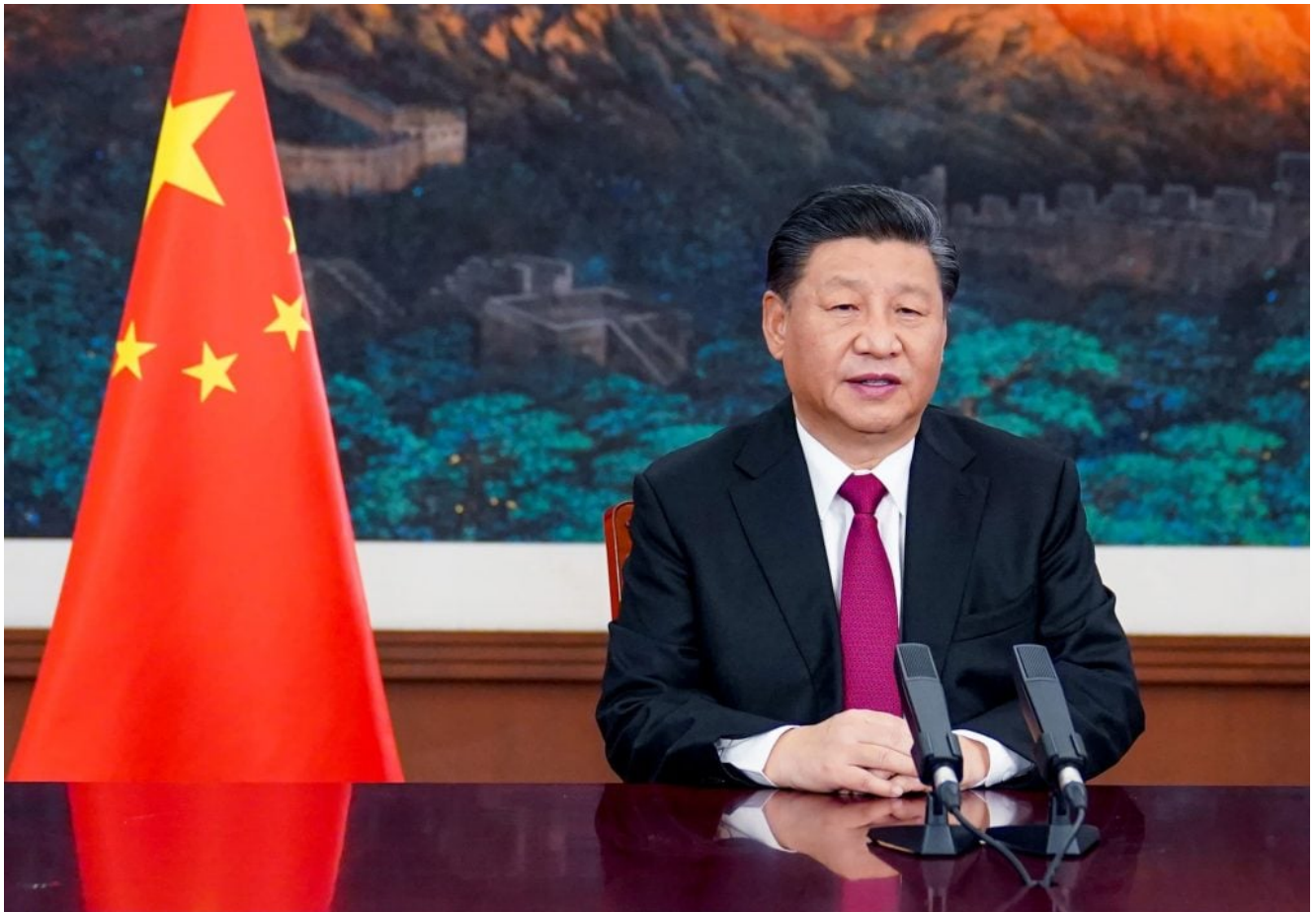


Who should wield power? Mr. Xi, or the “treasonous or traitorous” of Hong Kong?



by Lev Tsitrin

It is hard to not be impressed by the profundity of wisdom of China's Xi. Here, per the [New York Times](#), is what he told the residents of Hong Kong when he came to celebrate the quarter century of the return of the territory to China's rule: "Political power must be in the hands of patriots. There is no country or region in the world that would allow unpatriotic or even treasonous or traitorous forces and people to take power."

Wow! Who would have thought! How brilliant! How refreshing! How very true, when one takes the time to ponder it!

And yet, the carping types may ask, so what? The devil is in the definitions. Who exactly is a “patriot?” What makes one “treasonous or traitorous”?

Apparently, Mr. Xi did not elaborate, the matter being self-evident to him – so we will have to turn to other authoritative sources to counter the cavers. How about dictionary.com? Here is how it defines a “patriot:”

noun

1 a person who loves, supports, and defends his or her country and its interests with devotion.

2 a person who regards himself or herself as a defender, especially of individual rights, against presumed interference by the federal government.

3 Patriot, *Military*. a U.S. Army antiaircraft missile with a range of 37 miles (60 kilometers) and a 200-pound (90-kilogram) warhead, launched from a tracked vehicle with radar and computer guidance and fire control.

It is very unlikely that what Mr. Xi meant was the military meaning of the word; so let us focus on its first two meanings. How would “a person who loves, supports, and defends his or her country and its interests with devotion” govern? Since the key word here is “country,” how would such ruler define it? As a huge family that strives to take care of each member’s needs? Or as a colony of ants, whose function – whether warrior or worker – is to serve and follow the queen/ruler? Which boils down to this – does a “patriot” ruler care about the people, or is his only care making sure that people do what he cares about?

In the case of China and Mr. Xi, the answer is obvious: China is a place where people obey and serve the ideology of Communism. Yet, ideology is inseparable from a person who expresses it; there can be no ideology without its mouthpiece. Mr. Xi is the fountainhead of ideological wisdom; he lays out the Communist rights and the wrongs exactly as ants’ queen

lays her eggs. Just as the queen and her eggs are what an ant colony lives for, so does China live for – and by – the premier's Communist wisdom. The only difference between the two social structures – China and an anthill – is that China runs on ideology while an anthill runs on biology. Social DNA of ants runs in their genes; that of the Chinese, is injected through brainwashing. Everything else is the same.

If, instead, one defines the country as a huge family, then personal development of each member becomes a priority – which can only happen when the kind of patriots defined as “a person who regards himself or herself as a defender, especially of individual rights, against presumed interference by the federal government” run the country. That kind of governance cannot, by its very nature, be exercised centrally – but only comes about through laws that keep the government in check, which is, of course, anathema to Mr. Xi – as is, in fact, the very thought that citizens can be autonomous actors motivated and powered by their own agency, acting without the government's leave. Which translates into Mr. Xi's definition of a “patriot:” since China is an ideology-run anthill in which he is the ideological queen, than a “patriot” is, of necessity, he himself, and his proxies.

But how patriotic is such Xi-centered “patriotism” that, by its nature, brooks no dissent, seeing in it nothing but the product of “treasonous or traitorous forces,” as Mr. Xi so elegantly put it? Well, it depends on one's priorities. Some think that “rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God” – the notion that, to think of it, underpins patriotism's definition number 2. So the question becomes, who should one obey? Should one obey God who, having created a man in His own image, gave us the mind to reason things out – or the ideologues like Mr Xi (and Hitler, Stalin, and Mao before him, and his contemporaries like Khomeini) – who insist that they alone should do the thinking, the minds of the others having been made only to memorize their wise utterances, people being but

quotation machines, not fit to think on their own?

Which in turn leads to a follow-up question of who is a patriot – those who want to live by what is divine in us – by our ability to reason, or someone who wants to suppress that ability, reducing the public to a colony of brainless, subservient, obedient ants? Is Mr. Xi a patriot, or are residents of Hong Kong whose rights he suppressed by arrests and murder, treating them as “treasonous or traitorous forces” real patriots? Who is better fit to rule – Mr. Xi, or those who want to be free from his ideological dictates?