

TIMELINE: CHINA SINCE 1898

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1898: Emperor Kuang-hsu (1871-1908) of the Qing Dynasty initiates Hundred Days Reform program as reformist movements spread amid foreign interference in China; Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi (1835-1908) has Kuang-hsu arrested and rules until her death.

1900: Anti-foreigner uprising (“Boxer Rebellion”) sweeps China, prompting reprisals and expedition by the Eight-Nation Alliance (Japan, Russia, Britain, France, United States, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) to protect foreign interests; Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) becomes leader of the Revive China Society and, in 1905, of the United League.

1911: Uprisings with support of military rebels begin in Wuchang and spread widely, culminating in the 1911 Revolution.

1912: Last Qing Emperor of China, Pu Yi (1906-67), abdicates, ending over two thousand years of imperial rule; nationalists proclaim Republic of China in Nanjing; Sun Yat-sen becomes president, and establishes the Kuomintang nationalist party; Sun is pushed out and replaced by military leader Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) as president in Beijing.

1915: Japan imposes Twenty-One Demands on Yuan Shikai.

1916: Revolt of the Generals halts Yuan Shikai’s attempt to re-establish imperial rule.

1917: China declares war on Germany, entering World War I; Sun Yat-sen establishes rival government in Guangzhou, Guangdong; Bolshevik Revolution occurs in Russia, inspires Chinese revolutionaries.

1919: May Fourth Movement student protests occur in protest of the Versailles Peace Conference decision to grant German concessions in Shandong to Japan rather than restoring Chinese sovereignty.

1921: Chinese Communist Party is formed in Shanghai as an outgrowth of May Fourth Movement; Mao Zedong (1893-1976) becomes secretary of Communist Party branch in native Hunan.

1924: Kuomintang first national congress seeks cooperation with Communists and Soviet Union for unification of China.

1925: China experiences outbreaks of anti-foreign strikes and political unrest; Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), chief of staff of National Revolutionary Army, succeeds Sun Yat-sen as Kuomintang leader.

1926: Chiang Kai-shek launches Northern Expedition against warlords and unifies wide parts of China.

1927: Chiang Kai-shek crushes Communists and consolidates control; Communists form Red Army (later called the People’s Liberation Army).

1928: Chiang Kai-shek establishes Nationalist government in Nanjing.

1929-30: Great Famine in northern China kills 5-10 million.

1930: Nationalists launch Extermination Campaigns against Communists.

1931: Mao Zedong establishes Chinese Soviet Republic in Ruijin.

1934: Fifth Extermination Campaign drives Communists from southern China; Communist army undertakes the Long March to Yanan with Mao Zedong emerging as Communist leader.

1937: Japan invades China, capturing Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing; Nationalists and Communists form temporary United Front; Mao Zedong’s party leadership confirmed; Soviet Union aids Chinese resistance.

1941-1945: China joins World War II alliance with United States and Britain against Japan; Chiang Kai-shek attends Cairo Conference with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill; war leaves Nationalists beleaguered while Communists make significant gains in membership and influence.

1945: Mao Zedong elected chairman of the Communist Party and its Politburo; China signs United Nations Charter.

1946: Nationalists and Communists fail to agree on coalition rule and civil war resumes; Communists declare “war of liberation.”

1949: Communists defeat Nationalists and Mao Zedong proclaims the establishment of the People’s Republic of China on October 1 in Beijing; Mao declares intention of creating socialist society and promoting world communism; Chiang Kai-shek and Nationalists flee to island of Taiwan declaring continuity of Republic of China; United States supports Taiwan government and pledges to work towards Mao Zedong’s downfall.

1950: China enters Korean War, supporting Communist invasion of south; a U.S.-led United Nations force repulses invaders; Chinese troops occupy Tibet; China signs Treaty of Friendship with Soviet Union.

1953: China launches first Five-Year Plan, intended to spur economic growth using the Soviet model of centralized planning, state ownership and collective farms.

1954: United States signs Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan.

1956: Mao Zedong launches Hundred Flowers Campaign to encourage criticism of Communist policies.

1958: China begins Great Leap Forward program aimed at rapid industrialization; economic disruption triggers widespread famine, killing as many as 30 million.

1959: Chinese forces crush uprising in Tibet; the Dalai Lama flees to India.

1960: Ideological and strategic tensions escalate between China and Soviet Union.

1962: Clashes over disputed Himalayan border occur between China and India; China increases military aid to North Vietnam.

1964: China detonates a nuclear device, signaling China’s rise as a global power.

1966: Mao Zedong launches Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution aimed at reviving revolutionary spirit and cleansing party of ideological enemies; Deng Xiaoping (1904-97), a pragmatic economic reformer, is stripped of party leadership positions.

1966: United States increases military forces in Vietnam to 500,000 after U.S. President Lyndon Johnson cites need to stop Chinese Communist aggression in Asia.

1967: China experiences widespread violence and economic disruption amid the Cultural Revolution.

1968: China detonates a hydrogen device.

1969: Chinese and Soviet forces engage in border clashes.

1970: China withdraws war support personnel from North Vietnam after Hanoi refuses to cut relations with the Soviet Union.

1971: United Nations recognizes People’s Republic of China, which becomes one of the five permanent members of the Security Council; Taiwan is expelled from the UN.

1972: U.S. President Richard M. Nixon makes historic eight-day visit to China, paving the way for official U.S. recognition of the People’s Republic of China.

1974: Ailing longtime Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) designates Deng Xiaoping as successor; Deng returns to politics as first vice premier.

1976: Zhou Enlai dies; Gang of Four, a militant party faction that includes Mao Zedong’s wife Jiang Qing, targets Deng Xiaoping as counterrevolutionary;

Mao Zedong dies; **Hua Guofeng** (1921-2008) takes over as chairman (position renamed general secretary in 1982).

1978: **Deng Xiaoping** (1904-97) becomes de facto leader; launches Open Door Policy and market reforms.

1979: United States and People's Republic of China establish diplomatic relations; United States commits to military and other support for Taiwan; China launches punitive invasion of Vietnam following Vietnam's incursion into Cambodia.

1980: **Hu Yaobang** (1915-89) becomes general secretary; China establishes special economic zones to attract foreign direct investment as part of free market reforms; China becomes a member of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

1981: Members of Gang of Four are tried and given long sentences for usurping power and persecuting thousands; Communist Party denounces Cultural Revolution.

1984: China designates fourteen coastal cities open for foreign direct investment and trade.

1987: **Zhao Ziyang** (1919-2005) becomes general secretary.

1988 Regulations are enacted for establishment of private businesses and corporations.

1989: Government violently suppresses democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in Beijing; **Zhao Ziyang** is dismissed and replaced as general secretary by **Jiang Zemin** (1926-); the Dalai Lama is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for "for his consistent resistance to the use of violence in his people's struggle to regain their liberty."

1990: Shanghai and Shenzhen stock markets open.

1992: **Deng Xiaoping** calls for more rapid economic growth and reform during visit to southern China; Communist Party endorses "socialist market economy," calling market economy compatible with socialism; China accedes to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

1994: All regions of China are opened for foreign direct investment.

1996: China mounts war games in Taiwan Strait on eve of presidential elections in Taiwan; United States sends two carrier battle groups into the Strait.

1997: Britain returns Hong Kong to Chinese rule.

1999: U.S. forces bomb Chinese embassy in Belgrade during NATO raid on Serbia during Balkans conflict, triggering diplomatic tensions and anti-American protests in China; Portugal returns Macao to Chinese sovereignty.

2001: China enters World Trade Organization.

2002: **Hu Jintao** (1942-) becomes general secretary.

2003: China launches its first manned space flight, Shenzhou 5.

2006 Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydropower project, is completed.

2007: China carries out a missile test in space.

2008: Beijing hosts Summer Olympic Games.

2009: Leaders of China and Taiwan exchange messages for the first time in six decades.

2010: China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) create a free trade area; China surpasses Japan as the world's second largest economy after the United States; Chinese literary critic and human rights activist **Liu Xiaobo** is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his "long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights."

2012: **Xi Jinping** (1953-) becomes general secretary; China opens world's longest high-speed rail route linking Beijing and Guangzhou; influential Chongqing party chief **Bo Xilai** is expelled from party amid murder and corruption scandal; China experiences increased diplomatic tensions with the Philippines and Vietnam over rights in the South China Sea.

2013: Diplomatic tensions escalate between China and Japan over disputed islands in the East China Sea.