



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 16, 2021

## Don't Believe China's Growth Numbers

On Friday, April 16, journalists for the *New York Times* and *Forbes* magazine exulted over [the report from China's Communist Party reporting agency](#), the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC). Written in the CCP's usual stilted style, the report read, in part:



Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, all regions and departments conscientiously carried out the decisions and arrangements made by the CPC....

As a result, the economy delivered a stable performance....

Production demand was expanded, market vitality was enhanced, employment and prices were stable, and people's well-being was strongly guaranteed.

The national economy made a good start.

In their coverage, the *Times* ignored the blatant propaganda and instead focused on the document's second paragraph, noting that "The gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter [increased] by 18.3 percent year on year."

Yowser! Said the *Times*: "When China released its new economic figures on Friday, they showed a remarkable postpandemic surge." *Forbes* called it "the largest quarterly growth figure since China began keeping records in 1992 and an indication China's robust recovery is continuing."

Neither source noted that since 1992, the Communist Party's NBSC has been reporting whatever the Party wanted it to, with little evidence of concern over whether those reports reflected reality.

Deep into the report, the NBSC claims that the economic surge "was affected by such incomparable factors as the low base figure of last year." Moreover, on a quarter-to-quarter basis, China's economy grew by just 0.6 percent in the first quarter of 2021.

Figures can lie and liars can figure, and the Chinese communists are masters at the trade.

One caveat, however, was issued by NBSC spokeswoman Liu Aihua, who warned: "The basis of the national recovery is not secure.... Long-term structural contradictions are still as present as before, and there are even a few new problems and circumstances in development."



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But what problems might Aihua be referring? Let's analyze some realities: Thanks to Communist Party rule, China is statist to its core, and the early surge from its position as a Third World country only came about when the Party temporarily let peasants take 99-year leases on their land — some were even allowed to purchase their land outright — and local politicians allowed them to till the land and sell what they produced through local markets not controlled by the Party. The economy predictably exploded. But since Comrade Xi Jinping has clamped down on that temporary economic freedom, the faux growth has had to come from somewhere. And it has come from expanded government spending on “infrastructure”: transportation and cement and steel manufacturing facilities.

But the consumer has been reluctant to spend, with the savings rate (again, if that number can be believed) approaching 15 percent of salaries. Only in the last month has the agency reported an increase in mall and restaurant traffic.

Andrew Collier, managing director of Orient Capital Research, located in Hong Kong, is less likely to be tempted to fudge the numbers. Collier wrote that the “quality” of the growth reported by the mouthpiece was questionable: “For every yuan they spend they get less and less impact [on the economy]. It's a very lopsided, heavily industrialized country that's growing slower and slower.”

For China's economy to be sustainable over decades, citizens must be allowed the freedom they recently enjoyed to own land, to start and own small businesses, without government meddling or excessive taxation. Such notions are anathema to communists in general, and the Chinese Communist Party in particular. In China's economic war against the United States, its citizenry must meet the Party's objectives: provide cheap labor to build cheap products that Americans buy without an awareness that they are funding their deadly enemy.

Any chance that Comrade Xi will lift the heavy hand of the state from the backs of its citizens is minimal. From the conclusion of the NBSC's report, we read:

We must follow the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.



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