

# FOR ONE AND ALL: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON CHINA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

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In 2017, China's President [Xi Jinping became the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of China to attend the World Economic Forum](#) at Davos, a gathering synonymous with global capitalism. He delivered [a robust defence of globalisation](#), three days before newly elected U.S. President [Donald Trump was set to be sworn in](#), and six months after the [Brexit vote in the U.K.](#) On January 25, [Mr. Xi returned to the Davos platform](#), albeit virtually. His speech carried many of the similar themes from four years ago, calling for global unity, closer coordination on macroeconomic policy, and more equitable growth. It did also carry two messages that appeared to be aimed at Washington, a reflection of four turbulent years of a tariff and technology war between the world's two biggest economies. "Each country is unique with its own history, culture and social system, and none is superior to the other," he said. "Difference in itself is no cause for alarm. What does ring the alarm is arrogance, prejudice and hatred; it is the attempt to impose hierarchy on human civilisation or to force one's own history, culture and social system upon others." He also hit out at attempts "to build small circles or start a new Cold War, to reject, threaten or intimidate others, to wilfully impose decoupling, supply disruption or sanctions" and said a "misguided approach of antagonism and confrontation, be it in the form of cold war, hot war, trade war or tech war, would eventually hurt all countries' interests."

If Mr. Xi's first Davos speech found a broadly receptive audience amid a crisis in capitalism, with the rise of populism in the West creating the space for China to try and fill a void in global economic leadership, China will find a harder sell four years on. His message "to stay committed to international law and international rules instead of seeking one's own supremacy" and for "the strong [to] not bully the weak" will appear especially jarring to those in China's neighbourhood. Indeed, only the day before the speech, military commanders from India and China spent over 16 hours in talks, the latest unsuccessful attempt to disengage two forces that have been eyeball-to-eyeball for months, after China's unprecedented military mobilisation across the LAC starting in May. It is not only India that is dealing with a harder Chinese military posture in the midst of a global pandemic. On January 23, eight bombers and four fighters from China entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone, the latest warning to Taipei. One cannot find fault with Mr. Xi's statement that "decisions should not be made by simply showing off strong muscles or waving a big fist". Indeed, its importance is in its relevance to all the big, militarised powers. And, China is one of them.

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