ASIA PROGRAM SPECIAL REPORT

NO. 105

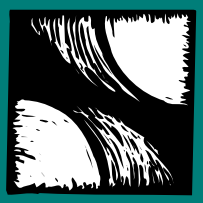
SEPTEMBER 2002

The 16th CCP Congress and Leadership Transition in China

EDITED BY GANG LIN & SUSAN SHIRK

This Special Report is a cooperative effort by the University of California, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

ABSTRACT: This Special Report containing seven essays examines China's leadership transition around the forthcoming 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Susan Shirk of the University of California at San Diego argues that most Chinese officials probably want Jiang Zemin to retire, and that they will be able to organize collective action to force him to retire if a prominent official dares to speak out in favor of it. H. Lyman Miller of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School cautions that if Hu Jintao fails to succeed Jiang, Beijing's previous efforts to institutionalize political processes will suffer a key setback. Gang Lin of the Woodrow Wilson Center predicts that Jiang is likely to retire from all his current posts, but may find a new institutional base from which to wield power behind the scenes. Lowell Dittmer of the University of California at Berkeley observes that Chinese factions today appear to be motivated entirely by the career ambitions—rather than ideological or policy orientation—of their members. Cheng Li of Hamilton College discusses the competition between Hu Jintao and Jiang's closest associate, Zeng Qinghong, finding they have different political and regional constituencies. David Shambaugh of George Washington University describes leadership transition in the army, which reflects a continued trend of military professionalism. Richard Baum of the University of California at Los Angeles maintains that China's new leadership may be open to institutional change under intensified sociopolitical stress. This Special Report provides a timely assessment of leadership transition in China as well as its implications for the country's domestic development and international image.



ASIA PROGRAM

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Introduction

Susan Shirk

The leadership transition that is expected to occur at the 16th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) scheduled for November 2002 is potentially the most momentous one in the history of the People's Republic of China (PRC). If Jiang Zemin steps down as CCP general secretary and is succeeded by Hu Jintao, it will be the first normal transfer of power in the PRC's history. In every previous succession, either the incumbent has died, been physically incapacitated, or purged. No Chinese leader before now has ever freely and peacefully left office and handed it down to someone else.

The 16th CCP Congress is, therefore, a test of how far the PRC has come in its political evolution. If Jiang Zemin retires at age 76 after two terms as general secretary, it will indicate that the Chinese polity is becoming more institutionalized, i.e., that officials—including its top leaders—are constrained by institutional rules and procedures. Even by the standard of communist regimes, China's institutionalization has been relatively slow. Mao Zedong actively subverted institutionalization, believing that it was a

Gang Lin is program associate at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Asia Program. Susan Shirk is professor in the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California at San Diego, and research director of the University of California system–wide Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC).

way to rob him of power and lead China down the "bourgeois revisionist road." Mao Zedong's death in 1976 finally opened the way for the regularization and normalization of politics. Deng Xiaoping made a systematic critique of China's political shortcomings, including over-concentration of power, patriarchal methods, and life tenure in leading posts. Under Deng, a number of significant measures were introduced to enhance institutionalization, including term limits and retirement ages for government and Party posts. Yet Deng's legacy as an institutionalizer was mixed: he ruled from outside formal institutions and never held the top Party position, and he never stepped down until he was physically incapacitated. Institutionalization has accelerated during the period of Jiang Zemin's rule; Jiang holds the top formal positions in the Party, government, and military and has used these formal positions to consolidate his power. Term limits and retirement ages have been enforced, although Jiang exempted himself from retirement at the 15th CCP Congress in 1997. Yet Jiang, like Deng Xiaoping, has appeared ambivalent about the institutionalization of political leadership. He recognizes that rules can be used as checks on his power and patronage. He hedged his bets by not putting in writing the retirement age for Party leaders.

The CCP officials who are authorized to decide the upcoming succession are well aware that the outcome will be interpreted by people in China and abroad as signifying progress, stagnation, or even retrogression. Domestically, if Jiang Zemin refuses to retire and clings to power, it will aggravate an already serious legitimacy crisis for the CCP leadership. The economic dislocations caused by China's transformation to a more open market economy have sparked protests by laid-off workers and hard-pressed farmers. The pervasive rot of official corruption has discredited the Party at every level. People value stability and continuity, but their growing sense of alienation from the Party will be intensified if Jiang and other aging leaders hold on to power. The backlash is likely to shorten the life span of Party rule in China. On the other hand, a normal transfer of power will prolong its life span by giving people confidence that the Party is headed in the right direction and may even undertake political reform.

The international reaction to a normal transfer of power will be positive as well, although its significance—regular turnover in an authoritarian system—may not be appreciated by foreigners who are awaiting China's democratization. In Washington, the U.S. government would be sad to see Jiang Zemin go; Jiang has developed a strong personal investment in a harmonious Sino-American relationship. Yet, on balance, Washington would prefer to see Jiang retire and a normal succession occur. American policymakers have no reason to expect that Hu Jintao and his peers will make any fundamental shifts in foreign policy. Hu also offers a better chance for the political reforms that will improve human rights and ease frictions with the United States. An orderly transition, moreover, will signify a mature, pragmatic government that we can work with; not a sclerotic regime on its last legs.

The briefing papers that have been collected in this Special Report were commissioned for a project, "The 16th CCP Congress and Leadership Transition in China," co-sponsored by the Asia Program of the Woodrow Wilson Center and the University of California system–wide Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation. The authors of the papers presented their views in panel discussions held in Washington D.C. at the Wilson Center on September 17, 2002. The papers are designed to help China watchers in government, the mass media, and the public understand the leadership transition, including what is going on behind the scenes and what are the stakes for China's future.

The first essay, "The Succession Game," written by **Susan Shirk**, describes the strategic situation facing the several hundred Party, government, and military officials who as members of the CCP

THE ASIA PROGRAM

The Wilson Center's Asia Program is dedicated to the proposition that only those with a sound scholarly grounding can begin to understand contemporary events. One of the Center's oldest regional programs, the Asia Program seeks to bring historical and cultural sensitivity to the discussion of Asia in the nation's capital. In seminars, workshops, briefings, and conferences, prominent scholars of Asia interact with one another and with policy practitioners to further understanding of the peoples, traditions, and behaviors of the world's most populous continent.

Asia Program Staff:
Robert M. Hathaway, Director
Gang Lin, Program Associate
Amy McCreedy, Program Associate
Wilson Lee, Program Assistant
Timothy R. Hildebrandt, Program Assistant

"selectorate" will decide the outcome of the succession. Jiang wants to remain as leader of the Party; the majority of the selectorate probably want him to retire. Yet there are serious risks to organizing collective action to block Jiang's effort to retain his position. Collective action is very difficult in this situation unless an individual dares to speak out and thereby becomes a focal point for the opposition. Still, in a group of this size, it is likely that someone will emerge as a focal point for collective action. A compromise solution may be to allow Jiang, and perhaps Li Peng and Zhu Rongji as well, to continue to exercise informal influence over policymaking. As some of the other authors point out, Jiang's personal following and stature are far smaller than Deng's were; if his role is not institutionalized, his influence will soon evaporate.

Lyman Miller, in "The 16th Party Congress and China's Political Processes," highlights the very important implications of the upcoming succession for the institutionalization of China's political system in the post-Mao era. Hu Jintao has been groomed to be the next leader of the CCP, and a generational turnover was expected to occur at the 16th Party Congress. If Jiang Zemin rewrites the script and retains his position, the effort to institutionalize China's political processes will have suffered a key setback. Miller places this succession in the context of the history of China's institutional development, which was stunted under Mao and accelerated under Deng. By clinging to his position, Jiang will be violating the institutional norms established by Deng, a move of profound significance for the future of Chinese politics.

"Jiang's Last Card: Empowering the National Party Congress?" by **Gang Lin** predicts that Jiang is likely to give up all his *current* positions because institutionalization has progressed to the point that rules and norms will constrain him. Instead of quietly retiring, however, Jiang may find a way to continue his influence through institutional innovation. Lin suggests that Jiang might have been searching for a new power base in the National Party Congress that is to be upgraded from a once-every-five-years nominating convention to a more permanent and significant body. The result would be a more gradual transfer of power from Jiang to Hu over a number of years without reversing the institutionalization trend.

Lowell Dittmer analyzes the factional landscape of the succession in "Chinese Factional Politics Under Jiang." Factional networks of patron-client ties have been a pervasive feature of Chinese politics. The glue that holds a faction together is the career interests of its members and personal loyalties. Beyond these interests and loyalties, however, factions differentiated themselves along ideological lines under Mao and along policy lines under Deng. Under Jiang, however, the Chinese elite has come to a policy consensus (i.e., economic reform and political stability), and therefore factions do not divide along policy lines. As Cheng Li argues later, factional competition is more visible than ever before in the 16th Party Congress succession, but factions appear to be motivated entirely by the career ambitions of their members. Dittmer identifies the main factions as the "Shanghai gang" (or mainstream faction), the "power" faction, the "old guard," and Hu Jintao's followers. Only the "Shanghai gang" clearly supports Jiang Zemin's ploy to retain Party leadership, and the "old guard" and Hu Jintao's followers oppose it.

Cheng Li, in "Emerging Patterns of Power Sharing: Inland Hu vs. Coastal Zeng?" shifts the focus from the issue of whether or not Jiang Zemin will retire to the competition between Hu Jintao and Zeng Qinghong, Jiang's closest associate who is head of the CCP Organization Department. Despite the competition between them, Hu and Zeng have developed ways of cooperating with one another and may be able to share power after the succession. The two appear to have different regional constituencies. Zeng is associated with Jiang Zemin's "Shanghai clique," while Hu has a broader following based on his past leadership of the Communist Youth League and his service in two inland provinces. Li notes that conflicts of interest between regions and factions are more out in the open than ever before.

In "The Leadership Succession in the Chinese Military," **David Shambaugh** considers the changes in military leadership that are expected when the Central Military Commission (CMC) meets following the 16th Party Congress. He describes the new faces and says they reflect the trend of an increasingly professional People's Liberation Army and a "bifurcation" between military and political elites in China. China's politicians

no longer have career experience in the military; and military officers have more corporate autonomy and reduced influence in politics. The two elites meet only within the CMC. Shambaugh predicts that Jiang Zemin will be forced to give up not only his Party and government posts, but his CMC chairmanship as well.

The implications of leadership succession for China's political future are explored by **Richard Baum** in "To Reform or to Muddle Through?: The Challenges Facing China's Fourth Generation." It is impossible to predict on the basis of previous career patterns or public pronouncements whether the next generation of leaders will introduce meaningful political reform. In several important cases of democratization in authoritarian regimes—the USSR under Mikhail Gorbachev, Taiwan under Chiang Ching-kuo, and South Korea under General Chun Doo-hwan—fundamental changes were set in motion by leaders whose personal and organizational backgrounds contained little or no hint of their readiness to induce broad systemic transformation. The fourth generation's weak ties to the regime's elder statesmen, their lack of complicity in the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, and their ideological flexibility are encouraging signs that this generation may be open to institutional change. Whether such change actually occurs depends on the intensity of sociopolitical stress as well as the characteristics of the leadership in the future.

Following the essays are two charts provided by Cheng Li based on his research on China's political elite. One chart provides biographical sketches of four of the most important members of the fourth generation who are expected to assume Party and government leadership positions at the 16th Party Congress. Another contrasts the characteristics of the fourth generation with those of the third generation incumbents.[1] These two charts, together with the seven essays, are aimed at providing a timely assessment of the ongoing leadership transition in China as well as its implications for the country's domestic development and international image.

ENDNOTE

1. China counts leadership generations since the 1949 revolution. The first generation of leaders applies to Mao Zedong and his comrades in arms. The second generation refers to Deng Xiaoping and those who worked with him after Mao. The third refers to Jiang Zemin and the present day leadership. The fourth generation applies to Hu Jintao and the younger cohort of leaders expected to follow Jiang.

The Succession Game

SUSAN SHIRK

The big question in China's upcoming contest for leadership succession is not which candidate will win but whether the succession will occur at all. The incumbent leader, Jiang Zemin, aged 76, is reluctant to retire and is campaigning to stay on. Up until summer 2002, Vice President Hu Jintao was treated as the heir apparent; he visited the United States in that capacity in the spring. It appeared certain that Jiang would retire from at least two of his three positions, i.e., Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary (the topmost position of power) and state president (a job with little authority over domestic policy but who represents China internationally), even if he succeeded in retaining some influence as chairman of the Party-led Central Military Commission. Yet, significantly, Jiang evades answering questions about his plans and has never committed publicly to step down. And by summer 2002, he was campaigning hard to gain the approval of the 16th CCP Congress to retain the post of general secretary

Jiang is not the first leader in China—or in the world—to believe that he is indispensable or that his successor is not up to the task. His predecessors Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping both became disenchanted with their chosen successors and replaced them with others. Jiang did not choose Hu Jintao—Deng Xiaoping did—so his lack of confidence in Hu is not surprising. Like Mao and Deng, Jiang also enjoys wielding power and wants to protect his political legacy. In Jiang's case, however, he may believe that if he retires now, his accomplishments would be insufficient to elevate him to the level of his predecessors. He may think he needs more time to cement a legacy by major accomplishments, such as broadening the social base of the Communist Party (the objective of his so-called "Three Represents"), reunifying Taiwan and the Mainland, or building a constructive strategic partnership with the United States.

An important factor in the retirement calculus of Jiang Zemin and other current officials—one that Mao and Deng never had to worry about—is a desire to protect themselves and their families from corruption charges. Jiang and his colleagues are well aware that in other Asian countries like Indonesia and South Korea, retirement has meant jail for former leaders and their relatives. In China's free-wheeling semi-marketized economy, having the backing of Party and government leaders is an important asset to any venture, and the law does not clearly specify the line between legitimate and illegitimate political influence. With such a wide gray area and so much temptation, almost no senior official can be considered completely clean. Even if one behaves honestly, one's children or relatives may have succumbed to temptation. In this environment, anti-corruption campaigns have replaced the ideological campaigns of the Mao era as the weapon of choice for elite conflict. All three top incumbent leaders in China—Jiang, Premier Zhu Rongji, and National People's Congress Chairman Li Peng—have children and other relatives in business; all of them are vulnerable to corruption prosecutions. One reason that Jiang prefers to delay retirement may be that he does not trust Hu Jintao to protect his family.

The expectation that Jiang would retire as the head of the Party was based on the belief that despite his desire to continue in office, he would not flout the rule that requires Party leaders to retire at age 70. This rule, established in 1997 as part of Jiang's effort to eliminate his rival Qiao Shi, while not yet formalized in the Party constitution, has acquired a normative weight that was expected to deter Jiang.[1] (Since government posts have a limit of two five-year terms, Jiang cannot keep the presidency without revising the constitution, a step he is less likely to take.) Chinese and foreign observers have speculated that Jiang might retain the post of chairman of the Central Military Commission because there is no rule, written or unwritten, that would require him to resign from it (although as David Shambaugh notes, such an arrangement would violate the notion that the Party leads the Army). The possibility that Jiang might retain the pre-eminent institutional role of general secretary of the CCP comes as something of a surprise.

Will the CCP allow Jiang Zemin to retain the post of general secretary and postpone the succession? Predictions in Chinese politics are hazardous; decision-making is opaque even to Chinese citizens; PRC mass media are forbidden from reporting about it. To understand what is going on behind the screen we need to consider the nature of the leadership selection process, the preferences of the elite constituency who will make the decision, and the strategic context for their choice. The essence of the situation is: Jiang wants to stay; the majority of Party officials want him to go. But will these officials be able to overcome the difficulties of collective action to organize an effective movement to force Jiang to retire?

The Leadership Selection Process

Whether or not Jiang will achieve his desire to retain the position of CCP general secretary depends on the approximately 200 members of the Chinese political elite who constitute China's "selectorate," the group empowered to choose the top Party leaders in China.[2] According to the CCP constitution, the Central Committee, a body of approximately 200 senior Party, government and military officials, has the authority to choose the Politburo, the Standing Committee of the Politburo, and the General Secretary. This fall when the Party Congress, a group of approximately 2000 delegates of Party members in offices, schools, factories, and villages throughout the country, gathers in Beijing, its main task will be to elect this new Central Committee, which in turn will choose the top leaders of the Party. The incumbent leaders draw up the slate of nominees for the Central Committee; the slate has up to five percent more names than slots.[3] By and large, however, the membership of the Central Committee is assigned by job-slot, with every province's governor and Party secretary, all government ministers, all heads of Party departments, all senior PLA generals, and the managers of some of the largest state-owned corporations, being members.

Much of the preparation work for the Party Congress occurs at Beidaihe, the seaside resort where the Chinese political elite gathers each summer for a series of meetings of the Central Committee that are attended by some retired officials as well as the regular members. At Beidaihe, the slate for the new Central Committee and the draft political work report that will be submitted to the Party Congress are discussed; the senior leadership arrangements are also discussed, at least informally. Ideally, from Jiang's point of view, the group at Beidaihe would have approved his retention of the general secretary position. A positive decision out of the enlarged Central Committee at Beidaihe would probably, but not certainly, be ratified formally by the Party Congress and the new Central Committee in the fall.[4] Because the meetings at Beidaihe apparently were unable to resolve the succession issue, the meeting, originally scheduled for September or October, will be delayed until November.

The Preferences of the Selectorate

Although public opinion polls have not yet become part of China's political campaigns, China watchers believe that most members of China's political elite want Jiang Zemin to retire and hand over power to the next generation.

- Younger cohorts of officials, from Hu Jintao and his colleagues on down, want to move up the career ladder in the system that still operates largely by seniority. Waiting another five years, even another two years, is considered too long.
- Although most officials support Jiang's policy positions—i.e., continued economic reform and opening, good relations with the United States, and a firm stance on Taiwan—they do not see any risk that Hu would abandon these positions.
- They appreciate Jiang's accomplishments, but do not have great respect for him as an individual. In their view, Jiang Zemin is no Deng Xiaoping, whose personal qualities justified bending the rules to extend his power into his old age.
- Therefore, they prefer an orderly retirement and transfer of power that will demonstrate to Chinese and foreigners alike that China is progressing toward a more institutionalized political system. Term limits and retirement rules are themselves a kind of political reform; to flaunt them would indicate retrogression not progress.

Where might the support for Jiang to remain in office come from? Some members of the successor generation, called the "fourth generation," owe their careers to Jiang or have a special relationship with

him and support his remaining in power. Such Jiang-supporters undoubtedly are a minority within the selectorate, however. Not every government minister, provincial governor, or PLA general who was appointed during Jiang's reign sees himself or herself as a member of a Jiang faction. Of course every leadership transition means turnover in subordinate positions, creating some career uncertainty for current officials. But shifts in assignments are bound to occur as part of the 16th Party Congress regardless of whether Jiang retires or remains.

Some observers believe that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is supporting Jiang's campaign to stay on. Military representatives constitute a significant group within the Central Committee selectorate. From a broader perspective, the PLA has an effective veto over the choice of the supreme Party leader because the military's loyalty can be decisive in an internal security crisis like the 1989 Tiananmen protests. The *Liberation Army Daily* has been publishing paeans to Jiang's "Three Represents." Echoing the Mao era, it exhorts people to "conscientiously study and implement Chairman Jiang's thoughts."[5] The PLA has been favored with budget increases during the Jiang era; since 1999, it has been given the resources to upgrade its capabilities to prepare to resolve the Taiwan issue militarily if need be. The flattering press appears to signal that the military supports Jiang's retention of the general secretary post, or at least that they want him to continue as chairman of the Central Military Commission. Another plausible interpretation, however, is that the PLA is thanking Jiang for supporting it and giving him a glorious send-off into retirement.

The other two main groups in the Central Committee selectorate are the top officials from government and Party agencies and top provincial officials. There are no signs of policy differences between Jiang and Hu Jintao and no signs of a clear preference on the part of either group between them. Jiang has been very successful at creating a broad geographic base of support; he encouraged the coastal provinces to attract foreign investment and enter the world market, and at the same time implemented a massive program of infrastructure construction in the poorer inland provinces. There are no indications that provincial leaders from either region are pro-Jiang or pro-Hu.[6]

One group that appears to be very pro-Jiang is private business. Entrepreneurs have flourished economically in the Jiang era. Jiang's current move to enhance their political status through the "Three Represents" will make it easier for their businesses to obtain bank loans and gain other types of policy support. Yet because private business people have no seats in the Central Committee, their enthusiasm for Jiang will have little influence over the succession.

The Nature of the Game

The key player in the leadership succession contest in any authoritarian system is the incumbent leader. In most systems, he decides when to step down, if at all; he nominates his successor; and he may still exercise influence from behind the scenes after his retirement. Even so, he cannot dictate the outcome. The preferences of the other players in the selectorate also have weight.

The ability of the incumbent leader to determine the succession has become progressively more limited over time, from Mao's era, through Deng's, and to Jiang's. Jiang's limited power is highlighted by the fact that his several attempts to promote his right-hand man, Zeng Qinghong, into a position as full Politburo member were successfully resisted by the Politburo and the Central Committee. In summer 2001 Jiang's effort to have his notion of the "Three Represents" enshrined formally in the CCP constitution provoked a massive debate at the Beidaihe enlarged Central Committee meetings; objections stemmed not just from the substance of the idea, but also from the mode by which Jiang seemed to be promoting his own cult of personality.

Although he cannot dictate the outcome over the objections of the rest of the selectorate, Jiang's decisions structure the strategic context. Members of the selectorate are unsure about what his strategy is. Is he serious about retaining the number-one position of CCP general secretary? Or is he staking out a maximalist position to help him win support for a compromise outcome, i.e., keeping the Central Military Commission chairmanship from which he would exercise power from outside the Politburo as Deng Xiaoping did? Or is he actually ready to retire but just trying to create leverage to make sure that Zeng Qinghong becomes part of a fourth generation triumvirate with Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao?

Uncertainty about what Jiang actually wants and what in the end he is likely to achieve complicates the coordination problem facing the majority of officials in the selectorate who want Jiang to retire from all his positions. Communist officials cannot openly campaign for positions, and because of the Party's official myth of unity, officials cannot openly form blocs or factions. Because the competition for power is covert and considered illegitimate, individual officials have very poor information about the preferences of other officials; members of the selectorate are wary of confiding in one another because they fear betrayal in the service of personal ambition. Therefore it is impossible to calculate in advance the votes for and against Jiang's retirement. Organizing collective action to block Jiang from holding on to power is extremely risky because if it fails and Jiang keeps his power, he will punish those who participated. This risk of collective action exists even when the contest is between two possible successors; it is much greater when the contest is between the incumbent leader and a successor.

Hu Jintao has not dared come out into the open as the presumed successor. He does not refer to his successor status or his plans for China under his leadership. Typically, leadership contests are opportunities for policy innovation in authoritarian states. The contenders differentiate their policy "platforms" in order to build support for a winning coalition among the groups in the selectorate. What is striking about this contest is that since Hu needs to convince Jiang to retire, he has deferentially echoed all of Jiang's policy positions; even the most assiduous Beijingologist cannot identify any policy differences between the two. Because Hu supervises the CCP Central Party School and the School's faculty has organized a series of projects on topics like social democracy in Europe and democratic transitions in authoritarian states, people infer that Hu plans to undertake political reforms, but nothing he has said himself indicates such leanings.

In the year leading up to the 16th CCP Congress the central government has put on hold any new economic reforms that might harm the interests of groups within the selectorate; government spending on infrastructure projects (Chinese-style "pork") remains high even though the need for fiscal stimulus has diminished; and collection of revenue from the provinces has been more lax than in the previous two years. This effort to keep everyone satisfied, while led by Jiang, has not been criticized by Hu or by any other senior official.

This strategic context makes it very difficult for Hu Jintao or anyone else to instigate a collective effort to force Jiang Zemin to retire. The risks of confronting Jiang head-on are just too great. It would be impossible to maintain the secrecy of any such organized effort; the likelihood of someone defecting and reporting it to Jiang is very high. Given these risks, the opposition to Jiang's continuing in office is probably latent rather than organized. It awaits the emergence of an individual who speaks out and thereby becomes a focal point to galvanize support for Jiang's retirement.

How might such a scenario unfold? Jiang Zemin has most likely orchestrated a series of speakers to stand up at Beidaihe and at the 16th CCP Congress to propose that Jiang remain in the general secretary post because of the pressing need to maintain stability in the next few years. Perhaps the speakers will point to the challenges of managing the economic dislocations of WTO membership and preventing Taiwan independence as the exigencies requiring Jiang to stay on.

The key question, then, is who might have the political courage to rise and speak in favor of Jiang's retirement and become the focal point for collective action? The speech would have to frame the issue in broad terms—advocating that everyone over 70 step down to enjoy their richly deserved retirement with their families or stressing the importance of the institutionalization within the Party initiated by Deng Xiaoping—not as a question of Jiang's retirement per se. The effectiveness of the speech would be enhanced if the speaker himself were viewed as being motivated by the collective interest of the Party instead of self-interest. Two individuals who might speak up and spark effective resistance are Li Ruihuan and Zhu Rongji. Li Ruihuan, former mayor and Party secretary of Tianjin and current head of the relatively powerless body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, is the only member of the third generation of leaders currently in the Standing Committee of the Politburo who is under 70 and therefore does not have to retire. His contempt for Jiang Zemin is well known, which might undercut the persuasiveness of his advocacy of Jiang's retirement. But, if he cast his

brief as an argument in favor of all members of the third generation—including himself—retiring and handing down authority to Hu Jintao and the fourth generation, his gesture of sacrificing his own ambition would put pressure on Jiang to do the same.

Premier Zhu Rongji also would make an effective case if he rose to advocate in favor of everyone in the third generation retiring. For some time, he has indicated that he looks forward to his own retirement. And as Jiang Zemin's second in command, he has learned how to bury his own ambition in deference to Jiang. A Zhu Rongji motion for the entire third generation to retire could succeed in turning the process around.

Jiang Zemin appears to have been trying to align the interests of Li Peng, head of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and number two in the Party rankings, and the interests of Zhu Rongji, with his own interests (he probably considers Li Ruihuan as lost cause). If he can coopt these key third generation leaders, then he can lower the odds that they will challenge his effort to postpone retirement. If Jiang declines to retire and continues to exercise power, then Li Peng and Zhu Rongji could do the same.[7] Even if Jiang does step down from the general secretary position and tries to exercise power from the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission, then he would expect to include Li Peng and Zhu Rongji in a semi-formal group of new elders modeled on the Deng Xiaoping arrangement that lasted until 1995. During 2001, there were rumors that Jiang was criticizing Vice Premier Wen Jiabao, Zhu's chosen successor as premier and top economic decision-maker; if Wen were discredited and Zhu believed there was no one capable of taking over the reins of the economic reforms, then he might be willing to join Jiang in delaying retirement.

Whether or not there will be a succession this year in China depends on whether a senior figure, such as Li Ruihuan or Zhu Rongji, has the courage to speak out in favor of retirement, expressing openly the view that is held by the silent majority of the selectorate, and galvanizing collective action to force Jiang to retire. Even a statement by a more junior member of the selectorate might be enough to spark the group to stand up to Jiang. Despite the risks, the odds of someone emerging from this group of several hundred officials to advocate the retirement of the third generation are high.

The awkwardness of directly confronting the ambitions of the authoritarian leader is so great, however, that it is very likely that someone subsequently will propose the face-saving solution that the new leaders continue to consult with and be guided by the wisdom of Jiang and the other retiring Party veterans. As the essays by Gang Lin, Lowell Dittmer and Cheng Li note, however, Jiang's personal following and stature are far smaller than Deng's were. If his role is not institutionalized by the creation of an organization similar to the previous Central Advisory Commission and a rule that Party documents must be passed to and approved by it, his influence will soon evaporate.

ENDNOTES

1. According to press reports, another part of the 1997 deal was an informal commitment by Jiang to retire in 2002, at the end of his second term as CCP general secretary. See *Xinbao* (Hong Kong), September 10, 2001, 9.

2. Susan L. Shirk, *The Political Logic of China's Economic Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

3. The size of the Central Committee is not fixed and is determined each time by the incumbent leaders.

4. The present Central Committee is likely marginally more pro-Jiang than the next one will be.

5. *Jiefangjun Bao* editorial, August 1, 2002.

6. In the lead up to the CCP Congress many provincial leadership posts have been filled by newcomers who appear to have ties to Jiang and his close associate Zeng Qinghong; but many other newcomers appear to have ties to Hu Jintao. Both Zeng and Hu have had considerable authority over personnel-based appointments in recent years.

7. Li Peng has never appeared anxious to retire and now he sees his own fate as linked to Jiang's. During the year before the 16th CCP Congress he has been uncharacteristically silent, declining to criticize Jiang or Zhu for any policy failings, in an apparent effort to bolster rather than undercut Jiang's efforts to perpetuate his power.

The 16th Party Congress and China's Political Processes

H. LYMAN MILLER

The leadership succession widely expected to take place at the 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) this November is the centerpiece of a broader effort begun by Deng Xiaoping two decades ago to institutionalize China's political processes along more stable and predictable routines. Preparations for the anticipated succession of Hu Jintao to Jiang Zemin as China's top Party, state, and military leader at the 16th Party Congress and at a session of China's parliament next year began a full decade ago. Rumors recently circulating in Beijing and reported by Hong Kong and foreign media suggest, however, that Hu's succession may be delayed or may not take place at all. If so, the effort to institutionalize China's political processes will have suffered a key setback.

Preparing Hu

Neither public comments by China's leaders nor PRC media have ever explicitly stated that Hu Jintao is Jiang Zemin's successor as China's top leader. It has nevertheless long been apparent that Hu has been groomed to become the "core leader" of an emerging "fourth generation" of leaders due to take over running China at the upcoming Party congress. Hu's successor status has been clear from several steps over the past decade:

- At the Central Committee plenum immediately following the 14th Party Congress in 1992, presumably at the behest of Deng Xiaoping, Hu was given a seat on the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee, the key decision-making body among the top leadership. Hu had not previously served on the Politburo. His only previous service in central institutions had been as first secretary of the Communist Youth League in the mid-1980s, preceding postings as Party chief in Guizhou and then in Tibet. In the latter post, he rarely appeared in Lhasa, and in the year before the 1992 Party congress, he was reportedly in Beijing assisting Jiang Zemin in the process of selecting candidates nominated for the new Central Committee.
- Hu was also appointed in 1992 to the Party Secretariat, the key body that coordinates implementation of Politburo decisions in the Party, and other institutions of China's political system. On the Secretariat, Hu served as the body's executive secretary, aiding Jiang in running the Party apparatus, a role that enabled Hu to begin to establish network of personal ties throughout the Party. In that capacity, Hu also managed the process of selecting candidates for the Central Committee elected at the 15th Party Congress in 1997.
- In 1993, Hu was appointed president of the Central Party School, which trains rising Party leaders, giving Hu a further opportunity to establish ties within the Party. In presiding over the Central Party School, Hu has been aided by Executive Vice President Zheng Bijian—a liberal Party theoretician and former personal secretary to Party General Secretaries Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang in the 1980s. Under Hu's leadership, the Central Party School in the 1990s emerged as an important arena of intra-Party debate over major questions concerning the Party, including political reform of the Party itself.
- At the 1997 15th Party Congress, Hu was re-elected to the Politburo Standing Committee, moving up from seventh-ranking member to fifth.
- At the Ninth National People's Congress (NPC) in 1998, Hu was appointed PRC vice president, making him the second-ranking leader in China's state protocol behind PRC President Jiang Zemin. In that role, Hu could begin to establish greater international visibility than had been the case when he was exclusively a Party leader. He began more routinely to meet visiting foreign state leaders and tour foreign countries as a Chinese state leader. Since 1998, Hu has toured

H. Lyman Miller is associate professor of history, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School; research fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University; and general editor of the Hoover Institution's **China Leadership Monitor** *(www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org).*

extensively, including high-profile trips through Russia and Europe in 2001 and his visit to Washington in the spring this year.
- In 1999, Hu was appointed vice chairman of the Party Central Military Commission, second only to Chairman Jiang Zemin.

Although Hu Jintao has never been explicitly named successor to Jiang Zemin, his steady ascent close to the very top of China's political system bespeaks a clear and coordinated effort over the past ten years to prepare him to do so.

Institutionalizing Succession in China's Politics

Leadership succession has long been recognized as the Gordian knot in communist political systems. No major communist country has succeeded in planning the orderly succession of a new top leader to replace a retiring aging one. Instead, leadership succession has universally triggered by the death of the paramount leader or his outright removal at the hands of conspiring peers, prompting sometimes ferocious power struggles among competing successors.

The PRC's record up through much of the Deng Xiaoping era has been typical in this respect. Both of Mao Zedong's designated successors, Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao, fell afoul of the power struggles during the Cultural Revolution. The authority of his actual successor, the previously little known Hua Guofeng, unraveled almost immediately, leading to his loss of control over the Party agenda to Deng Xiaoping in less than two years and his formal replacement by Hu Yaobang as Party chairman in 1981.

Even while establishing himself as paramount leader in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Deng, already in his late 70s, chose not to occupy the top formal posts in China's Party and state hierarchies himself. Instead, he delegated these positions to younger lieutenants whose commitment to his reform agenda would ensure policy continuation as he passed from the scene. The first of these, Hu Yaobang, became Party general secretary in 1980, but he was nevertheless removed from that position amid a leadership battle over "bourgeois liberalization" in 1987. Deng's replacement for Hu, Zhao Ziyang, lasted as general secretary for only two years and fell from power amid the leadership split attending the Tiananmen crisis in 1989. Deng's third attempt was to designate the top Party leader to Jiang Zemin, who was installed as general secretary in June 1989 and who succeeded in retaining his post despite Deng's passing in 1997.

Hu's planned succession to Jiang is arguably the centerpiece of a comprehensive effort by Deng Xiaoping to institutionalize China's leadership politics into stable, predictable routines and to establish procedures for orderly retirement of leaders and for promotion of their replacements. Deng's persistence in this respect underscores the fundamental differences between his agenda as paramount leader and Mao Zedong's.

For Mao, the foremost object of CCP rule was China's social transformation according to his essentially Stalinist understanding of Marxist-Leninist ideals. In Mao's view, the CCP is an agent of continuing class warfare under Chinese socialism. Economic progress would follow from the Party's focus on class struggle. Institutions at best are temporary; at worst, they become obstacles in the way of society's advance toward communism, justifying their overthrow at the hands of an aroused proletariat and its allies. The institutions and orderly processes of the CCP itself could become corrupted by the privileges of power and status, in Mao's view, an evolution he sought to abort through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

For Deng Xiaoping, the foremost object of CCP rule was China's economic modernization under socialism. The fundamental role of the CCP, in Deng's view, was as a manager of modernization. In that regard, orderly institutional processes and organizational discipline were essential. Mao's inherent anti-institutionalism and the endless political struggles and turmoil it spawned during his years, in Deng's view, detracted from the effort to build China's prosperity and power and had to be prevented.

Therefore, Deng's agenda for institutionalizing leadership politics emerged at the very beginning of his time as paramount leader and characterized Chinese politics throughout his era. Most broadly, several emphases emerged:

- *Institutional proliferation*. Deng promoted the restoration of old institutions obliterated in the

Cultural Revolution and the creation of new ones suited to the tasks of China's economic modernization. The Party Secretariat was re-established in 1980 to coordinate systematic implementation of Politburo decisions. The Central Committee department structure was expanded to accommodate old and new roles. The National People's Congress system resumed normal patterns of operation, and a system of functional and procedural sub-committees was elaborated to facilitate processes of legislation aborted since the late 1950s. State Council ministries, commissions, and agencies proliferated as the Chinese state began increasingly to take over regulatory rather than revolutionary roles in China's economy and society. Provincial revolutionary committees created in the late 1960s were abolished in favor of restored provincial Party committees, people's congresses, and people's governments.

- *Regularization of institutional process.* Deng re-established orderly process to China's politics. The Party Central Committee resumed regular operation, meeting at least once a year as mandated by the Party constitution, in contrast to its sporadic convocation over the last 15 years of Mao's leadership. The NPC resumed annual sessions in 1979, and its Standing Committee resumed regular meetings through the course of the calendar year. Throughout the Deng and Jiang years, Party congresses and new NPCs have met fastidiously according to the five-year schedule stipulated by the Party and PRC constitutions. Both documents were themselves extensively revised in 1982 to incorporate Deng's emphasis on orderly institutional process. In conjunction with the restored routines of top Party and state institutions, processes of economic planning, budget review, and legislation drafting followed in step. More broadly, Mao's preferred mechanism of mass campaigns was abandoned in favor of routinized pursuit of regime goals through organizational processes.
- *Institutional discipline*. Regularization of institutional processes in turn mandated explicit stipulations and informal norms of leader and cadre behavior. The 1982 Party constitution strongly enunciated the obligations of Party members to organization discipline. Previously, in 1980, the Party adopted a lengthy code of cadre behavior. The personality cult around Mao Zedong was dismantled, and efforts to establish new leadership personality cults—as Hua Guofeng had attempted, by combing his hair like Mao's and publicizing "Quotations from Chairman Hua" in the Party newspaper *People's Daily*—were formally banned in 1980. The late-1950s project of establishing codes of socialist law was resumed, producing the PRC's first criminal code in 1979 and setting forth other categories of codes thereafter. The remnants of Lin Biao's clique and the "Gang of Four" were put on public trial in late 1980 and early 1981, as if to underscore that even the top leaders of the CCP itself were liable to the strictures of law. Meanwhile, under Deng's leadership a style of collective leadership gradually emerged under which leaders have maintained a consistent facade of public unity despite their undoubtedly profound private differences over policy and power, contrasting starkly with the open factionalism of the later Mao era.
- *Transformation of political discourse*. Under Deng Xiaoping, the language of politics changed. The jargon commending disorder, struggle, and class warfare evaporated from Chinese political discourse, as one by one the Maoist slogans of the Cultural Revolution era were explicitly discredited. In their place has emerged a discourse focused on stability, reform, and interest—all three of which were previously dirty words in the Marxist-Leninist lexicon.

In conjunction with these broader institutionalizing reforms, Deng took a number of steps with respect to leadership succession. These included:

- *Leadership term and age limits*. For top posts in the state hierarchy, the 1982 PRC constitution stipulated fixed limits of not more than two five-year terms for PRC president, NPC chairman, and State Council premier. Over the Deng era, mandatory retirement ages were established for a variety of state posts, such as ministers of the State Council. In the Party, no such term limits were established for top Party posts. But the 1982 Party constitution did specify that no leader is "entitled to lifelong tenure" and called on Party leaders to be ready to retire for reasons of age and ill health.

In the 1990s, an internal Party rule was adopted that, with the exception of the "core leader," requires candidates under consideration for Politburo appointment not exceed 70 years of age and that those on the Politburo older than 70 be prepared to retire at the next Party congress. Under this rule, all six leaders aged 70 or older on the Politburo and Secretariat (but excluding Jiang) did in fact retire at the 1997 Party congress, including then NPC Chairman Qiao Shi, who apparently sought to retain a high-level post.

- *Retirement of revolutionary veterans*. Deng pressed for the retirement of the generation of veteran revolutionaries who founded the CCP to which he and Mao both belonged. The 12th Party Congress in 1982 established a Party Central Advisory Commission to provide an institutional platform from which retiring veterans could continue to offer advice to younger leaders taking over day-to-day leadership roles. Although most top-level veterans did not move onto this new body in 1982, they did so soon after. At a national Party conference in 1985 and the 13th Party Congress in 1987, almost all of the revolutionary elders dropped off the Politburo, including Deng himself. Deng gave up his remaining posts as Party and state Central Military Commission chairman in 1989. The younger leaders continued to defer to the revolutionary elders even after they left the Politburo. But with the attrition of that unique revolutionary generation, the authority of Party institutions became more firmly established.
- *Generational turnover*. In place of the retiring revolutionary generation, Deng promoted a younger "third generation" of leaders whose administrative careers and technical skills suited his policy agenda of modernization. These leaders, among whom Jiang Zemin was designated "core leader," consolidated their position at the top of China's political order at the 14th Party Congress in 1992 and the Eighth NPC in 1993. Compared to the 25 leaders installed on the Politburo around Deng Xiaoping at the 1982 Party congress, the group of 24 leaders appointed around Jiang Zemin at the 1997 Party congress were on average nine years younger. They included 17 who had university degrees—mostly in engineering—as opposed to none holding university degrees among the leaders around Deng in 1982. All had established their political careers after the 1949 revolution in the institutional hierarchies of the PRC itself; most hailed from, or had risen to prominence in, the coastal provinces associated with Deng's reforms. By contrast, 23 of the 25 leaders around Deng had been career revolutionaries, joining the CCP before the Long March.

What's at Stake at the 16th Party Congress

The institutionalizing reforms of the Deng era generally and the provisions Deng established with respect to leadership retirement and succession created a powerful set of precedents against which the actions of China's current leaders leading into the upcoming 16th Party Congress may be judged. In particular:

- Hu Jintao's decade-long preparation for succession as "core leader" of an emerging fourth generation of top leaders at the upcoming 16th Party Congress is the centerpiece of Deng's attempt to crack the hard nut of institutionalized, orderly leadership succession. Jiang is constitutionally mandated to step down as PRC president at the 10th NPC next year. No Party stipulation mandates his stepping down as Party general secretary at any point, and Deng's own retention of the post of Central Military Commission chairman after leaving the Politburo also provides a limited precedent for Jiang to retain that post for some time. But Deng's efforts, implicit media treatment of Hu Jintao, and comments by PRC leaders—including Jiang himself—to foreign visitors have created the expectation he will step down as Party and state leader and eventually as Central Military Commission chairman.
- On the basis of the precedents created by Deng and the internal Party rule regarding retirement from the Politburo at age 70, 10 current members of the Politburo—including NPC Chairman Li Peng and Premier Zhu Rongji—in addition to Jiang are slated to retire in favor of younger fourth generation leaders, along with Hu Jintao. Over the past year, some of these leaders have strongly hinted that they expect to retire.

Recent rumors reported in the Hong Kong and foreign press, however, assert that Jiang is balking at his pending retirement. If true, the reasons for Jiang's hesitation may only be speculated about thus far: second thoughts about waning political influence after retirement; mounting concern over the evidently deep-seated resistance to his "Three Represents" strategy of sustaining Party power by co-opting emerging economic, technical, and social elites; a tactical effort to gain higher positions for his cronies in exchange for his retirement; concern about uncertainties in the international environment; or all of these and others together.

If, in the end, Jiang does not retire as Party general secretary and perhaps as Central Military Commission chairman, his actions will constitute a severe blow to the progress of institutionalizing politics in China that Deng attempted to foster and from which Jiang personally benefited.

- Hu's failure to succeed Jiang will appear the product of the kind of power struggle that has always been the case in communist systems everywhere. Jiang will increasingly look like "China's Brezhnev," and he will appear less as the leader who took Deng's institutionalizing agenda beyond what Deng himself could accomplish. The aborted succession at the 16th Party Congress will stand as powerful evidence that China's politics are not nearly as stable as hoped and invite renewed, and perhaps lasting doubts among Chinese and foreigners alike.
- In addition, Jiang's hesitancy to retire at the upcoming 16th Party Congress will invite other leaders to propose their continued active service instead of retirement. Zhu Rongji, for example, might point out that he has served only a single term as premier and is eligible to serve another. Li Peng might find support for a new term on the Politburo among conservative members of the Party rank and file who oppose the "Three Represents" transformation of the Party.

From the longer perspective of the evolution of China's political order from personal to institutional rule over the past two decades, the political stakes at the 16th Party Congress are high. The Congress may well turn out to be a critical turning point in the long-term fortunes of the CCP.

Jiang's Last Card: Empowering the National Party Congress?

GANG LIN

Leadership transition in China is less transparent and more unpredictable than that in liberal democracies.[1] In the absence of political transparency ordinary people living in China can talk only covertly about the upcoming leadership transition, in contrast to the fevered speculations among China watchers outside the mainland over the past year or so.[2] Because of Jiang's core position among Party leaders, discussion of China's leadership transition has inevitably focused on whether Jiang will retire from his current positions, with two principal scenarios dominating the speculations. One popular prediction of Jiang's future role in Chinese politics is the "non-retirement" scenario. Under such a scenario, General Secretary Jiang, while maintaining his position as chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), would also continue to serve as Party boss, either by retaining his current title, or resurrecting and assuming the post of the Party chairmanship while yielding the devalued general secretaryship to Hu Jintao. Another popular prediction is the "half-retirement" scenario, i.e., Jiang would cling to his military leadership while giving up other Party positions. It is argued that Jiang could easily follow the precedent of Deng Xiaoping, who resigned from the Politburo in 1987 but continued to serve as CMC chairman until 1989. Even if Jiang gives the CMC chairmanship to Hu, observers note that he could remain *de facto* military chief, just as the late Deng did between 1989 and 1994.[3]

This essay argues that Jiang is more likely to transfer all his *current* posts to Hu than he is to retain some of them. Regardless of Jiang's personal desires, he is constrained by institutional rules (formal and informal) and unwritten norms developed in the 1990s. This does not mean that Jiang will completely lose his political influence after the 16th National Party Congress in November 2002. For one thing, Jiang's idea of the "Three Represents" will be enshrined in the Party constitution by the 16th Congress, serving as a new ideological guideline for the Party. Moreover, Jiang might very well find a new institutional base for himself, which will serve to dilute Hu's authority and ensure a gradual transfer of power over a number of years. One possible option for Jiang is to empower the National Party Congress by upgrading it from an "electoral college" and a rubber stamp for endorsing revisions to the Party constitution into an ultimate decision-making body. After all, in every political system the elite always has the option of innovating institutions to better achieve its interests.

Institutional Constraints—Significance of Informal Rules and Unwritten Norms

Although no specific regulation on the term limit of Party general secretary and CMC chairman has been written into the Party constitution, informal rules may be at work. As the government positions of president, State Council premier and National People's Congress (NPC) chairman are all subject to a two-term limit constitutionally, the Party probably also has an informal rule or unwritten norm about the term limit of its top posts. In fact, since the end of the Cultural Revolution, no Party leader or military head has ever stayed in his office after two full terms.[4] Jiang would not be likely to break this precedent and undermine Deng Xiaoping's previous efforts to abolish the lifetime term of office for Party leaders. Breaking the precedent would also damage Jiang's image as a reformer in PRC history, not to mentioning provoke a possible reaction within the Party.

Another institutional constraint on Jiang's ambition comes from an informal age limit for Party and government officials. While this rule is more strictly practiced at the provincial/ministerial level than the higher level, the retirement of Qiao Shi from the Standing Committee of the Party's Politburo and the chairmanship of the NPC in his seventies following the 15th National Party Congress in 1997

has set a precedent that Jiang is expected to follow. In fact, strict adherence to this rule on the age for retirement would have required Jiang to resign from his posts too following the same Congress five years ago. He was then exempted because he held the preeminent position in the Party. At the age of 76, if Jiang wants to continue as an exception, he is likely to confront strong opposition within the Party and encourage other veterans to follow his example and remain on the Politburo's Standing Committee—thereby creating new tension between the third and fourth generation leaders.

Moreover, if Jiang retains his general secretaryship and CMC chairmanship while giving up the presidency, the new president would have to adjust his role in state affairs and redefine his relations with the general secretary as well as with the premier. Institutionally, the PRC presidency has been greatly empowered since 1993 by the present arrangement, in which Jiang occupies a trinity of positions and thereby serves as "core leader." Around him, the other two top Party leaders in 1993, Li Peng and Qiao Shi, concurrently served as premier and NPC chairman. This 1993 institutional innovation—or, to be more precise, restoration of early practice in PRC history—has been conceptualized as "anchoring Party leadership to the government" (*yu dang yu zheng, or jiandang yu zheng*).[5] The Ninth NPC in 1998 followed this unwritten norm, with General Secretary Jiang retaining the presidency, Li obtaining the NPC chairmanship, and Zhu Rongji taking the premiership.

"Anchoring Party leadership to the government" by having the top Party leaders serve in the top government positions is consistent with the Party's tradition and ruling principle. After establishment of the PRC, Party Chairman Mao Zedong concurrently served as the state head from 1949 to 1959. Party Vice Chairman Liu Shaoqi served as NPC chairman between 1954 and 1959, and Zhou Enlai, another vice chairman of the Party, retained the premiership of the State Council until he died in 1976. One of the most dramatic institutional changes in the history of the PRC was the abolition of the state presidency during the Cultural Revolution, a period when government offices were overwhelmingly replaced by "revolutionary committees" or "Party core groups" (*dang de hexin xiaozu*) in the name of enhancing the Party's unitary leadership (*yiyuanhua lingdao*). Consequently, the premiership became the most influential of government positions. Since 1993, however, the state presidency has resumed its supreme status over the premiership within the government because it has been held by General Secretary Jiang.

"Separating the Party from the government" (*dangzheng fenkai*) was once an important norm, but it has been rarely mentioned since 1990. Practice of this norm can be traced to 1959 when Mao gave the PRC presidency to Liu Shaoqi and maintained Party and CMC chairmanships himself. With this arrangement, Mao remained the paramount leader on the "second front," while Liu, as the Party's number two leader, took care of day-to-day state affairs on the "first front"—an institutional design and precedent that probably inspired Deng's reform blueprint of Party-government separation proposed in the 1980s. However, the uneasy relationship between Mao and Liu ended up with Liu's dismissal as president during the Cultural Revolution. Because of the institutional tension between Party chairman and PRC president, as well as Mao's inability to serve as state head for more than two terms, the abolition of the state presidency became his best choice. This was why Lin Biao's attempt to restore the presidency only made Mao more suspicious of his own designated successor and contributed to Lin's sudden downfall in 1971. Despite Deng's efforts to separate the Party's role from that of government, it is in fact difficult to draw a fine line between the two institutions. Functional ambiguity between the Party and the government created power conflicts between the Party general secretary and the premier throughout the 1980s. This institutional friction has changed considerably since the state presidency was attached to the general secretaryship in 1993.

According to past experience and lessons, if the presidency is once again detached from the general secretaryship, it is likely to create new institutional tension as well as power conflicts between Jiang and Hu Jintao, should Jiang continue to cling to his current two key positions in the Party and military. Interestingly, periods in which one core leader assumed all three positions—the 1950s and the 1990s—were notable for relative lack of political tension. Thus from the perspective of "path dependency," which emphasizes the impact of past choice

on current institutions, it seems more likely that the Chinese elite will continue to follow the informal norm of "anchoring Party leadership to the government." To change current norms appears at odds with the Party's goals of realizing institutionalization, standardization and procedural formalization (*zhiduhua, guifanhua, chengxuhua*) of socialist democratic politics, as Jiang stressed in his May 31, 2002 speech. In fact, there are no signs in Chinese media and official speeches indicating Beijing is going to resurrect the norm of "separating the Party from the government," which would be useful to justify Jiang's clinging to the general secretaryship without the presidency after the 16th Party Congress.

It might look easier for Jiang to retain the CMC chairmanship than the general secretaryship, making the "half-retirement" scenario more credible than the "non-retirement" one. Proponents of the "half-retirement" scenario assume that military leadership is the core of political power in China, and that it is most difficult to transfer military power from one leader to another. They also perceive China's military power structure as a unique kingdom independent from civil institutions and norms, operated strictly by the rules of discipline, hierarchy, seniority, war experience and long-time personal ties. However, Jiang's retaining the CMC chairmanship alone would be obviously at odds with the basic principle of "the Party commands the gun," in addition to breaking informal rules on the age limit and the unwritten norms on the term limit for Party leaders. Except for the period between 1981 and 1989, when Deng served as CMC chairman without taking the Party's top post, the CMC chairmanship has been closely attached to the Party's supreme leadership in PRC history (e.g., Mao between 1949 and 1976, Hua Guofeng between 1976 to 1981, and Jiang from 1989 on). It will be difficult for Jiang to gain acceptance for following Deng's precedent. Deng's prestige among the military men came from his longtime revolutionary wartime experience. By contrast, Jiang does not have that kind of personal prestige, and his connections with the army began only when he took up the CMC chairmanship after he became Party general secretary.[6] Leadership consolidation and the continued process toward military professionalism during the 1990s have reshaped civil-military relations, making it more difficult for Jiang to maintain military power after two terms of service.

Although Chinese politics is still incompletely institutionalized, informal rules and unwritten norms nevertheless constrain Jiang in his efforts to cling to his current posts. Unlike Deng who could maintain his paramount leadership without any formal positions after 1989, Jiang must search for a new institutional base for himself if he wants to maintain his influence after the 16th Party Congress.

Searching for a New Institutional Base—Party Congress Empowered

Jiang Zemin clearly is reluctant to relinquish power completely, having dropped no hints this year that he will retire at the 16th National Party Congress.[7] Such an unusual silence does not suggest that there will be a clear-cut leadership transition from the third to fourth generation. While the official media in China has spotlighted members of new leadership—including Hu Jintao, Zeng Qinghong, Wen Jiabao and Luo Gan—in recent months, it has kept from using the term "fourth generation leaders" since the beginning of this year, suggesting an intermediate political framework accommodating both the third and fourth generations might be under consideration. There are also hints that Jiang is searching for a new power platform created through institutional innovation (*zhidu chuangxin*).

Institutional innovation is a term first endorsed by Jiang in his speech during ceremonies of the 80th anniversary of the CCP on July 1, 2001. The term has gained popularity in China's official speeches and academic discourse since then. The Party elite is trying to appear reform-minded while sustaining its rule by developing new institutions from inside the old system. In terms of political reform, they now apparently seek to develop "within-Party democracy" (*dangnei minzhu*) through the strengthening of the existent institutions of Party congresses and Party committees at central and local levels. This idea is fully elaborated in a book entitled *A Great Platform for Party Construction in the New Century—Instruction to Studying General Secretary Jiang Zemin's July 1 Speech*, co-authored by theorists and professors in the Central Party School. Some of the book's main arguments are as follows:

- To improve the Party Congress system is fundamental to developing democratic centralism

within the Party. The Party Congress system should be as essential to the Party as the NPC system is to the state.

- At any given level, the Party Congress is the most important body, with power to decide crucial issues (*zhongda shiwu*) and supervise other Party organizations.
- The Party Congress should convene annual meetings, just as the NPC has done.
- Meeting regulations and operation procedures must be improved to ensure good discussion at the Party Congress.
- The Party Committee should make policies according to decisions made by the Party Congress at the same level, and upon instructions given by the Party Committee at a higher level.[8]

These viewpoints from inside the prestigious Central Party School look more like policy proposals or marching signals than mere academic discussion. As a matter of fact, by the end of 2001 the Party's Organization Department had selected ten counties nationwide as trial spots where Party congresses convened annually rather than once every five years.[9]

The 16th National Party Congress will probably endorse these arguments and experiments through revising the Party constitution. One of China's official journals, *Outlook Weekly*, recently published an article on Party constitutional revision that argues that the organization system of the Party consists of two basic institutions, congresses and committees, at different levels, but that Party history has been inconsistent as to whether the Congress should convene once every five years (*dingqizhi*) or once a year (*lianhuizhi*), and whether the Congress should have standing bodies (*changrenzhi*).[10] Mention of such institutional possibilities in an article related to Party constitutional revision at such a critical moment suggests that some people within the Party would like to strengthen the role of the National Party Congress.

If the National Party Congress, an "electoral college" for selecting the Central Committee and a "rubber stamp" for endorsing Party constitutional revision, were to transform itself into the "highest decision-making organ," it could provide a new institutional platform for Jiang Zemin and other third generation leaders. In the past, delegates to the Party Congress have elected its presidium at the opening of the meetings and voted for the new Central Committee on the last day. As soon as the Central Committee is elected, both the Congress and the presidium are dismissed. If the 16th Party Congress is to convene its annual meetings in the future, its presidium will likely become a standing body, good for five years, rather than for several days. According to precedent, key members (*changwu weiyuan*) of the presidium to the Party Congress usually consist of a couple dozen top Party leaders (including the retired, incumbent and forthcoming leaders), led by the incumbent Party general secretary. Thus, if the National Party Congress is empowered, Jiang may hope he could legitimately remain "the first among the equals" within the presidium for another five years, even if he resigns from all his current positions. In this way, he can legitimately keep his status as the supreme leader of the Party at least in name, especially during the meeting periods of the National Party Congress, without breaking precedent and undermining the expected process of smooth leadership transition in an institutionalized way. Other third generation leaders may also find the new presidium an appropriate post for them to maintain their influence for a number of years, probably better than the outmoded Central Advisory Commission that was abolished ten years ago.

It is too early to predict whether the Party elite will empower the National Party Congress and reach a consensus on how to redefine a new relationship between the National Party Congress and the Party's Central Committee. Such an institutional innovation would involve a redistribution of power among the Party elite, especially between the third and fourth generations, and may require some new institutional arrangements between the National Party Congress and the Central Committee. If past experience is instructive, we should not expect a clear-cut power transfer from third to fourth generation leaders. Some sort of intermediate arrangement in the form of institutional innovation may serve to reduce the shock of leadership transition in China, and gradually ease the veteran incumbents off the center stage of Chinese politics.

Conclusion

In the absence of free and competitive elections, leadership transition in China is likely to entail great compromise between different generations or result in serious political conflict and chaos. It is not unlikely that Jiang and other third generation leaders are inclined to immortalize their political power, but their intentions are constrained by previous institutional norms and challenged by young leaders who are keen to get out of the shadow. The likely-empowered National Party Congress, even though it is to be convened only once a year and is not comparable to the *de facto* power organs, the Central Committee and its Politburo, may serve as a buffer to render more gradual the leadership transition in China. In view of the Party's current organization system, its stability-first mentality, and its advocacy for within-Party democracy, such an institutional innovation seems a likely choice for the Chinese elite at this historical juncture of leadership transition.

Endnotes

1. This author would like to thank my colleagues, Robert M. Hathaway, Amy McCreedy, and Wilson Lee, for their comments on the earlier version of this essay. Views expressed here are of the author only.

2. For example of earlier discussion of China's political succession, see Gang Lin, ed., *Asia Program Special Report: China's Political Succession and Its Implications for the United States* (Woodrow Wilson Center, June 2001).

3. Deng resigned from his post as CMC chairman in fall 1989, together with his membership on the Central Committee of the CCP. However, Deng remained influential in military as well as national affairs in the early 1990s. Deng did not die until 1997, but he uncharacteristically failed to appear on Chinese TV during the Spring Festival of 1995, a significant sign of his fading from the Chinese political stage.

4. After Mao, Hua Guofeng served as chairman for the Party and the CMC between 1976 and 1981. Deng served as CMC chairman from 1981 to 1989. Hu Yaobang first worked as Party chairman from 1981 to 1982, then as Party general secretary from 1982 to 1987. Zhao Ziyang failed to finish his term as general secretary. Jiang took these two positions from Zhao and Deng in 1989, and his two full terms are supposed to end with the 16th National Party Congress.

5. Zhu Guanglei, *Dangdai Zhongguo Zhengfu Guocheng <Process of Government in Contemporary China>* (Tianjin, China: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe<Tainjin People's Press>, 1997), 77.

6. When Deng first introduced Jiang as the new CMC chairman to the Party elite in 1989, he said that Jiang would become a good chairman because he had been a good general secretary.

7. John Pomfret, "Chinese Leader Throws a Curve: Jiang's Reluctance to Retire Could Spark Power Struggle," *Washington Post*, July 21, 2002, A1.

8. Wang Changjiang, et. al., *Xinshiji Dang de Jianshe de Weida Gangling—Xuexi Jiang Zemin Zongshuji Qiyi Jianghua Fudao <Great Platform for Party Construction in the New Century—Instruction to Studying General Secretary Jiang Zemin's July 1 Speech>* (Beijing: Central Party School Press, 2001), 126-31.

9. Li Wenzhong, "*Guanyu Gaige Dangwei 'Yixing Heyi' Lingdao Tizhi de Sikao*"<On Reforming the Leading System of "Combining Executive and Legislative Functions into One Organ" within Party Committees>, *Tizhi Gaige <Institutional Reform>* (Beijing), No. 4., 2002, 29.

10. *Xinhuanet* (Beijing), July 26, 2002; *United Daily* (Taiwan), July 25, 2002.

Chinese Factional Politics under Jiang

LOWELL DITTMER

This brief outline of the factional dimension of political life under Jiang Zemin, focusing on preparations for the forthcoming 16th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) scheduled for November 2002, will consist of three sections.[1] In the first, by way of historical background, we summarize the development of elite factionalism in the CCP, attempting to explicate both the enduring structure of factional organization and how it has varied from the Mao era to the Jiang Zemin period. Second, we introduce the main political actors and informal networks of the Jiang era and observe how they seem to be pursuing their respective ends. Finally, we attempt to draw some tentative conclusions about the impact of the current factional balance on China's forthcoming 16th Party Congress and the country's leadership succession.

Background

The research on the internal structure of the faction in China is remarkably consistent in its findings: the faction is hierarchically organized, based on revolutionary seniority. It is essentially a face-to-face group built upon dyadic patron-client ties; attempts to extend factional allegiance across space (as in forming a nation-wide network) or time (as in inheriting a factional constituency from a deceased patron), though sometimes successful, risk a high rate of defections. The faction is dependent on the formal organizational structure within which it resides, for recruits and incentives. It is relatively independent from ideology, operating in a world of realpolitik based on the unsentimental quest for power. Yet the faction's relationship to both formal organization and ideology is quite variable, as we shall see below. Whereas there is considerable scholarly consensus concerning how factions are organized, about the relationship among elite factions there has been some controversy: Andrew Nathan believes there is a code of civility among factions based on a balance of power; Tang Tsou saw factional relations as a "game to win all or to lose all."

Factionalism during the Mao era, when the revolutionary flame still burned brightly, was animated by political ideas: by contending policy "lines," ultimately organized around ideological world-views. The public discourse about factionalism was ideological even when it concerned personal idiosyncrasies. The desire to wear the formal Chinese slit skirt or cheongsam (*qipao*) on diplomatic occasions, to cite one celebrated example, was considered evidence of a bourgeois class nature, and the correlation between class and morality was perfect. Thus wives could divorce their husbands, and children could abandon and betray their parents, in the name of these abstract principles. The two countervailing principles at stake during this period were "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" (the position championed by Mao Zedong and his minions), and rapid economic development based on pragmatic eclecticism (as allegedly endorsed by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who were condemned by Mao as the "top Party persons in authority taking a capitalist road"). Though there could be confusing departures from the ideologically prescribed policy "line" over time, these could be understood to be tactical feints (by the "bourgeois reactionaries") or dogged pursuit (by the "proletarian revolutionaries"). Elite representatives of the defeated classes had wormed their way into the CCP, and struggle of varying intensity was assumed to be constant, culminating in periodic purges in which all the negative aspects of the past several years of political reality were blamed on the victim. Yet while factions were thought to be bonded by ideas, it was implicitly assumed that social intimacy also played a role—an assumption manifest in the tendency to suspect everyone previously associated with the victim, as if crimes spread epidemiologically (Indeed there was growing empirical evidence that there was indeed a tendency to involve family members in factional causes, as in the recruitment of spousal support by Mao, Liu Shaoqi, and Lin Biao). Concerning the question of relations between factions, certainly

Lowell Dittmer is professor of political science, University of California at Berkeley, and editor of **Asian Survey.**

there were repeated fights in which one faction prevailed decisively, but this tended to be followed by the fragmentation of the winning group and renewed factionalism (e.g., the Mao vs. Liu split was replaced by a Mao vs. Lin split, then a "Gang of Four" vs. Zhou Enlai-Deng split).

Factionalism did not vanish during the Deng Xiaoping era, but it underwent several important changes. Although there was an ideological dimension to the arrest and trial of the "Gang of Four" (in 1976 and 1981, respectively), and then again in the Deng vs. Hua Guofeng split (viz., eclectic pragmatism vs. rigid adherence to Mao's Thought), the elimination of Hua and his followers was followed by an ideological consensus around reform and opening. This did not mark the end of factional splits, but factions were henceforth organized around policy goals and bureaucratic interests rather than ideology. Thus the issue of rapid reform (e.g., price reform, privatization) vs. more gradual reform pitted those supporting the agricultural sector in a broad sense (including township and village enterprises) against a coalition of central planners, the state enterprises, and the propaganda department. This factional split culminated in a confrontation at Tiananmen in which the more cautious reformers prevailed decisively over the "liberal" faction, whose leader Zhao Ziyang was purged and placed under house arrest. But with few exceptions (the "Gang of Four," Zhao Ziyang), the factional atmosphere in the reform era was marked by greater civility. Factional rivalries (e.g., between Deng and Chen Yun) were quietly tolerated, losing faction leaders were not publicly blamed for ideological deviations, and confrontations were typically followed by retirement of the losers to comfortable if not influential positions. Yet although factional positions were now more closely correlated with bureaucratic interests and policy preferences, ironically the gap between informal and formal organization widened under Deng: due in large part to Deng's ambivalence about his own retirement, a shadow elite of senior retired officials was created ready to intercede in an emergency and if necessary (as in the decision to crack down on the Tiananmen demonstrators in spring 1989) to trump the decisions of the formal authorities.

Jiang Zemin has defined himself a legatee of Deng Xiaoping's policies as well as Deng's successor, and many of the trends inaugurated under Deng have indeed continued. The code of civility has been further extended to opposing faction leaders, who have been permitted to disagree discreetly with the majority faction, and to retire honorably without ideological recrimination if kicked out of the leadership.[2] Thus we find, for example, that former PRC President Yang Shangkun was not ideologically "branded" or placed under house arrest following his ouster at the 14th Party Congress in 1992 but continued to be politically active until his demise, and that former National People's Congress (NPC) Chairman Qiao Shi, despite his involuntarily retirement at the 15th Congress in 1997, continued to tour the country giving speeches and even now serves as a member of the Preparatory Committee for the 16th Congress.

Despite Jiang's claims to be faithfully continuing Deng Xiaoping's legacy, factionalism has assumed at least two distinctive features in the Jiang era. First, the gap between informal and formal organization that opened to such alarming dimensions during the Deng era has been to a large extent closed. The "sitting committee" of retired senior veterans, willing to return to active leadership whenever duty called, has been all but eliminated—first by Jiang's skillfully emollient handling of these eminences grises, and second by the fact that most of them finally proceeded to die off. And in contrast to Deng, who retired from formal positions while continuing to exercise informal influence, Jiang has avidly pursued as many formal positions as possible in both Party and state hierarchies. While this presents its own problems when it comes to arranging leadership succession, as we shall see, it has helped to realign formal and informal power. Second, not only ideology, but also policy and bureaucratic interest seem to have disappeared as bases for factional organization. Factions are no longer identified with distinctive policy platforms; rather, competing factional maneuvers seem to be oriented exclusively around personnel issues—in a word, power. This is in part a result of the attainment of a greater sense of leadership consensus on the package of economic reform and political stability since the purge of Zhao Ziyang and his followers in 1989. The jockeying for position preparatory to the 16th Congress illustrates that elite factionalism has by no means disappeared, but the remarkable vacuum of policy disputes indi-

cates that factionalism is not tied to policy differences. The most prominent new operating criterion for factional organization is locational (e.g., the "Shanghai gang," the Communist Youth League clique, the Tsinghua clique), somewhat like partisan loyalties in South Korean politics.

Dramatis Personae

The identification of factions in the Jiang era is difficult precisely because there are no longer any ideological or policy splits to divide the leadership, meaning the number of potential factional directions is as large as the number of full members of the Politburo Standing Committee, plus those who have retained influence since their retirement (e.g., Qiao Shi, Deng Liqun, Bo Yibo). Some Politburo Standing Committee members, however, belong to the same faction, or refrain from factional affiliation. In any case, a working hypothesis is that in the Jiang era, there have been essentially four CCP elite factions: the "Shanghai gang," the "power" faction, the "old guard," and the Communist Youth League (CYL) clique.

The first and easily the largest faction, hence sometimes referred to in Beijing as the "mainstream faction" (*zhuliupai*), is the well-known "Shanghai gang," led of course by Jiang Zemin, with the energetic and capable support of Zeng Qinghong.[3] Zhu Rongji also belongs to the "Shanghai gang." Although Zhu and Jiang reportedly did not get along when both of them were serving as officials in Shanghai, and Zhu sometimes still disagrees with Jiang within Party councils (e.g., the Falun Gong issue), Zhu's fate seems to have converged with that of Jiang over time. Zhu's blunt way of expressing himself and his harsh discipline of subordinates (greatly admired by Western correspondents and by some Chinese) have made it difficult for him to cultivate his own faction, and in any case any association with Zhu has become something of a liability of late, as the hardships incurred by China's efforts at WTO compliance are blamed on Zhu. To be sure, there are a number of officials, particularly in the economic and financial ministries, who owe him their promotions, and Zhu has defended them from attack. In mid-2001, when Li Peng, in his position as the head of Standing Committee of the NPC, submitted a recommendation to the Politburo to conduct corruption and incompetence investigations into several key ministries, implicating Zhu's men Li Rongrong (State Economic and Trade Commission) and Dai Xianglong (Bank of China), Zhu refused, citing internal State Council investigations as the proper venue. It has also become clear that Zhu tried to protect now arrested Construction Bank of China President Wang Xuebing from prior corruption and mismanagement investigations. There have also been several waves of organized attacks bordering on elite struggle on Zhu as an individual politician rather than head of a faction.

Closely allied to the "Shanghai gang" is the "power" faction (no pun intended), including Luo Gan, Wu Bangguo, Qian Qichen, Jiang Chunyun, Li Tieying (all are Politburo members), Wang Liping, and He Chunlin. This group of Beijing central bureaucrats, many of whom were associated with Li Peng in the Ministry of Electric Power, has lost strength in the past several years, partly due to the death of many senior officials who had supported Li Peng, partly because Li and his family have come under a cloud of suspicion for corruption. Many members of this group—e.g., Luo Gan, Wu Bangguo, Qian Qichen, Li Tieying—also bear some allegiance to Jiang, though they have little to do with Shanghai. This group nevertheless has its distinct agenda—for example, it is reportedly this group, not Hu Jintao or the old guard, which has repeatedly blocked the promotion of Zeng Qinghong to full membership in the Politburo.

The old guard is the only faction in Chinese leadership politics that is still informed by an ideological propensity, in addition to being generationally defined. These two criteria are however mutually reinforcing: these are second generation veterans who see themselves as representing the ancient verities of the revolutionary leadership, before the correct line was confused and sullied by myriad economically expedient adjustments. Yet there is a subtle split among them between those who embrace Deng's ideas and those who criticize Deng (as well as Jiang) from a leftist or neo-Maoist perspective. The boldest and most articulate leader of the left is Deng Liqun, the "underground Party secretary," but it also includes the elderly Song Ping (former Politburo Standing Committee member, who is personally close to Deng), Bo Yibo (former vice director of the Central Advisory Commission),

Wan Li (former NPC chairman), Wang Hanbing (former NPC vice chairman), Song Renqiong (former vice director of the Central Advisory Commission), and Generals Hong Xuezhi and Chen Xilian. Though they were articulate critics of Jiang's ideological innovations, the closure of two of their journals in 1999 forced this group, most of whom are in any case retired, into more discrete opposition.

In the post-Tiananmen period Jiang was the old guard's favorite son, thanks to his tough but smart handling of the Shanghai protests and his staunch defense of Deng's crackdown against domestic and international critics. Peng Zhen (former NPC chairman) and Bo Yibo rallied the old guard to support Jiang during the potentially risky transition period after Deng Xiaoping's death. Up to that time, some of these same people had been vocally critical of the direction Jiang was taking the Party and the nation, including the leaders of the left wing (Song Renqiong, Deng Liqun, Chen Xilian, and former Beijing Party Secretary Li Ximing) who implied that Jiang was deviating from Deng's line. Around February 1997 Yang Shangkun also made some pointed remarks about corruption and elitism in the Party and military and the need for political reform, which were retracted from further dissemination by the Central Secretariat. Interestingly, in the summer of 1999, the old leftists, spearheaded by Deng Liqun, launched a criticism of Deng Xiaoping's preoccupation with economics, praising Jiang by comparison for bringing ideology and politics to the fore in his "Three Emphases"(*san jiang*) campaign. This is an indication that the old leftists had been basically defeated if not co-opted by Jiang by that time. In a heated debate over reassessing Mao's legacy at a Party History Work Conference in December 1999, Qiao Shi, Wan Li, Geng Biao, and Huang Hua, called for an all-out criticism of Mao, counterattacking the left by implication, while Deng Liqun and Song Ping insisted that Mao's place should not be subject to re-evaluation. Jiang intervened, and reportedly said "The debate should not continue … Let's leave it to the fourth generation to discuss and study … For twenty years, [this debate] has formed a most divisive and heated point of contention within the Party. The debate will continue into the next century, and still might not arrive at a consensus."[4]

On the issue of retirement, a policy they had staunchly resisted when Deng Xiaoping initiated it in the 1980s (but ultimately complied with), the seniors have been generally critical of any attempt by Jiang to exempt himself. True, in 1997, Bo Yibo provided the original pretext for Jiang, as the third generation leadership "core," not to step down along with Qiao Shi (as Qiao himself had suggested) because he was beyond the retirement age of 70. But Jiang accepted Bo's advice selectively. During and after the August 1997 Beidaihe preparatory session for the 15th Party Congress, Bo Yibo and Wan Li also repeatedly suggested that Jiang relinquish his post as state president to Qiao Shi, arguing that the roles of leading the Party and the state should be kept separate *(dang zheng fenkai)* to "preserve the health of our leader." This proposal was seconded by Wu Xueqian, Ye Xuanping, Hong Xuezhi, Xie Fei, and many other leading officials in the NPC and CPPCC—but it went nowhere. To the spring 2002 rumors of Jiang's campaign to retain the leadership of the Party, the old guard reportedly reacted with consternation. More surprising than Qiao Shi's opposition is the fact that he should still be free to voice it, a tribute to post-Mao elite liberalization. Senior veteran Deng Liqun distributed a letter in January in which he opposed the concept of lifetime tenure in office, consistent with his longstanding opposition to the "Three Represents."

In general, Jiang has tried to give the old guard "face," for example, by conferring on Yang Shangkun, Wan Li, Bo Yibo, and Song Ping the honorary post of "personnel advisors" for the 15th Party Congress, giving them considerable leverage over key appointments. The remaining old timers have been recalled once more to constitute an "advisory group" of the Preparatory Committee of the 16th Party Congress, though their actual influence is unclear. Notably for this group, Jiang intends Liu Huaqing and Song Ping to serve as his main backers due to their influence in the military and Party systems, respectively. However, since most members of the old guard have passed away or receded in active political involvement by the end of 1990s, they are not likely to have much influence over the outcome of the 16th Party Congress.

Hu Jintao has a latent constituency rather than a faction, for he identifies himself punctiliously with the Jiang Zemin "core," although he has never been

counted a member of the Shanghai faction. Hu does have his own political network. Hu's quasi-group consists of two categories of cadres: previous subordinates in the CYL, where Hu was first secretary, and former classmates at Tsinghua University (from which Hu graduated with a distinguished record). Beginning with the appointment of Li Keqiang as governor of Henan province, Hu's allies have become Party secretaries or deputy secretaries in Beijing and 15 other provinces, including Hainan, Shandong, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Guanxi, Jilin, Jiangsu and Fujian. The equation of rejuvenation and generational succession with "reform" has played to the advantage of the CYL group.[5] In addition to the CYL, the growing "Tsinghua gang," the largest "old school tie" group in the central elite, has an affinity for fellow alumnus Hu Jintao.

In addition to the four dominant factional groupings (the "Shanghai gang," the "power" faction, the old guard, and the CYL clique), there are two marginal leaders who have followers if not a clearly structured faction: Qiao Shi and Li Ruihuan. Qiao no longer holds any formal leadership position but he was retired without prejudice and still retains a certain influence, particularly in the legal bureaucracies he once dominated. The remnant sympathizers of Qiao Shi include Wei Jianxing, Ren Jianxin, Tian Jiyun, and Jia Chunwang. Though widely respected, Li Ruihuan is not a faction chief (factionally he might be considered a member of the CYL group, though he is senior to Hu Jintao). But Li has been emerging as a possible focus for rallying anti-Jiang forces, in much the same role as that played by Qiao between the 14th and 15th Congresses; in both instances, the opposition materialized in response to Jiang's attempts to aggrandize his power via various personnel manipulations. Li Ruihuan does not appear reluctant to play the role of political lightning rod, having openly criticized Jiang's "Three Represents" as well as more generally pointing out the corrupt state of Party life and the current regime's declining mass support. At the Politburo's "Year-End Conference on Work Summary of Democratic Life" in December 2000, Zeng Qinghong reportedly found six faults with Li Ruihuan. But instead of making a self-criticism, Li defended himself vigorously, and Ye Xuanping, former Guangdong Party boss and now Li Ruihuan's deputy at the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, came to his defense. Li Ruihuan also declined to chair the Preparatory Committee for the 10th NPC, effectively ruling himself out as successor to Li Peng and putting pressure on Jiang to retire with him. At the Politburo session "on democratic life" in August 2001, Jiang reportedly unleashed his followers—including Wu Bangguo, Huang Ju, Zeng Qinghong, Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, Wu Guanzheng, Luo Gan, and Li Tieying—to bombard Li with criticisms.

Generational Succession?

Factions consists of hierarchical networks that turn into political action groups in order to defend the perceived interests (real or ideal) of its members. As neither ideological nor policy cleavages have been permitted to emerge in the Jiang Zemin era, the dominant cleavage has been over personnel selection, a zero-sum choice that determines which group waxes and which wanes. In the absence of a Supreme Leader of the stature of Mao or Deng to mediate these issues, they are fought out visibly. The 16th Party Congress has been looked forward to since at least the 14th Congress as a major opportunity to satisfy various patronage needs, on the consensual understanding that this would be a "generational succession," not just from Jiang to Hu Jintao, but from the third to the fourth generation. Deng had been "core" of the second generation; he announced in 1989 that Jiang Zemin would be core of the third generation and decided in 1992 that Hu Jintao would be core of the fourth generation. To ensure generational turnover, Deng instituted a two-term limit for all government posts in the 1980s. At the 15th Congress in 1997 the rule was added that the Party, hitherto free of term limits, should adopt a retirement age limit. Qiao Shi reportedly had proposed a "three-tiered" age limit regulation—75 for Politburo Standing Committee members, 70 for Politburo members and secretaries of the Secretariat, and 65 for the remaining Central Committee members. Jiang, with Li Peng's support, devised an alternative "two-tier" regulation—65 for provincial and ministerial level cadres, and 70 for central leaders. In view of Jiang's age (then 71), at the Beidaihe preparatory sessions for the 15th Party Congress, Jiang's supporters Ding Guangen and Li Tieying (both are members of the Politburo) argued

against strict observance of the age limit for Politburo members. At this same conference, the decision to retire Qiao from all substantive posts was reached. Hu Jintao gave the official explanation and resolution for Qiao's retirement at the Ninth NPC.

The generational succession scenario, in which all but two of the Politburo Standing Committee members would step down in 2002, seemed on track after the Beidaihe preparatory meetings in the summer of 2001. Then in a series of meetings around the country starting in early January 2002, provincial Party leaders and leading military officials reportedly began calling on Jiang to stay on, for the sake of stability.[6] These calls were assumed to be orchestrated manifestations of loyalty by Jiang's beneficiaries, whose careers might be jeopardized if Hu stepped in with his own claim on patronage spoils. The first step was for Jiang to stay on as chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), which may have been tacitly accepted as early as January 2001 by dint of the Deng Xiaoping precedent. But Jiang's military supporters used this to advocate Jiang's retention of Party leadership as well, pointing to the inexorable link between the Party and the gun (and in any case, for Jiang to remain CMC chairman without Party leadership would probably not do him much good, in view of his relatively weak military base). In the public media, it is interesting that all mentions of "generations" disappeared as of early 2002. Succession might still occur, but on an incremental schedule. Jiang reportedly would cede his posts as general secretary of the Party and chairman of the CMC to Hu Jintao at the 4th Plenum of the 16th Congress, scheduled for 2004, while remaining a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, at which point he would retire at the ripe old age of 81.

Yet there have been Aesopian indications that not everyone agrees with this adjustment. Li Ruihuan's repeated declarations of his wish to retire as part of a generational transition even though he has not yet even reached the age limit was assumed to be an implicit challenge to the older Jiang to step down. At a meeting with Chinese and foreign delegates to the international forum "China and the World in the 21st Century" on September 10, 2001 Jiang reportedly lauded "young people Hu Jintao, Li Lanqing," apparently signaling a preference for Li Lanqing over Li Ruihuan, perhaps as new chairman of the NPC. If some can stay on beyond their time, why not also get rid of some troublesome cases before their time? In an early July 2002 speech Jiang reportedly offered his own resignation on condition that all other members of the Standing Committee step down except Hu Jintao, echoing Li Ruihuan's offer, though without much credibility—given Jiang's age he was expected to retire anyhow. Among senior cadres, only Li Peng was vocally supportive of Jiang's plan to extend his term, for reasons that can only be imagined: should not Li Peng also be exempted? The old guard has been skeptical. This "sitting committee" had helped topple two previous general secretaries, but would they now prevail against the organizational legerdemain of Zeng Qinghong and Jiang Zemin, when the latter appear to enjoy military backing? Interestingly, those with a personal stake in the outcome have expressed themselves more tactfully. Hu Jintao, whose interests are most directly affected, reportedly urged Li Ruihuan not to retire and clarified on Jiang's behalf that the Central Committee did not formulate a "regulation" in 1997 but only a "proposal." Sixteen years Jiang's junior and in good health, Hu dares not jeopardize his future chances by speaking out. Aside from maintaining his own determination to retire, Zhu Rongji has remained resolutely silent about the issue, though there has reportedly been pressure on him to postpone retirement as well for Jiang's sake.

Conclusions

At this writing, the Party is in delicate equipoise between two alternatives: succession to the fourth generation, with Jiang stepping down from all three executive positions in favor of Hu Jintao, and a postponement or phased-in compromise of some sort. The recent reports that the Party Congress will be postponed till November indicates that the ultimate has not been achieved by the closed high-level meetings held at the Beidaihe resort, where the old guard was out in force. Empirically, the difference between these two "roads" is rather subtle. Even devout advocates of "real" generational retirement would countenance a continuing advisory role for Jiang Zemin and perhaps a few other senior veterans, just as those with greatest misgivings do not deny the need for institutional rejuvenation and generational transition. It is a confrontation between

nuances, in which "an inch at the outset portends a mile of difference in the long run." Even had the original proposal moved forward without a hitch, Jiang's informal influence would have continued to loom in the background—but unlike Deng, Jiang was unwilling to trust informal influence alone: he (and, perhaps more importantly, his retinue) felt the need for an institutional base.

With the outcome hanging in abeyance, what difference does it make politically? If generational succession takes place, even in modified form (i.e., Jiang steps down from the Politburo while remaining CMC chair), this will signify not only the institutionalization of formal norms and procedures over factional politics, but a momentous shift in the power balance between monocracy and collective leadership. This would mark the first time that the Party Congress will have elected a new leader since the 6th Congress in 1928, which decided (with the help of the Comintern) upon a young peasant named Xiang Zhongfa, who was then promptly eclipsed by the fiery labor organizer Li Lisan. Indeed, that is one conceivable fate of Hu Jintao, unless he emerges quickly from the cocoon of inoffensive clichés in which he has self-protectively wrapped himself. If Li Ruihuan survives his rivalry with Jiang to assume NPC chairmanship, he could emerge as senior figure in a troika including Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. The danger of popular unrest is unfortunately not illusory; although the transition from Deng to Jiang proceeded smoothly, the previous successions, from Mao to Hua, and again from Hua to Deng, were accompanied by mass demonstrations. Thus whatever the eventual succession lineup, the 16th Congress might as easily be followed by a preemptive crackdown as by an outburst of reform.

If Jiang delays his retirement, the attempt to institutionalize succession based on age and term limits on a predetermined schedule in the absence of a political opposition or popular oversight will have suffered a severe setback. Although it is not an outright repudiation of the 1997 agreement, but rather a compromise and a postponement to which the overwhelming majority of affected elites must still comply, the credibility of a premortem norm so capriciously applied would inspire cynicism. Still, though the norm will be politically tainted, the difference between winners and losers is not based on ideological or policy cleavages. A once categorical rule disintegrates into individualized decisions based only on the personal quality of the relationship. Another problem has to do with Jiang himself: if he once again evades the rule with a promise to conform after two years or five years or some other stipulated time period, how much is that promise worth? That this has occurred to Jiang's Chinese critics is indicated by their equation of postponed succession with a return to a "dynastic" system. As Bo Yibo reportedly has put it, "Ending lifetime tenure was advocated by Comrade Xiaoping, carried out by Comrade Xiaoping, retiring with advanced age. Does he [Jiang] think that he is wiser than Comrade Xiaoping?"[7]

What will be the impact on informal politics? Factional alignments under Jiang are becoming shallower, more short-term, and purpose-rational. Thus Jiang in the early 1990s was close to Li Peng, while since the 15th Congress he has worked more closely with Zhu Rongji to prepare China for entry into the WTO (which Li opposed), though he abandoned Zhu to join Li in the crackdown on the Falun Gong. In their recent recrudescence, factions no longer seem to be organized around ideological "lines," as during the Mao period, nor around policy platforms, as during the Deng era. Jiang's great achievement has been to create a reformist middle-of-the road consensus at the center of Chinese elite politics, which brooks no debate. Instead, factional groupings tend to revolve around a vague conjuncture of shared background (geographic or bureaucratic) and personal ties. They appear to play little role in the policy making process, but only in personnel policy. They remain necessary, given the continuing lack of institutionalization, and are most sorely needed during succession crises, when policy decisions are all put on hold.

Despite his intense efforts with the help of Zeng Qinghong to build a dominant factional organization, our survey of the past decade reveals Jiang to be far more vulnerable than Deng Xiaoping. His appointments are not always approved by his colleagues, and his appointees do not necessarily remain loyal to him. The role of power behind the throne is one he does not trust his protégés to honor. Jiang's informal power is simply not as great as Deng's. In the current showdown, Jiang has thus pulled out all the stops to retain formal posts, with-

out of course flouting Chinese conventions by explicitly stating his ambitions. Yet his refusal to step down puts him in the difficult position of opposing the hallowed blueprint of Deng Xiaoping, as well as a certain popular yearning for fresh leadership. Though there is no assured commitment to political reform among fourth generation elites, Jiang has lost all credibility on this issue.

In the current factional lineup, only the "Shanghai gang" and the intermeshed Li Peng group have expressed strong support for such a postponement. Our evidence suggests outspoken opposition from the old guard, and covert opposition from the Hu Jintao camp. For Jiang to put together a winning coalition including some of those now opposed or skeptical, he will need to give them a suitable *quid pro quo.* Jiang's ideological innovations (the "Three Represents") constitute one such concession for China's dynamic new middle classes, but unless the old working class is assuaged, they may impose political costs offsetting that concession. The recent reforms introduced in cadre policy that emphasize rejuvenation and better training of cadres are concessions designed to appeal to the CCP's reform wing most upset by Jiang's power play. The game is afoot.

ENDNOTES

1. I wish to thank Kun-Chin Lin for his invaluable research assistance, and the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of California at Berkeley for funding support. Space does not permit detailed references, but I rely heavily on Hong Kong China watching publications I consider reliable for the empirical findings in this article.

2. A notable exception was the prosecution of Beijing Party boss Chen Xitong, who was given a long prison sentence for corruption.

3. Key members include Zeng Qinghong, You Xigui (director of the palace guard), Jia Qinglin (Party secretary of Beijing), Huang Ju (Party secretary of Shanghai), Li Changchun (Party secretary of Guangdong), Wu Guanzheng (Party secretary of Shandong), Zhang Gaoli (governor of Shandong), and Meng Jianchu (Party secretary of Jiangxi) among civilian cadres. In the PLA, Generals Zhang Zhen, Hong Xuezhi, Liu Huaqing, Cao Gangchuan, and Yu Yongbo are top Jiang Zemin beneficiaries.

4. *Chengming* (Hong Kong), February 2002, 15-17.

5. After the Politburo Standing Committee announced its interest in adding one or two young people to the Politburo and the Central Committee Secretariat, a number of Hu's associates came into consideration, including Zhou Qiang, 41, first secretary of the Central Committee of the CYL; Li Keqiang, 46, governor of Henan and Zhou's predecessor at the CYL; Zhao Leji, 44, governor of Qinghai; Xi Jinping, 48, governor of Fujian (and son of Party veteran Xi Zhongxun), Quan Zhezhu, alternate member of the 15th Central Committee and executive vice governor of Jilin; Wu Aiying, alternate member of the 15th Central Committee and deputy Party secretary of Shandong, et al.

6. See John Pomfret, in *Washington Post*, July 21, 2002, A01; and Hiroyuki Sugiyama, in *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Tokyo), June 21, 2002. Though these reports cannot be independently confirmed, it seems plausible that Jiang, faced with widespread expectations that he should retire, would prefer to orchestrate grassroots demand rather than simply announce his intention not to do so.

7. *Kai Fang* (*Openness*), June 2002, 13.

Emerging Patterns of Power Sharing: Inland Hu vs. Coastal Zeng?

CHENG LI

China is undergoing another momentous transition of power. The important question is whether this leadership succession will be less painful and result in a more institutionalized sharing of power than those in the past. Crucial to this question is the dynamic relationship between Hu Jintao and Zeng Qinghong, the two leading contenders for power in the upcoming post-Jiang era. Both Hu and Zeng already wield enormous power. Hu has been generally recognized as the man who will succeed Jiang Zemin as the Party chief and the head of state. His recent widely publicized appearances at home and high-profile visits abroad have reaffirmed that he is poised to take the helm. Zeng, who has long been seen as Jiang's "hand, ear and brain," is currently the head of the Organization Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It can be argued that he plays the most crucial role in the selection of members of the Central Committee at the 16th Party Congress.

More importantly, Hu and Zeng represent two different political and geographical constituencies. To a great extent, these differences are reflected in their distinct personal careers and political associations. Hu's political association was largely with the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) in which he served as a member of the Secretariat and then as first secretary during the early 1980s. Hu has spent most of his adult life in some of the poorest provinces in China's inland region, including 14 years in Gansu, 3 years in Guizhou, and about 4 years in Tibet. In contrast, Zeng, as a princeling with strong family ties, is known for his political associations with some powerful networks—first with the influential faction of China's petroleum industry and then with the emerging "Shanghai gang."[1] Zeng has thus far spent almost his entire career in coastal regions such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong.

The strife between Hu and Zeng, therefore, goes far beyond two political rising stars' contest for supremacy after Jiang's departure. It reveals some of the most important trends and tensions in Chinese politics today, especially new patterns of factional formation and the strained relations between inland and coastal regions. This ongoing contention between political forces can potentially lead to disastrous consequences for the country because it may aggravate region-based animosity. However, it may also have a constructive impact on Chinese institutional development if conflicts of interest are resolved through compromise and negotiation.

Misperceptions about Jiang-Hu-Zeng Relations

Unfortunately, many students of Chinese politics have failed to grasp this broad picture of the leadership succession and its implications. Some have been obsessed with speculation on the power struggle among individual leaders without paying much attention to the political forces and regional interests that these leaders represent. Others have been too simplistic in exploring the origin of factional politics while ignoring the complicated interdependence of various factions, especially the factors that push even political rivals (such as Hu and Zeng) to cooperate.

As a result, the changing nature of Chinese elite politics has been woefully misunderstood. There have been more myths, rumors, and speculation than thoughtful analysis and well-grounded assessment. For example, some widely circulated assumptions in China and abroad are factually wrong, analytically misleading and logically contradictory. The following three erroneous assumptions are particularly worth noting.

Misperception #1: Deng appointed Hu as the designated successor to Jiang.[2] The underlying assumption is that Jiang is not comfortable with Deng's choice; Jiang would dump Hu and choose someone else if he could.

While Deng indeed promoted Hu to the standing committee of the Politburo at the 14th Party

Cheng Li is professor of government, Hamilton College, and Woodrow Wilson Center fellow.

Congress in 1992, it was Jiang (not Deng) who later appointed Hu as his "successor." Hu's promotion to the seven-man Standing Committee of the Politburo did not designate him as the successor. The signs that Hu was the successor occurred in 1998-99, well after Deng's death in 1997 and when Jiang was firmly in charge. Hu's appointments as vice president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1998 and vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) in 1999 made it clear that Hu was first in line in the political succession.

The fact that Hu was promoted by Deng and was later appointed by Jiang as the successor places Hu in a truly advantageous position; he has Jiang's endorsement, but his rise to the top leadership will not be seen as a result of Jiang's favoritism. From Jiang's perspective, the appointment of Hu as his successor served at least three purposes: 1) Jiang's power would not be based solely on the "Shanghai gang;" 2) this gave Jiang a few years to test the loyalty and capacity of Hu; and 3) as Jiang's own chosen successor, Hu will be unlikely to cause Jiang and his family much trouble after the succession. During the past four years, there has been no indication that Hu failed Jiang's test. Unless something drastic develops, Jiang has neither the incentive nor the political might to change his successor.

Misperception #2: Zeng was unable to be promoted from an alternate to a full member of the Politburo. According to some media sources, Zeng tried but failed to become a full member at each of the three consecutive plenums of the Party's 15th Central Committee during the past few years.[3] Japanese media recently reported that, due to the strong resistance against the "Shanghai gang," Zeng would have no chance of becoming a Standing Committee member of the Politburo at the 16th Party Congress.[4] Ironically, it has been widely speculated during the past two months (including by the same media sources that reported Zeng's problems in getting promoted) that Jiang will not retire at the 16th Party Congress because of the enormous power enjoyed by Jiang and his "Shanghai gang."

These two assessments above contradict each other. In my view, the first underestimates the power and manipulative tactics of Zeng and the second overestimates the capacity and authority of the "Shanghai gang," including Zeng. However, Zeng's rumored attempts to be promoted from an alternate to a full member of the Politburo have never been verified. Of course, the political future of Zeng has been overshadowed by Jiang's favoritism and Zeng's identity as a prominent figure of the "Shanghai gang." My assessment is that the power of Jiang and the "Shanghai gang" will probably not be strong enough to reverse the institutional measures developed since the Deng era, such as term limits and the age requirement for retirement, but will be strong enough to allow Zeng, Jiang's closest ally, to gain a seat on the Politburo Standing Committee of the Party's 16th Central Committee.

Misperception #3: Hu and Zeng have been engaged in a vicious power struggle. According to some observers, the competition between Hu and Zeng is a zero-sum game. Tensions between these two political heavyweights certainly exist. Their differences in personal experiences, career backgrounds, political associations, leadership styles and regional loyalties have all reinforced their distrust of each other. But this does not necessarily eliminate the possibility that Hu and Zeng can cooperate in both consolidating the rule of the CCP and sharing power between their respective constituencies.

As a matter of fact, numerous events provide evidence that Hu and Zeng have been cooperating with each other. The best example is their cooperation at the Central Party School (CPS). Hu has served as president of the CPS since 1993. Under his presidency, the CPS has significantly broadened its mid-career training programs, and has become a leading think tank for the study of both China's domestic political reform and international relations. Zeng, however, has also been heavily involved in these developments at the CPS. Some top officials of the CPS are Zeng's long-time associates; for example, Li Junru, vice president of the CPS since 2000 is a close friend of Zeng. (Li was transferred from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences to Beijing in 1993). Yu Yunyao, new executive vice president of the CPS, was Zeng's deputy in the CCP Organization Department.

In a sense, the CPS has become not only a place for theoretical brainstorming about China's political reform, but also an experimental zone for political negotiations and factional compromises between Hu and Zeng. Not surprisingly, earlier this year Hu and Zeng personally granted diplomas to over 800 graduates of the class of 2002 in a highly publicized

graduation ceremony at the CPS. In another recent televised meeting of heads of provincial CCP organizational departments, Hu constantly referred to Jiang's theory of the "Three Represents," and Zeng repeatedly quoted Hu's remarks.[5] Power sharing between Hu and Zeng is also evident in the recent appointments of Li Zhilun and Zhang Huixin to the important posts of deputy secretaries of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Li advanced his career through the CCYL and Zhang was transferred from Shanghai where he served as a senior Party official for over a decade.

All this evidence suggests that Hu and Zeng have formed a relationship that is both competitive and cooperative. Any analysis of Chinese elite politics will be severely undermined if we fail to examine the dynamic and complicated interaction between these two heavyweights in the new generation of Chinese leaders, especially their different power bases within the leadership of China's provinces.

Hu's Followers in the Inland Provinces

At least until now, Hu has not been as focused as Jiang on promoting protégés to important leadership positions. In fact, no one in the current Politburo is seen as Hu's protégé. With the exception of the promotion of his long-time personal secretary, Ling Jihua, to the post of deputy director of the General Office of the CCP Central Committee in 2000, Hu has rarely directly promoted any provincial and ministerial levels of leaders. There are probably three reasons explaining this phenomenon.

First, Hu has had to be cautious politically because he knows too well that, in the history of the PRC, many appointed heirs fell suddenly from favor. It would be unwise for Hu to establish his own powerful network while his boss, Jiang, is still in charge. It is still the "Jiang administration;" it should be the job of Jiang's team to run the show. It will become Hu's team when he officially takes over power.

Second, Hu's power base is currently much broader and less exclusive than Jiang's was when the latter became general secretary of the Party in 1989. Hu has been associated with three very important institutions for elite recruitment in present-day China, namely, Qinghua University, the CCYL and the CPS.[6] However, neither the Qinghua network nor the CPS is controlled by Hu exclusively. Other political forces, especially the "Shanghai gang," have also exerted influence on these institutions; many prominent members of the "Shanghai gang" also belong to the "Qinghua clique." As for the ties between Hu and his CCYL associates, they have more to do with shared identity than political loyalty.

Third and most importantly, Hu does not need to promote followers to establish his own faction. Hu's extensive leadership experience in China's inland provinces gives him a broader support base, especially because a great number of leaders in the inland provinces have been concerned about Jiang's Shanghai-based nepotism and favoritism. Although economic reform over the past decade has enhanced the standard of living of the whole country, some provinces and cities along the coast have benefited far more than those in the inland areas, largely due to the favorable policies of the central government. The difference in GDP per capita between Shanghai and Guizhou, for example, increased from seven times in 1990 to twelve times in 2000.[7] Meanwhile, many provincial leaders, especially those in the inland areas, have had reservations about the overrepresentation in the central government of leaders born in the coastal region.

If a factional fight breaks out between Hu and Zeng, a majority of provincial leaders will likely side with Hu rather than Zeng because of their resentment of the manipulation by the "Shanghai gang." Provincial leaders in inland provinces (20) usually occupy almost twice as many seats on the CCP central committee than those in coastal provinces (11).[8] But meanwhile, provincial leaders in inland regions have less experience or expertise in foreign trade, finance, technological development and large-scale urban construction than their counterparts in coastal regions, especially those from Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong.

To a certain extent, Hu can be seen as a role model for provincial officials in China's inland areas, especially those who have advanced their career through CCYL or those who were transferred from coastal provinces. Some provincial leaders can be recognized as Hu's followers, not only because they had previous political associations with Hu at the provincial and national levels of leadership in the

CCYL, but also due to the fact that their career paths have often been identical to Hu's.[9] For example, Liu Qibao, a member of the CCYL Secretariat in the late 1980s and deputy chief of staff of the State Council, was recently transferred to Guangxi where he served as deputy Party secretary. Wang Lequan, Party secretary of Xinjiang, was transferred from Shandong where he had served as deputy secretary of the CCYL. These leaders seem to follow their role model, Hu Jintao, who was often "ready to take on difficult posts" such as the ones in Guizhou and Tibet."[10]

Among the 62 top provincial chiefs (Party secretaries and governors), six have advanced primarily through posts in the CCYL (e.g., Henan Governor Li Keqiang and Guizhou Party Secretary Qian Yunlu) and the other six have princeling backgrounds, as we will discuss later. Of course, CCYL experience and princeling backgrounds are not necessarily exclusive.[11] However, none of the current provincial chiefs with backgrounds in the CCYL comes from a high-ranking official family. Similarly, none of the six princelings has been part of the CCYL. Most of them have been promoted through posts in coastal cities. This observation reaffirms the contrasting career paths between Hu's followers and Zeng's allies.

Zeng's Allies in the Coastal Provinces

Of all the issues related to China's political succession, probably the most intriguing one concerns the prospects of the "Shanghai gang." Membership in the "Shanghai gang" is based on political association rather than regional origin, although a majority of them were born in Shanghai and two nearby provinces, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. All of them, however, have advanced their careers primarily due to their political associations in Shanghai. The crucial role that Zeng has played in the formation of the "Shanghai gang" makes Zeng second only to Jiang in this formidable political network.

Zeng began to work in Shanghai in late 1984, a few months before Jiang's arrival. For Zeng, coming to Shanghai was a carefully planned move. Shanghai was the city in which his father, Zeng Shan, served as vice mayor soon after the Communist victory in 1949. About three decades later, three of his father's junior colleagues, Chen Guodong, Hu Lijiao and Wang Daohan, occupied three top posts in the city. Under the protection of his father's "comrades-in-arms," Zeng's political career took off.

Zeng was first appointed deputy director of the Organization Department of the Shanghai CCP Committee. When Jiang arrived in Shanghai as mayor, Zeng was promoted to director of the CCP Organization Department in the city. Jiang and Zeng share similar family backgrounds: high-ranking Communist families, fathers associated with the New Fourth Army during the anti-Japanese war, and the loss of family members during the Communist war with the Nationalists. In 1986, Zeng became Jiang's chief-of-staff in the Shanghai municipal administration and began their long-term mutually beneficial cooperation.

The relationship between Jiang and Zeng differs profoundly from other important patron-client relationships in the CCP history, for example, the one between Mao and Hua Guofeng or the one between Deng and Jiang. Unlike other relationships in which the clients (Hua and Jiang) heavily depended on the patrons (Mao and Deng), Jiang has greatly depended on his "client," Zeng, for his family networking, administrative skills and political wisdom. Zeng has earned Jiang's respect for all the political victories that they have jointly achieved during the past decade, including the fights against the "generals of the Yang family," the Deng children, Chen Xitong (former Party chief of Beijing), and Qiao Shi (former head of the NPC).

During the past decade, most provincial leaders have been regularly—in some cases, frequently—reshuffled. The CCP Organization Department's "Regulations on Cadre Exchange" decrees that local leaders should not serve in their home regions.[12] But in Shanghai, since Jiang became general secretary of the CCP in 1989, almost no high-ranking officers (full or deputy Party secretaries and full or vice mayors) have been transferred from other regions into Shanghai's Party committee or municipal government.[13]

Jiang and Zeng have firmly controlled the selection of the municipal leadership in Shanghai and continuously promoted members of the "Shanghai gang" to the central government. Their efforts to transfer Shanghai officials to other provinces and major cities, however, seem unsuccessful thus far. Among the 62 current top provincial chiefs (Party

secretaries and governors), only one, Meng Jianzhu, Party secretary of Jiangxi, has been transferred from Shanghai.

The fact that very few of the members of the "Shanghai gang" currently serve in the leadership of other provinces suggests that Jiang and Zeng have faced strong local resistance in appointing Shanghai officials on others' turf. In addition, the percentage of the seats on the 15th Central Committee (both full and alternate memberships) that the "Shanghai gang" occupied was almost negligible (4.1 percent). This is largely due to the fact that deputies at the 1997 Party Congress blocked the election of nominees favored by Jiang, especially those from Shanghai.

Zeng faces a dilemma: he can take advantage of his power as the head of the CCP Organization Department to appoint members of the "Shanghai gang" to important positions, but the political spotlight will focus on his use of favoritism, thus creating more public resentment against him. Therefore, Zeng has cautiously—almost meticulously—manipulated the process of reshuffling and promotion of provincial leaders in order to form a broader power base beyond the "Shanghai gang." While Hu has a large number of followers in inland provinces, Zeng has attempted to develop many allies among leaders in coastal provinces.

His allies in provincial top leadership in coastal regions originate largely from three groups: 1) his fellow princelings, 2) his fellow natives from Jiangxi, and 3) Jiang's old friends.

1. Zeng's Fellow Princelings

Although Zeng has attempted to keep his distance from other princelings, during his directorship in the CCP Organization Department some princelings were appointed to the posts of provincial Party secretary and governors, including Bo Xilai (governor of Liaoning), Xi Jinping (governor of Fujian), Bai Keming (Party secretary of Hainan), Yu Zhensheng (Party secretary of Hubei), Hong Fu (Party secretary of Jilin) and Tian Chengping (Party secretary of Shanxi). Among them, Bai and Yu are both close friends of Zeng's, and their friendship traces back to their teenage years.

Many princelings have had career experiences similar to Zeng's. Like Zeng who worked as a *mishu* (personal secretary) for a senior leader in the State Council, Xi Jinping and Bo Xilai also once served as *mishus* to senior leaders in the State Council and the General Office of the CCP Central Committee respectively. Also, like Zeng, these provincial heads with princeling backgrounds chose to work in coastal cities to expedite their careers. Yu, Bo and Xi, for example, served either as mayor or Party secretary of Qingdao, Dalian and Fuzhou, coastal cities that have the status of special economic zones or make economic planning under the direct supervision of the State Council (*danlieshi*). Economic achievements were more easily attained in these rich coastal cities.

2. Zeng's Fellow Natives from Jiangxi

The same birthplace (*chushengdi*) or native origin (*jiguan*) has always played an important role in the political socialization of Chinese elites. The overrepresentation of Chinese leaders with Jiangsu and Shandong origins, for example, has received much attention.[14] Among the 62 provincial chiefs, ten were born in Jiangsu. Four currently serve in coastal provinces (Beijing Mayor Liu Qi, Tianjin Mayor Li Shenglin, Hebei Party Secretary Wang Xudong and Jiangsu Governor Ji Yunshi). Wang was Zeng's deputy in the CCP Organization Department before being appointed to his current post.

Zeng was born in northern Jiangsu, but he usually identifies himself as a native of Jiangxi, where his parents were born and where he spent part of his childhood. Largely because of the same Jiangxi native origin, Zeng has developed a close relationship with Wu Guangzhen, Party secretary of Shandong. Wu, currently a Politburo member, is another heavyweight in China's provincial leadership. Wu not only has had broad leadership experience in several provinces (Hubei, Jiangxi and Shandong), but has also promoted many of his assistants and deputies to high offices. For example, among the other 61 current provincial chiefs, six previously worked under Wu.[15] No other provincial chief has had so many high-profile protégés at the same level of leadership as Wu has had.

3. Jiang's Old Friends

Several provincial leaders in coastal provinces are Jiang's close friends. Two are currently Politburo members who occupy important posts of provincial leadership. One is Party Secretary of Guangdong Li

Changchun and the other is Party Secretary of Beijing Qia Qinglin. Li has a solid power base in his native province, Liaoning, whose provincial leaders have also recently been transferred to head other provinces. Jia's association with Jiang traces back to the 1960s when they both worked in the First Ministry of the Machine Building Industry. Jia spent about a decade as a provincial leader in Fujian before he was appointed by Jiang to head the Beijing municipal government in 1996.

Both Li and Jia will likely keep their memberships in the 16th Politburo. Li is also a front-runner for a seat on the Standing Committee of the Politburo. But recent corruption scandals in both Liaoning and Fujian where they were once leaders may jeopardize their future careers. It remains to be seen whether, due to their mutual interests, Jiang's confidants who are not from Shanghai will form an alliance with Zeng after Jiang's departure.

Conclusion

What makes this moment in Chinese history truly extraordinary, and this political succession particularly noteworthy, is the fact that various types of tensions (e.g., factions, regions, generations, and social strata) are being acknowledged, and conflicts of interest are recognized. Prominent political figures such as Hu and Zeng will probably be willing to compromise and cooperate—not because they are motivated by democratic ideals, but because they recognize their own limitations, and therefore, the necessity for sharing power. Time will tell whether the Hu-Zeng dynamics will eventually lead to a political system in which factional politics is not only legitimized and transparent, but one in which various constituencies and the general public will also have their interests protected and their voices heard.

Endnotes

1. For the influential role of the petroleum industry in elite recruitment during the 1970s and the early 1980s, see David M. Lampton, *Paths to Power: Elite Mobility in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1986). For the formation and role of the "Shanghai gang," see Cheng Li, "Shanghai Gang: Force for Stability or Fuse for Conflict?" *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 1, Winter 2002.

2. Some Western media, for example, *The New York Times*, identified Hu as the "presumed successor" of the fourth generation chosen by Deng Xiaoping in 1992. See Erik Eckholm, "China's Heir Apparent in Debut on the World Stage," *The New York Times*, October 29, 2001, 3.

3.See http://www.geocities.com/ccparty2002/zengqinghong.html. It states that "Jiang has unsuccessfully tried three straight times—most recently in September 2001—to have Zeng promoted to full membership on the Political Bureau." According to some media sources, when Xie Fei, a full member of the Politburo, died in 1999, Zeng Qinghong, an alternate, was supposed to be promoted to full status. In fact, the CCP constitution states that, when the seat of a full member of the central committee is vacated because of death or other reasons, a leading alternate will be promoted; but the regulation does not apply to the Politburo.

4. *Shijie Ribao* (*World Journal*), August 6, 2002, 7.

5. http://www6.chinesenewsnet.com/, August 8, 2002.

6. For more discussion of the elite recruitment of fourth generation leaders, see Cheng Li, China's Leaders: *The New Generation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001); and David M. Finkelstein and Maryanne Kivlehan, eds., *Chinese Leadership in the Twenty-First Century: The Rise of the Fourth Generation* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

7. *Shijie Ribao*, January 12, 2000, A9. For a detailed discussion of the growing economic disparity in present-day China, and the jurisdictional division of China's provincial-level administrations, see Wang Shaoguang and Hu Angang, *The Political Economy of Uneven Development: The Case of China* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).

8. In the 15th Central Committee, all but one of the thirty-one provincial-level administrations has two full members. These two seats are usually occupied by the Party secretary and the governor of the province. There are 20 inland provincial-level administrations and only 11 coastal provincial-level administrations. The latter includes Liaoning, Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan.

9. In my case study of 15 provincial-level administrations in 2002, thirty provincial leaders (full or deputy Party secretaries and full or vice governors)

served as provincial or national leaders in the CCYL during the early 1980s when Hu Jintao was in the secretariat of the CCYL. See Cheng Li, "Hu's Followers: Provincial Leaders with Backgrounds in the Youth League." *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 2, Spring 2002.

10. H. Lyman Miller, "The Succession of Hu Jintao." *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 1, Winter 2002.

11. Some princelings also pursued their careers through the CCYL, for example, Chen Haosu, son of the late Marshal Chen Yi, and He Guangwei, son of revolutionary veteran He Changgong, served as members of the CCYL secretariat in the early 1980s. But the "helicopter-style" of promotion in the CCYL did not advance their political careers much further. Chen is currently president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and He is director of the National Tourism Administration under the State Council.

12. *Liaowang* (*Outlook Weekly*), June 7,1999, 15-16; also see Li, "After Hu, Who?—China's Provincial Leaders Await Promotion," *China Leadership Monitor,* No. 1, Winter 2002.

13. The only exception is Yang Xiaodu, the newly appointed vice mayor of Shanghai. But even Yang has substantial previous experience in the city. Yang was born in Shanghai in 1953 and was "sent down" to Anhui in 1970. In 1973 he returned to his birthplace to study at the Shanghai Traditional Medical School. He later went to Tibet, where he later became vice governor.

14. Cheng Li and Lynn White, "The Fifteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Full-Fledged Technocratic Leadership with Partial Control by Jiang Zemin," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 38, No. 3, March 1998, 231-264.

15. They include: Qian Yunlu (Party secretary of Guizhou), Wu's deputy in Wuhan in the early 1980s; Wang Taihua (Party secretary of Anhui), Wu's deputy in Jiangxi in the late 1980s; Zhang Yunchuan (governor of Hunan) and Huang Zhiquan (governor of Jiangxi), Wu's assistants in the provincial government of Jiangxi in the early 1990s; Song Fatang (governor of Heilongjiang), Wu's deputy in Shandong between 1997 and 1999; and Chen Jianguo (Party secretary of Ningcxia), Wu's deputy in Shandong between 1998 and 2002.

The Leadership Succession in the Chinese Military

DAVID SHAMBAUGH

While the majority of attention concerning the pending leadership change in China is focused on the new generation that will accede to the top of the Communist Party and government (State Council and National People's Congress) hierarchies, an equally important transition will take place at the pinnacle of the military: in the Central Military Commission (CMC), in the seven Military Regions, and in the four General Departments. To be sure, changes in these top institutions mirror a broader generational turnover underway throughout the officer corps in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). A much more professional officer corps is coming of age and being reflected across the services.[1] If tradition holds, a meeting of the CMC will take place just after the 16th Party Congress. At this special conclave we can expect a sweeping set of retirements and replacements at the top of the PLA hierarchy.

Changing of the Guard

Of the eleven current members of the CMC, slightly more than half (six) are over retirement age (70) and are thus due to retire following the 16th Party Congress. In addition to Jiang Zemin (76), those expected to retire include Minister of Defense Chi Haotian (75), General Zhang Wannian (74), Chief of Staff General Fu Quanyou (72), General Wang Ruilin (74), and General Political Department Director General Yu Yongbo (70). What are the implications of these personnel changes?

Consider, first, the case of Jiang Zemin. There has been considerable speculation that Jiang may intend to hold on to his position of CMC chairman, while stepping down from his positions as state president and general secretary of the CCP. There are also recent reports that Jiang will again seek (as he did at the 14th Congress) to resurrect the position of CCP chairman, while Hu Jintao becomes CCP general secretary. This will likely meet with resistance, given the precedent set at the 12th Party Congress in 1982 by Deng Xiaoping when the position of Party chairman was abolished. It may also be seen by many in the Party as an inappropriate attempt by Jiang to perpetuate his formal rule. My guess is that Jiang will be forced to forego his Party leadership position to Hu Jintao. Jiang may be able to hold on to the CMC post, and there would certainly be a precedent for a leader heading the CMC while not heading the Party (namely Deng Xiaoping). But there is at least an equally good chance that Jiang will be forced to cede the CMC chairmanship to Hu as well.

There are several reasons for this conjecture. First, and perhaps most important, is the fact that the CMC is a Party organ, and for the CMC to be headed by someone other than the Party leader, someone not even in the Standing Committee of the Politburo, would make a mockery of the much-vaunted principle that "the Party commands the gun." While there is a second and simultaneous state CMC, it is of secondary importance and the membership is identical. Jiang is also expected to retire as state president at the March 2003 National People's Congress, thus also reducing the possibility of his chairing the state CMC. When Jiang secured his second five-year term as CCP general secretary in 1997, he promised that he would agree to step down from all *Party and government posts* at the 16th Congress. This was part of the *quid pro quo* at the time, for Jiang's desire to involuntarily retire his rival Qiao Shi, ostensibly on the basis of age.[2] For these reasons, I would expect Jiang Zemin to step down from his position of CMC chairman, to be replaced by Hu Jintao. However, this does not necessarily mean that either Jiang's influence with the senior military brass would be eclipsed or that it would automatically accrue to Hu Jintao.

If Hu Jintao accedes to the CMC chairmanship, how would the military view their new commander-in-chief? It is difficult to say. On the one hand, other CMC members have had three years to grow accustomed to Hu (although his promotion to vice

David Shambaugh is professor of political science and international affairs and director of the China Policy Program, George Washington University, and Woodrow Wilson Center fellow.

chairman was rebuffed at least twice before his promotion in September 1999). No doubt the military would give due deference to Hu as senior leader of the Party and state, as there do exist important institutional norms to enforce such fidelity. On the other hand, he has no military service of his own and no real previous experience of interacting with senior PLA commanders. His position would not be unlike that of Hu Yaobang or Zhao Ziyang in the 1980s, or—for that matter—Jiang Zemin when he named chairman in November 1989.[3] In Jiang's case, he gradually earned the respect of the military brass over time, although his predecessors never did. If Hu Jintao is to do so, then he needs time, a strategy of progressive cultivation of central and regional military elites, some high-profile symbolic acts, and the support of Jiang. He also needs to forge a close relationship with the senior-most officers who serve as vice chairmen of the CMC. Of particular importance to Hu will be his relationship with General Cao Gangchuan.

In my estimation, General Cao will become the leading officer on the CMC and in the PLA. With this promotion it is doubtful that Cao will continue as head of the General Armaments Department (GAD), and may become either Minister of Defense (a nominal position) or chief of General Staff. Two characteristics distinguish Cao Gangchuan's career path: expertise in conventional land armaments and ties to Russia. These two attributes were fused together when Cao was promoted to the position of director of the Military Products Trade Office of the CMC in 1990 and consequently became the PLA point man for negotiating weapons purchases and military cooperation with Russia. For the previous five years Cao had served as deputy director of the Armaments Department of the Headquarters of the General Staff Department (GSD), and in November 1992 he was promoted to the position of Deputy Chief of Staff with overall responsibility for PLA equipment and weaponry. In 1996 Cao succeeded Ding Henggao as director of the Commission on Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND), and subsequently presided over its dismantling. He had been known to previously express great frustration with COSTIND and its many failings to produce high-quality weaponry. General Cao was therefore the logical choice to be appointed to be the inaugural Director of the GAD when it was created in 1998 (he may well, in fact, have been responsible for conceptualizing the new body and the revision of COSTIND). Cao was promoted to the rank of full general in March 1998, and shortly thereafter became a full member of the CMC. His status and importance are anticipated to increase in the next few years.

Another key CMC officer, and likely vice chairman, will be General Wang Ke. There is the possibility that he too may retire if the retirement requirement is strictly adhered to (he is 71), but it is just as likely that Wang Ke will remain for a year or two as a bridge between the third and fourth generations. If he remains, Wang is in line to replace Fu Quanyou as chief of staff, as traditionally the director of the General Logistics Department moves over to head the GSD. A veteran artillery commander, Wang has been described as a "jack of all guns."[4] Geographically, Wang Ke served most of his career in the northwest—primarily in the Xinjiang Military District of the Lanzhou MR. Wang has thus also enjoyed career-long ties to Fu Quanyou, and undoubtedly to the late PLA elder Wang "Big Cannon" Zhen, who oversaw Lanzhou and Xinjiang as his personal military fiefdoms during his lifetime. Wang Ke was also praised by Jiang Zemin during his 1991 tour of Xinjiang, and soon found himself propelled to be commander of the important Shenyang MR (a good example of regional commanders with whom Jiang met during his 1991-92 MR tours who were promoted to top positions). Wang Ke is also known to be a leading advocate of reforming tactics in line with the new doctrine of "limited war under high technology conditions." After the Gulf War, Wang submitted a report on Desert Storm to the CMC, which was reportedly well received.[5] During his time as head of the General Logistics Department (GLD) General Wang has been quite innovative in introducing new concepts of logistics to the PLA—particularly pre-positioning and systematized stockpiles.

In 1999 two other officers of the "fourth generation" were promoted to the CMC: Generals Guo Boxiong (66) and Xu Caihou (58). Both are destined to move up in membership and help to anchor the CMC, presuming their health holds (General Guo is said to be suffering from an unspecified cancer). General Xu is surely destined to replace Yu

Yongbo (70) as GPD chief, while General Guo will likely replace Wang Ke at the GLD.

General Guo rose through the ranks of the Lanzhou MR, serving successively as a squad leader, platoon leader, regimental propaganda cadre, headquarters staff officer, and eventually MR deputy chief of staff. From 1994-1997 he was transferred to the Beijing MR, where he had the opportunity to travel abroad with Defense Minister Chi Haotian and domestically with President Jiang Zemin. In 1997 he was sent back to Lanzhou as MR commander. Guo has longstanding career ties to Chief of Staff Fu Quanyou (who was his commander in the 47th Group Army), as well as former Lanzhou MR Commander Wang Ke.

General Xu Caihou has had a career in PLA political work. Geographically, he has spent most of his career in Jilin Military District of the Shenyang MR—although at the time of his promotion to the CMC he worked in the Jinan MR. In Jilin, Xu held a succession of propaganda and GPD jobs. In November 1992, he was transferred to Beijing where he became assistant to GPD Director Yu Yongbo, but also worked closely with Wang Ruilin. With this backing, Xu is undoubtedly on track to head the GPD following Yu's retirements. In mid-1993, Xu also assumed co-editorship of the *Liberation Army Daily*. This was a sensitive time following the purge of Yang Baibing, with the need to garner control over the GPD apparatus. Xu performed well and was promoted to deputy director of the GPD in July 1994. From 1997 to 1999 he served as political commissar of the Jinan MR.

New Faces in the High Command

With a civilian chairman of the CMC (whether it is Jiang or Hu), Cao Gangchuan, Wang Ke likely to become vice chairmen, and Guo Buoxing and Xu Caihou continuing on as members, it raises the question of what other new promotions will occur in the PLA's top body? There is no specified number of members on the CMC, but in recent years it has had around ten members. This would leave room for five or so promotions. Who might they be?

It is easier to speculate about *what* they are rather than *who* they are. That is, during the 1990s it became conventional (and perhaps required by regulation) that the directors of all four general departments would automatically become CMC members. Hence, if indeed the shifts in positions outlined above occur as predicted (Cao Gangchuan or Wang Ke to GSD or Minister of Defense, Guo Boxiong to GLD, and Xu Caihou to GPD), this would mean that whoever replaced Cao Gangchuan at the GAD would earn a set on the CMC. It is difficult to predict who this individual would be, although at present there are no fewer than six GAD deputy directors. Of these, Chu Hongyan, director of the GAD's integrated planning department (*zonghe bu*) is the most senior and likeliest possibility for promotion.

In addition to the GAD director, it is reasonable to expect the commanders of several military regions to be promoted. Throughout 2002 there has been far-reaching shakeup of MR commanders. Several were retired and several were rotated. Of the currently serving MR commanders, Generals Chen Bingde (Jinan MR), Liang Guanglie (Nanjing MR), and Qian Guoliang (Shenyang MR) have served the longest as military region commanders. Any or all of these three could be promoted. All three have distinguished themselves in the PLA. Chen was commander of the Nanjing MR during the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, Liang has commanded several group armies and has been an innovator in shaping the PLA's rapid reaction units, while Qian has overseen the reorganization of heavy armor units and ground forces in the Jinan and Shenyang MRs. On the other hand, Chengdu MR Commander Liao Xilong, 62, is the only MR commander to hold the rank of full general (three stars). Guangzhou MR Commander Liu Zhenwu is also a possibility for promotion to the CMC. General Liu, 58, served successfully as the first commander of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Garrison command, a former commander of the 42nd Group Army, and has been an alternate member of the 15th CCP Central Committee. He is a leading member of PLA supreme General Zhang Wannian's extensive network throughout the upper reaches of the PLA. Zhu Qi, commander of the Beijing MR, is another possibility. Although he was only appointed earlier this year, this military region is the most important in China, and it is hard to conceive of other commanders of less important regions being represented when the commander of the Beijing is not.

Another equally plausible scenario, which would be more innovative, would be to promote the com-

manders of the three services (the ground forces are, in effect, commanded by the Chief of General Staff and are not formally constituted as a separate service branch). This would mean that the current commanders of the PLA Navy (Shi Yunsheng), PLA Air Force (Qiao Qingchen), and PLA Second Artillery (Yang Guoliang) would all move on to the CMC. This scenario is plausible, as all three individuals currently hold the rank of full general (unlike six of the seven MR commanders). It would be an unusual precedent bureaucratically, however, as service commanders have traditionally not even been of equal standing to MR commanders.

Implications: Continuing the Bifurcation of Party and Army

These are the current proximate players in civil-military relations in China today. The CMC will remain the nexus of civil-military interaction, although it is ostensibly a Party organ. This is important, as channels of civil-military interaction outside the CMC have been radically reduced in recent years. The PLA no longer has a representative on the Politburo Standing Committee, and its representation on the Politburo is presently limited to Zhang Wannian and Chi Haotian (both of whom are slated for retirement). It will be interesting to see if this norm changes at the 16th Party Congress, although traditionally there has not necessarily been a military member on the Politburo Standing Committee.

Other informal channels of PLA influence have also been reduced in recent years. As late as the mid-1990s the Hong Kong media reported a series of extra-institutional channels through which the senior PLA brass sought to influence policy, e.g., senior military officers would personally visit and lobby Deng Xiaoping and other leaders; they would sometimes write "letters of opinion" and other documents expressing their views in inner-Party circles; they would sit in on Politburo meetings; and retired PLA elders would weigh in on policy deliberations. If these reports were correct to being with (doubtful), this all seems to have stopped, and the channels of civil-military interaction have been restricted to the CMC since the late-1990s.

As a result of these changes and the general *bifurcation* of army and Party elites of the "third generation," in which not a single senior Party leader has experience in the military and only one senior PLA officer—Chi Haotian—has extensive experience at the top of the Party structure, civil-military relations have entered an entirely new and unprecedented period. I use the term *bifurcation* to describe the separation that has taken place between the Party and military in recent years. That is, the CCP has permitted and encouraged the military to become more professional and exclusively focused on its modernization program. The military has also become less politicized since the intense indoctrination of the 1989-1992 (post-Tiananmen) period. Today the PLA sets its own priorities and is increasingly given the fiscal and other resources to pursue its modernization program without interference from the Party.

As a result, the PLA has become more corporate and institutionally autonomous from the CCP. Conversely, as noted above, the military's intervention in political affairs (i.e., foreign policy or Taiwan policy) has also reduced—leaving these policy spheres to civilian Party elites to manage. It is quite likely that the so-called "fourth generation" will continue this trend toward *bifurcation*. For the PLA, the result will be an increasingly modern and professional military force. Politically, however, whether this trend moves the PLA from being a "Party army" to being a "national army" is the big question for the future.

Endnotes

1. See James Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps: Trends and Implications* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1997); and June Teufel Dreyer, "The New Officer Corps: Implications for the Future," *The China Quarterly* (June 1996), 315-335.

2. See Richard Baum, "The Fifteenth National Party Congress: Jiang Takes Command?" *The China Quarterly* (March 1998), 150-51.

3. See my "China's Commander-in-Chief: Jiang Zemin and the PLA," in C. Dennison lane et al eds., *Chinese Military Modernization* (London and Washington, D.C.: Routledge Kegan Paul and AEI Press, 1996), 209-245.

4. "Wang Ke, Commander of the Shenyang Military Region," *Inside China Mainland*, March 1994, 83.

5. *Ibid*, 84.

To Reform or to Muddle Through?: The Challenges Facing China's Fourth Generation

RICHARD BAUM

As China prepares for a major leadership transition at the 16th Party Congress, renewed attention has been paid to the prospects for meaningful political reform. For more than two decades, China's ossified political institutions have creaked and groaned under the demands of a dynamic, thriving market economy and the attendant rising expectations of 1.27 billion newly-empowered Chinese consumers. Although reform experimentation in villages and townships throughout China has produced a broad range of pragmatic local government innovations, including direct election of village leaders, the political picture in Beijing is less reassuring. There, at the center of the Chinese system, the continued lack of public accountability of top political leaders, the absence of meaningful restraints on the CCP's monopoly of power, and the consequent blurring of lines between Party and state authority serve to highlight China's institutional sclerosis. Under such conditions it has proved impossible, for example, for the National People's Congress (NPC) to pass laws independently of Party initiative, for courts to act autonomously, or for the mass media to scrutinize critically the behavior of top officials. Still less has the Party-state permitted spontaneous, unauthorized expression of dissent by aggrieved citizens. Especially since the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen debacle and subsequent collapse of socialism throughout the Soviet bloc, Chinese leaders' fear of popular unrest and instability has precluded both expanded political tolerance and meaningful institutional reform. The result is an increasingly dynamic, marketized economy harnessed to an insensitive, anachronistic Leninist political apparatus.

As the contradictions within China's disjointed political economy have become more apparent—and more troublesome—over time, speculation has mounted concerning the reform propensities of the emerging "fourth generation" of Chinese leaders, who are expected to assume power after the 16th Party Congress. With the current, septuagenarian ruling troika of CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin, Premier Zhu Rongji, and NPC Chairman Li Peng soon slated for retirement, outside observers have been sifting through the life histories and factional ties of a small group of presumptive heirs apparent—Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, Wu Bangguo and Zeng Qinghong, among others—for clues to China's probable future political direction.

While much that is of predictive value can be gained through a sensitive interpretation of individual career paths and organizational networks, a single-minded focus on biographical details and personal connections may draw attention away from other important factors that condition and constrain the political behavior of top leaders. This paper seeks to explore one such factor, viz., the catalytic role played by the critical confluence between systemic stress and innovative leadership in producing political reform.

Throughout the post-Tiananmen decade of the 1990s, Jiang Zemin, following the lead of his patron, Deng Xiaoping, repeatedly cited the need for "unity and stability" as the prime reason for postponing fundamental political reform. With the lessons of Tiananmen and the 1991 Soviet collapse fresh in mind, Jiang and his chaos-fearing colleagues circled their wagons, pushing ahead with Deng's audacious marketization and "openness" policies while at the same time jealously preserving the monopolistic political position of the Communist Party. The result, noted earlier, was that China entered the new millennium with a vibrant (if troubled) economy hitched to a retrograde polity.

With Jiang Zemin and Li Peng firmly committed to upholding Deng's "correct" verdict on the Tiananmen crackdown, and with both men closely identified with the two-track Dengist strategy of liberal economic reform *cum* tight political control, there was never much likelihood of major constitu-

Richard Baum is professor of political science and director of the Center for Chinese Studies, University of California at Los Angeles.

tional or institutional change occurring under their stewardship. "Muddling through" was the order of the day for Jiang Zemin and Li Peng. But what of their successors? Under what circumstances might Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and the other fourth generation successors be willing pro-actively to confront the discomfiting political legacies of the past and the equally stressful challenges of the present and future?

Searching for Precedents: Mikhail Gorbachev, Chiang Ching-kuo, and Chun Doo-hwan

There are relevant precedents for colorless Communist bureaucrats and authoritarian technocrats initiating broad, sweeping political changes. Who would have predicted in the early 1980s, for example, that Mikhail Gorbachev—a loyal *apparatchik* (bureaucrat) in the Soviet Union's post-Stalinist party machinery—would launch democratic reforms with such profound transformative potential? Was there anything in Gorbachev's personal history or career path prior to becoming general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party that prefigured his startling post-Chernobyl policy of "*glasnost*" (openness)" culminating in the constitutional termination of the party's 70-year monopoly on political power? And what of Chiang Ching-kuo, Moscow-trained son of Chiang Kai-shek and former head of Taiwan's much-feared secret police, who succeeded his father as president of the Republic of China in 1975? Shortly before his death in 1988, Chiang Ching-kuo unilaterally rescinded the oppressive martial law regulations imposed by his father in 1949 and agreed to permit electoral competition by "*dangwai*" (non-Kuomintang) political parties—measures that culminated, within a few short years, in the near-complete democratization of the Taiwanese political system. Such examples have served to confound the conventional wisdom, which for decades held that Leninist-style one-party regimes were inherently incapable of meaningful self-reform because the leaders of such regimes would never voluntarily relinquish their political monopoly. These examples also serve to remind us that bold, visionary leadership can—indeed, at times does—emerge in the most unexpected places.

Looking at the situations that confronted Mikhail Gorbachev and Chiang Ching-kuo (as well as General Chun Doo-hwan in South Korea, another "hard authoritarian" leader who opted for democratic reform in the late 1980s), it is apparent that their decisions to launch major institutional reform were taken under circumstances of critical, rising societal stress. For Gorbachev, the stagnant, ossified Soviet "command economy" could not bear the weight of continued Cold War competition with the United States. Faced with strong conservative opposition from a deeply entrenched Soviet bureaucracy, however, Gorbachev was unable to reform the economy from above; and his far-reaching "perestroika" (economic restructuring) initiatives thus failed to take hold. To free the economy from the vise-like grip of central planners, therefore, Gorbachev first had to challenge the political stronghold of the *apparatchiki*. It was this calculation that led him to champion a more "open" Soviet society and to enlarge the political authority of representative institutions such as the Congress of People's Deputies. Only too late—and at considerable political cost to himself—did Gorbachev come to fully realize the system-transforming implications of "*glasnost*."

Chiang Ching-kuo's reforms also took place against a backdrop of mounting systemic stress. During the 1960s and 1970s, Taiwan's economy developed rapidly, jump-started by American economic aid and further enabled by progressive governmental agricultural policies, flexible manufacturing techniques, a skilled and disciplined workforce, and a coherent national strategy of export-led industrialization. By the 1980s, however, cumulative political tensions and frustrations engendered by a regressive, "hard-authoritarian" political system threatened the island's prospects for continued prosperity and peaceful development. Increasing popular support for the long-banned Taiwan Independence Movement was the most obvious symptom of rising malaise. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s political tensions surfaced episodically in local demonstrations and acts of defiance against the mainlander-dominated Kuomintang one-party dictatorship. Such tensions reached a peak in 1979 with the infamous Kauhsiung riot—an anti-government demonstration by Taiwanese nationalists that resulted in hundreds of citizens being arrested and beaten by government troops.

In many respects, the Kauhsiung debacle marked a watershed in Taiwan's modern political history.

Thereafter, the government appeared to be on a collision course with increasingly self-confident social forces demanding full political participation and representation for the indigenous Taiwanese, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the island's 23 million people. Against this background, Chiang Ching-kuo's dramatic reforms in 1987 represented a bold attempt to create a more broadly based, inclusive Kuomintang regime, one that would tolerate dissent and organized electoral competition. Although Chiang died before the full effects of his reforms could be felt, by the mid-1990s Taiwan had emerged as the leading democratic success story in East Asia. By the turn of the millennium, the peaceful electoral replacement of the Kuomintang by the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party marked the culmination of a remarkably successful, wholly peaceful democratic transition.

In South Korea, the "hard authoritarian" military regime of General Chun Doo-hwan faced rising popular protest in the 1980s. The regime's brutal suppression of anti-government demonstrations in Kwangju in 1980, coupled with deteriorating economic conditions, had created a volatile mix of rising social unrest. With students and workers taking to the streets in large numbers in the summer of 1987, demanding an end to military rule, and with South Korea slated to host the Summer Olympic Games a year later, in 1988, Chun faced a painful choice: to crack down hard on protesters (and thereby risk global opprobrium on the eve of the Seoul Olympics), or to hand over the reins of power to reform-minded civilians (and thereby relinquish authoritarian control). In the event, Chun—like Chiang Ching-kuo—chose the path of reform.

Although intensified socioeconomic and political stresses were a necessary condition for systemic reform in Taiwan, the Soviet Union, and South Korea, they were not a sufficient condition. Without the decisive leadership of Gorbachev, Chiang and Chun, Russia, Taiwan and South Korea might look quite different today. One need only consider the rising popular unrest faced by Burmese leaders in the late 1980s (or China's 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations) to appreciate that political reform is not always or necessarily chosen over cracking-down when "hard authoritarian" leaders confront mounting popular unrest. The key, then, is the confluence of systemic stress and leadership receptivity. As suggested earlier, such confluence is extremely difficult to predict in advance.

The Relevance of the Soviet and Taiwanese Models

Although it is relatively easy to find examples of "democratic breakthrough" in the 1980s, it is more difficult to assess the degree of relevance, or fit, between these cases and the current Chinese political situation. Are there sufficient similarities that might point to the likelihood of major political reforms being introduced by China's new fourth generation leaders? Is there anything in their collective demographic profile that might suggest a capacity for systemic innovation? On the one hand, China in 2002 is arguably beset by societal stresses equal to (albeit different from) those confronting Mikhail Gorbachev, Chiang Ching-kuo, and Chun Doo-hwan in the late 1980s. In China, as a cumulative result of industrial reforms launched over the past 15 years, thousands of unprofitable, inefficient state-owned enterprises have been shut down or merged, creating a dramatic rise in urban unemployment (currently estimated unofficially at 16-20 million, roughly 7-8 percent of China's urban work force). In the absence of adequately funded retirement programs and unemployment benefits for displaced workers, there has been a sharp upsurge in the incidence of labor unrest throughout the country—including sporadic acts of collective violence against industrial employers and local government officials. This malaise has been exacerbated, *inter alia*, by mounting popular discontent over rampant official corruption; dramatic and rising rural vs. urban and coastal vs. interior inequities in income distribution; predatory extraction by rural officials of exorbitant taxes, levees, and user fees from impoverished rural dwellers; and a banking system plagued by cronyism and awash in bad loans. These various focal points of societal stress have yet to reach the point of criticality where they might coalesce or metastasize into an organized challenge to the Communist Party. Nevertheless, the government's coercive overreaction to a peaceful protest by members of the Falun Gong in 1999, to give but one example, illustrates the continued insecurity of China's leaders. Some outside observers have even begun to predict—perhaps wishfully—the regime's imminent demise.

In such a situation of mounting sociopolitical stress, China's entry into the WTO holds the potential for further exacerbating the country's socioeconomic problems—e.g., by substantially increasing the pressure of foreign competition on such long-protected, inefficient (but critical) economic sectors as farming, heavy machinery, telecommunications, and transportation. If unemployment should spike sharply in these sectors, and if economic growth should slow appreciably from the recent eight percent annual average to a more modest five or six percent—a development many economists consider likely—the Party could face an additional, substantial loss of popular confidence.

The Search for Political Solutions

Partly in response to such problematic developments, both real and anticipated, Chinese leaders have begun to call for the CCP to update its antiquated mission statement and revive its sagging public prestige. Already, three of Deng Xiaoping's original "four cardinal principles"—adherence to socialism, the people's democratic dictatorship, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought—have been attenuated to the point of near-irrelevancy. Only the fourth principle—unquestioned obedience to Party leadership—has retained its original importance. But this principle, too, is tottering; and the CCP itself is acknowledged—by no less an authority than Jiang Zemin—to be in need of a thorough-going mission overhaul.

In the spring of 2000 Jiang launched a "Three Represents" (*sange daibiao*) campaign, a nationwide public relations blitz calling for the CCP to represent not just the class interests of the workers and peasants, as in the past, but the "advanced forces of production, advanced culture, and the interests of the broad masses." Though intended to broaden the Party's appeal, Jiang's "Three Represents" reportedly evoked a very mixed response in Chinese society, ranging from lukewarm support to apathy and downright cynicism.

In a related attempt to reform the Party from within, on July 1, 2001, Jiang called for the admission of capitalist entrepreneurs into the CCP. This speech evoked a firestorm of controversy, however, and was subsequently criticized from both right and left. From the right, Jiang was chided for delivering his speech without having sought the prior approval of the Politburo's Standing Committee, ostensibly in violation of established norms of collective leadership; from the left he was criticized by leading Party conservatives for virtually inviting China's *nouveau riche* bourgeoisie to capture the CCP from within. Such swirling controversy served to underline the difficulty of implementing even limited institutional reforms from above in Leninist systems.

At the August 2001 summer leadership meeting in Beidaihe, Jiang stressed that if the CCP wanted to retain its leadership mantle, it had no choice but to change from a Party representing workers and peasants to a "party of the whole people" (*quanmin dang*). Reiterating his previous call to admit capitalist entrepreneurs and other new classes into the Party, Jiang called for a second round of "thought emancipation" (the first having been initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1979), stressing the need to "progress with the times."

Although the precise implications of Jiang's exhortation were unclear, policy advisors close to the CCP general secretary have gone well beyond his minimalist call for within-Party reform. For the past two years, analysts at Beijing's Central Party School, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and various Chinese think tanks have actively studied the political dynamics of Western Europe's social democratic parties and political systems. Since the summer of 2000, several top Chinese leaders—including fourth generation's heir apparent Hu Jintao—have traveled to Western Europe where, among other things, they have held discussions on party organization with leaders of the German SPD and the British Labor Party. While it would require a substantial stretch of political imagination to foresee the purposeful reinvention of the CCP as a European-style social democratic party, the fact that Chinese leaders are openly examining alternative political forms is significant in itself.

The biggest obstacle to such an orderly transition is the fact that it is extremely difficult to control the pace and momentum of political reform once it has begun—as both Mikhail Gorbachev and Chun Doo-hwan discovered belatedly (and quite painfully). Having set in motion the forces of within-system political reform, both men were overwhelmed by the march of events. Of the major instigators of democratic reform in the 1980s, only Chiang

Ching-kuo is today remembered as a true "hero" in his own society—perhaps because he died before his mistakes could come back to haunt him. In any event, the problem with trying to introduce gradual, piecemeal democratic reforms within a "hard authoritarian" regime is that the introduction of a little bit of political freedom and accountability, like a little bit of marketization or a little bit of pregnancy, tends to generate uncontrollable momentum.

A key difference between "hard" authoritarian regimes and "soft" ones lies in the presence of at least some political accountability in the latter. Although neither Singapore nor Hong Kong would qualify as full electoral democracies, top leaders in both systems are at least indirectly accountable; in both systems there are competitive parties; and ordinary citizens elect at least some of their representatives. Thus far, the political will to undertake such far-reaching institutional redesign in China has been conspicuous mainly by its absence.

Although *radical* top-down regime transformation is not considered likely in the near future, might not a worsening of the socioeconomic stresses mentioned earlier help to overcome elite resistance to partial systemic reform? Under such circumstances, might we not reasonably expect China's fourth generation leaders to experiment with more inclusive, hybrid forms of "soft authoritarian" governance? This would presumably involve relaxing present restrictions on unofficial religious and social organizations, enlarging the scope of political and intellectual tolerance, and strengthening the autonomy and efficacy of existing "consultative" bodies such as the National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the PRC's eight existing "democratic parties"—relics of the CCP's "united front" policies of the 1950s traditionally disparaged by critics as "flowerpots" because of their close control and supervision by the CCP. This is precisely the direction in which former CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang was moving before he was purged in the spring of 1989 for displaying excessive sympathy for pro-democracy student demonstrators. Since Zhao's purge, serious political reform has been conspicuously absent from the leadership's agenda.

But times—and leaders—change. Most significant, perhaps, is the fact that none of the top fourth generation leaders slated for promotion at the 16th Party Congress has a deeply-vested personal or political interest in upholding, at all costs, the regime's official verdict on the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen Massacre. The anticipated retirement of Jiang Zemin and Li Peng at (or soon after) the 16th Party Congress will remove from power those whose reputations and legacies would stand to suffer most from a reassessment of the June 4 debacle. As premier of the State Council in 1989, Li Peng was the leading governmental proponent of a hard-line response to student demonstrators. By the same token, as Deng Xiaoping's hand-picked successor, Jiang Zemin has been duty-bound to honor Deng's injunction never to "reverse the verdict" on Tiananmen. No top level fourth generation leaders—not Hu Jintao, not Wen Jiabao, not Wu Bangguo nor even Jiang's protégé, Zeng Qinghong—has such an overriding obligation, personal or political, to reject out-of-hand a pragmatic reassessment of the events of May-June 1989. (Indeed, this may be one reason why Jiang Zemin and Li Peng have reportedly been reluctant to retire fully at the 16th Party Congress.)

Moreover, unlike their third-generation predecessors, the fourth generation leaders are entirely a product of post-revolutionary political socialization. Not a single fourth generation leader joined the Party or the Army prior to the birth of the PRC in 1949. Members of this generation thus tend to be more flexible politically and ideologically than their predecessors. Where China's third generation elites are sometimes referred to as "socialist technocrats" because of their entry into administrative/political roles in the Soviet-inspired 1950s, a different label can be applied to the fourth generation—viz., "market technocrats." Overwhelmingly, these rising elites, now mostly in their late 50s, joined the CCP in the 1960s and early 1970s. Most were recruited to responsible political/administrative roles in the early years of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms. To a considerable extent, their political views and orientations were heavily influenced by the traumatic experiences of the Cultural Revolution.

Given these demographic characteristics, and the "routinization of charisma" that normally follows by two or three generations a revolutionary change of regimes, China's fourth generation leaders may be expected to display (as did Gorbachev, Chiang and Chun before them) a greater willingness to examine

various "soft authoritarian" alternatives to the continuation of an increasingly dysfunctional status quo. In this connection, it is relevant to note that among the few remaining Communist states, only Cuba and North Korea—both still in the grip of first-generation charismatic founders or their immediate offspring—have remained implacably hostile to systemic reform.

Beyond the Fourth generation: Political Reform in the Long Run

If the fourth generation should prove capable of modest but measurable *quantitative* movement in the direction of "soft authoritarian" political pluralism and openness, then—barring unforeseen economic or political crises—a *qualitative* breakthrough might be expected to occur within about a decade, with the rise to power of the *fifth* generation. For it is the fifth generation of cosmopolitan, Western educated, entrepreneurial Chinese elites, wholly untainted by the shadow of Tiananmen and largely indifferent to the imperatives of Deng's "four cardinal principles," that would seem to offer the greatest hope for a genuine democratic breakthrough in China.

Signs of inter-generational differences are not hard to find. At a recent conference on political reform held in Beijing, political scientists from China and abroad openly discussed such once-taboo subjects as press freedom, multi-party democracy, and leadership succession. When a well-known fourth generation reform theorist took the floor at the conference to extol the virtues of a so-called "Third Way"—an institutional compromise between single-party authoritarianism and multi-party democracy—younger members of the audience, impatient with the slow, halting progress of political reform to date, were heard to hiss audibly.[1]

Although the simple passage of time would thus seem to favor the forces of gradual political evolution in China, there is nonetheless a possibility of more discontinuous change. A sudden, sharp economic downturn, for example, accompanied by accelerated and potentially metastasizing sociopolitical discontent, is also plausible. Would such a scenario give rise to a democratic breakthrough as under Gorbachev or Chiang Ching-kuo? Or would it produce an instinctive Leninist resort to violent repression, a là Tiananmen? While no-one can say for certain, it is at least plausible to conjecture that China's fourth generation leaders—though they assume power with little in their backgrounds that would augur bold innovation—may prove more politically far-sighted and less risk-averse than their backgrounds would otherwise suggest. As the cases of Gorbachev and Chiang Ching-kuo suggest, "muddling through" may not be a viable long-term option for Leninist regimes confronted with the pluralizing pressures of global information flows, thriving markets, and rising citizen expectations.

The Fourth generation is arriving on the political scene at a critical moment in China's modern history. The country today exhibits greater creative energy, greater intellectual diversity, greater socioeconomic dynamism, and less stifling political dogmatism than at any time in memory. But China's problems—rising inequality, urban unemployment, rural stagnation, rampant corruption, and a banking system teetering on the brink of insolvency, *inter alia*—are also daunting. Harnessing the Chinese Leviathan and guiding it with minimal social friction and disruption into the 21st century is the biggest challenge facing China's new leaders. Other things being equal, the fourth generation is arguably better equipped to deal with this challenge than any previous group of Chinese leaders. How they respond to the vicissitudes of a rapidly changing world, however, will depend, as always, on a combination of talent, vision, political will—and just plain luck.

Endnote

1. *Reuters* (Beijing), July 19, 2002.

Four Top Contenders in the Fourth Generation Leadership

Compiled by Cheng Li

Name	Brief bio	Post (current/future)	Network	Strength	Weakness
Hu Jintao	Born in 1942, Jiangsu; native Anhui; engineer by training; CCP functionary; head of Communist Young League; Party secretary of Guizhou and Tibet.	Current: vice president, Politburo Standing Committee member, vice chairman, Central Military Commission. Future (anticipated): president and CCP general secretary.	1) "Qinghua Clique;" 2) Chinese Communist Youth League; 3) Central Party School.	1) designated-successor to Jiang Zemin; 2) solid power base; 3) low-profile; 4) known for nationalist appeal, esp. to young people; 5) popular among the public; 6) acceptable by both left and right.	1) no connection with the military; 2) no concrete achievements; 3) no credentials in economic or foreign policy.
Wen Jiabao	Born in 1942, Tianjin; engineer by training; CCP functionary; chief of staff, CCP General Office.	Current: vice premier; Politburo member. Future (anticipated): Premier.	1) close association with Zhu Rongji; 2) none of his own.	1) work experiences as chief of staff for three general secretaries of the CCP; 2) broad leadership experiences in various sectors, esp. in agriculture and finance/banking; 3) no factional background; 4) popular among the public.	1) no power base; 2) no connection with the military; 3) no provincial level leadership experience.
Zeng Qinghong	Born in 1939, Jiangsu; native Jiangxi; engineer by training; CCP functionary; chief of staff, CCP General Office.	Current: head, CCP Organization Department; Politburo alternate member. Future (anticipated): standing member of Politburo.	1) close association with Jiang Zemin; 2) "Shanghai Gang;" 3) princeling.	1) a skilled tactician; 2) currently in charge of personnel affairs; 3) Jiang's successful consigliore.	1) unpopular with many officials; 2) princeling background; 3) no experience in economic or foreign policy; 4) resented as Jiang's hatchet-man.
Li Changchun	Born in 1944, Liaoning; engineer by training; industrial manager; mayor of Shenyang; governor of Liaoning; Party secretary of Henan and Guangdong.	Current: Party secretary of Guangdong; Politburo member. Future (anticipated): executive vice premier; Politburo Standing Committee member.	1) close association with Jiang Zemin; 2) close association with many provincial leaders.	1) reputation for handling tough jobs; 2) relatively young; 3) experiences in three major provinces: Liaoning, Henan and Guangdong.	1) some of his associates involved in corruption scandals; 2) often seen as a protégé of Jiang Zemin.

A Comparison of the Characteristics of the 3rd and 4th Generation of Leaders

Collective Characteristics	The 3rd Generation	The 4th Generation
Age in 2002	Between late 60s and mid 70s	Between late 40s and early 60s
Major Historical Event during Their Formative Years	The Socialist Transformation (1949-58)	The Cultural Revolution (1966-76)
Educational Background: Field Level Foreign trained	 – Mainly technocrats – Mainly college graduates – Many trained in the Soviet Union in the 1950s	 – Mainly technocrats, with some economists and lawyers – Increasing number of Master/Ph.D. degree holders – Some younger leaders trained in the West in the 1980s
Political Solidarity	Share strong bonding experience	Lacking political solidarity because they fought with each other during the Cultural Revolution
Ideological Commitment	More dogmatic	Less dogmatic and more open-minded because of disillusionment following the Cultural Revolution
Work Experience	Primarily as CCP functionaries and industrial managers	More diverse work experiences (some were assigned to distant regions after college graduation and others were "sent-down youths" during the Cultural Revolution)
Political Network	Civilian leaders with bureaucratic affiliation (e.g., Ministry of Petroleum Industry & Ministry of First Machinery Industry) Military leaders with Field Army association	Many advanced their careers through Chinese Communist Youth League, and/or worked as *mishu* (personal secretaries) to senior leaders. Some military leaders advanced their careers through military academy ties (e.g., National Defense University)
Economic Policy Orientation	Emphasis on coastal development and large-scale urban construction	Emphasis on more balanced regional development and the establishment of a social safety-net

Note: This table is based on Cheng Li, *China's Leaders: The New Generation*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001).

RECENT ASIA PROGRAM PUBLICATIONS

Special Report: China's "Credibility Gap": Public Opinion and Instability in China
Martin King Whyte, Jie Chen, Edward Friedman, Yongming Zhou, August 2002

Special Report: China Enters the WTO: The Death Knell for State-Owned Enterprises?
Dorothy J. Solinger, Lawrence C. Reardon, June 2002

Special Report: Scholars under Siege? Academic and Media Freedom in China
Perry Link, Richard Madsen, Chin-Chuan Lee, Yongming Zhou, April 2002

Special Report: Undercurrents in Japanese Politics
Ellis S. Krauss, Patricia L. Maclachlan, Aiji Tanaka, Steven R. Reed, Ofer Feldman, Ikuko Toyonaga, February *2002*

Special Report: Old Game or New? Corruption in Today's Indonesia
Nono Anwar Makarim, Robert N. Hornick, William S. Cole, December 2001

Special Report: Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: A Threat to American Interests?
Steven I. Levine, Alexei D. Voskressenski, Jeanne L. Wilson, September 2001

Special Report: Globalization: The Agent of Good Governance?
Chai-anan Samudavanija, Chan Heng Chee, Alasdair Bowie, August 2001

Working Paper: Japan's Official Development Assistance: Recent Issues and Future Directions
Masahiro Kawai and Shinji Takagi, August 2001

Special Report: China's Political Succession and Its Implications for the United States
Andrew Scobell, Murray Scot Tanner, Cheng Li, June 2001

Special Report: China-Japan Relations: Old Animosities, New Possibilities
David Arase, Joshua Fogel, Mike Mochizuki, Quansheng Zhao, January 2001

Special Report: The Origins of Korean Democracy
John Kie-chiang Oh, Jacqueline Pak, January 2001

Special Report: Theater Missile Defense and U.S. Foreign Policy Interests in Asia
David M. Finkelstein, David R. Tanks, Zhenqiang Pan, Ming Zhang, October 2000

Special Report: U.S.-China Relations since the End of the Cold War
Craig Thomas, Stanley Roth, Minxin Pei, Merle Goldman, Xing Qu, Dimon Liu, Cal Cohen, Jiemian Yang, Kun-shuan Chiu, Robert Suettinger, Xinbo Wu, Arthur Waldron, August 2000

Special Report: "Us" Versus "Them": Cultural Nationalism in Japanese Textbooks
Alexei T. Kral, July 2000

A copy of any publication can be obtained free of charge by contacting the Asia Program. Please include your name, address, and the title of the desired publication.

The Woodrow Wilson Center Asia Program
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027
Ph: 202-691-4020 Fax: 202-691-4058
Email: asia@wwic.si.edu http://www.wilsoncenter.org

ONE WOODROW WILSON PLAZA, 1300 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20004-3027

Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars