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ASIA PROGRAM



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China's Political Succession and Its Implications for the United States

ANDREW SCOBELL • MURRAY SCOT TANNER • CHENG LI

Introduction

GANG LIN

China's top leader Jiang Zemin is scheduled to resign from his post as Party boss at the 16th national congress of the Chinese Communist Party in the fall of 2002. The following spring he will step down as China's president during the country's Tenth National People's Congress. If the Party leadership can be smoothly transferred from Jiang to his designated successor Hu Jintao, it will mark the first routine power transition without the impetus of a political crisis or the death of the top leader in the history of the People's Republic of China. However, the identity of China's next leader is contingent upon many uncertain factors, including:

- Will Jiang Zemin cling to the powerful chairmanship of the Party's Military Affairs Commission and rule from "behind the curtain" after 2002?
- Will Hu Jintao be able to control the Chinese military?
- Will China's "fourth generation" of leaders endorse Hu's leadership and replace the "third generation" as the principal force in Beijing's ruling hierarchy over the next few years?
- Is Beijing likely to initiate significant political reforms in an effort to maintain social stability and economic prosperity, or continue to stagnate politically by manipulating the widespread nationalism and neo-conservatism inside China?



- Will Beijing, as part of its leadership transition, adopt a more flexible policy toward the United States as well as the rest of the world? At a February 21 seminar on "China's Political Succession and Its Implications for the United States" sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Center's Asia Program, four distinguished experts on Chinese politics explored China's possible power structure and policy direction after next year's Party congress. Panelists agreed that Hu Jintao will become China's next top leader. They differed, however, as to whether Jiang will remain influential and what will be the political agenda for the new leadership in the years to come. Incorporating three essays contributed by seminar speakers, this special report looks at Beijing's upcoming political succession and its implications for China's domestic development and foreign relations.

In the first essay, **Andrew Scobell** of the U.S. Army War College argues that it is unlikely that Jiang Zemin will vacate all his official positions and fade away after the Party's 16th congress in 2002. Jiang is reluctant to relinquish

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power and wants to leave a legacy of great accomplishments comparable to his two predecessors, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Given Jiang's good health and the allegiance of military commanders to his leadership, he could remain China's paramount leader for another decade, Scobell maintains. After Jiang resigns from his positions of Party general secretary and state president, he will still control Beijing's general policy direction and be prone to intervening in political crises or controversies. Scobell contends that Jiang's continued status as China's paramount leader will help ensure an important degree of continuity in U.S.-China relations.

Likewise, the second essay by **Scot Tanner** of Western Michigan University maintains that Jiang's designated successor, Hu Jintao, is likely to inherit Jiang's general secretaryship and presidency, while Jiang will emulate Deng by continuing to control the Chinese military and rule from "behind the curtain." According to Tanner, Hu's dilemma is that anything he does to strengthen his own power base risks eroding Jiang's trust; but actions designed to reassure Jiang risk leaving Hu too weak when Jiang passes from the scene. At present, Hu has apparently promoted a noteworthy but hardly overwhelming cadre of allies into significant Party and state posts. No matter whether Jiang really trusts Hu, Tanner argues, Jiang lacks the power to dislodge Hu as designated successor and build sufficient support for an alternative candidate in Hu's place. However, once Hu takes over the general secretaryship next year, the willingness of Jiang to stand by Hu during a major political crisis will become the single greatest question in Hu's effort to beat the successor's dilemma.

In the third essay, **Cheng Li** of Hamilton College challenges four widespread misperceptions in the West regarding China's political succession. These misperceptions are that 1) Chinese leaders are inef-

fective, politically rigid and shortsighted; 2) a vicious power struggle is going on among various factions; 3) Chinese leaders can be divided into dichotomous groups such as hardliners vs. reformers; and 4) since some fourth generation leaders were trained in the United States, they may form a pro-American force in China's policy-making circle. Li contends that the fourth generation of leaders is less dogmatic, more capable and more diversified than previous political generations in the Party's history. Chinese politics has shifted from an all-powerful single leader to a greater collective leadership, and Chinese leaders are more likely to unite than to fight among themselves. Li believes Jiang's successors will likely push Jiang aside and accelerate China's political reform, but modify the pace of economic reforms. Western-trained Chinese leaders will still be a minority in the foreseeable future, and China's new leaders are cynical about the alleged moral superiority of the United States, Li concludes.

In commentary delivered during the seminar, **Carol Hamrin** of George Mason University argued that China is unlikely to experience sweeping change during the period of power succession. Jiang may not entirely leave China's political stage after the Party's 16th Congress, and political reform in China will remain marginal, given the widespread money politics and ongoing neo-conservatism in China. On the other hand, social issues, the global context and the factors of Hong Kong and Taiwan will continue to force China's new leaders to be more open and transparent in dealing with domestic and international affairs.

Offering various perspectives on Beijing's upcoming political succession as well as its implications for China's domestic development and foreign relations, this Special Report reveals the difficulty of evaluating political changes and continuities in this complicated country. In the absence of political transparency and institutionalization in China, it is difficult to avoid speculation in examining Beijing's leadership transition. Studies of China's political succession could be enhanced, however, by looking at economic, social, cultural and foreign factors most pertinent to Beijing's internal politics. We hope this Special Report will contribute to a better understanding of China's upcoming leadership transition and its implications for the United States. ●

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Jiang Zemin and China's Leadership Transition: Legacies, Longevity, and Lines

ANDREW SCOBELL

When political leaders think about political succession, they also tend to think about their legacies. They think about their most significant accomplishments and how they will be remembered. Of course many leaders become addicted to the power and privilege of their positions and seek ways to prolong their leadership tenures. Eventually, however, even long-serving leaders must face their own mortality, reconcile themselves to how they will be remembered, and plan for the succession.

When we examine the case of the People's Republic of China, it is worthwhile to consider both the process of political succession and the nature of China's current paramount leader Jiang Zemin. A fundamental aspect of the looming leadership transition in China is Jiang's fate: Will he leave quietly after presiding over the 16th Party Congress in 2002? I posit four possible scenarios.

First, Jiang could actually retire. Jiang could gradually vacate all his official Party, government and military positions and fade away. I view this scenario as extremely unlikely.

Second, Jiang could be ousted, possibly in a military coup d'état. His removal is certainly possible in the event of a major national crisis, but I see this as an unlikely scenario. Still, military coups — one successful and one unsuccessful — have occurred in the post-1949 China. Significantly, the two I have identified occurred when "leadership transition arrangements were in flux."¹

Third, Jiang could die in office of natural causes. While this is certainly possible, his health is extremely good. He is a slightly overweight septuagenarian who enjoys eating but exercises regularly — swimming is his preferred activity.

Fourth, Jiang could stay in power for another decade or so. Jiang is most reluctant to retire and will do his utmost to remain in a position of power and influence.

I argue that the most likely scenario is that Jiang Zemin stays in power for another decade. In my view Jiang will not willingly give up power for at least four reasons. The first two have to do with the nature of the succession process in contemporary China, while the second two are related to the personal drive of the man himself. This essay first considers the succession process itself, with particular attention to the role of the paramount leader and the process of leadership selection. Second, personal ambitions are examined — specifically, Jiang's fondness for power and his quest for an enduring legacy.

SUCCESSION PROCESS

1. Role of the Paramount Leader

In Chinese communist politics, political power tends to be concentrated not in institutions but in individuals. The most powerful individual is usually referred to as the paramount political leader. This person does not necessarily hold a formal position of authority, but exerts considerable power and influence over all major foreign and domestic policymaking, though not over routine day-to-day decisions. Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping exerted such control during their respective tenures. While Jiang is not as powerful or unchallenged as these predecessors are, he nevertheless holds substantial authority. Of course he is not an absolute dictator and must build consensus and seek compromises with other senior leaders. However, Jiang's position is unlikely to be directly challenged. The position of paramount leader is sacrosanct and tends to be dependent on the health and longevity of the individual leader. While paramount leaders tend over time to become more removed from day-to-day political decision-making, they remain active in making general policy decisions and prone to intervening in crises or controversies. Here, it is important to make a distinction between "first line" and "second line" leadership in

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Chinese communist politics. A paramount leader and his generation of leaders tend not to walk away from power completely. Rather, they step back from the “first line” to positions of elder statesmen in the “second line.”² The paramount leader becomes a senior minister without portfolio, akin to the status of Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew.

A coup or ouster in early 21st century China would be unlikely except in the most extreme of circumstances. Only once has there been a successful (military) coup d’etat in the post-1949 China, and only once has a paramount leader been toppled peacefully from power. Significantly both occurred in the tumultuous 1970s at the tail end of the disastrous Cultural Revolution. The coup occurred with the arrest of the so-called Gang of Four in October 1976, while the peaceful ouster of Hua Guofeng several years later certainly qualifies as the dethroning of Mao’s putative successor.³ These unusual events occurred in times of great crisis and deep polarization in Chinese domestic politics. Moreover, the victims of these ousters were either so disliked or lacking in stature that they made easy targets. Furthermore, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) viewed them with outright hostility (in the case of the Gang of Four) or lukewarm approval (in the case of Hua Guofeng).

With regard to the PLA, Jiang is well positioned: he has skillfully managed to win the allegiance of military leaders and has turned a weakness into a strength. Jiang, unlike Mao or Deng, could claim no military experience or expertise. The decision several years ago to divest the PLA of its commercial holdings was not as controversial as it might have appeared and was not the civil-military confrontation that some depicted. It reflected a consensus decision by military and Party leaders to control corruption and strengthen military readiness. Jiang’s greatest crisis was over Taiwan policy in 1995, but he weathered it with flying colors. With Deng out of the picture because of illness, Jiang forged a consensus hard-line policy on Taiwan. Foreign Minister Qian Qichen took the brunt of criticism for insisting to his colleagues that he had been given assurances that the United States would never grant Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui a visa. Qian then had to eat crow when this happened. I contend that the missile tests and military exercises of 1995-1996 constituted a “baptism of fire” for Jiang in the eyes

of China’s soldiers.⁴ He won them over as a leader who would not blink in a crisis and was prepared to flex China’s military muscles when necessary.

The elite rules of the game in China today are such that no one wants to risk rocking the boat by directly challenging the incumbent paramount leader. While policies can be questioned and personnel selections rejected, the paramount leader himself remains largely unassailable. The pervasive fear of chaos or upheaval among China’s leaders is such that no individual or faction is likely to try anything that might signal elite instability and trigger unrest. Stability and unity are now the mantra of the elite. No one wants to risk adversely impacting the economy by launching a direct political challenge to Jiang. And Jiang, just like Mao and Deng, has proved adept at finding scapegoats for policy failures and deflecting blame for mistakes. Of course this could change in the event of a serious economic or foreign policy crisis.

2. Process and Precedent

The leadership transfer mechanism in the PRC boils down to successor selection by incumbent. That is, the paramount leader chooses his own “heir presumptive.” This incidentally has tended to be the norm in communist regimes.⁵ This is the precedent in China: Mao did it and Deng followed the same process. But this procedure can be long, tortuous and problematic. Mao found it difficult to decide on a suitable successor and considered Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai before ultimately settling on the lackluster Hua Guofeng. Deng’s selection of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang fell from favor. Serving as an anointed successor-in-waiting is a tricky business and is fraught with pitfalls. The art of pleasing one’s patron requires quiet competence, devoid of controversy, all accomplished without overshadowing or embarrassing the paramount leader.

Once the paramount leader selects his successor, he then retires to the “second line” from active day-to-day “first line” leadership. He still attends key meetings and reviews all major documents. In a real sense he is there looking over the shoulder of his protégé.

JIANG’S ADDICTION AND QUEST

3. Penchant for Power

Not to be overlooked is Jiang Zemin’s great reluc-



tance to relinquish power. The man clearly loves being the most powerful individual in China and the considerable perks that go with the job. He enjoys the limelight: hob-knobbing with world leaders and being front-page news. Of course he wants everything to be scripted and designed to flatter and enhance his image. Thus while he is usually calm and composed in the spotlight, he flew into a rage when a Hong Kong reporter posed an impertinent question at a November 2000 press conference in Beijing. Jiang relishes his role as China's head of state, presiding over the ceremonies marking the historic returns of Hong Kong and Macao to Chinese sovereignty. And Jiang took enormous pride in organizing an impromptu meeting of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council during last year's Millennium summit in New York. Jiang is rumored to have agreed in principle to establish the equivalent of the U.S. National Security Council.⁶ He is reportedly slated to become the head of this powerful organ, and hence Jiang will continue to hold a formal position of considerable power even after he vacates the posts of CCP general secretary in late 2002 and PRC president in early 2003.

4. Legacy of Greatness?

But even Jiang recognizes that at 74 years of age, his tenure as China's paramount leader is limited by his own mortality. He can count on perhaps another decade of reasonably good health. Undoubtedly his foremost personal goals are to secure his own place in history and ensure a smooth leadership transition. The two goals are clearly linked, since a successful handover of power to a political successor will serve to bolster his claim to greatness. Still, a fundamental question remains: what kind of legacy does Jiang want? Jiang is overshadowed by two larger than life figures: Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. It is inevitable that he would like to be favorably compared to these giants. How can he be judged worthy? Essentially there are two dimensions: length of leadership tenure and legacy of actual accomplishments. To compete in the first dimension, he must remain paramount leader for an extended period of time — preferably a decade or more. Mao ruled China for twenty-seven years, from the establishment of the PRC in 1949 until his death in 1976 (actually longer if one counts his tenure as leader of the communist movement since the mid-1930s). Deng ruled China for almost two decades,

from late 1978 until his death in February 1997. By contrast, Jiang can so far lay claim to being China's undisputed top leader for only four years.

The second dimension is the legacy of actual accomplishments. There are some strong hints as to how Jiang wishes to be remembered. While Mao is revered as the man who established the communist party-state and let the Chinese people "stand tall" and Deng is respected as the one who "let the Chinese people get rich," Jiang wants to be remembered as the leader who made China "a strong country." Jiang's chief cheerleader within the PLA, General Zhang Wannian, said as much at the 15th Party Congress in 1997.⁷ What are the specific goals Jiang might have in mind to show that China is strong? Economically, Jiang would like to see China become the largest economy in the world. In practical terms he will settle for China being admitted into the World Trade Organization (WTO). In the arena of sports, Jiang would like to preside over the hosting of a major global sporting event. No Chinese city has hosted an Olympics, and China has never served as the venue for a World Cup soccer tournament. China is still bitter about losing out to Australia for the 2000 Olympics. Jiang would love to have a major achievement in space exploration on his watch — a manned space flight seems possible within a decade or so. On the military side, a Chinese aircraft carrier or an enlarged nuclear arsenal to match that of the United States holds great appeal. Neither of these defense goals is likely to be attained if Jiang relinquishes all his official positions by 2003.

But the greatest feather in Jiang's cap would be making progress on unification with Taiwan. Achieving actual unification or reaching a signed agreement setting out a specific timeline for unification would be the ideal legacy. Indeed the continued separation of Taiwan and the mainland underscores the significant limitations of China's power. At present the PLA does not have the capability to seize Taiwan physically in an amphibious assault. While it could arguably impose a blockade or use missiles to wear the island down and possibly force Taipei to capitulate, such strategies are risky and invite U.S. intervention.⁸

Taiwan is at once Jiang's greatest potential achievement and the biggest albatross around his neck. Unification policy is traditionally the preserve of the paramount leader, and Jiang certainly recognizes that he must provide leadership in this area. Jiang clearly harbors ambitions to make progress on Taiwan; one



need only recall his all-but-forgotten Spring Festival speech in early 1995 in which he made an eight-point proposal for moving forward on unification with Taiwan.⁹ The proposal received lukewarm response from Taipei and was quickly overshadowed by the furor that followed Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States five months later. Moreover, after all the official hype surrounding the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macao, progress on political union with Taiwan has been non-existent. Indeed, some would argue progress on unification with Taiwan has actually regressed since the early 1990s.

Ideally, unification with Taiwan would come peacefully — but it is difficult for Beijing to envision this happening given the current climate of cross-strait relations and political trends on the island. Nevertheless, if Jiang could muster some imagination and boldness to go with his quest for a legacy, he just might have a fair shot at pulling off a spectacular negotiation coup to rocket him into the same orbit as Mao and Deng. Jiang could invite Taiwan's top leader Chen Shui-bian to China or, more dramatically, agree to visit Taiwan. If he were sufficiently magnanimous, Jiang could propose some kind of confederation, and offer a formula whereby Taiwan could have its own flag and membership in the United Nations in exchange for Taiwan formally acknowledging once and for all it is part of China. A gracious, generous, and bold act like this might even earn Jiang the Nobel Peace Prize (perhaps to be shared jointly with Chen). After all, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung won the 2000 Nobel Prize for Peace by traveling to Pyongyang and initiating a rapprochement between the two Koreas. And as Chen Shui-bian pointedly remarked: "If [both Koreas] can sit down why can't the leaders on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait sit down?"¹⁰ If Jiang took such an inspired step, his legacy would be assured.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Given the enthusiasm in the Bush administration for missile defense and Beijing's adamant opposition to this initiative, U.S.-China relations seem headed for a rocky period. However, China cannot afford to make missile defense the litmus test of the relationship. Still the issue will likely make the U.S.-China climate frosty. Taiwan will also remain an intractable issue in the relationship. Of course, it is the nexus of the two issues — TMD for Taiwan — that is particularly incendiary.

The climate of relations with the United States will serve to constrain or broaden Jiang's options as he seeks to secure his legacy, particularly vis-à-vis Taiwan. But Jiang's continued status as China's paramount leader should be good news for the United States. His presence will help ensure an important degree of continuity in the bilateral relationship and be a force for moderation and reconciliation. This should increase the likelihood that the United States and China will ride out the inevitable crises that seem likely to plague their bilateral relations in the early 21st century. ●

ENDNOTES

1. Andrew Scobell, "Military Coups in the People's Republic of China: Failure, Fabrication, or Fancy?" *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 14 (Spring 1995): 38. In my view the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976 qualifies as a successful coup while the attempted coup by the Lin family in 1971 rates as a coup attempt.
2. See, for example, Ian Wilson and You Ji, "Leadership by Lines: China's Unresolved Succession," *Problems of Communism* 39 (January-February 1990): 28-44.
3. On the arrest of the Gang of Four, see Scobell, "Military Coups in the People's Republic of China," pp. 35-37.
4. See the analysis in Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 253-54, 328. The 1995-1996 tensions marked the first crisis of the post-Deng era. See Andrew Scobell, "Show of Force: Chinese Soldiers, Statesmen, and the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly* 115 (Summer 2000): 229.
5. Myron Rush, *How Communist States Change Their Rulers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).
6. See, for example, Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "Will Jiang Zemin Be Able to Retain His Post Until 2007?" *Ping Kuo Jih Pao* (Hong Kong), January 17, 2001, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, January 17, 2001.
7. Cited in Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *The Era of Jiang Zemin* (Singapore: Prentice Hall, 1999), p. 210.
8. On the low probability of an all-out invasion, see Scobell, "Show of Force," p. 245; the alternative scenarios were suggested to the author by civilian and military researchers in Beijing and Shanghai in the spring and fall 2000.
9. Yun-han Chu, "Making Sense of Beijing's Policy Toward Taiwan: The Prospect of Cross-Strait Relations During the Jiang Zemin Era," in Hung-Mao Tien and Yun-han Chu, eds., *China under Jiang Zemin* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp. 193-212.
10. *Business Week* (international edition), August 14, 2000.



After Jiang, Hu? Can Hu Jintao Beat the “Successor’s Dilemma”?

MURRAY SCOT TANNER

Since shortly after Hu Jintao’s accession to the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) ruling Politburo Standing Committee in 1992 at the strikingly youthful age of 49, it has become increasingly apparent that Hu is the designated successor to assume the post of Party general secretary after General Secretary Jiang Zemin retires from that position at the 16th CCP Congress sometime late next year.¹ At present, the most widely expected scenario would be for Hu Jintao to inherit the general secretaryship in 2002 and the PRC presidency in the following year, with Jiang attempting to emulate Deng Xiaoping by continuing to rule from “behind the curtain.” This would be possible only if Jiang could retain the chairmanship of the Party’s Central Military Commission for another five years, until the 17th Party Congress in 2007. This speculation has been reinforced by Hu’s appointment as the Politburo Standing Committee member in charge of Party affairs and personnel in 1992, his selection as PRC vice president in early 1998, his promotion as the only civilian vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and the prominence afforded him by the media on such crucial issues as the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the effort to reduce the People’s Liberation Army’s involvement in business. A pivotal moment in the marking of Hu as successor occurred rather quietly last fall, when Jiang Zemin was apparently unable to secure the promotion of Zeng Qinghong — Jiang’s longtime deputy and Hu Jintao’s most obvious potential rival for the post of general secretary — as a full member of the Politburo at a Central Committee plenum.²

THE SUCCESSOR’S DILEMMA

When one surveys Hu Jintao’s meteoric 23-year rise from a deputy chief of construction in desperately poor Gansu province to the youngest member of the Politburo Standing Committee in 1992, it does not take any special expertise in Chinese politics to

recognize that Hu is an exceptionally skilled politician. But as Hu’s status as unofficially designated “successor” is increasingly acknowledged, it is clear that for at least the next several years Hu will have to navigate his way through the trickiest political game in any authoritarian system — what has come to be known as the “successor’s dilemma.”

The “successor’s dilemma” derives from the fact that China, like other authoritarian states, has no institutionalized system of leadership succession, and current leaders must designate loyal successors while still in powers themselves. Simply stated, the successor’s dilemma is this: while the current top leader is still alive and politically influential, the “successor” must maintain the trust and active support of the top leader. But the successor must also simultaneously establish his own independent power base that will maintain him when the current top leader is gone and can no longer help the successor. If, however, the successor is “too successful” in building an independent power base, this can leave the current top leader feeling threatened and fearing that the successor may be plotting to push the current leader out prematurely. The current leader may retaliate by undercutting the successor, or attempt to maintain his own power by simultaneously promoting one or more possible alternative successors — thereby forcing the main designated successor to “look over his shoulder” constantly and to reassure the current leader that the successor intends to loyally “wait his turn.” For the designated successor, the essence of the dilemma is that anything he does to strengthen his power base risks eroding the current leader’s trust; but actions designed to reassure the current leader risk leaving the successor too weak when the current leader passes from the scene. The current leader faces a mirror-image dilemma: moves to strengthen the designated successor risk creating a political Frankenstein; but failure to give the successor adequate support risks wrecking the leader’s own succession arrangements.³

This dilemma is difficult enough when stated in such boldly amoral, power-centric terms. But when one considers the major policy changes that often accompany a succession — particularly in a rapidly reforming system — the game takes on an entirely new layer of complexity. The current leader may insist on foreclosing certain policy options or reforms that the designated successor may see as essential to the health of the country and the successor's own long-term survival. Even efforts by the successor at “normal” policy change may be misinterpreted by the current leader as an attack on his legacy.

Rapid political change can further compound the successor's dilemma by transforming the nature of leadership power, especially in reforming Leninist states such as China. The process of reform and collapse in the European Leninist regimes a decade ago revealed that the power bases that Leninist leaders use in their successful rise to power — such as control of appointments, propaganda, and coercion — may fail to sustain those leaders in power through the reform process. These power sources may be supplanted by new and more decisive power bases — sometimes requiring new populist, mass media, plebicitary or even electoral skills. Nowhere was this point more dramatically illustrated than in the former Soviet Union, where Mikhail Gorbachev initially did an impressive job of consolidating the traditional sources of power.⁴ By late 1991, however, he looked pathetic and irrelevant as he handed over power to Boris Yeltsin — a popularly elected Russian president whom Gorbachev had once dismissed from the traditional seat of Soviet power, the Politburo. Men like Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze perfectly timed their “jump” away from relying on the “old” power sources to relying on “new” power sources. Had they turned their backs on the Party leadership a few years earlier, they might well have been consigned to the kind of permanent political irrelevance China's Zhao Ziyang suffers today. Gorbachev, by contrast, recognized the changing bases of power too late to save himself.

Given the extraordinary complexity of this multi-layered succession game of traditional power-acquisition, policy management, and power transition, it is little wonder that the “successor's dilemma” has even defeated many of the most skillful and/or ruthless politicians in the history of the CCP,

including Gao Gang, Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Jiang Qing, Hua Guofeng, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang. Indeed, in many ways, the game even defeated China's two top leaders — Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping — who failed to institutionalize successors who fully reflected their policy views. Given this abysmal record, we would do well to ponder seriously what it will take for even a skilled young politician such as Hu Jintao to beat the “successor's dilemma.” The purpose of this essay is to assess, admittedly very speculatively, Hu's effort to establish his power, and in particular, examine:

1. Hu's relations with his various political patrons and the state of his relationship with General Secretary Jiang Zemin. This will include a discussion of Hu's impressive capacity to work with “multiple patrons,” as well as an examination of Jiang's efforts to promote rivals to Hu Jintao such as his longtime assistant Zeng Qinghong.
2. Hu's success in establishing his own power base that is relatively independent from Jiang. This section will focus not only on Hu's efforts to place supporters loyal to him in key Party and state positions, but also on Hu's manipulation of issues that could strengthen his appeal to key power constituencies where he has not yet established his power through personnel appointments.
3. More speculatively, this essay will close with a few comments on Hu's capacity to develop new, less traditional sources of power that might sustain him in the event — seemingly likely — that China's political system undergoes substantial changes in the next five to ten years.

Throughout, this essay will be frank about the limits of our knowledge, and will try to highlight important questions about current leadership politics that require further research and close monitoring in the next couple of years.

HU JINTAO'S RISE: THE MANAGEMENT OF MULTIPLE PATRONS

Hu Jintao's rise to power demonstrates an impressive skill for attracting the dedicated support of a series of more senior political patrons who represented a fairly broad range of political views. Even more impressive is the fact that as Deng Xiaoping's reform



coalition splintered during the mid-1980s, and ever-deeper splits emerged among Hu Jintao's various patrons, Hu was nevertheless able not only to survive, but to accelerate his rise within the Party. Just how Hu was able to renew his support from one patron even as a prior benefactor of a different political stripe was being demoted or passing from the scene is a fascinating question for students of leadership politics. What seems apparent, however, is Hu's capacity to inspire confidence in a wide variety of senior leaders while taking care to appear personally non-threatening — all important skills for a man trying to beat the “successor's dilemma.”

Hu's first major promotions took place under the patronage of Song Ping, CCP first secretary in impoverished Gansu province, where Hu was assigned after graduating from the cradle of China's technocratic elite, Qinghua University (also Song's alma mater). According to various versions of the story, Song was impressed with Hu's work as deputy director of the Capital Construction Commission and groomed him for rapid promotion by first promoting him to head the provincial Communist Youth League (CYL), and then sending him back to Beijing to the Central Party School (CPS). There, CPS Vice President Jiang Nanxiang (a longtime ally of General Secretary Hu Yaobang) was equally taken with Hu and recommended him to Hu Yaobang, Hu Qili and, according to some versions, Qiao Shi. They, in turn, recruited Hu Jintao as the replacement for another up-and-comer, Wang Zhaoguo, as first secretary of the CYL. Between 1984 and 1985, Hu Yaobang lavished unusual public praise on Hu Jintao. In a famous October 1984 interview with *Ming Bao*, Hu Yaobang individually noted Hu Jintao (along with Wang Zhaoguo, Hu Qili, Li Changchun, Li Peng and Tian Jiyun) as one of the Party's most promising future leaders. He also singled out Hu Jintao for praise as the youngest Central Committee member (albeit an alternate member) selected at the 1982 12th Congress. Hu Yaobang also showed off the younger “two Hus” (Hu Jintao and Hu Qili) to Romanian strongman Nicolae Ceausescu and other visiting foreign leaders. Hu Jintao rapidly emerged as a favourite of the so-called “Communist Youth League faction” that dominated the Party's more reformist wing.⁵

In response to the rapid wholesale promotion of very young Party officials during the mid-1980s,

many older Party members began to make disparaging comparisons to the infamous “helicopter” promotions of unqualified young revolutionaries during the Cultural Revolution. Hu Jintao, according to some sources, was highly sensitive to the reactions of his elders to his already impressive advances, and began to display a capacity for being “non-threatening” that apparently still serves him in his quest to succeed Jiang Zemin. After serving a couple of years in the CYL, Hu reportedly took the initiative to request another appointment outside of Beijing, where many of the best new officials were being “seasoned” as provincial Party and government officials.⁶ In successive postings as party secretaries in two of China's poorest provinces — Guizhou (1985-88) and Tibet (1988-92) — Hu acquired a reputation within the Party as a vigorous advocate for economic reform and development of China's interior regions, but also a very tough political administrator. In the former post, he reportedly cracked down on corruption by “cadre kids.” Coming to Tibet in the wake of the 1987 riots, he replaced probably the most liberal administrator Beijing has ever posted to the region (Wu Jinghua) and soon oversaw the imposition of martial law in the spring of 1989.

The dismissal of Hu Yaobang in 1987 and the demotions of Wang Zhaoguo in 1988 and Hu Qili in 1989 suddenly deprived Hu Jintao of his most powerful patrons. The intense ideological struggles of this period also revealed the ideological and personal chasm that separated Hu's various patrons — the reformists Hu Yaobang, Hu Qili, and Wang Zhaoguo, the shifting Deng Xiaoping, and the increasingly conservative Song Ping, who was soon put in charge of the Central Organization Department. Hu was, in retrospect, extremely fortunate that his focus on the suppression of Tibet exempted him from taking sides in the Beijing intrigues of 1987-89. Thus, unlike many of the young appointees of the early 1980s, Hu Jintao's career did not stall after Tiananmen. We do not know exactly how Hu reinvigorated his connections with more conservative patrons. Some Hong Kong press sources from that period stress Song Ping's patronage, and tend to portray Hu Jintao as a conservative, even a stalking horse for Song and Deng Liqun.⁷ Other sources claim that while Song was instrumental in recommending Hu to Deng

Xiaoping, Hu's ruling strategy of combining economic growth with political repression in Tibet was crucial in convincing Deng that Hu had what it took to be a successor, and Deng "personally" marked Hu for promotion. The story is made all the more complex by the growing divide between Deng and Song after Deng insisted on accelerating economic reforms during his 1992 "southern tour."⁸ It was during the southern tour that Deng reportedly echoed Hu Yaobang's earlier words and publicly complimented Hu Jintao as a model successor and "a good man." In 1992 Hu jumped all the way from Central Committee member to the pivotal successor's post — Politburo Standing Committee member in charge of party affairs and organization.⁹ In assuming the organization portfolio, Hu was effectively taking over from Song Ping. Once again, at a time of great ideological and personal division within the Party leadership, and among his own patrons, Hu Jintao demonstrated his ability to appeal to both supporters and critics of reform, maintain ties with each, and impress them that he was a man who should be entrusted with additional highly sensitive assignments.¹⁰

HU AND JIANG ZEMIN

By the mid-1990s, however, Hu Jintao had, for the most part, survived and surpassed all of the figures who were pivotal in his promotion during the period from 1979 to 1992 — a risky and exposed position for a potential successor. And indeed, most of the doubt about Hu's prospects for beating the "successor's dilemma" concerns the question of how enthusiastically Jiang supports Hu. Jiang Zemin is not one of Hu's historic patrons, and before 1992 they apparently did not work together. Indeed, most journalistic reporting on the succession stresses that within Beijing political circles it is generally accepted that Hu Jintao is not even Jiang's first choice to succeed him as general secretary. For more than a year, many Beijing political sources have told Hong Kong and Western correspondents and analysts that Jiang would prefer to strengthen the position of his longtime personal assistant from Shanghai, Politburo alternate Zeng Qinghong. At the 1997 15th Party Congress, shortly after Deng's death, Jiang reportedly promoted Zeng to head the Central Organization Department, the ideal position from which to build a power base to challenge

Hu. (Hu Jintao, however, apparently continued as the Politburo Standing Committee member in charge of this sector — suggesting a clear rivalry for control of personnel.) Last October during the Central Committee plenum, many sources reported that Jiang pushed to have Zeng promoted to a full member of the Politburo, but encountered too much resistance. Assuming these reports are true, and Jiang was unable to place such a close ally as a full member of the Politburo despite substantial effort, they would signal that Jiang's power within the Politburo might be substantially less than it was after his impressive accession to power and elimination of his rivals (especially Qiao Shi) in 1997-1998. It further underscores that Jiang's future capacity to rule Hu Jintao from "behind the screen" will certainly be far less than Deng's capacity to do so with Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang and Jiang himself.

Still, despite these reports, I would argue that there is also substantial evidence that even if Jiang Zemin is not wildly enthusiastic about Hu Jintao as a successor, he nevertheless places substantial faith in him, as have several senior Party leaders before Jiang. Over the past several years Jiang has entrusted Hu with a number of sensitive and even risky political assignments.

Hu has reportedly been placed in charge of the leadership group making personnel arrangements for next year's 16th Party Congress.¹¹ Based on guidelines for promotion and retirement age, the congress is expected to see a 50-60 percent turnover in the full and alternate members of the Central Committee, and perhaps a change of five out of seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee.¹²

In the wake of the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy, Jiang selected Hu to deliver the official televised address to the nation. The speech reflected Beijing's conspiratorial interpretation of the bombing and endorsed the "legality" of the widespread demonstrations outside U.S. diplomatic facilities. It was also, however, the first public government statement to make the case to the Chinese people — however obliquely and gently — that because of the fundamental importance of the "opening up" policy and the U.S.-China relationship, the two countries would eventually have to find some way of getting past the emotional crisis.¹³



Hu has apparently played an important role in one of Jiang Zemin's most sensitive policy initiatives — his efforts to substantially reduce the involvement of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the civilian security and judicial organs in business activities.¹⁴

In recent years, Jiang has apparently decided to increase Hu Jintao's visibility and prestige. Hu has become something of a globetrotter, representing Jiang on a large number of state visits. The same is true in military affairs. Since Hu's promotion to vice chairman of the Party's Central Military Commission (CMC), and particularly in the past six months, Jiang has had Hu accompany him on many of Jiang's ceremonial visits and inspections of military units. Jiang has also allowed Hu to announce a number of official military policy decisions, including the politically pleasant task of announcing the promotion of key officers to the rank of general.

Finally, Hu has been a key figure in the investigation of several of the massive scandals currently plaguing the leadership. Hu has personally been involved in reorganizing the Communist Party committees and governments of Beijing and Fujian province, and some reports have indicated that Hu was specifically in charge of the investigation of military cadres implicated in the Xiamen smuggling scandal. In the Fujian case, Hu's longtime Youth League associate Song Defu was recently chosen to take over as Party secretary in the revenue-rich province.¹⁵

As we examine this list of important political assignments, it is reasonable to raise questions about the prevailing Hong Kong journalistic interpretation — that Jiang strongly desires to supplant Hu Jintao with Zeng Qinghong or other allies with whom Jiang is personally much closer. Even if Hu is not Jiang Zemin's favorite potential successor, it at least appears that, as with Song Ping, Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping, Hu Jintao has won at least a substantial measure of respect from Jiang Zemin. Still, in the successor's dilemma, the question of whether Jiang gives Hu his "respect" rather than his "enthusiastic support" could determine the amount of tension in the relationship if and when Jiang steps aside as general secretary. We must also frankly recognize the limitations of our information, and accept that a number of incidents in Jiang and Hu's relationship are equally compatible with two very

different interpretations of their relationship — that Jiang trusts and respects Hu enough to support his promotion, or simply that whatever Jiang's reservations and preferences, he lacks the power to dislodge Hu as designated successor and build sufficient support for an alternative candidate in Hu's place. Looming over all of these calculations is the spectre of Deng Xiaoping's withdrawal of support for Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang during political crises in 1987 and 1989. Once Hu takes over the general secretary's post, the willingness of Jiang Zemin to stand by Hu during a significant policy disagreement or a major political crisis must, for now, remain the single greatest question in Hu's effort to beat the successor's dilemma.

BUILDING HIS OWN INDEPENDENT POWER BASE

Relations with the Military

What, then, of Hu's ability to beat the successor's dilemma by placing his own allies in positions of power, and perhaps even eventually being able to supplant Jiang Zemin? If Jiang's willingness to back Hu Jintao in a pinch is the greatest question looming over the succession, the second must surely be Hu Jintao's relations with the PLA. As noted earlier, all available sources suggest that Jiang intends to cling to the chairmanship of the CMC for one more five-year term, until the 17th Party Congress in 2007, with Hu presumably continuing as first vice chairman of the CMC.

The current military leadership on the CMC all rose to power under Deng Xiaoping, and owe their present positions to the patronage of Jiang, not Hu. Jiang has probably devoted more effort to consolidating his control over the PLA than any other political institution, and has lavished budgets, technological buildups, promotions, and pay increases on the military in order to secure that support.

There is no evidence of widespread military hostility to Hu Jintao, and unlike the hesitancy Deng Xiaoping encountered in trying to secure military support for a civilian leader like Hu Yaobang in the 1980s, the PLA seems to have accepted that for the foreseeable future they will be ruled by men like Jiang and Hu with no personal military experience. Still, Hu remains an unknown quantity to the military, unlike their avid longterm suitor Jiang Zemin. As the former party secretary of Tibet implementing

martial law during his term, Hu probably worked more closely with military officers (in the Chengdu Military Region and the Tibet Military District) than any other provincial Party secretary. Still, rather strikingly, this does not seem to have translated into any noteworthy following in the PLA. Indeed, it is difficult to identify senior military officers who have close leadership ties with Hu Jintao. Although Fu Quanyou — the Chengdu MR Commander during Hu's first years in Tibet — rose to Chief of the General Staff, virtually every other identifiable senior PLA and People's Armed Police officer who served in the Tibet Military District during Hu's four years there had retired by 1996 or well before.¹⁶ Based on presently available information, we have to conclude that Hu's influence over Party personnel matters has not translated into any noteworthy power base within the PLA, and Jiang Zemin has hoarded those personnel resources away from his successor.

On the other hand, the age of the most senior officers in the CMC (over 70) makes it almost certain that they will be replaced by the 16th Congress or soon thereafter. We may yet see the emergence of some officers who served at lower levels in the Tibet MD during Hu's period there. Thus, one of the first key tests of Hu's personal power will come with the struggle over appointing new officers to the CMC and new commanders and commissars to the key armies and military regions — can Hu win Jiang's acquiescence in gradually appointing officers more closely tied to him than to Jiang?

Building Power within the Party

Another key question of the succession is this: since becoming the Politburo Standing Committee member in charge of party affairs and organization in 1992, how effectively has Hu Jintao exploited this opportunity to place his key supporters in positions of power? Has he positioned himself to effect the classic "circular theory of power" for Leninist general secretaries, whereby these leaders select and promote the Central Committee members and other Party-state leaders who, in effect, "select" the general secretaries?¹⁷

Again, any assessment must be cautious. Hu reportedly headed personnel arrangements for the 15th Central Committee selected in 1997, and is in charge of similar arrangements for the 16th

Congress. Although a very large proportion of the current CC members selected in 1997 are expected to step down next year, the vast majority of those who are re-selected are likely to be "first timers" Hu Jintao helped promote in 1997. With the backgrounds of many new CC members obscure, we have no way of knowing how many of these were selected as a result of meeting Hu Jintao during his innumerable local inspection trips over the past eight years, and thus how many will see Hu, rather than Jiang or other leaders, as their principal patron. Doubtless many will emerge who are as yet unidentified as Hu supporters.

At present, about the best we can do is to focus on those rising Party leaders who had demonstrable professional and personal ties to Hu in the past, most notably during his years in the national CYL leadership and as provincial party secretaries.¹⁸ Based on this limited pool, we can say that Hu apparently has already been able to promote a noteworthy but hardly overwhelming cadre of allies to significant Party and state posts. Viewed in historical terms, Hu's body of clients is probably greater than Jiang Zemin's network of clients was in Jiang's first couple of years as general secretary; but it pales in comparison to the enormous number of former Youth League allies Hu Yaobang was able to promote during the early and mid-1980s. (Of course, the fact that Jiang nevertheless beat the successor's dilemma while Hu Yaobang did not is a cautionary tale to analysts trying to infer too much about succession prospects just from the successor's ability to promote supporters!)

Hu Jintao has adopted a style rather reminiscent of Hu Yaobang's work in the Party during the early 1980s, and Jiang Zemin's tactics for building his military support base during the early 1990s — making dozens of inspection trips to the localities where he can meet and size up young potential promotees. Hu Jintao also seems to be making fairly effective use of China's numerous corruption investigations and scandals to place longtime associates in important positions that have been vacated by officials purged for malfeasance.

In late 1994, Hu reportedly visited Guangdong to consult and arrange the succession and reshuffle of the Guangdong Provincial and Guangzhou City Party committees and governments.¹⁹ Hu helped arrange the promotion of Liao Hui as governor and Yu Youjun as mayor.



Hu also helped reorganize the Beijing City Party Committee after the Wang Baosen/Chen Xitong case, chairing the meeting and delivering the speech to local cadres in which the new leadership was unveiled.²⁰ Other reports suggest that Hu has recently pushed the corruption investigation of Beijing Party Secretary and longtime Jiang ally Jia Qinglin and his wife.

Since at least May 1995, Hu has made prolonged investigations of corruption in Fujian province, in particular the recent smuggling scandal there.²¹ In the last months of 2000, his longtime CYL associate Song Defu was appointed Party secretary there.

When Minister of Justice Gao Changli was suddenly removed from his post last fall, he was replaced by Zhang Fusen, reportedly a former associate of Hu from the CYL.

New appointees who previously served with Hu Jintao in the leadership of the CYL or as his provincial deputies are listed in Table One (see below).

A couple of trends are apparent in Hu's emerging power base. Hu's provincial power base is growing, but still rather limited, and it is focused mostly in the interior, poorer, heavily minority provinces (with the notable exception of Fujian). Just as Hu lacks apparent supporters in the PLA, his influence in the civilian political-legal system (justice and civil affairs) is only slightly stronger, with no apparent associates in the most powerful institutions (public security, state security, the Supreme Court, the Supreme Procuratorate). Hu's associates appear to be strongest in the Party's propaganda sector (especially Xinhua) and the Party's various united front organizations. These latter, however, are hardly the stuff out

TABLE ONE: OFFICIALS WITH CAREER TIES TO HU JINTAO

Name	Current Post	Past Association to Hu Jintao
Song Defu	Fujian CCP Secretary, former Personnel Minister	CYL
Mao Rubai	Ningxia CCP Secretary	Tibet
Li Keqiang	Hunan Governor	CYL
Linghu Jihua	CCP CC General Office Dep. Director	CYL
Danzim	Tibet CCP Dep. Secretary	Tibet
Zi Cheng	Tibet CCP Dep. Secretary/Political-Legal Sec.	Tibet
Tian Congming	Xinhua News Agency President former Director, State Radio, Film, TV Admin.	CYL/Tibet
Zhang Baoshun	Vice President, Xinhua	CYL
Zhang Fusen	Minister of Justice	CYL
Doje Cering	Minister of Civil Affairs	Tibet
Wang Zhaoguo	Minister, CCP United Front Work Dept.	CYL
Liu Yandong	Dep. Secretary, CCP United Front Work Dept.	CYL
He Guangwei	Director General, National Tourism Admin.	CYL
Li Haifeng	Dep. Dir., State Council Overseas Chinese Office	CYL
Chen Haosu	President, Chinese Friendship, Peace & Development Foundation	CYL
Li Yuanchao	Jiangsu CCP Dep. Secretary Former Vice Minister of Culture	CYL



of which general secretaries have built successful power bases.

Again, it must be stressed that we do not yet know how many of the currently emerging generation of officials owe their new positions to the patronage of Hu Jintao, Jiang Zemin, Zeng Qinghong, or others. Based solely on those officials with identifiable past ties to Hu Jintao, however, it seems that he still has a good deal of work to do if he is to build the kind of support base in the Party central offices, the State Council ministries, and the provinces that would assist him in beating the successor's dilemma.

NEW SOURCES OF POWER?

Up to this point, this analysis has focused exclusively on very traditional sources of power for Party general secretaries — the patronage of their predecessors, and their personnel support bases in the PLA, Party, and government. The role of new forms of power — for example, popular support and legitimacy without election as a power base — is a very complex issue for an authoritarian ruler such as Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao that has not received a great deal of serious attention from Western scholars. But as traditional sources of power and social control erode in contemporary China, we will have to begin to discuss them more explicitly. Perhaps the fates of Communist and post-Communist leaders in the formerly Leninist states of Eastern Europe and central Eurasia will yield some interesting hypotheses here.

For now, we can only speculate on new sources of power that might assist Hu Jintao in ruling through the major political changes and social upheavals that seem almost inevitable if he does indeed rule China for much of the next five to ten years. For now, we simply cannot say if Hu has some “secret plan” for reviving the political structural reforms that Jiang Zemin has so carefully avoided. A number of recent Hong Kong press reports have claimed that Hu has mobilized his own political reform think tanks at Qinghua University and elsewhere, and tasked them to study political reforms ranging from the incremental (gradual extension of the current village election system up to the township or even county/city level) to the radical (the prospect of reorganizing the Chinese Communist Party into a European-style “social democratic

party”). This latter rumor may herald great changes; it may also rank with past reports such as “General Secretary Yuri Andropov speaks English and loves Western jazz music and novels” as a deliberate bit of disinformation designed to fascinate Westerners. I personally doubt the more radical of these reports, but at this stage, we simply cannot be certain.

However, if Hu Jintao wants to take an intermediate step to strengthen his popular support without crossing the “electoral Rubicon,” he has at his disposal some key issues that would certainly play well with most Chinese citizens. In recent years, Hu has shown, for example, a willingness to support tough crackdowns on crime. Although recent research by the Chinese police has shown that anti-crime campaigns are not effective in fighting crime, as populist issues they are proven winners. Hu has also been willing to flirt with nationalist appeals, though, to date, hardly in a manner that needs really to worry Westerners. He demonstrated this during the NATO bombing, when he spoke on national TV and made a very emotional display of meeting the slain Xinhua reporters' bodies at the airport (in the company of his CYL allies who now head Xinhua). Hu has also occasionally given speeches to anniversary commemorations of the anti-Japanese war, and shown some skill at exploiting that always popular hot-button issue. Finally, Hu's heavy involvement in the current anti-corruption campaign could win substantial popular support if he can find a self-sustaining, effective method for cracking down on official corruption that does not simply look like a weapon to attack his political rivals. This, of course, has always been the flaw in Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong's use of the corruption issue — it simply looks like a ruse to demote their rivals. Hu Jintao has, to date, effectively identified himself with the issue. Whether he is able and willing to use it effectively as a base for greater popular involvement in and support for the current regime is another question. ●



ENDNOTES

1. Shortly before the October 2000 Central Committee plenum, Jiang reportedly told a meeting of Politburo members that he would step down as general secretary in 2002 and as president in 2003. Jiang declared that “the goals of the third generation have basically been achieved.” Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), October 4, 2000, p. 16. See also *The Straits Times* (Singapore), September 18, 2000, p. 62.

2. This version of the Central Committee plenum events has been reported in a number of sources. See *The Economist*, October 28, 2000; David Hsieh, “He Was Not Promoted,” *The Straits Times*, October 22, 2000, p. 49; Li Chao, “Zeng Qinghong Has the Chance to Rise to the Core of the Party’s Leadership,” *Ching Chi Jih Pao* (Hong Kong), October 21, 2000, translated by *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, October 31, 2000. For a report from before the plenum indicating Jiang’s desire to promote Zeng Qinghong, see *The Straits Times*, September 18, 2000, p. 62.

3. Several sources have sketched out this dilemma. For a particularly clear discussion with reference to China, see David Bachman, “Institutions, Factions, Conservatism and Leadership Change in China,” in Raymond Taras, ed., *Leadership Change in Communist States* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

4. For a contemporary analysis that stressed Gorbachev’s successful accumulation of the traditional sources of Leninist power, see Jerry F. Hough, “Gorbachev Consolidating Power,” *Problems of Communism* 36 (July–August 1987): 21–43; For an analysis that stressed his dilemmas in mobilizing new more populist sources of power, see Elizabeth Teague and Dawn Mann, “Gorbachev’s Dual Role,” *Problems of Communism* 39 (January–February 1990): 1–14.

5. On Hu’s early careers, see *South China Morning Post*, December 1, 1994, p. 13; *SCMP*, September 25, 1992, p. 12; *Jiushi Niandai* (Hong Kong), August 1, 1997, pp. 72–75; *New York Times*, October 20, 1992, p. A1; *Xin Bao* (Hong Kong), April 14, 1997, p. 18; *New York Times*, September 23, 1985, p. A3; *Kyodo* (Hong Kong), December 10, 1984; *Xinhua*, June 25, 1985; *Straits Times*, September 26, 1996, p. 40.

6. On Hu requesting provincial assignment to avoid criticism, see *South China Morning Post*, September 25, 1992, p. 12.

7. Hsin Erh-ke in *Xin Bao* (April 14, 1997 p. 18) claims that Hu Jintao and the Party’s Organization Department Minister Zhang Quanjing were both handpicked by Song Ping and Deng Liqun and acted at their behest. Willy Lam in a *SCMP* report

(December 1, 1994, p. 13) also stresses Song Ping as Hu’s patron and their conservative links. Another source reports that Hu returned to Beijing and began working with Song in the Organization Department by early 1992. See *South China Morning Post*, September 25, 1992, p. 12.

8. Richard Baum contends that Song Ping was a focus of Deng’s criticism during and after the Southern Tour in *Burying Mao* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 336, 344, 347.

9. On Deng’s support, see, for example, James Kyngge, “Aura of Dynastic Change Permeates Party,” *The Financial Times*, November 13, 2000, p. 2; also *Jiushi Niandai*, August 1, 1997, pp. 72–75; *The Straits Times*, September 26, 1996, p. 40.

10. In this regard, an interesting comparison can be made to the late leftist Politburo member Wang Hongwen, who rose to the top with even greater alacrity, but was unable to stay there because he had hitched his wagon to a single leftist “star.”

11. Willy Lam has reported Jiang’s choice of Hu to lead Party congress personnel arrangements, interpreting it as a sign of Jiang’s increased support for Hu since his failure to promote Zeng Qinghong. See Lam, “Waiting for Hu Jintao to Shake Off His Image as an Ornament and Reverse the Declining Reform Tendency,” *Ping Kuo Jih Pao (Apple Daily)*, January 31, 2001, p. A18, translated by *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, February 5, 2001.

12. On the turnover percentages in the Central Committee and Politburo Standing Committee, see *South China Morning Post*, October 4, 2000, p. 16; *The Straits Times*, September 18, 2000, p. 62; *The Economist*, October 28, 2000.

13. The official text of Hu’s televised speech after the embassy bombing is in *Xinhua* (Beijing), May 9, 1999, translated by *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, May 9, 1999.

14. See “Vice President Hu Jintao Delivers Speech on Army, Business,” *Xinhua*, April 26, 1999, translated by *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, May 1, 1999; also Susan Lawrence, “A Model People’s Army,” *South China Morning Post*, July 13, 2000.

15. On Hu’s role in these cases, see the report from *Sing Tao Jih Pao* (Singapore), August 16, 2000, translated by *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, August 17, 2000; also Mary Kwang, “Hu Jintao Leads Probe,” *The Straits Times*, January 22, 2000, pp. 30–31.

16. This includes two Chengdu Military Region commanders (Fu Quanyou and his successor Zhang Taiheng), two Tibet Military District commanders, two Tibet Military District commissars, and more than ten other officers at the deputy-commander/commissar



level in the PLA and People's Armed Police between 1988 and 1992. Based on Lexis-Nexis search of these officers' public appearances.

17. This "circular theory of power" for general secretaries was first described for the Soviet system. The classic was Robert V. Daniels, "Soviet Politics Since Khrushchev," in John W. Strong, ed., *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev and Kosygin* (Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1971); also Jerry F. Hough, "Gorbachev Consolidating Power," *Problems of Communism* 36 (July-August 1987): 21-43.

18. While such biographical analysis is the staple of this kind of research, it has always rested on some shaky assumptions. Most notably, it tends to assume that any two current leaders who worked together in the same department in the past must have gotten along reasonably well with one another, and one of them probably served as patron for the other.

19. *Lien Ho Pao* (Hong Kong), November 29, 1994, p. 1.

20. *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), April 29, 1995.

21. See for example the report on Hu's inspections there in 1995. *Xinhua*, May 19, 1995.



China's Political Succession: Four Misperceptions in the West

CHENG LI

A fresh look at China's political succession is timely and important for at least two reasons. First, the new generation of leaders, the so-called fourth generation, is now aggressively taking the helm of power in China. The fourth generation of leaders mainly includes those who were born in the 1940s and early 1950s. Members of the fourth generation currently occupy 49% of the seats in the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), 19% of the full members of the Politburo, 48% of ministers in the State Council, 52% of provincial Party secretaries and 77% of provincial governors.ⁱ They will further increase in both numbers and influence in the coming two years. There is little doubt that this generation will rule China for most of this decade and beyond.

The second, and perhaps even more important reason to study Chinese political succession is because this issue is woefully misunderstood in the West. There are more myths, rumors, and speculation than thoughtful analysis and well-grounded assessment. Wrong perceptions about China's new leaders can make our policies toward China ineffective. If our sights are distorted, our policies will be as well.

This essay will challenge four widespread misperceptions regarding China's political succession. By addressing each of these four misperceptions, I hope to shed light on the main characteristics of the fourth generation of leaders, power relationships among the top contenders, the policy orientation of Jiang Zemin's successors, and implications for U.S. interests.

MISPERCEPTION #1: Chinese Communist leaders are ineffective, incompetent, politically rigid, narrow-minded and shortsighted.

In fact, under the current leadership, China has sustained remarkable economic growth and has maintained social stability, despite all the odds against the country. I am not suggesting that the political elite

should receive most of the credit for China's development. In my view, societal forces have played the principal role in China's progress. I also want to make it clear: I am not a fan of Chinese leaders. Based on my own contacts with a number of rising stars in the Chinese leadership, I found some of them to be arrogant, snobbish and very nationalistic. But demonizing Chinese leaders is detrimental — it prevents us from understanding their true characteristics.

I believe that collectively the fourth generation of leaders is *less dogmatic, more capable, and more diversified* than previous political generations in CCP history. This can largely be attributed to the fact that this generation grew up during the Cultural Revolution. Although there is roughly a fifteen-year span between the oldest and youngest members of the fourth generation, they usually acquired their first political experiences during the Cultural Revolution. They grew up in a political environment characterized by idealism, collectivism, moralism and radicalism. They were taught to sacrifice themselves for socialism. But as time passed, their faith was eroded and their dreams shattered.

In fact, members of this generation experienced ideological disillusionment twice. The first time was with Marx's communism and Mao's socialism. The second time was with "the great ideas" suggested by "Harvard economic geniuses" like Jeffrey Sachs. In the early 1980s, many prominent members of the fourth generation — for example, Bo Xilai (now governor of Liaoning) and Wang Qishan (now minister of the State Commission on Economic System Reform) — were very enthusiastic about Western liberal economic theories. However, important events in the 1990s — for instance, undesirable side-effects resulting from China's market reform, Russia's shock therapy that led to only shock, but no therapy, and the East Asian financial crisis — all had an impact on their thinking. Some have wondered if Adam Smith might have been as wrong as Karl Marx, although the consequences of their errors

have been profoundly different. As a result, new leaders are far more interested in discussing issues than defending “isms.”

In many ways, fourth generation leaders are probably more capable than their predecessors of dealing with the tough issues that China faces. This is related to their experience during the Cultural Revolution, when many were sent to remote areas. For example, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao were both sent from Beijing to Gansu, a poor province where they worked for over a decade. Li Keqiang (now governor of Henan) and Xi Jinping (now governor of Fujian) were sent to the countryside where they worked as farmers for many years. Enormous physical hardship and an ever-changing political environment nurtured within them some valuable traits such as adaptability, endurance, and political sophistication.

The fourth generation of leaders is also more diversified than previous generations in terms of political solidarity and occupational backgrounds. Although fourth generation leaders share similar memories of the Cultural Revolution, they often have a diverse spectrum of political affiliations and class backgrounds. This is evident by the different periods in which they joined the Party. My study of 522 high-ranking leaders in the fourth generation shows that about half of them joined the Party during the decade of the Cultural Revolution. Another 35 percent joined the Party before, and 15 percent joined after the Cultural Revolution. As we know, the CCP had quite different criteria for political recruitment before, during or after the Cultural Revolution. This means that, unlike the previous generations of leaders, who usually shared strong bonding experiences such as the Long March and the Anti-Japanese War, the fourth generation of leaders lacks political solidarity. Similar to the leadership in post-Communist Russia, China's fourth generation of leaders may lack a common ideology and a willingness to commit to the existing political system.

Another important indication of the diversity among members of the fourth generation is reflected by their educational and occupational backgrounds. Although both the third and fourth generations of leaders are known for the predominance of technocrats, there are more financial experts and lawyers in the fourth generation than in any previous generation. Currently, young leaders who are in

charge of China's financial system are usually economists by training. Just a few years ago, the most important posts in China's financial system were usually occupied by Soviet-trained engineers. Some fourth generation leaders studied in the United States and other Western countries. A few rising stars in the provincial and ministerial leadership actually studied law and political science. This reflects the central authorities' efforts to establish and consolidate the Chinese legal system during the post-Deng era. In the early 1980s, there were only 3,000 lawyers in a country of over one billion people. China now has 150,000 lawyers. The growth rate is even more rapid than in the United States, for better or worse! Engineers, economists, and lawyers are all professional experts, but variations in their expertise will likely lead to differences in their political perspectives and policy choices.

MISPERCEPTION #2: A vicious power struggle is going on among various factions, especially among the top contenders of the fourth generation, thus leading to a major internal crisis.

China watchers have long been obsessed with an individual leader's factional identity and the change in relative power of that particular faction. The recent attention given to the *Tiananmen Papers* reinforces this conventional approach. Of course, factional politics was, is, and will be a key part of the Chinese political process. Chinese leaders, like politicians in other countries, are “political animals” more than anything else. However, some profound changes and broad trends in Chinese politics may be overlooked if too much attention is given to factional politics.

What is most evident in Chinese politics today is the broad shift from an all-powerful single leader, such as Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping, to a greater collective leadership, which is now characteristic of the Jiang era. It seems highly likely that post-Jiang leaders, the fourth generation, will progress even further in this direction. They will rely even more on power sharing, negotiation, consultation and consensus building.

It is true that nepotism in various forms has played a very important role in the recruitment of Chinese elites. For example, school ties (such as the Qinghua clique), blood ties (such as *taizidang* or



princelings), patron-client ties (such as *mishu* or personal secretaries), and fellow provincials (such as the Shanghai gang) still affect the makeup of Chinese leadership. But at the same time, there has been a strong effort by the political establishment to constrain nepotism. During the reform era, a number of institutional mechanisms have been adopted to prevent various forms of favoritism. These institutional developments include:

- an “election with more candidates than seats” (*cha'e xuanju*) has been adopted since the 13th Party Congress. The deputies in both the Party congress and the National People's Congress (NPC) have increasingly used their votes to prevent princelings and those favored by top leaders from being elected;
- regional representation on the CCP Central Committee gives each province two full membership seats;
- term limits have been established for top posts in both the Party and government;
- cadres at a certain level of leadership are forced to retire at a certain age;
- the promotion of children of high-ranking officials is restrained; and
- there is a regular reshuffling of both provincial and military leaders.

These institutional developments have led to three results:

- no faction, no institution, no region and no individual can dominate power. Everyone has to compromise; this process favors those who are skillful in coalition building.
- members of formal bureaucratic institutions and informal networks have often overlapped, thus forming a complex interdependence among various factions.
- as new leaders move into the highest levels of authority, patron-client ties that previously enabled them to succeed may now become a liability. Their legitimacy, therefore, should rely on something besides their political networks.

The career experiences and personalities of three front runners in the fourth generation, Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao and Zeng Qinghong, all fit this analysis. Let's first look at Hu Jintao. China watchers were surprised when Hu was elected vice president of the PRC in 1998. This appointment has made Hu a rec-

ognized successor to Jiang Zemin. The rise of Hu Jintao, however, should not be a surprise if one realizes that Hu has headed three powerful networks, namely, the Qinghua clique, the Chinese Communist Youth League, and the Central Party School. While all these political associations suggest that Hu has a solid power base, he has three main shortcomings: 1) he does not have much of a connection with the military; 2) he does not have much achievement; and 3) he has yet to demonstrate his competence in economic and foreign affairs.

Wen Jiabao's experience is also remarkable, not only because he worked as a chief of staff for three bosses, two of whom were purged while he survived, but also because he gained broad administrative experience – handling political crises such as the 1989 Tiananmen movement, coordinating power transitions, commanding the anti-flood campaign in 1998, supervising the nation's agricultural affairs, and overseeing the financial and banking reform. Wen's talent as a superb administrator and his role as a coalition-builder explain his legendary survival and success. Yet, Wen has two main weaknesses: 1) unlike Hu, Wen does not possess any solid power base; and 2) like Hu, Wen does not have many connections with the military.

Zeng Qinghong's idiosyncratic personality and performance are even more revealing. While both a princeling and *mishu*, Zeng differs from most princelings and *mishu* in one important aspect — while many others rush for quick promotion and instant profits, Zeng is a well-rounded tactician with a long-term vision and a great sense of timing. Many choices that he has made during his career demonstrate Zeng's unconventional wisdom. In the early 1980s, when a majority of princelings rushed to join the business sector, especially enterprises involving foreign trade, Zeng quit his post as deputy director of the Foreign Liaison Department under the Ministry of the Petroleum Industry. Even more surprising to many observers, Zeng did not join the military when his mentor, Yu Qiuli, was appointed director of the PLA's General Political Department, a top military post. Zeng would not allow any short-term material gain to jeopardize his great political ambition. Also, Zeng did not want to advance his political career through the military.

When he was the head of the Organization Department in Shanghai in the early 1980s, Zeng

selected five bright young college graduates in the city and sent them to the United States to study political science instead of the then-fashionable academic disciplines such as physics and engineering. Unlike many of his peers at that time, Zeng sensed the importance of political science to the future of China's reform. Zeng has been patient with his own promotion and has been very cautious to avoid unnecessary conflicts with other political "heavy-weights" who are of similar age. Zeng's main weakness, however, is that he has been too closely tied to Jiang. Zeng has often been seen as Jiang's "hand, ear and brain," although he is not known to fawn upon his boss.

All three of these front runners in the fourth generation are talented political tacticians. None of them is a "lightweight" figurehead. To put it a different way, none of them is powerful enough to knock down either of the other two potential rivals. Power sharing and consensus-building are essential for all three. To a certain extent, they are similar to Jiang Zemin, who has remained in power through coalition-building and political maneuvering. The difference is that for many years Jiang's legitimacy was based on the support of Deng and other elders, but top contenders of the fourth generation can stand on their own, even now.

A frequently raised question is whether Jiang will continue to serve as chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission after the 16th Party Congress. Although this is possible, it is more likely that Jiang's successors will push him aside because he is no Deng Xiaoping. It is true that not one of the three top contenders is associated with the military, but it is also true that no strong military man has emerged among the new generation of leadership. It is most likely that Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, Zeng Qinghong and other civilian leaders will work together to prevent the emergence of a strong military figure.

MISPERCEPTION #3: Chinese leaders can be divided into dichotomous groups such as conservatives vs. liberals, hard-liners vs. reformers, and radicals vs. moderates.

Western China watchers have long divided Chinese leaders into two contending camps. This dichotomous categorization is too simplistic, if not entirely misleading. On most occasions, policy differences among Chinese leaders are not as substantial as for-

ign observers may believe. Quite often, Chinese leaders disagree with each other only upon priority, timing and tactics, not so much upon principle, objective and direction.

At present, there is no indication that Hu, Wen and Zeng have any fundamentally different views regarding either domestic or foreign policies. Since they face some daunting challenges, such as an unprecedented high rate of urban unemployment and the Falun Gong, the semi-religious "qigong movement" that claims to have tens of millions of adherents, Chinese leaders are more likely to unite than to fight among themselves.

It is also unlikely that the fourth generation of leaders will dramatically reverse existing policies as they assume power from the third generation. The fourth generation leaders have already participated in the policy-making process. Some junior members of the fourth generation have also served as advisors to both Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji.

But this does not mean that the third and fourth generations have identical policies. I believe that, because of their generational characteristics, the new leaders will accelerate China's political reform, but modify the pace of economic reform. In the political arena, new leaders will make unremitting efforts to prevent a sudden fall from power, which has occurred in many Communist or Leninist one-party regimes during the past decade. They will likely pursue the following objectives:

- To consolidate China's legal system and propagate the rule of law. This is related to the fact that a growing number of leaders among the fourth generation have been trained in law and social sciences.
- To institutionalize the so-called "inner Party democracy" (*dangnei minzhu*). The fact that the fourth generation leaders are good at coalition building and are willing to compromise will lead them to move in this direction.
- To redefine the Chinese Communist Party. In contrast to the Marxist notion that the Communist Party should be the "vanguard of the working class," the fourth generation leaders will broaden the Party's base of power to include intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and technical specialists. They consider these social groups to be the most advanced forces in an era of technological revolution and economic globalization.



- To be more accessible to the media. Among the third generation of leaders, Zhu Rongji is famous for his eloquence and his human touch. The fourth generation has more leaders like Zhu because of their generational characteristics. They feel more comfortable in dealing with the media, both domestic and foreign.

It is unclear how far China's political reform will go under the leadership of the fourth generation. One encouraging fact is that unlike Deng Xiaoping in the second generation, or Li Peng in the third generation, who have been under the shadow of the Tiananmen tragedy, most of the fourth generation leaders do not have to overcome this hurdle because they were not involved in the crackdown.

In the economic arena, new leaders will more likely rely on using government policies, instead of an "invisible hand" to reduce growing disparities between coastal and inland regions, urban and rural areas, and non-state firms and state-owned enterprises. Since many prominent fourth generation leaders have worked and lived in the western and central regions (as "sent-down youths" during the Cultural Revolution or as provincial leaders), they are more likely to pursue a more balanced regional economic development.

Compared to their predecessors, fourth generation leaders probably have a better understanding of the problems faced by their non-elite peers in the same generation. In fact, an overwhelming majority of their non-elite peers continue to shoulder the heaviest economic burdens during the reform era. They need to support elderly family members and raise their often-spoiled children, while they themselves face the threat of unemployment. To establish a social safety net in this rapidly changing country will be a top priority for the new leaders.

MISPERCEPTION #4: Since some fourth generation leaders were trained in the United States, they may form a pro-American force in China's policy-making circle.

This optimistic interpretation is subject to the test of future events. Evidence gathered thus far is not so promising. Several points should be made here. First, some prominent leaders in the fourth generation studied in the West (for example, Yang Jiechi, China's new ambassador to the United States, Wang

Guangya, vice minister of foreign affairs, and Long Yongtu, chief trade negotiator, all studied at the London School of Economics), but their overall presence in both national and provincial levels of leadership is still marginal. Although it is expected that more Western-trained Chinese leaders will enter the top leadership, they will still be a minority for the foreseeable future. These new leaders who were trained overseas are usually cautious and avoid being seen as pro-West or pro-American.

Second, those who studied in the West may not have a favorable view of the Western political and economic systems. For example, during the crises over the Taiwan presidential election and the embassy bombing incident in Belgrade, the harshest condemnation against U.S. policy toward China came from a few members of Chinese think tanks who recently received Ph.Ds in political science from American universities.²

Third and finally, one may reasonably argue that the tensions and conflicts in the relationships among China, Taiwan, and the United States have nothing to do with ideology, but have to do with the nature of *realpolitik*. For those Chinese leaders with this perspective, the cause of tensions in Sino-U.S. relations is clear: the most powerful country in the world wants to contain an emerging power. China's new leaders — military hard-liners and U.S.-educated technocrats alike — may believe this to be the case. Regarding the Taiwan issue, they all see reunification with the island as a matter of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. No top leader can afford to be blamed as the "man who lost Taiwan."

As Paul Heer recently argued in his *Foreign Affairs* article, "external factors ... affect all Chinese leaders equally, and they effectively limit Beijing's viable policy options."³ Heer is insightful when he states that if Washington truly wants to understand Beijing, it should understand the thinking of the new Chinese leaders and the origins of their world-views, rather than fantasize that there is a powerful pro-American force in the Chinese leadership.

Nationalism is rising, not only among CCP leaders, but also among Chinese intellectuals and the general public. Perceived humiliations by the West have set them on edge. These include the demonization of China in the Western media after the Tiananmen incident, the U.S.-led effort to block

Beijing's bid to host the 2000 and the 2008 Olympics, the difficulties of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, the Cox report accusing China of technological espionage, "hectoring" China over human rights, the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, and U.S. plans to include Taiwan in its Theater Missile Defense (TMD) program.

Because of both their generational characteristics and recent troubling events in U.S.-China relations, China's new leaders are cynical about the alleged moral superiority of the United States, resentful of American arrogance, and doubtful about the total adoption of Western economic and political systems. Yet, even during crises, such as the tragic incident in Belgrade, they understand the need for cooperation instead of confrontation.⁴ Their policies toward the United States will be firm, but not aggressive.

Economic development has remained the country's top priority, despite the fact that the leadership is increasingly distracted by the Taiwan issue. Although some new leaders may have reservations about China's accelerating integration into a global economy, most hold the view that the benefit derived from a two-decade-long economic reform and "opening" has far exceeded the cost. This positive attitude toward economic globalization among Chinese leaders differs significantly from leaders of many developing countries, who are very suspicious about the impact of global capitalism. In fact, Chinese leaders will more frequently play the "trade card" between the United States and other industrialized countries, especially European nations.

To conclude, I want to address two important policy questions. What are the implications of all these factors for the United States? What, if anything, can Washington do to affect the dynamics of China's political development, including its leadership succession? These are not easy questions. Our answers depend not only on our knowledge of China's past, our understanding of its present and our assessment of its future, but also on our own worldviews.

Three words, however, come to mind: wisdom, patience and humility. Karl Rove, senior advisor to President Bush, recently used these words to describe the way in which the new administration should act. I believe that the exact same words — wisdom, patience and humility — are also essential to our

policymakers in dealing with China's political succession and the future of U.S.-China relations.

We need wisdom at this crucial time in US-China relations as both sides struggle to find the right policies toward each other. It is naive to assume that new Chinese leaders, especially those who were trained in the West, will provide opportunities for the United States to remold China in line with American interests. But it is even more dangerous to assume that the so-called "China threat" is imminent, and that a major conflict between China and the United States is inevitable. For China, a radical and xenophobic foreign policy probably requires a charismatic and xenophobic Chinese leader, but no such a leader now exists, nor should we expect one in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, as Henry Kissinger observes, China does not have an ideology fundamentally hostile to American values.⁵

We need patience if we really want China to move in the direction we prefer. At present, Chinese leaders face many perplexing economic and socio-political challenges at home, and daunting policy choices abroad. China's road to a more open and liberal state will not be smooth. Similarly, the progression of Sino-U.S. relations has never been linear. Its twists and turns have taught us to be patient.

Finally, we need a sense of humility. Two realities should make our policy makers humble. First, U.S. influence over China's domestic politics, including its political succession, is very limited.^{vi} And second, global peace and prosperity in the 21st century requires a cooperative and responsible China. Our humility will lead us to seek a constructive relationship with China's new leaders. Humility is always a sign of strength, not weakness. ●

ENDNOTES:

1. For a detailed analysis of the fourth generation of leaders, see Cheng Li, *China's Leaders: The New Generation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). All the data used in this essay without identification of the sources come from this book.

2. For example, Yan Xuetong (executive director of the Institute of International Studies, Qinghua University), Pan Wei (associate professor at the School of International Studies, Beijing University) and Zhang Ruizhuang (associate professor of the Department of Political Science at Nankai



University) all received Ph.Ds in political science from the University of California at Berkeley. They have all served as members of think tanks for the Chinese government, and have been very critical of U.S. policies toward China in the Chinese media during the past few years. See Yan Xuetong, *Meiguo baquan yu Zhongguo anquan* (American hegemony and Chinese national security, 2000).

3. Paul Heer, "A House United: Beijing's View of Washington," *Foreign Affairs* 79 (July/August 2000): 22.

4. A review of the recent writings and interviews of the fourth generation of leaders affirms this observation. See Cheng Li, *China's Leaders: The New Generation*.

5. Henry A. Kissinger, "No Room for Nostalgia," *Newsweek* (June 29, 1998), p. 51.

6. For an insightful discussion of this point, see David Shambaugh, "Facing Reality in China Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 80 (January/February 2001): 58.

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In terms of China's domestic politics, the new leaders will probably accelerate China's political reform, but modify the pace and emphasis of economic reforms. Third and finally, one may reasonably argue that the tensions and conflicts in the relationships between China and the United States have nothing to do with ideology, but have to do with the nature of realpolitik. What are the implications of all these factors for the U.S.? What, if anything, can Washington do to affect the dynamics of China's political development, including its leadership succession? First, U.S. influence over China's domestic politics, including its political succession, is very limited. And second, global peace and prosperity in the 21st century requires a cooperative and responsible China.

Implications for U.S. Policy. Summary. This report discusses the political succession in Turkmenistan following the death of long-time authoritarian leader Saparmurad Niyazov in December 2006. Implications for Turkmenistan and U.S. interests in Central Asia are examined. This report may be updated. Boucher stated that the United States "would like to see Turkmenistan be able to develop its resources, its oil and gas reserves in a market fashion that gets them a market price for their energy. that's where the idea of multiple pipelines, multiple outlets, [and] multiple options is really a question of how to secure the sovereignty and independence of the nation.