

Hu Jintao's Power Consolidation: Groups, Institutions, and Power Balance in China's Elite Politics*

ZHENGXU WANG

After becoming General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in November 2002, Hu Jintao surprised many observers by consolidating his power in a short period of time. There are two aspects to this power consolidation. First, he quickly promoted a large number of supporters, most notably his associates from the Chinese Communist Youth League, to key positions. Second, he buttressed himself as the core of the top leadership, at the same time forming a viable working relationship with other leaders, most notably Wen Jiabao and Zeng Qinghong. This resulted in a stable and viable power structure dominated by Hu. The institutionalization of Chinese elite politics in the last decade has created favorable conditions on which Hu was able to capitalize. However, future successions may still be hampered by institutional impediments.

KEYWORDS: Hu Jintao; elite politics; *Tuanpai*; faction; institutionalization.

ZHENGXU WANG (王正緒, Ph.D., Political Science, University of Michigan, 2005) is a Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore. His studies focus on China's political changes and elite politics, as well as democratization and citizen politics. His recent publications examine politics of governing China as well as changing citizen attitudes and behaviors and their impacts on political changes in China and East Asia. He can be reached at <eaiwz@nus.edu.sg>.

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In China's recent history, it has been difficult for top leaders to consolidate their power. Hua Guofeng (華國鋒), Mao Zedong's (毛澤東) designated successor, had to step down after only a brief period in office.¹ In the 1980s, the two Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretaries hand-picked by Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平), Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦) and Zhao Ziyang (趙紫陽), were both forced out of office before completing their respective terms.² Jiang Zemin (江澤民) became CCP general secretary following the 1989 Tiananmen Incident (天安門事件), but his position was shaky for a long period of time. At several points, he was believed to be on the verge of losing power,³ and it was not until the Fifteenth Party Congress of 1997 that his power was fully consolidated.⁴ Apparently, assuming the highest position in China does not translate into wielding the greatest power.

Not surprisingly, when Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) took over the helm of the Party in November 2002, whether he could hold on to it immediately became a question. He appeared to have no economic expertise, no foreign policy exposure, no military ties, and no power base. The foreign media expressed doubts with headlines like "Who's Hu?" "Hu's in charge?" "Hu pledges to confer with Jiang on issues," and "Is Hu going to be lame-duck leader?"⁵ One scholarly journal called this a succession that "did not

¹Hua Guofeng headed the CCP from 1976 to 1981 and was premier from 1976 to 1980. From 1978 he was gradually eclipsed by Deng Xiaoping.

²Hu Yaobang was general secretary from 1980 to 1987 while Zhao Ziyang held the same post from 1987 to 1989.

³Around late 1991 and early 1992, Deng Xiaoping's serious criticisms of the Party leadership during his now famous southern tour led many observers to believe that Jiang's position was at risk.

⁴At that Congress, Jiang secured the retirement of Qiao Shi (喬石), thereby removing the last person who could pose a direct challenge to his power. Much earlier, in 1992, Jiang managed to outmaneuver former President Yang Shangkun (楊尚昆) and his half-brother Yang Baibing (楊白冰), both of whom were opposed to Jiang's leadership of the Party.

⁵These headlines are found in Reuters, November 15, 2002; *Time* (Asia), November 25, 2002; *International Herald Tribune*, November 21, 2002; and *The Sunday Times* (Singapore), November 17, 2002, respectively.

happen": Hu took over the position, but he did not receive the power.⁶ At that time, Jiang Zemin's known supporters occupied half to two-thirds of the seats on the nine-member Politburo Standing Committee, while Jiang himself still retained the posts of state president and chairman of the Central Military Commission. One Chinese scholar predicted that having Jiang as a mentor would likely limit Hu's power, resulting in another tide of the gerontocracy that had haunted Chinese politics for so long.⁷ Others expected that Jiang would replace Hu with his own favorite, Zeng Qinghong (曾慶紅).⁸

Yet Hu quickly consolidated his power. By early 2004, the political agenda seemed to be under his control, as his "scientific development" (科學發展觀) slogan gradually replaced the "three represents" (三個代表) slogan of Jiang Zemin.⁹ The same year saw the complete retirement of Jiang Zemin, bringing the military under Hu's full control. By mid-2005, barely half-way through his first term, Hu's consolidation of power appears to have been completed.¹⁰ While it took Jiang Zemin eight years after he

⁶Joseph Fewsmith, "The Sixteenth National Party Congress: The Succession That Didn't Happen," *The China Quarterly*, no. 173 (2003): 1-16.

⁷Yu-Shan Wu, "Jiang and After: Technocratic Rule, Generational Replacement and Mentor Politics," in *The New Chinese Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities after the 16th Party Congress*, ed. Yun-han Chu, Lo Chih-cheng, and Ramon Hawley Myers, *The China Quarterly* Special Issues New Series, no. 4 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁸As late as March 2004, a China analyst with the CIA still felt Jiang would replace Hu with Zeng at the 2007 Party Congress. The head of the CIA China program made this comment in his personal capacity at a seminar held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 2004.

⁹After Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao came to office in late 2002, they began to shift the Party away from the growth-first model. Hu Jintao put forward the notion of "scientific development," indicating China's shift toward a more balanced, efficient, equitable, and environmentally friendly growth model. Hu then further developed "scientific development" into the more encompassing "harmonious society" notion. At the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee in October 2006, the Party formally adopted "harmonious society" as its supreme goal in governance. Although it can be argued that these doctrines do not contradict or negate Jiang Zemin's "three represents" theory, the point here is that Hu's doctrine took the preeminent place in China's political discourse, indicating the enhancement of his power. See Yongnian Zheng, Zhengxu Wang, and Sow Keat Tok, "Hu Jintao at the Helm: Major Issues in the Aftermath of the 6th Party Plenum" (Singapore: East Asian Institute, November 9, 2006).

¹⁰The most noticeable sign is that by 2005, the guiding principle for China's public discourse had become "harmonious society," clearly a Hu product. See Yongnian Zheng, Zhengxu

took office to emerge as the indisputable top leader, Hu has had a much smoother ride. While in early 2004, many predicted that Jiang would serve a full term (until 2007), in January 2005 China scholar David Lampton expressed his surprise at the speed of Hu's power consolidation.¹¹ If in 2004 and 2005, observers (especially those in the West) were still not sure that Hu's policy lines had taken root, by the end of 2005 his "harmonious society" and "scientific development" doctrines had been adopted as the ideological guidance for the country's Eleventh Five-Year Program. In mid-2006, some observers again pointed to the revival of Jiang's influence when his trip to Mount Tai (泰山) was publicized and his three-volume *Selected Works* were released with much fanfare. However, with the fall of Jiang's protégé Chen Liangyu (陳良宇), Jiang and his "Shanghai Gang" (上海幫) were soon forgotten. Barely two weeks later, the Sixth Plenum of the Party's Sixteenth Central Committee adopted "harmonious society" as the guiding ideology of the Party. In the words of one China-watching institute, "the Hu Jintao era has finally arrived."¹²

How did Hu succeed in consolidating his power in such a short period of time? This article focuses on Hu's two successful strategies: a decisive move to promote his supporters to key positions, and an effort to establish a stable power structure at the top. During this process, an early harvest of popularity gave Hu a strong advantage. More importantly, however, the strong support network he built up during his ten years as heir-apparent, especially among those officials with a background in the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL, 中國共產主義青年團 or 共青團, *Gongqingtuan*), or the so-called *Tuanpai* (團派), was of critical help.

Wang, and Liang Fook Lye, "China Politics 2005: Promoting a Harmonious Society to Cope with Crisis of Governance" (Singapore: East Asian Institute, December 21, 2005).

¹¹The same CIA China analyst cited in note 8 above believed Jiang would serve until 2007 and replace Hu with Zeng Qinghong as China's top leader. China scholar David Lampton's comment was made to *Ta Kung Pao* (大公報) of Hong Kong and quoted in Qiu Ping, *Zhonggong diwudai* (The fifth generation of CCP leaders) (Hong Kong: Xiafeier Publishing Company, 2005), 23.

¹²Zheng, Wang, and Tok, "Hu Jintao at the Helm: Major Issues in the Aftermath of the 6th Party Plenum," 3. In hindsight, it appeared Hu's promotion of the study of Jiang's *Selected Works* was a final celebration of Jiang's prestige, rather than an indication of a comeback.

In the high-politics arena, he skillfully used the powers of the formal institutions, especially the Politburo and its Standing Committee, to enhance his authority and curb the influence of other power groups, especially the followers of Jiang Zemin, or the "Shanghai Gang." Overall, his power consolidation points to the growing institutionalization of elite politics in China, but it also reveals the built-in impediments to smooth power transition in the Party-state.

From "Who's Hu?" to "Hu's in Charge"

As early as 1992, Hu was installed by Deng Xiaoping to lead the so-called "fourth generation" of leaders that would rule China in the early twenty-first century. Starting from that point, his eventual succession in 2002 was carried out by the CCP top leadership in stages. After the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992, as the youngest of the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee, Hu took charge of running the daily affairs of the Party. He was also in charge of the Party's personnel system (the *nomenklatura* system), and headed the Central Party School. In 1998 he was appointed vice president of China; and in 1999 he became vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC). Hu's ten-year apprenticeship as heir-apparent enabled him to acquire important experience and skills in governing the gigantic Party and state apparatus. It also enabled him to build up a support network. It is true that as heir-apparent Hu was very careful to keep a low profile. This resulted in him being relatively unknown to outside observers, hence the doubts about his ability to hold on to power after he finally entered the limelight at the Sixteenth Party Congress. In reality, however, this carefully maintained low profile enabled him to survive his ten long years as heir, while making solid preparations for the eventual takeover.¹³

¹³I have not seen a study on how the apprenticeship system works for a planned succession. For a description of Hu as heir-apparent, see Andrew J. Nathan and Bruce Gilley, *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2002).

Indeed, Hu's moves after taking over were decisive, confident, and effective. He quickly gained high popularity by projecting a pro-people image. For his first public appearance after assuming office, he made a point of visiting a CCP revolutionary base, reviving the regime's image as coming "from the people," and delivering an address in which he announced his "new Three People's Principles" (新三民主義).¹⁴ In the following months he shifted government rhetoric toward social justice and equality, appealing to the large majority of the population.¹⁵ Some observers characterize this as a shift of Party rhetoric toward the "left" of the political spectrum, hence belying early hopes that Hu was a reformer. However, in reality, this "leftist" stance gave the majority of the public a long-missed sense of government concern for ordinary folks, while Party veterans highly appreciated his commitment to such Maoist values.¹⁶ Then the outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic in spring 2003 allowed Hu to prove his competence while further enhancing his pro-people image.¹⁷ In policymaking circles, he promoted the idea of "scientific development."¹⁸ This change in development thinking was highly praised by government officials and intellectuals, who saw the

¹⁴Hu's "new Three People's Principles" are: that political power should be used for the people, that Party officials should always keep the people in their hearts, and that Party officials should always work for the interest of the people. See "Quanmian luoshi dang shiliuda jingshen, Hu Jintao dao Xibaipo xuexi kaocha" (全面落實黨十六大精神, 胡錦濤到西柏坡學習考察, To comprehensively implement the spirit of the Sixteenth Party Congress, Hu Jintao made study trip to Xibaipo), Xinhua, December 7, 2002.

¹⁵Some of this was done together with the new premier, Wen Jiabao. For example, at Chinese New Year 2003, the two of them visited poor people and poor regions in the country. This was very different from how Jiang Zemin spent his New Year's Day. Hu also changed some policies to show he wanted to stress thrift and efficiency in government, such as reducing the cost and scale of top leaders' activities. For example, he abolished the annual summer meeting of top leaders at the resort of Beidaihe (北戴河), and eliminated the ceremonies on the departure and return of top leaders on overseas trips.

¹⁶Sometime around mid-2003, there was an unconfirmed report in the Hong Kong press that a group of Party elders had written a letter to the Central Committee asking Jiang to transfer his CMC chairmanship to Hu, thereby completing his retirement process.

¹⁷During the SARS epidemic, Hu's surprise appearance on the streets of SARS-ravaged Guangzhou (廣州市) was enthusiastically received by the nation. He also fired two high-ranking officials who mismanaged the situation. He and Premier Wen were hailed by the public for putting the people's interests first. The nation naturally credited him and Premier Wen for beating the epidemic.

¹⁸See note 9 above.

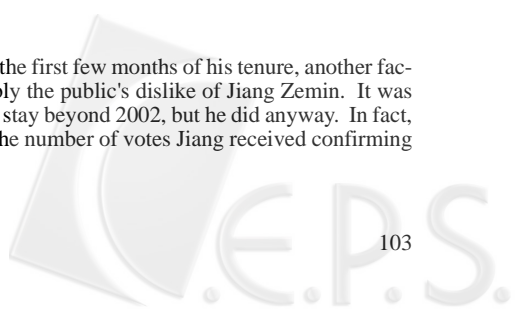
previous single-minded pursuit of economic growth as more and more unsustainable. Furthermore, compared to the "three represents" theory with which Jiang had tirelessly indoctrinated the Party, the idea of "scientific development" seemed to focus on real problems on the ground instead of smacking of hollow ideology. In short, Hu was highly popular during the early months of his leadership. When the National People's Congress (NPC) voted on the presidency in March 2003, Hu received 99.8 percent of the vote.¹⁹

However, popularity alone cannot consolidate a leader's power. Two more things appeared necessary. On the one hand Hu had to reinforce his support networks within the ruling elite, while on the other he had to achieve dominance among the top leaders. The rest of this paper focuses on these two aspects of his power consolidation. First, in 2003 and 2004, he gradually promoted his supporters, especially those who were linked to the CCYL, to important positions. Among the top leaders, he first worked closely with Premier Wen Jiabao (溫家寶) in promoting a pro-people image for the new administration, in combating the SARS epidemic, and in managing economic and social issues. Then he successfully co-opted several top leaders who had previously been seen as his rivals, most notably Jiang Zemin's protégé Zeng Qinghong. These leaders all controlled important portfolios and represented various power and functional groupings. By rallying these people around him, Hu established himself as the core of the new leadership.

Tuanpai: Hu's Key Support Pillar

Politics is about alliances and coalitions. For any leader to hold on to power, he/she must command loyal support from a sufficient number

¹⁹In addition to Hu's good performance during the first few months of his tenure, another factor contributing to his popularity was probably the public's dislike of Jiang Zemin. It was likely that many people did not want Jiang to stay beyond 2002, but he did anyway. In fact, at the NPC that confirmed Hu's presidency, the number of votes Jiang received confirming his CMC chairmanship was relatively low.



of people within the power establishment. Ever since he entered China's elite politics in the early 1980s, Hu had built various support networks around him. Some of these date from his earlier career in Gansu (甘肅省), Guizhou (貴州省), and Tibet (Xizang, 西藏), others he was able to connect with through Party elders who adopted him as their protégé.²⁰ All in all, however, Hu's largest number of supporters came from the CCYL.

The CCYL is by design the "reserve army" of the Party. According to one estimate, the CCYL had over 68 million members in 2002, including 181,000 full-time CCYL cadres.²¹ Through the years, many cadres have risen from the ranks of the CCYL to key positions. Cadres with CCYL backgrounds are known as "*Tuanpai*" (團派, the *Tuan* faction). Hu Yaobang served as first secretary of the CCYL before the Cultural Revolution. Throughout the 1980s, in the then five-member Politburo Standing Committee, there was always at least one person with a CCYL background.²² When Hu Yaobang was CCP general secretary from 1982 to 1987, he promoted many *Tuanpai* officials. Hu Jintao was at that time promoted to be a provincial Party secretary from his post in the CCYL.

Most political groupings in China are formed through regional, family, or professional ties, and hence are limited in scope. In contrast, the *Tuanpai* network spans both central and local government across various functional sectors. According to a recent study, about 150 *Tuanpai* officials are serving as ministers, vice ministers, provincial Party secretaries, provincial deputy Party secretaries, governors, and vice governors.²³

²⁰For example, Chen Kuyuan (陳奎元, now Party secretary of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences [中國社會科學院], the Party's official think tank) was his colleague during his tenure in Tibet, and some of his other supporters used to follow Party elder Song Ping (宋平), who was probably most responsible for Hu's rapid rise within the Party establishment up to 1992.

²¹*Shijie ribao* (世界日報, World Journal), May 3, 2002.

²²They included Hu Yaobang, general secretary 1982-87; Hu Qili (胡啟立), member from 1987 to 1989; and Li Ruihuan (李瑞環, 1989-2002).

²³*Zhongguo shibao* (中國時報, China Times) (Taipei), July 13, 2005.

Hu's Tuanpai Associates

Hu's connection with the CCYL dated back firstly to 1982-85, when he headed the CCYL, as secretary and then as first secretary, and secondly to 1992 through 2002, when the CCYL was part of his portfolio as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Soon after he became the CCP general secretary in November 2002, several of his *Tuanpai* colleagues were promoted. Li Keqiang (李克強) was transferred from the under-developed central Chinese province of Henan (河南省) to be Party secretary of industrial heavyweight Liaoning Province (遼寧省). Li Yuanchao (李源潮) was promoted from deputy Party secretary to Party secretary of Jiangsu Province (江蘇省). Zhang Baoshun (張寶順) was promoted to be Party secretary of Shanxi Province (山西省), and Yuan Chunqing (袁純清) was promoted to be deputy Party secretary of Shaanxi Province (陝西省). All of these officials had worked with Hu when he headed the CCYL (see table 1 for the CCYL experience of these officials).

Among the more important *Tuanpai* officials (those currently at vice-gubernatorial and vice-ministerial level and above), their closeness to Hu roughly falls into three tiers. In the first tier are those who worked with him at the CCYL Central Secretariat during the 1980s. These are mostly his fellow secretaries between 1982 and 1985, and those who worked in the various departments of the CCYL Central Committee during that time. The second tier includes those who served as provincial secretaries of the CCYL between 1982 and 1985. For example, Qian Yunlu (錢運祿), who served as Party secretary of Guizhou Province and was recently moved to be the Party secretary of Heilongjiang Province (黑龍江省), was CCYL secretary of Hubei Province (湖北省) between 1982 and 1983. Governor Song Xiuyan of Qinghai (青海省省長宋秀岩), Governor Huang Huahua of Guangdong (廣東省省長黃華華), and Minister of Justice Wu Aiyong (司法部長吳愛英) also belong to this category. The third tier includes those who have CCYL backgrounds (CCYL provincial deputy secretary or above), but their CCYL experience came after Hu had left the organization in late 1985. Hu most likely had contact with them after he entered the CCP Politburo Standing Committee and took charge of CCYL work as part of his portfolio.

Table 1 lists the important *Tuanpai* officials according to this three-tier classification. Tier One includes those currently in vice-ministerial/vice-gubernatorial positions (副部級、副省級) or above. In Tier Two and Tier Three, only gubernatorial/ministerial (省部級) officials are listed, including executive vice ministers and executive vice governors, as they hold gubernatorial/ministerial rank. Tier Three officials were appointed to CCYL positions after Hu had left the CCYL, and only six of them have reached gubernatorial or ministerial rank as of the time of writing. There are quite a large number of them, however, that are currently in vice-ministerial or vice-gubernatorial positions.

Between 1992 and 2002, as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, Hu took charge of the Party's organizational affairs (the CCP's *nomenklatura* system). It was during this time, especially from 1997, that he was able to promote his fellow *Tuanpai* people, particularly those in Tier One. He started by placing them in secondary or subordinate positions in various ministries or provinces, as the top positions were in the hands of the protégés of Jiang Zemin or other political bosses. However, once Hu became the top leader, he quickly promoted these people to top positions. In a way, these were his troops, "fielded" in various locations, waiting to take over. For example, Li Yuanchao was placed as deputy Party secretary of Jiangsu Province in October 2000, and was promoted to be secretary in December 2002, only one month after Hu became CCP general secretary. Similarly, Zhang Baoshun was appointed vice governor of Shanxi Province in 2001. In January 2004, he was promoted to be the acting governor and was soon promoted to be Shanxi's Party secretary.

Of course, not all of those with a CCYL background are close to Hu. Some rose into the central leadership alongside, not following, Hu Jintao. For example, in addition to Hu himself, three of the current twenty-five Politburo members have a CCYL background: Liu Yunshan (劉雲山), Wang Lequan (王樂泉), and Wang Zhaoguo (王兆國). None of them is Hu's protégé.²⁴ Some other officials with a CCYL background attained

²⁴Liu Yunshan was promoted from Inner Mongolia to be CCP director of propaganda in

Table 1
Major Tuanpai Officials as of December 2006

Name	Year of Birth	CCYL Experience	Current Position	Time Appointed
Tier One				
Wang Zhaoguo 王兆國	1941	Central Secretariat, 1982-84	Politburo Member and Vice Chairman of the NPC	Nov 2002 Mar 2003
Li Zhilun 李至倫	1942	CCYL Central School, CCYL Newspaper, 1982-88	Minister of Supervision	Mar 2003
Li Xueju 李學舉	1945	Central Department, 1978-88	Minister of Civil Affairs	Mar 2003
Liu Yandong (f.) 劉延東	1945	Central Secretariat, 1982-91	Director, CCP United Front Work Department	Nov 2002
Song Defu 宋德福	1946	Central Secretariat, 1983-93	Vice Chairwoman, CPPCC Deputy Director, Central Human Talent Coordinating Small Group	Mar 2003 Dec 2004
Cai Wu 蔡武	1949	Central Department, 1983-95	Director, State Council Information Office	Aug 2005
Li Yuanchao 李源潮	1950	Central Secretariat, 1983-93	Party Secretary, Jiangsu	Dec 2002
Zhang Baoshun 張寶順	1950	Central Secretariat, 1979-91	Party Secretary, Shanxi	July 2005
Zhang Qingli 張慶黎	1951	Central Department, 1979-86	Party Secretary, Tibet	Nov 2005
Yuan Chunqing 袁純清	1952	Central Secretariat, 1980-97	Acting Governor, Shaanxi	June 2006
Han Changfu 韓長賦	1953	Central Department, 1982-99	Acting Governor, Jilin	Dec 2006
Jiang Daming 姜大明	1953	Central Dept and Secretariat, 1982-98	Vice Party Secretary, Shandong	July 2001
Li Keqiang 李克強	1955	Central Secretariat, 1982-98	Party Secretary, Liaoning	Dec 2004
Ling Jihua 令計劃	1956	Central Department, 1980-92	Deputy Director, General Office of the CCP Central Committee	Nov 2002
Tier Two				
Li Dezhu 李德洙	1943	Secretariat, Jilin, 1978-83	Minister of Ethnicity Affairs	Mar 2006
Ma Qizhi 馬啟智	1943	Secretariat, Ningxia, 1973-83	Governor, Ningxia	Jan 2003
Qian Yunlu 錢運錄	1944	Secretariat, Hubei, 1982-83	Party Secretary, Heilongjiang	Dec 2005
Sun Jiazheng 孫家正	1944	Secretariat, Jiangsu, 1979-83	Minister of Culture	Mar 1998
Wang Lequan 王樂泉	1944	Secretariat, Shandong, 1982-86	Party Secretary, Xinjiang and Politburo Member	Dec 1995 Nov 2002

Table 1 (Continued)

Name	Year of Birth	CCYL Experience	Current Position	Time Appointed
Tier Two				
Zhang Weiqing 張維慶	1944	Secretariat, Shanxi, 1982-83	Minister, Population and Family Planning	Mar 2003
Ji Yunshi 季允石	1945	Secretariat, Jiangsu, 1982-84	Vice Minister, Personnel (Ministerial rank)	Oct 2006
Du Qinglin 杜青林	1946	Secretariat, Jilin, 1979-84	Party Secretary, Sichuan	Dec 2006
Huang Huahua 黃華華	1946	Secretariat, Guangdong, 1982-87	Governor, Guangdong	Jan 2003
Li Chengyu 李成玉	1946	Secretariat, Ningxia, 1978-83	Governor, Henan	Jan 2003
Liu Yunshan 劉雲山	1947	Secretariat, Inner Mongolia, 1982-84	Politburo Member and Director, CCP Propaganda Department	Nov 2002
Qin Guangrong 秦光榮	1950	Secretariat, Hunan, 1984-87	Acting Governor, Yunnan	Nov 2006
Ye Xiaowen 葉小文	1950	Secretariat, Guizhou, 1985-90, Central Dept, 1990-91	Director, National Authority of Religious Affairs	Mar 1998
Wu Aiyang 吳愛英	1951	Secretariat, Shandong, 1982-89	Minister of Justice	July 2005
Liu Qibao 劉奇葆	1953	Secretariat, Anhui, 1982-85 Central Secretariat, 1985-93	Party Secretary, Guangxi	June 2006
Song Xiuyan 宋秀岩	1955	Secretariat, Qinghai, 1983-89	Governor, Qinghai	Jan 2005
Wang Yang 汪洋	1955	Secretariat, Anhui, 1982-84	Party Secretary, Chongqing	Dec 2005
Tier Three				
Li Changjiang 李長江	1944	Central Secretariat, 1986-92	Director, State Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine	Apr 2001
Li Zhanshu 栗戰書	1950	Secretariat, Hebei, 1986-90	Executive Vice Governor, Heilongjiang	Dec 2006
Liu Peng 劉鵬	1951	Secretariat, Sichuan, 1987-91; Central Secretariat, 1993-97	Director, State Sports Bureau	Dec 2004
Ji Bingxuan 吉炳軒	1952	Central Secretariat, 1993-98	Executive Vice Director, CCP Propaganda Department	Nov 2002
Yang Jing 楊晶	1953	Secretariat, Inner Mongolia, 1993-96	Governor, Inner Mongolia	Jan 2004
Yang Chuantang 楊傳堂	1954	Secretariat, Shandong, 1987-92	Vice Minister, Ethnicity Affairs (Ministerial rank)	June 2006
Han Zheng 韓正	1954	Secretariat, Shanghai, 1990-92	Mayor, Shanghai Acting Party Secretary, Shanghai	Feb 2003 Sept 2006

Table 1 (Continued)

Name	Year of Birth	CCYL Experience	Current Position	Time Appointed
Tier Three				
Zhou Qiang 周強	1960	Central Secretariat, 1995-present	Acting Governor, Hunan	Sept 2006
Hu Chunhua 胡春華	1963	Secretariat, Tibet, 1987-92, 1992-95, Central Secretariat, 1997-2001	First Secretary, CCYL Central Secretariat	Dec 2006
Total Number			40	

Sources: He Meirong, ed., *Zhongguo dangzhengjun gaoji lingdaoren cidian* (Who's who: current Chinese leaders) (Hong Kong: Wen Wei chubanshe, 2003); documents of CCYL (www.ccyl.org.cn) and provincial CCYL; and official biographies on the websites of the Chinese government (www.gov.cn) and its various ministries; Xinhua News Agency; People Daily (Renminwang); and provincial governments.

Criteria:

- (1) All must serve at CCYL provincial secretariat or a CCYL central department or the CCYL Central Secretariat.
- (2) Tier 1 includes vice-gubernatorial/vice-ministerial officials and above.
- (3) Tier 2 and Tier 3 only include officials currently at gubernatorial/ministerial level or above, inclusive of "executive vice" position holders.
- (4) Officials within each tier are listed in the order of year of birth.

their present status more on account of their performance at the provincial level than through Hu's patronage. These may include Governor Huang Huahua of Guangdong, Governor Song Xiuyan of Qinghai, and the recently appointed minister of justice, Wu Aiyong. All three of them rose from prefecture-level positions after earlier careers in the provincial CCYL leadership.²⁵

1997, when Jiang was in full control. Wang Lequan rose from the vice governorship of Shandong (山東省) in the early 1990s to become the top leader of Xinjiang (新疆). He was promoted to the Politburo in 1997, before Hu Jintao became the paramount leader. Wang Zhaoguo, vice chairman of the National People's Congress, rose to the Party Center in 1984. However, Wang and Hu were colleagues at the CCYL, and hence they are close to each other. See Gao Xin, *Lingdao Zhongguo de xin renwu* (The new personnel leading China) (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 2003).

²⁵Wu Aiyong's promotion to minister of justice in 2005 should probably be attributed to the role played by Wu Guanzheng (吳官正) (no relation), who is ranked number seven in the Politburo and is in charge of Party discipline. When Wu Guanzheng was Party secretary of Shandong, Wu Aiyong was his deputy.

There are some officials whose CCYL background qualifies them to be called *Tuanpai*, but whose *Tuanpai* identity has been overwhelmed or even erased by their close association with other political groups. Han Zheng (韓正), for example, served in the Shanghai CCYL Secretariat in the early 1990s, but the fact that he is a protégé of Chen Liangyu, the Party secretary of Shanghai and a close ally of Jiang Zemin, disqualifies him from being close to Hu.²⁶ The sacked mayor of Beijing, Meng Xuenong (孟學農) (not included in table 1), is also too close to Liu Qi (劉淇), a diehard follower of Jiang Zemin.²⁷ However, with the exception of these two, the other 50-odd *Tuanpai* officials currently in the CCP Central Committee are all actual or potential protégé or supporters of Hu.²⁸

A few Tier Two and Tier Three *Tuanpai* officials are currently in vice-ministerial or vice-gubernatorial positions. Most of these are bound to be promoted in the coming years, especially after the Seventeenth Party Congress in fall 2007. They include Hu Wei (胡偉), vice governor of Xinjiang; Li Zhanshu (栗戰書), vice governor and deputy Party secretary of Heilongjiang; Song Airong (宋愛榮), vice governor of Xinjiang; and Shen Yueyue (沈躍躍), deputy director of the CCP Central Organization Department (中共中央組織部) (see table 2). These people are generally close to Hu, having worked with him for a long time. For example, Shen

²⁶Han Zheng's tenure in the CCYL was very brief. In 1990 he was appointed secretary of the Shanghai CCYL, by October 1992 he was relocated to serve as Party secretary of Luwan District, Shanghai. Hence he probably never came into real contact with Hu Jintao until he became mayor of Shanghai in 2003. Through much of 2005, it was rumored that Shanghai Party secretary Chen Liangyu, together with Mayor Han Zheng, were to be removed by Hu Jintao. Then in September 2006, Chen Liangyu was deposed but Han Zheng retained his post and was appointed to take over Chen's position temporarily. See, for example: "China Communist Plenum Test of Hu's Influence," Reuters, August 19, 2005.

²⁷After he became mayor of Beijing, Meng told reporters at his first press conference that he had worked under Hu Jintao in the early 1980s in the CCYL. That is an indisputable lie: official records show that his tenure in the CCYL came after Hu had left. Meng did not come into contact with Hu until sometime in 1999. He was fired by Hu only a few months into office for mishandling the SARS crisis in Beijing. See Zong Hairan, *Aimeide quanli jiaojie* (Ambiguous power transition) (New York: Mirror Books, 2003).

²⁸Zhiyue Bo has drawn up a complete list of *Tuanpai* officials in the Sixteenth CCP Central Committee. He has also calculated a cohesion-index based on each person's direct contact with all the others within the group. See Zhiyue Bo, "The 16th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Formal Institutions and Factional Groups," *Journal of Contemporary China* 13, no. 39 (May 2004): 223-56.

Table 2
To Be Watched *Tuanpai* Officials at Vice-Ministerial and Vice-Gubernatorial Level

Name	Year of Birth	CCYL Experience	Current Position	Time Appointed
Tier Three				
Shen Yueyue (f.) 沈躍躍	1957	Secretariat, Zhejiang, 1985-95	Vice Director, CCP Department of Organization Vice Minister, Personnel	Nov 2002 Mar 2003
Song Airong (f.) 宋愛榮	1959	Secretariat, Xinjiang, 1994-99	Vice Governor, Xinjiang	Jan 2005
Sun Jinlong 孫金龍	1962	Central Secretariat, 1995-2003	Party Secretary, Hefei City and Member, Standing Committee of Party Committee of Anhui	Jan 2006
Hu Wei 胡偉	1962	Central Department, 1993-2001; Central Secretariat, 2001-05	Vice Governor, Xinjiang	July 2005
Yang Yue 楊岳	1968	Central Secretariat, 2001-present	Executive Secretary, CCYL Central Committee	Dec 2005

Sources: Same as table 1.

Criteria:

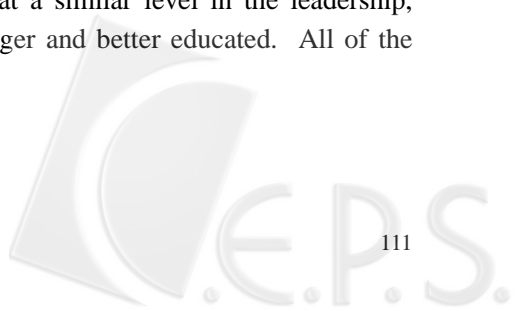
- (1) All must serve at CCYL provincial secretariat or a CCYL central department or the CCYL Central Secretariat.
- (2) Listed in the order of year of birth.

Yueyue has been named by observers as being chief of staff for personnel in Hu Jintao's team, and as such she is assisting Hu in reshuffling high-level personnel.²⁹ Three months after Hu Jintao became CCP general secretary, he moved Shen from deputy Party secretary of Anhui (安徽省) to her present post. Soon after, she was also appointed a vice minister of personnel in the State Council.

*Characterizing the *Tuanpai**

Compared to their colleagues at a similar level in the leadership, *Tuanpai* officials are generally younger and better educated. All of the

²⁹Qiu, *Zhonggong diwudai*, 198-202.



forty officials in table 1 have at least college-level education, and about half of them received graduate education. Three of them (Li Keqiang, Li Yuanchao, and Liu Yandong 劉延東) even hold PhDs. Most of them studied politics, law, economics, or the humanities, in sharp contrast to the engineers of the Jiang Zemin era.

After their earlier careers in the CCYL, many of them worked in various local governments (prefectural, municipal, and provincial) and in different functional areas (propaganda, organization, legal affairs). For example, Li Yuanchao served as deputy director of the Office of International Public Affairs of the CCP Central Committee (中共中央對外宣傳辦公室), deputy director of the Information Office of the State Council (國務院新聞辦公室), vice minister of culture, and Party secretary of Nanjing City (南京市) before assuming the post of Party secretary of Jiangsu. Hu Chunhua (胡春華) was prefect (專員, *zhuan yuan*) of Linzhi Prefecture (林芝地區) between his periods in the CCYL Tibet Secretariat and the CCYL Central Secretariat. He then returned to Tibet, where he first served as deputy Party secretary and vice governor, later becoming executive deputy Party secretary and executive vice governor. He has a special connection with Hu Jintao in that during 1989-92, when he was deputy secretary of the CCYL Tibet Committee, Hu Jintao was the Party secretary of Tibet. In December 2006, the CCP Central Committee announced that Hu Chunhua had been appointed first secretary of the CCYL (共青團中央第一書記). He is now in the position from which Hu Yaobang, Wang Zhaoguo, Hu Jintao, and most likely Li Keqiang, rose to national leadership positions.³⁰

A majority of the *Tuanpai* officials have rural backgrounds. Li Keqiang, Liu Yunshan, and Wang Lequan, for example, worked in people's communes during the Cultural Revolution. In general, they rose through Party work, such as the two major Party work functions of propaganda

³⁰Soon after Hu Chunhua's appointment as the CCYL first secretary, the Hong Kong and Taiwan media were saying that he would be the future top leader of China. See "Zhonggong jieban tidui chengxing, Hu Chunhua beikanhao gedai jiebanren" (中共接班梯隊成形：胡春華被看好隔代接班人, The CCP has formed its succession teams, Hu Chunhua believed to be the successor of the next generation), *Zhongguo shibao*, December 20, 2006.

and organization. When they moved from Party work to government, they usually moved into non-economic functions, such as cultural, ethnic, religious, sports, or legal affairs. Some have argued that the *Tuanpai* officials lack expertise in economics and financial affairs, meaning that they might need to share power with other groups with complementary expertise. At the same time, however, their experience in rural and underdeveloped regions may be well in tune with Hu's "harmonious society" project, which is focused on underdeveloped regions and sectors (see Appendix 1 for a list of *Tuanpai* officials governing the provinces).³¹

The Rise of the New "Core"

Hu's promotions of *Tuanpai* officials served two purposes in his power consolidation. On the one hand, they directly enhanced Hu's power as more positions came into the hands of his loyalists. On the other, these promotions sent a clear message to officials at central and local level that Hu is now in charge. This recognition of his power then created favorable conditions for him to further control the political agenda. However, Hu's supporters were still mostly at ministerial and gubernatorial level, or below. At the very top of the Party-state, he still had to affirm his authority. In other words, he had to establish himself as the "core" of the leadership.

Through the fifty-odd years of the People's Republic of China (1949-2002), only three leaders managed to establish themselves at the leadership core: Mao Zedong (1949-76), Deng Xiaoping (1982-89), and Jiang Zemin (after 1989). Jiang Zemin was known as the core of the third generation leaders, but he did not succeed in establishing himself in that position until the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1997, seven years into his tenure. What contributed to Hu's rapid consolidation of power appears to be a skillful use of his institutional powers. In the 1980s and early 1990s, when Deng

³¹See Cheng Li, "Hu's Policy Shift and the *Tuanpai*'s Coming-of-Age," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 15 (Summer 2005), <http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/> (accessed February 27, 2006).



Xiaoping ruled China as the honorary chairman of China's Bridge Association, political power largely depended on informal maneuvering, especially among Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun (陳雲), and several other elders. The shakiness of Jiang's position from 1989 through the early 1990s was largely attributable to the strong presence of the elders in the political arena.³² Things changed greatly during the late 1990s, especially after the death of Deng and the Fifteenth Party Congress, both of which occurred in 1997. Political power now depends more on formal institutions. The five-yearly Party congresses and the (mostly) annual plenums of the Central Committee are now the institutions which decide on important issues within the Party. Most importantly, in running the Party and the country, the Politburo and its Standing Committee are the legitimate institutions of paramount power.³³

Hence, having assumed the top position in the Party, Hu Jintao now has the institutional powers at his disposal. One such power is that of hiring and firing important officials around the country and across various government institutions, which we have seen in his promotions of the *Tuanpai* officials. Other important powers include setting Politburo agendas, presiding over policy deliberations, and deciding on specific issues. In the following section I discuss how he has used his powers within the Politburo and its Standing Committee.

Hu Materializes His Power: The Politburo, the Military, and Foreign Affairs

On the eve of the Sixteenth Party Congress, the biggest obstacle to Hu's taking full command was Jiang Zemin's grip on military power, and

³²See a discussion of how Deng, Chen, and others intervened in politics during the 1980s and early 1990s in Frederick C. Teiwes, "Normal Politics with Chinese Characteristics," *The China Journal*, no. 45 (January 2001): 69-82.

³³For the institutionalization of elite politics, see David L. Shambaugh, "The Dynamics of Elite Politics During the Jiang Era," *The China Journal*, no. 45 (January 2001): 101-12.

the fact that the Politburo was packed with Jiang's supporters.³⁴ In this regard, Hu's popularity proved very helpful. This popularity put Jiang at a disadvantage, and put him under more and more pressure to fully transfer power to his successor. Even though Jiang was still reluctant to step down, his influence had started to ebb. However, if Hu's popularity greatly constrained Jiang or any of the other contenders for power from openly challenging him, it was because he had skillfully used his official position to gain popularity in the first place. That is, he could "go public" only because he had the institutional legitimacy—i.e., he occupied the official positions of Party general secretary and state president.

Hu also made an effort to boost the public image of the Politburo (and its Standing Committee) as the highest authority in China. As soon as he assumed office, he started issuing public synopses of Politburo meetings. This had never been done before, as Politburo meetings were considered to be some of the most secretive activities in Chinese political life. By doing this, Hu enhanced his pro-people image, as the public welcomed it as an important achievement in open government. More importantly, however, it enhanced the public legitimacy of the Politburo, greatly reducing the possibility of informal power maneuvering outside this formal body. Back in the 1980s, horse-trading among the elders outside the Politburo and its Standing Committee often took precedence. Indeed, it was conspiracy-like deals such as this that eventually led to the downfall of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang. Similar maneuvering among Jiang's supporters would have weakened Hu's position. However, Hu's deliberate enhancement of the authority and legitimacy of the Politburo reduced the space available for such extra-institutional shenanigans. If the highest power in China now resides in the Politburo, anything coming from outside of it would be viewed as illegitimate. Thus the role played by "informal politics" as described by Lowell Dittmer and Yu-Shan Wu (吳玉山) is minimized.³⁵

³⁴Joseph Fewsmith, "Hu Jintao's Approach to Governance," in *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*, ed. John Wong and Hongyi Lai (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2006), 91-118.

³⁵Lowell Dittmer, "Chinese Informal Politics," *The China Journal*, no. 34 (July 1995): 1-34;

And by enhancing the Politburo, the chief of the Politburo is enhanced.³⁶

In addition to publicizing Politburo meetings, another strategy used by Hu to enhance the legitimacy of the Politburo and consequently his own power was the institution of Politburo study sessions. Hu started these sessions in December 2002, soon after he became general secretary. During the sessions, all the Politburo members meet to listen to lectures delivered by selected scholars. Hu decides the topics (probably in consultation with other members), which cover global or domestic issues that have important implications for China. Hu concludes each session with a formal speech. These study sessions are accorded wide publicity.³⁷ This new institution seems to serve three purposes. First, it promotes the legitimacy of the Politburo (and hence its institutional power), as the chosen topics help in setting national agendas. Second, it promotes the cohesiveness of the Politburo, as the members build up a collegiate spirit and come to identify with their "class president" (Hu). Third, these sessions provide Hu with a platform from which to articulate his policy thinking, which has helped him to gather wide-ranging support.

One example of how Hu used this platform to gather broader support is related to the military. Jiang Zemin's only partial retirement meant that the public was confused as to which one of them was the top leader. Following a submarine mishap in April 2003, Hu convened a Politburo study session on military affairs, which Jiang, as a non-member, could not attend. In his concluding speech at this session, Hu outlined his ideas for China's military development. It was in this speech that he put forward the idea of a "leap development" (跨越式發展) strategy for China's military. The progressive military thinking he articulated was clearly attrac-

and Lowell Dittmer and Yu-Shan Wu, "The Modernization of Factionalism in Chinese Politics," *World Politics* 47 (1995): 467-94.

³⁶Some may argue that publicizing Politburo meetings may erode the autonomy of the Politburo by causing it to be constrained by public opinion. This is probably not the case. Hu only publicized the meetings after they were held; he did not make their agendas public. The public was merely informed about the meetings, not consulted about them.

³⁷From December 2002 to June 2005, twenty-three such Politburo study sessions had been held. For details of these sessions, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2003-08/13/content_1024721.htm (accessed March 3, 2006).

tive to the military officers present, who were thus more prepared to see Jiang's full retirement and Hu's complete takeover.³⁸

This leads us to a yet more telling case of Hu's use of formal institutions to enhance his power, also related to the military. Between late 2002 and early 2005, although Jiang held the chairmanship of the CMC, he could not join in the deliberations of the Politburo and its Standing Committee. When deciding on the 2003-04 budget, the Politburo cut the increase in military spending to about 11.7 percent in 2003 and 10.9 percent in 2004, compared to 18.4 percent in 2002 and 19.4 percent in 2001.³⁹ This certainly created unease within the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Generals and lower-ranking officers alike realized that Jiang's being the top military leader limited the articulation of military interests in the Politburo. Naturally, they became eager to see the transfer of military leadership from Jiang to Hu. At the NPC session in March 2006, military spending was reported to have increased by 14.7 percent. This was the first military budget after Hu took over as CMC chairman in March 2005. Hence, it appears that Hu intentionally constrained military spending before the chairmanship was officially passed to him.⁴⁰

Hu also capitalized on his institutional powers to gain dominance in foreign policy making. Since Jiang Zemin's time, it has become the norm that the top leader (who is concurrently general secretary of the CCP, state president, and chairman of the CMC) takes charge of foreign affairs.⁴¹ In

³⁸The accident involving a Ming-class submarine (no. 361) on April 16, 2003, during an exercise, resulted in the loss of some seventy submariners; see "Wo haijun yisou qianting xunlianshi shishi" (我海軍一艘潛艇訓練時失事), *Xinhua*, May 2, 2003. For the Politburo study session on military development strategy presided over by Hu, see the *People's Daily*, May 25, 2003. For a discussion of how this affected Hu's power consolidation, see Zong, *Aimeide quanli jiaojie*, chap. 26.

³⁹For official figures on the military spending increase, see *China Statistics Yearbook* (2005). The 2004 figure is from official report by *People's Daily* English version: http://english.people.com.cn/200412/27/eng20041227_168807.html (accessed March 3, 2006).

⁴⁰I owe this insight to Ellis Joffe. For Hu's use of official authority to consolidate his power as the paramount military leader, see a discussion in Ellis Joffe, "The Chinese Army in Domestic Politics: Factors and Phases," in *Civil-Military Relations in China*, ed. Li Nan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8-24.

⁴¹This is institutionalized by having the top leader chair two important policymaking bodies: the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group and the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group.

late 2002, the North Korean nuclear issue escalated into a crisis. It was at this juncture that Hu started to take the initiative in foreign policy making. Hu's intervention led to North Korea coming back to the negotiating table, and this achievement greatly improved Sino-U.S. relations.⁴² After Hu became president in March 2003, his control of foreign affairs became even firmer. By 2005, Hu was directing China's foreign policy with confidence.⁴³ Hu's conduct of cross-Strait relations also helped his power consolidation. Visits by the leaders of Taiwan's opposition parties to the mainland in 2005 ushered in a new era of relations across the Taiwan Strait, and strengthened Hu's power at home.

In any case, although the information available is limited, it does appear that in domestic, military, and foreign affairs, Hu quickly moved to control policy initiatives. In all these spheres, institutions were the legitimate sources of power. Hu's success lies in his ability to materialize his institutional powers. And by capitalizing on these powers, he greatly enhanced his personal position. In the words of Lowell Dittmer and Yu-Shan Wu, Hu's *shili* (勢力, informal power) grew significantly.⁴⁴

Power Balance at the Top

Scholars of China's elite politics have struggled to understand how a stable power configuration is achieved at the apogee of the Party-state. Some believe that one person or group has to overwhelm the others (Mao-

See Hongyi Lai, "External Policymaking under Hu Jintao," *Issues & Studies* 41, no. 3 (September 2005): 209-44.

⁴²Cooperation with the United States over the North Korean nuclear crisis partly led to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell openly praising the Sino-U.S. relationship as being at its "best in 30 years." See "Powell: China Ties Best in 30 Years," *Xinhua*, November 14, 2004. The book *Aimeide quanli jiaojie* offers an insider's view of how Hu took the initiative in foreign policy throughout the crisis. An interview source also confirmed that before this crisis, Hu had refrained from dealing with foreign affairs, as it was still unclear how big a role Jiang would like to play in this area. However, this crisis persuaded Hu to take control in foreign affairs.

⁴³Lai, "External Policymaking under Hu Jintao," 212-14.

⁴⁴See note 35 above.

in-command or "winner takes all"); others argue that power equilibriums are achieved through some sort of inter-group, inter-faction dynamics.⁴⁵ The understanding of Deng Xiaoping, the architect of the system Hu has now inherited, seems to be a mixture of the two. According to his "core theory," a core individual (核心) should dominate the top leadership. At the same time, Deng was apprehensive of unchecked individual leadership as manifested in Mao's later years, so he held that the "core" should preside over a *collective* leadership (領體集体).⁴⁶ Although Deng supported both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao as the "core" of the leadership, he also wanted to make sure that a personal dictatorship did not emerge.

However, this rejection of personal dictatorship had more in it than fear of unchecked personal power. It also reflected the fact that governing China is now too complex for one single leader or a single power group. Indeed, scholars have argued that there is increasingly a division of labor and power sharing among various groups.⁴⁷ As mentioned earlier, *Tuanpai* officials generally lack expertise in economics, and they are therefore forced to cohabit with other factions that supply the necessary talent.⁴⁸ In order to consolidate his power, Hu had to rely on various leaders representing different power groups and functions of the Party-state. In the Politburo

⁴⁵For this debate, see Avery Goldstein, *From Bandwagon to Balance-of-Power Politics: Structural Constraints and Politics in China, 1949-1978* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991); and Tang Tsou, "Chinese Politics at the Top: Factionalism or Informal Politics? Balance-of-Power Politics or a Game to Win All?" *The China Journal*, no. 34 (July 1995): 95-156. A good synthesis is offered in Dittmer, "Chinese Informal Politics." A new offering is "Elite Politics in China," *Issues & Studies* 41, no. 1 (March 2005), especially the piece by Zhiyue Bo, titled "Political Succession and Elite Politics in Twenty-First Century China," 162-89.

⁴⁶See Deng Xiaoping's conversations on May 31 and June 16, 1989, especially the latter entitled "Urgent Tasks of China's Third Generation of Collective Leadership," in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1982-1992)*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994), 300-304.

⁴⁷Some scholars call this a Chinese form of check and balance: different groups or factions are so positioned in various institutions that the personnel arrangement at the top of each takes the form of a sandwich. For example, the premier and a few vice premiers normally come from different factions. See Guoguang Wu, *The Anatomy of Political Power in China* (Singapore: East Asian Institute and Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), chap. 3.

⁴⁸Cheng Li, "Deciphering Hu's Leadership and Defining China's New Elite Politics," in Wong and Lai, *China into the Hu-Wen Era*, 61-90.

and especially its Standing Committee, he had to work with his peers, each of whom could boast his own power base. In essence, Hu's most important power-balancing act was to form a viable working relationship with two other top leaders: Wen Jiabo, the premier, and Zeng Qinghong, vice president and ranking member of the CCP Central Secretariat.

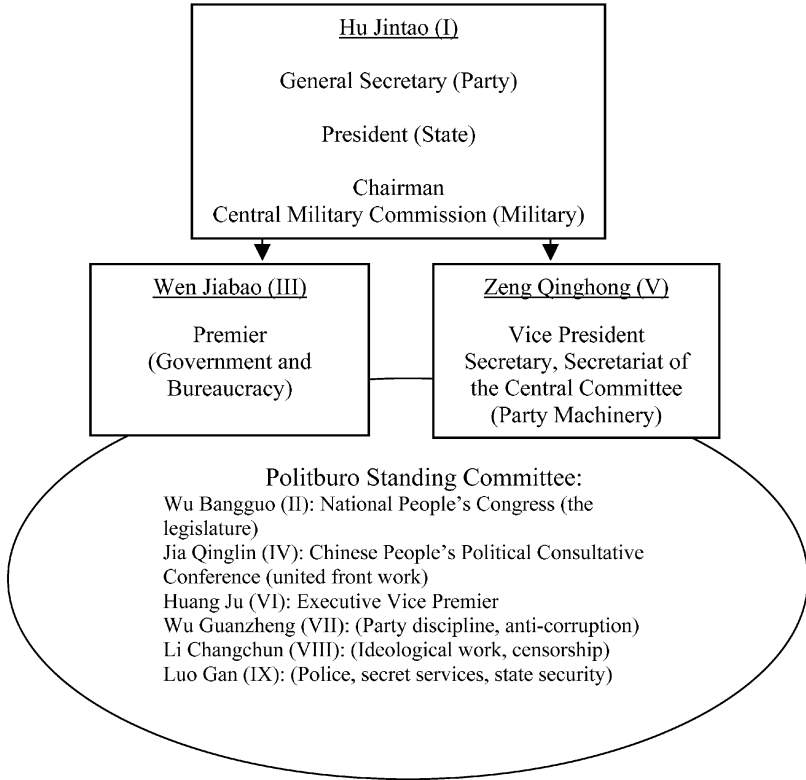
The Hu-Wen-Zeng Triumvirate

According to their formal portfolios, Hu, Wen, and Zeng each has a distinct job to do. Figure 1 shows the division of power and responsibilities among them. Hu controls the top posts in the Party, the state, and the military. As the premier, Wen Jiabao looks after governmental affairs. Zeng Qinghong's portfolios are supplementary to those of Hu: he performs supportive functions in Party and state affairs. This being the power structure at the top, what Hu succeeded in doing was tapping the strengths of Wen and Zeng, and buttressing his own position in the process.

Premier Wen Jiabao represents a loose functional group largely comprising technocrats and specialists within the State Council, both cabinet and non-cabinet ministers and officials. These officials are primarily preoccupied with the administration of the country and are not known to be active power contenders. By looking after the country's financial, industrial, agricultural, social, and diplomatic business on a daily basis, Wen's technocratic group performs an indispensable task for the Party in governing this increasingly modern and complex society and economy.

Wen Jiabao has worked closely with Hu ever since the two of them came into office. At that time, it seemed a natural choice for them to ally with each other. They share a similar background, they are the same age, they graduated from college in the same year, and were both stuck in Beijing due to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. In 1968, both of them were "sent down" to work in the underdeveloped northwestern province of Gansu; fourteen years later, in 1982, they were promoted to posts in Beijing. Although they probably did not meet until as late as 1992, such a common background is rare among the top leaders. On a more funda-

Figure 1
Division of Power and Responsibilities at the Top



Note: I, III, and V denote Politburo rankings in order of importance. Items in parentheses denote areas of responsibility.

mental level, they share a similar policy orientation, wishing to give more emphasis to less-developed regions and more attention to the peasants and urban poor. On the realpolitik level, they have faced the same sort of adversity: Jiang Zemin's supporters occupied the majority of seats in the Politburo, leaving Hu and Wen in a precarious position. Hence, beginning from late 2002, the two of them worked closely together in consolidating the new administration. After they jointly led the battle against

the SARS epidemic of early 2003, people began to refer to them affectionately as the "Hu-Wen new government" (胡溫新政). Their popularity enhanced their position within the elite circle.⁴⁹

Whether Hu could get Zeng Qinghong to work with him, however, was for a long time a topic of intense speculation. The favorite of Jiang Zemin, Zeng was widely viewed as a potential challenger to Hu. While Wen's support base is largely confined to the State Council, Zeng Qinghong enjoys a much more diverse and deep-rooted support base. On a superficial level, Zeng is a key member of the so-called Shanghai Gang, followers of Jiang Zemin who shared his background in Shanghai and who were placed in top positions during Jiang's tenure. Other members of the Gang are Politburo number two Wu Bangguo (吳邦國) and the number six Huang Ju (黃菊), both of whom were Jiang's deputies in Shanghai.⁵⁰ Non-Shanghai-related followers of Jiang include Politburo number four Jia Qinglin (賈慶林) and number eight Li Changchun (李長春).⁵¹ Therefore, including Zeng, five of the top nine Politburo members are Jiang's protégés. Outside the Politburo, State Councilor Chen Zhili (陳至立) and top Party theorist Wang Huning (王滬寧) also followed Jiang to Beijing from Shanghai.⁵² Once Jiang retired from the Politburo, observers naturally assumed that Zeng would become a leading figure in the Gang.

However, Zeng's network extends far beyond the Shanghai Gang. He can draw support from three other major networks: his fellow "princelings" (children of government leaders), friends and associates of his father, and

⁴⁹Zheng Yongnian, *Hu-Wen xinzheng: Zhongguo biange de xin dongli* (Hu-Wen new government: the new force behind China's transformation) (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2004).

⁵⁰Wu succeeded Jiang as the Party secretary of Shanghai. When Jiang promoted Wu to the Politburo in 1994, Huang took over in Shanghai. In November 2002, Jiang personally appointed Huang as number six in the Politburo at the Sixteenth Party Congress, and made him executive vice premier of the State Council the following spring.

⁵¹Jia Qinglin was Jiang's colleague in the Ministry of Mechanical Engineering in the 1980s, while Li attracted Jiang's attention in the 1990s when Li was governor of Henan Province.

⁵²For details on the formation and role of the Shanghai Gang, see Cheng Li, "Shanghai Gang: Force for Stability or Fuse for Conflict?" *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 1 (Winter 2002): <http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/> (accessed February 27, 2006).

people he associated with during his earlier career.⁵³ The princelings form one or several loose groupings within China's political and economic power structure. Zeng's father and mother were both senior Party officials, and since childhood he has been friends with many other princelings, including Deng Pufang (鄧朴方), the eldest son of Deng Xiaoping.⁵⁴ The princelings are a major power group from which Zeng can draw powerful support.

Zeng's father was well respected by his colleagues and followers, and after he was persecuted to death during the Cultural Revolution, these colleagues took it upon themselves to look after the young Zeng. In fact, Zeng's early career was made possible by these powerful friends, colleagues, and followers of his father, and he continues to draw support from this vast network.⁵⁵ Lastly, Zeng also formed some important connections during his earlier career. For example, the current Politburo member, state councilor, and minister of public security Zhou Yongkang (周永康) knew Zeng when they both worked in the petroleum industry.⁵⁶ After moving to Beijing with Jiang Zemin in 1989, Zeng did long stints as director of the General Office of the CCP Central Committee and director of the Organization Department. In both positions, he was untiring in building up a power base.

⁵³The following discussion of Zeng's connections and support networks is largely based on evidence provided in several biographies of Zeng and other top leaders: Ding Wang, *Zeng Qinghong yu xiyangzu qiangren* (Zeng Qinghong and the strongmen of the sunset race), 2nd edition (Hong Kong: Celebrities Press, 2001); Gao, *Lingdao Zhongguo de xin renwu*; and Zong Hairan, *Disidai* (The fourth generation) (New York: Mirror Books, 2002). Through my interviews with Party officials in Beijing I was able to corroborate these accounts of Zeng.

⁵⁴Some of these princelings were indeed raised by Zeng's mother, who used to head a kindergarten for the Party leadership during the early years.

⁵⁵Zeng joined the petroleum industry in the early 1980s, working for Yu Qiuli (余秋里), a former revolutionary comrade of his father and at that time a vice premier and the "king" of China's petroleum industry. In 1984, Shanghai Party chief Chen Guodong (陳國棟), who was a subordinate of Zeng's father in the early 1960s, brought him into the Shanghai Party Committee. This proved to be a critical point in his career, as from there he rose to be the deputy Party secretary of Shanghai and, eventually, the top aide of Jiang Zemin.

⁵⁶Their wives are sisters. Given his current status and portfolio, Zhou will very likely take up the Politburo Standing Committee seat to be vacated by Luo Gan (羅干) on his retirement at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 2007. If this occurs, Zhou will be the highest official in charge of law enforcement, including intelligence and the secret police.

Such a strong and extended network makes Zeng a formidable power broker, added to which he has limitless realpolitik skills. This is probably why Jiang brought him along when he left Shanghai for Beijing in 1989, and relied on him as his top aide thereafter. Indeed, it is widely believed that between 1989 and 1997, Zeng engineered the downfall of Jiang's major challengers.⁵⁷ His career advancement is testimony to his political clout: on the eve of the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992, when Hu Jintao started his term as the youngest member of the Politburo Standing Committee, Zeng was a mere deputy director of the General Office of the CCP Central Committee, a vice-ministerial position. By the Sixteenth Party Congress in 2002, he had risen to stand next to Hu Jintao at the very top of the Party leadership.⁵⁸

As such, people had long viewed Zeng as a direct threat to Hu's power. Hence it must have come as a great surprise for many that by 2005, he had repositioned himself as a useful lieutenant to Hu.⁵⁹ Indeed, informants with inside information argued that Zeng and Hu had long seen each other as colleagues and were ready to work together after Jiang's retirement.⁶⁰ Powerful as Zeng might have appeared to be, a rational as-

⁵⁷Three challengers of Jiang fell from power between 1989 and 1997: Yang Shangkun (and his half-brother Yang Baibing) who was becoming too powerful in the military in the approach to the Fourteenth Party Congress of 1992; Beijing Party boss Chen Xitong (陳希同), who could not disguise his arrogance in front of Jiang Zemin; and Qiao Shi, Politburo Standing Committee member whose (forced) retirement at the Fifteenth Party Congress of 1997 made Jiang the indisputable leader of the Party. It was believed that Zeng used his powerful networks, including his close relations with friends of Deng Xiaoping's son Deng Pufang, during these political battles. All of this is recorded by a CCP official who defected abroad, with the pseudonym Zong Hairen, in *Disidai*. Also see Nathan and Gilley, *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files*.

⁵⁸Despite Zeng's strong networks within the inner circles of the Party and his formidable Machiavellian politicking skills, he has long been unpopular in wider circles. Many saw him as being too close to Jiang, and agonized about his rapid rise due to Jiang's favor. In fact, he gathered a relatively low number of votes at his confirmation as a Politburo member following the Sixteenth Party Congress (November 2002) and as vice president at the NPC session (March 2003).

⁵⁹On July 1, 2005, the two of them were present at the annual ceremony to mark the founding of the CCP. Hu gave a speech praising the "Maintaining the Party's Advanced Nature" campaign executed by Zeng Qinghong. For other evidence of their good working relationship, see below.

⁶⁰Interview sources, August 2004, Beijing. Also see the sections on the relationship between the two men in Zong, *Disidai*.

assessment would predict that, given Hu's position as legitimate paramount leader, with the ability to remove potential challengers, the only option for Zeng if he wanted to keep his position was to work with Hu. This can be explained by what Avery Goldstein has called "bandwagon" behavior.⁶¹ On his first public appearance, Hu was accompanied by Zeng on a visit to the Xibaipo revolutionary base in Hebei Province (河北省) outside Beijing. Zeng also seems to have been entrusted with some very important portfolios by Hu. As the most senior member of the seven-member Secretariat of the Party Central Committee, Zeng was tasked with running the Party. Beginning from 2003, he indefatigably carried out Hu's Party rejuvenation campaign, aimed at "maintaining the Party's advanced nature" (保持共產黨的先進性). He also helped Hu defuse the 2003 crisis in Hong Kong over the slow pace of political democratization and the lackluster performance of former chief executive Tung Chee Hwa (董建華).⁶² In foreign affairs, Zeng was for some time in charge of China's relations with Japan, the second most important country after the United States in China's foreign affairs. He was also seen leading delegations to Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia. The fact that he was given these tasks shows that a relationship of trust exists between the president and the vice president; Hu felt comfortable entrusting Zeng with important work, while Zeng found it appropriate to work in accordance with Hu's plans and visions. A *New York Times* article even went so far as to assert that Zeng Qinghong had worked closely with Hu in pushing Jiang Zemin to resign from the chairmanship of the CMC in 2004.⁶³ Then in 2006, it was reported that Zeng had supported Hu's anti-corruption drive that eventually led to the fall of Shanghai Party secretary Chen Liangyu, someone who should have been able to count on Zeng's protection.⁶⁴

⁶¹Goldstein, *From Bandwagon to Balance-of-Power Politics*.

⁶²Zeng Qinghong chaired the Central Coordinating Small Group on Hong Kong and Macau Affairs.

⁶³See "China's Leader, Ex-Rival at Side, Solidifies Power," *New York Times*, September 25, 2005.

⁶⁴"Hu Jintao gongpo Shanghai tanfu baolei muhou" (胡錦濤攻破上海貪腐堡壘幕後, The

In sum, although exactly how this has come about will remain unclear for some time to come, Zeng appears to be willing to play a supporting role to Hu, just as he did to Jiang Zemin. Hu, for his part, has found it useful to tap Zeng's strengths. Thus the three most powerful members of the Politburo form the Hu-Wen-Zeng triumvirate that governs the Chinese Party-state.

A World without the Shanghai Gang

In terms of numbers alone, Jiang Zemin's followers, the so-called Shanghai Gang, will continue to dominate the Politburo Standing Committee until the Seventeenth Party Congress, as changes to the Committee rarely take place between congresses. As early as 2004, however, it became clear that quite a few of Jiang's known followers were working well with Hu. The most notable was Zeng Qinghong, of course, as discussed above. Lower-ranking individuals, such as Party theorist Wang Huning and State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan (唐家璇), appeared to have formed good working relationships with Hu as well. These people were seen in Hu's company at major events, and were entrusted with important portfolios.⁶⁵

However, some others fared less well. Huang Ju, the most prominent Jiang follower save Zeng, was tarnished by corruption allegations, and was clearly sidelined beginning sometime in 2005.⁶⁶ Beginning in January

inside story of Hu Jintao's attack on Shanghai corruption), *Yazhou zhoukan* (亞洲周刊, Asiaweek), October 8, 2006, 84-87.

⁶⁵For example, Wang Huning was a key member of the mainland side when Hu held meetings with opposition party leaders from Taiwan, and he accompanied Hu on various domestic and international trips. Tang Jiaxuan was in charge of foreign affairs within the State Council, and it appears Hu had entrusted him with several important missions, including a trip to North Korea in April 2004 followed by a trip to Washington, to lay the groundwork for both the six-party talks and for the upcoming summit between Hu and George W. Bush (which was postponed on account of Hurricane Katrina).

⁶⁶It is widely believed that Zhou Zhengyi (周正毅), the disgraced Shanghai business tycoon, had support from the Shanghai government when Huang Ju was Shanghai's Party secretary. Throughout 2004, there were rumors that corruption charges against the Shanghai government leaders would implicate Huang.

2006, Huang was absent from public view for several months, allegedly due to health problems.⁶⁷ In 2006, Chen Liangyu, the Party secretary in Shanghai, fell from power on account of corruption charges, and it was believed that Huang's wife and his brother, if not Huang himself, were involved in the same case. Eventually, in December 2006, it was reported that the Politburo had decided that Huang would remain out of Beijing, ostensibly for medical reasons.⁶⁸ Another key follower of Jiang, the number four in the Politburo and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Jia Qinglin, suffered the same fate: he was never able to establish his innocence regarding a huge smuggling scandal involving the Yuanhua Company (遠華集團) of Fujian (福建省), where he was Party secretary.⁶⁹ In the second half of 2006, it was reported that his position had been seriously compromised in an anti-corruption investigation by the central government into the Beijing municipal government, where Jia had worked before November 2002.⁷⁰ Both Huang and Jia are expected to leave the Politburo and retire from politics for good at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 2007.

The rapid demise of the Shanghai Gang gives us an opportunity to examine the nature of the "faction" in China's elite politics. In the center of this debate is whether the so-called factions are clear-cut, cohesive, solid, and long-lasting; or whether they are loosely formed amorphous groupings. When Jiang Zemin was at the height of his power, the Shanghai

⁶⁷"Cancer Diagnosis May Force Leader off Politburo," *South China Morning Post*, February 22, 2006.

⁶⁸For the Chen Liangyu case that involved Huang Ju's wife and his brother, see "Beijing Corruption Case Signals Political Battle," Reuters, Jun 21, 2006. For the Politburo decision to keep Huang in Shanghai, see "Huang Ju's Illness Unstable, Permitted to Stay in Shanghai for Treatment," *Lianhe bao* (聯合報, United Daily News) (Taipei), December 20, 2006.

⁶⁹Yuanhua was a Xiamen (廈門)-based company that in 1997-98 was involved in smuggling an estimated 80 billion RMB-worth of steel, oil, automobiles, and other commodities. The case led to the sacking of vice minister of public security Li Jizhou (李紀周) and a high-level PLA intelligence officer, Ji Shengde (姬勝德). See the latest report on this in "Lai Changxing [賴昌星] Speaks out on What He Dared Not Say," *Yazhou zhouban*, December 11, 2006, 26-31.

⁷⁰Joseph Kahn, "Chinese Corruption Inquiry Expands to Beijing Party Leaders," *New York Times*, October 27, 2006.

Gang appeared to be preeminent.⁷¹ In actual fact, however, as a political group it was never cohesive. Take the key figures for example. Zeng Qinghong was treated as a rival by Huang Ju when they were both deputy Party secretaries in Shanghai in the 1980s. Huang was afraid that his colleague would overshadow him, and he tried very hard to contain and undermine Zeng.⁷² One biographer of Zeng has asserted that it was for this reason that Zeng decided to leave Shanghai and find a position in Beijing.⁷³ As for Wu Bangguo, he generally worked well with all the top leaders and was never a real member of any particular power coalition.⁷⁴ Li Changchun did not work in Shanghai but was favored by Jiang Zemin, hence he was considered to be a key Jiang follower. For a time, Jiang wanted Li to be premier after Zhu Rongji (朱镕基), but this was not possible as Zhu strongly supported Wen Jiabao as his successor. Jiang then wanted Li to be executive vice premier. However, Huang Ju had had his eye on that position for a long time, hence the rivalry between Huang and Li. Li eventually pulled out of the race.⁷⁵

In sum, the term "Shanghai Gang" is deceptive at best. A rigorous definition of the membership of the Shanghai Gang as it existed from 1992 through 2005 would include those officials who: (1) worked with or came to associate with Jiang Zemin in Shanghai; (2) were promoted to the Center or other important positions by Jiang from 1992 through 2002; and (3) remained politically allied with Jiang thereafter. Using these criteria, only three senior officials can be said to belong to the Gang: Zeng Qinghong,

⁷¹For example, see note 48 above.

⁷²Rivalry between officials of the same rank working in the same place is very common in Chinese politics. For example, it is common for the Party secretary and the governor of the same province not to work well together. When Huang Ju was Party secretary of Shanghai, his relationship with the then mayor Xu Kuangdi (徐匡迪) was publicly known to be very bad.

⁷³At that time, Jiang Zemin had not been posted to Shanghai, hence the connection between Jiang and Zeng had yet to be formed. See Gao, *Lingdao Zhongguo de xin renwu*, 235-39.

⁷⁴For example, although many view him as a member of the Shanghai Gang, Wu worked closely with other top leaders including Li Peng (李鹏), the patriarch of a group viewed as rivals of Jiang. See the chapters on Wu and Li Peng in Zong, *Disidai*.

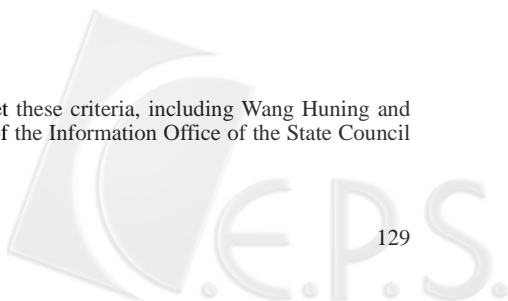
⁷⁵Zong, *Aimeide quanli jiaojie*, 58-59.

Huang Ju, and State Councilor Chen Zhili.⁷⁶ Of them, we should not forget that Zeng and Huang were never close. Wu Bangguo almost meets these criteria, but he remained equidistant from all the top leaders after he was promoted to the Center in 1994. Of course, Jiang had other followers, such as Jia Qinglin and Li Changchun, and there was indeed a group of people that could be termed Jiang loyalists, of which the Shanghai Gang was a subset. However, their association with Jiang was based on various connections, and there were no solid horizontal linkages among them. Furthermore, these individuals were associated with people outside the Jiang circle as well.

Readers may remember that back in 1994-95, even Zhu Rongji was labeled as a member of the Shanghai Gang. It is true that Zhu worked in Shanghai while Jiang was there, but Zhu never associated with Jiang and his loyal supporters such as Huang Ju. Hence it would be naive to label people as members of a faction based on one or two superficial characteristics, such as the location of their career. Similarly, some observers have identified a Tsinghua Gang (清華幫), consisting of leaders who attended Tsinghua University. It is true that for a time, there were quite a few Tsinghua graduates within the Politburo, but their educational background was never a basis for any political association. How could Hu Jintao and Huang Ju, both of whom were Tsinghua graduates, belong to the same political group? Similarly, how could Huang Ju and Zhu Rongji, also graduates of Tsinghua University and with a career background in Shanghai, be part of the same faction?

All this is only to say that within the Chinese elite, there are groupings and coalitions; however, groupings and coalitions are what politics is all about in every country around the world. These groupings are formed on very diverse bases, are subjected to rapid change, and seldom result in well-coordinated action. Whatever you like to call them, they are not

⁷⁶A few other officials of lower rank also met these criteria, including Wang Huning and Zhao Qizheng (趙啟正, sometime director of the Information Office of the State Council 國務院新聞辦公室主任).



what scholars think of as factions, but are closer to the political action groups described by Tsou Tang (鄒讜).⁷⁷

The *Jieban* System and Succession Politics: Discussions and Conclusions

When he assumed the office of CCP general secretary, Hu Jintao appeared to be faced with challenges not much different from those faced by his predecessors. Jiang Zemin still retained a key position, and Jiang's followers were predominant. The received opinion was that Hu would have to live in Jiang's shadow for a long time.⁷⁸ However, Hu beat the odds and rapidly gained a firm grasp on power.

In addition to a rapid build-up of his own popularity and the fact that Jiang's refusal to retire completely made him very unpopular, two factors seemed to contribute to Hu's rapid power consolidation: a strong support network and the institutional powers his position carried. This appears to be due to the recent institutionalization of elite politics in China. More specifically, we see two aspects of institutionalization here. The first is the institutionalization of succession (接班, *jieban*), and the second is the institutionalization of paramount political power in the Politburo and its Standing Committee. The succession arrangement appears to work like this: the chosen successor (接班人, *jiebanren*) is installed in the Politburo

⁷⁷Today, the "factionalism model" of Chinese politics does indeed seem a rather naive conception devised by a then inexperienced scholar at a time when information about Chinese elite politics was scarce. See Andrew J. Nathan, "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics," *The China Quarterly*, no. 53 (1973): 34-46. Unfortunately, through the years people have needlessly spent a great deal of effort trying to prove it wrong. See, for example: Dittmer, "Chinese Informal Politics"; Tsou, "Chinese Politics at the Top"; and Tang Tsou and Andrew J. Nathan, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Informal Groups in CCP Politics," *The China Quarterly*, no. 65 (1976): 98-117. When Nathan later tried to defend his thesis, he had little to say aside from complicating the picture by a wholesale borrowing from institutionalism. See Andrew J. Nathan and Kellee S. Tsai, "Factionalism: A New Institutional Restatement," *The China Journal*, no. 34 (July 1995): 157-92.

⁷⁸Indeed, at the time of writing, some sources were still arguing that Jiang Zemin would influence the outcome of the upcoming Seventeenth Party Congress. See "China's Jiang Creeps back from Political Oblivion," Reuters, July 19, 2006.

Standing Committee years ahead of his scheduled succession. As the heir-apparent, the *jiebanren* is assigned important portfolios. The *nomenclatura* portfolio enables him to build up his support network, while the Party affairs portfolio gives him the skills and ability to rule. As for the institutionalization of political power, this means that once the new leader assumes the top position in the Politburo, he has power at his disposal. As long as he uses his institutional powers well, others have no opportunity to challenge him. The top leader personally controls the most important formal powers needed for running the country, such as those governing foreign affairs and appointments to important positions. Hence, no matter how much an individual enjoys the support of the retired leader, if he does not have the right portfolio, he has no access to the policy making process and is thus deprived of the opportunity to influence it.⁷⁹ Such institutional arrangements clearly favored Hu's power consolidation.

In any case, it looks as though we finally have a complete and comparatively smooth transition of power in China. In fact, until Hu Jintao, all the *jiebanren* had failed: Liu Shaoqi (劉少奇), Lin Biao (林彪), Wang Hongwen (王洪文), Hua Guofeng, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang. Some of them failed very miserably: think of Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, and Wang Hongwen.⁸⁰ Even Deng Xiaoping, having been recognized in the late 1950s as a successor to Mao after Liu Shaoqi, failed twice during the Cultural Revolution. Hence in Hu's story the Chinese Party-state may claim a great victory for the institutionalization of succession politics. However, the current succession arrangements are still full of faults. First, the choice of the successor is arbitrary. Hu was chosen as Jiang's successor by Deng

⁷⁹In the current Politburo, Huang Ju, Li Changchun, and Jia Qinglin were favorites of Jiang Zemin but have ended up with the weakest portfolios. Li Changchun's was ideology, probably the most troublesome given the rising demand for pluralism and free speech in today's China. The finance portfolio, though officially held by Huang Ju, is personally overseen by Premier Wen Jiabao. Although Jia Qinglin is ranked number four in the Politburo Standing Committee, his portfolio is united front work, an area with no fiscal or political clout to speak of.

⁸⁰Jiang Zemin was not a *jiebanren* before he took over in 1989. He was a last-minute choice as the top leader after the Tiananmen Incident derailed the planned succession of Zhao Ziyang.

and several other elders in 1992, while Jiang Zemin and his Politburo, officially the most powerful people at that time, were kept out of the decision. In other words, Jiang Zemin had no say in who was going to succeed him, while ordinary citizens, who in a democracy are the only people who can decide on such issues, were not involved at all.

Even leaving this aside, the current power transfer arrangements are capable of creating tremendous friction. Jiang Zemin dragged his feet in exiting the scene, and there was not much Hu could do about that. Traditional Chinese wisdom seems to argue for an overlapping period in which the outgoing leader plays a supportive role to his successor: a form of phasing out rather than a one-shot transfer of power. In reality, however, such a power overlap is detrimental. It is very likely that the outgoing leader is guarding his own interests, making sure his followers are faring well and his legacy is protected. This creates a tremendous obstacle for the incoming leader.

This overlap is not the only problem with the succession, however. According to the current arrangements, the outgoing leadership arranges the governing team for the incoming leader. Had this not been the case, Hu Jintao would not have been faced with a Politburo packed with Jiang's followers. He also would not have needed to promote *Tuanpai* leaders while sidelining people who could not work with him, such as the Shanghai Gang. At the end of the day, that the new leader still *needs* to consolidate his power tells it all. Had the transfer of power been complete, there would have been no such need.

As of this writing, the CCP is in the process of deciding who will be the next *jiebanren*, the one who will succeed Hu Jintao at the Eighteenth Party Congress in 2012. This *jiebanren* will be promoted to the Politburo and its Standing Committee at the Seventeenth Congress in fall 2007. After that, the new heir-apparent will prepare and be prepared for his succession in 2012. Whether this next succession will be smoother than the last one remains to be seen.

Appendix 1

Tuanpai among Chinese Provincial Leaders

(Bolds indicate officials with CCYL backgrounds)

Provincial Units	Party Secretary	Mayor/Governor
Beijing 北京市	Liu Qi (劉淇)	Wang Qishan (王岐山)
Tianjin 天津市	Zhang Lichang (張立昌)	Dai Xianglong (戴相龍)
Hebei 河北省	Bai Keming (白克明)	Guo Gengmao (郭庚茂) (Acting)
Shanxi 山西省	Zhang Baoshun (張寶順)	Yu Youjun (于幼軍)
Inner Mongolia 內蒙古自治區	Chu Bo (儲波)	Yang Jing (楊晶)
Liaoning 遼寧省	Li Keqiang (李克強)	Zhang Wenyue (張文岳)
Jilin 吉林省	Wang Min (王珉)	Han Changfu (韓長賦) (Acting)
Heilongjiang 黑龍江省	Qian Yunlu (錢運錄)	Zhang Zuoji (張左己)
Shanghai 上海市	Han Zheng (韓正) (Acting)	Han Zheng (韓正)
Jiangsu 江蘇省	Li Yuanchao (李源潮)	Liang Baohua (梁保華)
Zhejiang 浙江省	Xi Jinping (習近平)	Lu Zushan (呂祖善)
Anhui 安徽省	Guo Jinlong (郭金龍)	Wang Jinshan (王金山)
Fujian 福建省	Lu Zhangong (盧展工)	Huang Xiaojing (黃小晶)
Jiangxi 江西省	Meng Jianzhu (孟建柱)	Wu Xinxiong (吳新雄) (Acting)
Shandong 山東省	Zhang Gaoli (張高麗)	Han Yuqun (韓寓群)
Henan 河南省	Xu Guangchun (徐光春)	Li Chengyu (李成玉)
Hubei 湖北省	Yu Zhengsheng (俞正聲)	Luo Qingquan (羅清泉)
Hunan 湖南省	Zhang Chunxian (張春賢)	Zhou Qiang (周強) (Acting)
Guangdong 廣東省	Zhang Dejiang (張德江)	Huang Huahua (黃華華)
Guangxi 廣西壯族自治區	Liu Qibao (劉奇葆)	Lu Bing (陸兵)
Hainan 海南省	Wei Liucheng (衛留成)	Wei Liucheng (衛留成)
Chongqing 重慶市	Wang Yang (汪洋)	Wang Hongju (王鴻舉)
Sichuan 四川省	Du Qinglin (杜青林)	Zhang Zhongwei (張中偉)
Guizhou 貴州省	Shi Zongyuan (石宗源)	Lin Shusen (林樹森) (Acting)
Yunnan 雲南省	Bai Enpei (白恩培)	Qin Guangrong (秦光榮) (Acting)
Tibet 西藏自治區	Zhang Qingli (張慶黎)	Qiangba Puncog (向巴平措)
Shaanxi 陝西省	Li Jianguo (李建國)	Yuan Chunqing (袁純清) (Acting)
Gansu 甘肅省	Lu Hao (陸浩)	Xu Shousheng (徐守盛) (Acting)
Qinghai 青海省	Zhao Leji (趙樂際)	Song Xiuyan (宋秀岩)
Ningxia 寧夏回族自治區	Chen Jianguo (陳建國)	Ma Qizhi (馬啟智)
Xinjiang 新疆維吾爾族自治區	Wang Lequan (王樂泉)	Ismail Tiliwaldi (司馬義 鐵力瓦爾地)
Number of Tuanpai as of Total	10 of 31	10 of 31

Source: "Renminwang: Ge sheng/shi/zizhiqu zhuyao lingdaoren mingdan" (人民網: 各省、市、自治區主要領導人名單, People's Daily Online: List of Provincial Leaders), <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/9667/9684/20021126/874879.html> (accessed December 29, 2006).

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