

PRC Leaders' "October 1" Speeches

In Chinese Communist leaders' speeches celebrating the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) National Day this year, Premier Li Peng continued to play up the achievements of the Chinese Communist regime, while a *People's Daily* editorial put forth the theory of "national spirit."

Li stated that the goals set for the Eighth Five-Year Plan have basically been achieved, mainland China's comprehensive state capacity continuously enhanced, and its people's living standards remarkably improved. In so saying, he intended to give the impression that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has exercised wise leadership and Deng Xiaoping's theory of "building socialism with Chinese characteristics" has been correct, with the ultimate goal of consolidating Communist authority.

Li also touched upon defects in the Eighth Five-Year Plan and major tasks to be fulfilled in the Ninth Five-Year Plan period. Beijing's policy toward Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao, as well as its global strategy in general was the other contents of Li's comments. His remarks will probably be used as a guideline for the upcoming Sixth Plenary Session of the CCP's Fourteenth Central Committee and the CCP's Fifteenth National Congress scheduled for next year.

From the "power transition" point of view, the *People's Daily* editorial's upholding of "national spirit" and patriotism can be construed as an effort made by the Jiang Zemin administration to assume leadership over official ideological interpretation, with the purpose of unifying the Party and further consolidating Jiang's leadership position.

According to the *People's Daily*, "national spirit" is "a strong spiritual power guided by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought, and Deng Xiaoping's theory of 'building socialism with Chinese characteristics'." The editorial also maintained that "such a spiritual power will enable a country to display its national spirit." It should be noted that Jiang first praised Deng's theory on building socialism in the CCP's Fourteenth National Congress held in October 1992;

since then, the mass media has followed suit. At the Third Plenary Session of the CCP's Fourteenth Central Committee held in 1993, Jiang further linked Deng's theory with Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, with the obvious intention of making himself the orthodox political successor. In addition, the *People's Daily* editorial also emphatically linked Jiang's inspection tour to southern China via the Beijing-Kowloon Railway to efforts in supporting mainland China's poor areas.

Generally speaking, Beijing's "October 1" propaganda this year has largely retained the same tone it has had in previous years: calling for unity within the Party and soliciting support from the people by trumpeting the CCP's achievements. The emphasis on "national spirit" can be viewed as an effort to consolidate Jiang Zemin's leadership position, and the reiteration of Deng's theory and the display of Jiang's tour in supporting mainland China's poor areas can be viewed as his effort to balance disputes between reformists and leftists regarding the pace of reform as he strives to dominate official ideological interpretation. Jiang's views on "national spirit" are expected to become the keynote of his remarks on "spiritual civilization" that he will deliver at the Sixth Plenary Session of the CCP's Fourteenth Central Committee and the CCP's Fifteenth National Congress. Li Peng's comments probably will serve as the outline for his "government work reports" which will be delivered at these two meetings.

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