

# The 18th Central Committee Politburo: A Quixotic, Foolhardy, Rashly Speculative, But Nonetheless Ruthlessly Reasoned Projection

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The 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, expected to convene in the fall of 2012, will see a turnover of leadership generations on a scale equaling that at the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2002. Predicting changes in China's top leadership has always been notoriously hazardous to the reputations of those who undertake it. Nevertheless, incremental institutionalization of leadership processes over the past two decades may offer a surer foundation for such predictions. This article projects what the 18<sup>th</sup> Central Committee leadership may look like based on the logic of institutionalization.

The patterns of institutionalization in leadership politics relevant to projecting the post-Hu Jintao leadership are evident in three critical areas. First, the Hu leadership appears to be adhering to norms of expected retirement. Second, the Hu leadership is making preparations and following procedures for orderly succession to the post of general secretary and perhaps premier based on previous precedent. Third, seating on the Politburo and its Standing Committee is increasingly allotted according to a logic of representation of key institutional hierarchies and constituencies, rather than purely on the basis of cronyism and considerations of factional balance as in the past.

As much as institutionalization has become increasingly visible, Chinese leadership politics has not become completely mechanical. On occasion since the mid-1990s, competition and conflict among leaders still twists, subverts, overrides, or outright ignores provisions in the party's constitution and regulations. Some norms that appear to hold in leadership politics, moreover, are not public and may be subject to change as circumstance demands. Finally, the process of institutionalization is dynamic, and so as the Hu Jintao leadership presses ahead with new reforms to regularize party political and policy processes, projections made on the basis of current rules and norms may be rendered invalid as institutionalization advances.

The projections this article offers therefore are intended as a yardstick against which to measure the advance of institutionalization in leadership politics at the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. That is, the impact of institutionalization—as opposed to other, more traditional factors in leadership politics—may be judged by the extent to which any of the projections made here are borne out by the leadership changes at the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress and the 18<sup>th</sup> Central Committee's First Plenum in 2012.

## The Scale of Leadership Turnover

Projection of turnover on the party Politburo may be made on the basis of age. Institutionalizing mandatory retirement norms was a major priority in Deng Xiaoping's political agenda since the beginning of the reform era, and explicit provisions for retirement were set down for provincial party leaders and governors, for ministers and vice ministers in the State Council, and for military officers in the People's Liberation Army and serving on the Central Military Commissions (CMCs) in the 1980s.

Stipulations regarding Politburo retirement were slower in coming. In his landmark 1980 speech on political reform, Deng noted that the party leadership had debated but deferred an explicit norm for Politburo retirement in the draft CCP constitution that was eventually adopted in 1982.<sup>1</sup> And while Deng engineered the wholesale retirement of his generation of veteran leaders at the 1985 party conference and the 1987 13<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, the leadership turmoil attending the demotion of party General Secretary Hu Yaobang in 1987 and the removal of Zhao Ziyang as party chief in the midst of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis evidently impeded any effort to impose a clear retirement age up through the early 1990s.

The existence of an age limitation for membership on the Politburo became evident only at the 1997 15<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, when all members 70 or older except then General Secretary Jiang Zemin retired. At the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2002, the age limitation governing Politburo retirement appeared to be lowered to 68, when all Politburo members at that age or older, including Jiang, retired. In each case, the existence of a retirement norm was not publicized and had to be inferred by examining the ages of those appointed to the new Politburo and of those who dropped off.

Many Western observers argued at the time that in each of those cases, the respective retirement norms of 70 and then 68 reflected ad hoc power plays by Jiang Zemin rather than efforts to institutionalize Politburo retirement norms. In 1997, the age 70 rule appeared to force the retirement of Qiao Shi, who was eligible to serve a second term as National People's Congress (NPC) chairman, a post that normally brought with it membership on the Politburo Standing Committee. In 2002, the lowering of the retirement norm to 68 served to compel the retirement of Li Ruihuan, then two years younger than the age 70 norm imposed in 1997 and so eligible to serve another term as chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), also a post that brought with it concurrent membership on the Politburo Standing Committee.

At the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in November 2007, the age 68 norm again applied, as all Politburo members at that age or above dropped off. Again, the rule was seen by some Western observers as serving a leadership power play—this time allegedly aiding General Secretary Hu Jintao's effort to dump Jiang Zemin crony Zeng Qinghong. But in the 2007 case, the retirement norm did not have to be inferred by examining the ages of those dropped from the Politburo and of those retained; PRC media reported that a "rigorous" retirement norm had been applied in the Politburo appointments and predicted that the norm would hold in the future:

What is reflected in this stable transition of the Politburo Standing Committee is Hu Jintao's outstanding coordinating ability as well as his prudent style of governing. The retirement of three Standing Committee members born before 1940—Zeng Qinghong, Wu Guanzheng, and Luo Gan—manifests the rigorous rule of “the retirement of members of the Politburo Standing Committee at the age of 68.” The institutionalization and standardization of the replacement of high-level leaders have not only ensured political stability but set an example for the transfer of power in the future.<sup>2</sup>

If retirement from the Politburo in 2012 is governed by the same norm that mandated retirement at the party congresses in 2002 and 2007, then all members of the current Politburo who have reached the age of 68 or older will retire. As indicated in Table 1 indicates (which shows in parentheses the ages the current Politburo's 25 members will reach in 2012), that leadership turnover will be significant.

**Table 1**  
*The 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Politburo\**

<i>Standing Committee (9 members, rank order)</i>	
<i>Name (age in 2012)</i>	<i>Concurrent leadership role</i>
HU JINTAO 胡锦涛 (70)	PRC president; chairman, CCP & PRC Central Military Commissions
WU BANGGUO 吴邦国 (71)	Chairman, National People's Congress
WEN JIABAO 温家宝 (70)	State Council premier
JIA QINGLIN 贾庆林 (72)	Chairman, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
LI CHANGCHUN 李长春 (68)	Supervises ideology-propaganda system
XI JINPING 习近平 (59)	Executive secretary, Secretariat; president, Central Party School; vice president, PRC
LI KEQIANG 李克强 (57)	Executive vice premier
HE GUOQIANG 贺国强 (69)	Chairman, Central Discipline Inspection Commission
ZHOU YONGKANG 周永康 (70)	Supervises legal-security work
<i>Regular Members (16 members, stroke order)</i>	
<i>Name (age in 2012)</i>	<i>Concurrent leadership role</i>
WANG GANG 王刚 (70)	Secretary, Central Committee Organs Work Committee
WANG LEQUAN 王乐泉 (68)	Secretary, Xinjiang UAR Party Committee
WANG ZHAOGUO 王兆国 (71)	Executive vice chairman, NPC Standing Committee; president, All-China Federation of Trade Unions
WANG QISHAN 王岐山 (64)	Vice premier
HUI LIANGYU 回良玉 (68)	Vice premier
LIU QI 刘淇 (70)	Secretary, Beijing Party Committee
LIU YUNSHAN 刘云山 (65)	Secretariat; director; CCP Propaganda Department
LIU YANDONG 刘延东 (67)	State councilor
LI YUANCHAO 李源潮 (62)	Secretariat; director, CCP Organization Department
WANG YANG 汪洋 (57)	Secretary, Guangdong Party Committee
ZHANG GAOLI 张高丽 (66)	Secretary, Tianjin Party Committee
ZHANG DEJIANG 张德江 (67)	Vice premier
YU ZHENGSHEG 俞正声 (67)	Secretary, Shanghai Party Committee
XU CAIHOU 徐才厚 (69)	Vice chairman, CCP and PRC Central Military Commissions
GUO BOXIONG 郭伯雄 (70)	Vice chairman, CPC and PRC Central Military Commissions
BO XILAI 薄熙来 (63)	Secretary, Chongqing Party Committee

Among the current nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee, seven will retire in 2012, including Hu Jintao—concurrently the top party, state, and military leader—and the top leaders of the NPC, the State Council, and the umbrella united front body, the CPPCC. Seven more leaders will retire as regular members of the broader Politburo—including both professional military members—bringing the total wave of retirements to 14 out of 25. That number may be larger, of course, should any of the leaders in the group of 11 who will be younger than 68 in 2012 falter physically or politically.

Such a turnover would rival the scale of retirements at the 2002 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, when 14 of 22 members dropped off the Politburo, including six of seven members of the Standing Committee. Turnover at the 2007 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress—effectively a mid-generational congress—was more limited. Nine of 25 members dropped off the Politburo, including four of nine Standing Committee members.<sup>3</sup>

## Politburo Standing Committee Projections

Projections of the membership of the Politburo Standing Committee in 2012 must reckon with the issue of the size of that key decision-making body. At the 2002 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, the Standing Committee was expanded from seven to nine members, the largest that body had been since its creation in 1956. Many Western observers chalked this expansion up to the efforts of retiring General Secretary Jiang Zemin to stack the Standing Committee with cronies to assure his enduring influence in a leadership presided over by Hu Jintao. However, the 2007 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress—at which Hu Jintao visibly consolidated power—sustained the size of the Standing Committee at nine members.

An alternative explanation for the expansion of the Politburo Standing Committee in 2002 is that it was done for structural purposes. Rather than reflecting yet another power play by Jiang Zemin, the expansion served to enhance the role of the Standing Committee as the decision-making core of the leadership at the expense of the broader Politburo. The expansion to nine members thus brought together all of the key leaders necessary for the Standing Committee to address any significant issue in all of the major policy sectors—economy, foreign and security policy, party affairs, propaganda, and internal security. Although the specific leaders changed in 2007, the nine-slot roster was retained for those structural purposes.

The division of policy responsibility among the members of both the 2002 and 2007 Standing Committees reflects such a structural logic, as the line-up of roles in the current Standing Committee suggests (see table 2, next page).

This revision in the Politburo Standing Committee's role is also evident in the gathering of leadership over all seven of the main Central Committee leadership small groups (CC LSGs) into the hands of the Standing Committee members, for the first time

in 2002, and again in 2007.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the current Standing Committee line-up is as shown in table 3.

**Table 2**

*The 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Politburo Standing Committee Division of Policy Work*

Hu Jintao 胡锦涛	PRC president; chairman, CCP & PRC Central Military Commission
Wu Bangguo 吴邦国	Chairman, National People's Congress
Wen Jiabao 温家宝	State Council premier
Jia Qinglin 贾庆林	Chairman, CPPCC
Li Changchun 李长春	Supervises ideology-propaganda system
Xi Jinping 习近平	Executive Secretary, Secretariat; president, Central Party School
Li Keqiang 李克强	Executive vice premier (macroeconomic policy)
He Guoqiang 贺国强	Chairman, Central Discipline Inspection Commission
Zhou Yongkang 周永康	Supervises legal & security work

**Table 3**

*The 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Politburo Standing Committee and the Leading Small Groups*

Hu Jintao 胡锦涛	Chairman, CC Foreign Affairs LSG & Taiwan Affairs LSG
Wu Bangguo 吴邦国	
Wen Jiabao 温家宝	Chairman, CC Finance and Economy LSG
Jia Qinglin 贾庆林	
Li Changchun 李长春	Chairman, CC Ideology and Propaganda LSG
Xi Jinping 习近平	Chairman, CC Party-Building LSG; chairman, CC Hong Kong-Macao Affairs LSG; deputy chairman, Foreign Affairs and Taiwan Affairs LSGs
Li Keqiang 李克强	Deputy chairman, Finance and Economy LSG
He Guoqiang 贺国强	
Zhou Yongkang 周永康	Chairman, Politics and Law Committee

In contrast, the 15<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Politburo Standing Committee appointed in 1997 did not include leadership of all seven of the CC LSGs.

Given these structural considerations, the Standing Committee appointed in 2012 seems likely to include nine members, barring some new structural innovation.

#### *Projecting the 2012 Standing Committee Line-Up*

Since 1997, the top four seats on the Politburo Standing Committee have gone to the party general secretary (who serves concurrently as PRC president and chairman of the

party and state CMCs), the NPC chairman, the State Council premier, and the CPPCC chairman, ranked in that order. There is no evident reason to expect a different outcome in 2012.

Preparations for the succession to the first- and third-ranking posts of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, respectively, have appeared under way since 2007. Although PRC media have named neither Xi nor Li explicitly as successors to the posts of party general secretary and premier, their designation is implicit in the posts they hold and the roles they play in the current leadership. With one exception, Xi Jinping has been given precisely the same array of concurrent posts that Hu Jintao held in the 1990s during his preparation to succeed Jiang Zemin in 2002. The single exception is the post of CMC vice chairman, which has thus far not been given to Xi. There may be several explanations for this exception, including evolving procedures for succession, but there seems no clear reason to doubt that Xi is Hu Jintao's presumptive successor.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Li Keqiang backs up Premier Wen Jiabao as executive vice premier and holds concurrently several other State Council posts that indicate that he is being prepared to succeed Wen in running that body.<sup>6</sup>

Given the enhanced significance of distinctive policy roles on the Standing Committee, projection of some of the remaining seven members may be made on the basis of administrative experience and expertise. Thus, using the current line-up as a point of reference:<sup>7</sup>

- The No. 4 slot—CPPCC chairman, currently held by Jia Qinglin—may go to Liu Yandong. Liu is a Communist Youth League (CYL) colleague of Hu Jintao's from the early 1980s, and she has served in united front roles, as Central Committee United Front Work Department chief and now as vice premier, over the past decade, and so suits the CPPCC role well.
- The No. 5 slot—ideology and propaganda czar, currently held by Li Changchun—would go to Liu Yunshan. Liu is a professional party propaganda official, who has served since 2002 as a member of the Politburo and as director of the Central Committee Propaganda Department. He has also served as Li's deputy on the CC Ideology and Propaganda LSG.
- The No. 7 slot—executive vice premier, currently held by Li Keqiang—may go to Wang Qishan or Zhang Dejiang. Wang is currently vice premier in charge of financial affairs and has been very active in policy-making in the effort to stem the impact of the world economic downturn on China's economy. Zhang, also a vice premier, has appeared to preside over energy and industrial policy under Wen Jiabao's supervision.
- The No. 8 slot—head of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission, currently held by He Guoqiang—may go to Li Yuanchao. Li, a Politburo member and another CYL crony of Hu Jintao's, currently serves as director of the sensitive Organization Department. Li's accession would replicate the pattern of He Guoqiang's elevation to the Standing Committee and the Commission chairmanship in 2007 after serving as Organization Department chief since 2002.

- The No. 9 slot—internal security czar, currently held by Zhou Yongkang—will likely go to Meng Jianzhu. Meng currently serves as vice premier in charge of public security and as Zhou's deputy on the Central Committee Politics and Law Commission.

That leaves the second and sixth slots, each of which opens ample room for old-style politicking. The No. 2 slot by established precedent goes to the concurrent chairman of the NPC, China's parliament, and is now held by Wu Bangguo. Wu served as vice premier alongside Wen Jiabao under Premier Zhu Rongji in the 1998–2003 period, before becoming NPC chairman when Wen succeeded Zhu as premier in 2003. If that succession offers any guidance to the 2012–2013 succession, then either Wang Qishan or Zhang Dejiang might take the NPC chairmanship, with the other man serving as executive vice premier. Whichever of these arrangements takes place, both men would be subject to the age 68 retirement rule in the 2017–2018 succession and so would serve only a single term. Alternatively, the NPC post could go to a rising province-based member of the Politburo—perhaps either Wang Yang, currently party chief in Guangdong, or Bo Xilai, now party chief in Chongqing. Both men have been the objects of rampant speculation for months in the Hong Kong China-watching media about prospective appointment to the Standing Committee.

The No. 6 slot—currently held by Xi Jinping—is the most sensitive one to fill. On both the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Politburo Standing Committees, the incumbent held or holds concurrently the positions of executive secretary of the Secretariat, president of the Central Party School, and vice president of the PRC, posts that prepare him to succeed the party general secretary. In the case of the Standing Committee appointed in 2002, that position was held by Zeng Qinghong, a close collaborator of Jiang Zemin until Jiang retired. Zeng's appointment to this array of posts appeared intended not to prepare him to succeed Hu Jintao as party chief in 2007, but rather to prepare him to serve out Hu's term as general secretary should Hu falter for reasons of physical or political health. As argued above, Xi appears to have been given this same array of posts to prepare him to succeed Hu as general secretary in 2012 and as PRC president in 2013.

Presuming that the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2012 defers appointment of a successor candidate to Xi Jinping until 2017, then the leader appointed in 2012 to the No. 6 slot and its concurrent posts in the party apparatus and as PRC vice president would be intended as a stand-in for Xi Jinping should he falter politically or physically during his first term as general secretary, PRC president, and chairman of the party and state CMCs. The politics of this appointment may be particularly contentious, but one plausible scenario would see the appointment of Li Yuanchao—a leader reportedly as close to Hu Jintao as Zeng Qinghong was to Jiang Zemin—to fill this slot rather than to the Central Discipline Inspection Commission post. That scenario would then entail a decision on a different candidate to fill the Commission post.

In summary, the 2012 Politburo Standing Committee would look as shown in table 4.

**Table 4***Projected 2012 Politburo Standing Committee Line-Up\**

1. Xi Jinping 习近平	PRC president; chairman, CCP & PRC Central Military Commission
2. Wang Qishan 王岐山? Zhang Dejiang 张德江?	Chairman, National People's Congress
3. Li Keqiang 李克强	State Council premier
4. Liu Yandong 刘延东	Chairman, CPPCC
5. Liu Yunshan 刘云山	Supervises ideology-propaganda system
6. Li Yuanchao 李源潮?	Executive Secretary, Secretariat; president, Central Party School
7. Wang Qishan 王岐山? Zhang Dejiang 张德江?	Executive vice premier (macroeconomic policy)
8. Li Yuanchao 李源潮?	Chairman, Central Discipline Inspection Commission
9. Meng Jianzhu 孟建柱	Supervises legal & security work

\*NB: Nos. 5–9 do not necessarily correspond to the party ranking these leaders would be listed in 2012.

## The Broader Politburo

As with the Standing Committee, appointment of the regular members of the Politburo also appears to be governed in significant measure by a structural logic. Judging by appointments to the Politburo over the past decade and a half, several leadership posts in the party, state and military hierarchies seem to merit concurrent membership on the Politburo: the heads of the party's Propaganda and Organization Departments, vice premiers of the State Council, and vice chairmen of the CMCs.

In addition, there has been an apparent effort since the late 1980s to balance representation on the Politburo of major institutional constituencies—the party apparatus, organs of state, and the provinces—and an effort to limit representation from among the security institutions, including the PLA. Leaving aside the four heads of the major hierarchies (Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, and Jia Qinglin), the current overall Politburo membership breaks down into institutional constituencies as follows:

**Table 5***Representation of Institutional Constituencies on the 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Politburo*

<i>Party Apparatus</i>	<i>State Organs</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Military/Security</i>
Li Changchun	Li Keqiang	Wang Lequan	Zhou Yongkang
Xi Jinping	Wang Zhaoguo	Liu Qi	
He Guoqiang	Wang Qishan	Wang Yang	Xu Caihou
Wang Gang	Hui Liangyu	Zhang Gaoli	Guo Boxiong
Liu Yunshan	Liu Yandong	Yu Zhengsheng	
Li Yuanchao	Zhang Dejiang	Bo Xilai	



The Soviet leadership used a similar system of institutional balancing in the Brezhnev period. As in the Soviet case, the purpose of this balancing appears intended to reinforce collective leadership among the Politburo oligarchy in two ways. On one hand, it appears to be aimed at inhibiting the assertion of dominance by any one leader or bloc of leaders from any constituency over the others. On the other hand, it also appears aimed at limiting the ability of the general secretary to acquire dictatorial powers over the rest of the leadership, as Mao had enjoyed in the 1960s and 1970s and as Stalin had done in Soviet politics. The constrained representation on the Politburo of the PLA—which has since 1987 been limited to two or fewer members—seems, in particular, aimed at that concern.

Considerations of institutional representation and institutional balancing will likely shape and constrain leadership competition for membership on the Politburo in 2012. On that basis, we may expect to see the following:

- Six provincial leaders will be appointed to the Politburo. Beijing Party Secretary Liu Ji and Xinjiang Party Secretary Wang Lequan will have passed the retirement age of 68, and Wang has already been moved from Urumqi to a post on the Central Committee Political and Law Committee in Beijing. The other four—Wang Yang in Guangdong, Yu Zhengsheng in Shanghai, Zhang Gaoli in Tianjin, and Bo Xilai—are each young enough to remain on the Politburo as provincial representatives. At least three of those, however, may be appointed to positions that merit membership on the Politburo or its Standing Committee. Present provincial membership on the Politburo remains tilted in favor of the coastal provinces—four of the six, with the other two from western provinces. Because of the economic strength and fiscal weight of the coastal provinces, this tilt is likely to continue.
- Two military leaders will be appointed. The CMC will likely see a major turnover in 2012, with perhaps six of its 10 military officers headed for retirement. Sorting out who will replace the two CMC vice chairmen—Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou—who sit concurrently on the Politburo, is a subject suitable for a separate article.
- If, as projected above, current Politburo members Wang Qishan, Liu Yunshan, and Li Yuanchao are promoted to positions on the Standing Committee, then appointment of successors in their concurrent positions as vice premier, Propaganda Department chief, and Organization Department chief are likely to be made with an eye toward their prospective membership on the Politburo. For example, were Li Yuanchao to move onto the Standing Committee in 2012, a plausible candidate to succeed him as Organization Department director may be Shen Yueyue, a crony of Hu Jintao's who was moved to the position of executive deputy director of the province after the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2007. She previously served as head of the organization department of the Zhejiang provincial party committee until 2003, overlapping slightly with Xi Jinping. Consideration of her candidacy to head the Central Committee Organization Department would likely take into account concurrent appointment to the Politburo.

## Conclusion

Chinese leaders, like politicians everywhere, are ambitious and struggle continually to advance their careers. They appear to do so now, however, within increasingly well established institutional hierarchies and increasingly institutionalized processes. Leadership politics thus plays out according to processes altogether different from the free-for-all factional competition evident in the latter two decades of Mao Zedong's rule. To the extent that the projections put forward above hold true in 2012, institutionalization in the most sensitive area of leadership politics may be said to have taken hold, perhaps decisively. To the extent that they do not, then institutionalization will have proved to be a weak constraint on a leadership dynamic still shaped by the predominant and unconstrained influence of cronyism, factional conflict, and other forms of traditional politics.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Deng Xiaoping, "On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership," *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975–1982)* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 314.

<sup>2</sup> Chuang Kung-pai, "With the Stable Transition of the CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee, the 'Core' of the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Begins to Show Up," *Zhongguo Tongxunshu*, 22 October 2007, as translated in Open Source Center (hereafter OSC) document no. CPP20071022136006. The norm of retirement at 68 or older is referred to as 七上八下 ("seven up, eight down") in Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> On the turnover at the 2002 party congress, see "China's Leadership Transition: The First Stage," *China Leadership Monitor* (hereafter *CLM*), no. 5 (Winter 2003). On turnover at the 2007 party congress, see "China's New Party Leadership," *CLM*, no. 23 (Winter 2008).

<sup>4</sup> The Politburo Standing Committee appointed in 1997 did not include the leaders directing the Ideology and Propaganda LSG (Ding Guang'en) and the Politics and Law Committee (Luo Gan). On the evolution, role, and leadership of the Central Committee leading small groups since their establishment in 1958, see "The Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *CLM*, no. 26 (Fall 2008).

<sup>5</sup> See "China's New Party Leadership," *CLM*, no. 23 (Winter 2008), 6–8; "Xi Jinping and the Party Apparatus," *CLM*, no. 25 (Summer 2008); and "The Case of Xi Jinping and the Mysterious Succession," *CLM*, no. 30 (Fall 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See "The Preparation of Li Keqiang," *CLM*, no. 31 (Winter 2010).

<sup>7</sup> The ranking of the bottom five members of the Standing Committee is variable, judging by the 2002 and 2007 rosters.