

Prospects for Solidarity in the Xi Jinping Leadership

Alice Miller

It may be true, as is often observed, that if all the world's economists were laid end to end, they would never reach a conclusion. It is all the more notable therefore that an increasing number of observers of China's economy are skeptical that the high rate of growth sustained over the past three decades is likely to continue much longer. In the past, China's leadership has weathered economic stress adroitly, most recently, in blunting the impact of the 2008 world economic crisis. However, the Xi Jinping leadership that is about to take the helm later this year is likely to be more diverse in its outlook, credentials, and experience. And so if projections of trouble in China's economy ahead are accurate, then it is reasonable to inquire into the prospects of an oligarchic leadership around Xi maintaining collective solidarity and providing effective policy responses.

The Xi Leadership

In the transition of leadership generations expected at the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) 18th National Congress this fall, the turnover in the party's Politburo will be extensive. If the norm of retirement at age 68 or older that was observed at the previous two party congresses holds, 14 of 25 current members will retire. This number is a minimum: it may be larger if any of the remaining 11 members is incapacitated physically or politically.¹

If the new Politburo retains the 25 seats it has had in the Hu Jintao era, then we may expect 14 new members to be appointed to replace those who will retire. If the 11 current members not mandated to retire from the 17th Central Committee (CC) Politburo are in fact reappointed to the 18th, then together they will likely constitute a little less than half of the membership of the new Politburo. That number is sufficient basis to make some preliminary judgments about the attributes of the new Politburo membership and its tendencies.

Leadership Generations

The CCP constitution mandates that national party congresses convene every five years, a stipulation that the party has rigorously observed since 1982, when the current constitution was adopted at the 12th Party Congress. Although the party constitution does not explicitly say so, this regularity in convocation of party congresses means that Politburo members serve five-year terms. In addition, the party has instituted a norm—as yet unpublished but nonetheless apparent in the leadership transitions at the 2002 16th and 2007 17th Party Congresses—that Politburo members achieving age 68 retire at the next

party congress.ⁱⁱ These two stipulations effectively create a calculus of succession, dividing Politburo members into cohorts based on their terms of membership and the dates of their anticipated retirement. For example, presuming that the party leadership continues to observe the age 68 norm, all Politburo leaders born between the years 1940 and 1944 will retire at the 18th Party Congress this fall—1944 because leaders born in that year will be 68 this year, and 1940 because leaders born before that year retired at the 2007 congress.

In addition, the two stipulations have created in effect a process whereby the general secretary, the party's top leader, serves two consecutive five-year terms in that position and then retires. Hu Jintao, born in 1942, became party chief in 2002 at age 60; he turned 68 in 2010 and will retire this year. Xi Jinping was born in 1953 and so will be 59 when he succeeds Hu later this year; he will turn 68 in 2021 and presumably will retire in 2022. The expectation that the party general secretary serve two consecutive five-year terms and so be about 60 when promoted to the post presumably was one criterion in selecting the pool of candidates for the post that included Xi.

Hong Kong and Western observers of China's leadership politics have grown accustomed to describing CCP leaders in terms of leadership generations, even though PRC media no longer do so. The designation of "leadership generations" goes back to 1989, when, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen crisis and the removal of party chief Zhao Ziyang, Deng Xiaoping called new General Secretary Jiang Zemin the "core leader" of the "Third Generation leadership collective." He further described Mao Zedong as "core leader of the First Generation leadership collective" and himself as "core leader" of the Second. Throughout his 13-year tenure as general secretary, Jiang was routinely referred to in these terms.

From the very beginning of his tenure as party chief, in 2002, PRC media as a rule have not referred to Hu Jintao as "core leader" of the "Fourth Generation" leadership. This omission is one of several steps to reduce the stature of the party general secretary relative to his Politburo colleagues and to reinforce collective leadership processes. Reference to "leadership generations" has therefore fallen out of use in PRC media, although foreign observers continue to use it.

Following that convention in referring to Hu Jintao as a Fourth Generation leader and Xi Jinping as a Fifth Generation leader, Politburo cohorts may be grouped accordingly. Because Hu has served two terms as party chief, the "Fourth Generation" Politburo members divide into two groups—a senior group that includes those in Hu's five-year age cohort and a junior group that includes those who fall into the next five-year group. Because Xi is likely intended also to serve two five-year terms, the "Fifth Generation" leadership will also divide into two—a senior cohort and a junior cohort. Using this terminology, Politburo leadership generations break down as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Politburo Leadership Generations

<i>Age cohort</i>	<i>Leadership generation</i>	<i>Designation</i>
1930–1934	Jiang senior cohort	3.0
1935–1939	Jiang junior cohort	3.5
1940–1944	Hu senior cohort	4.0
1945–1949	Hu junior cohort	4.5
1950–1954	Xi senior cohort	5.0
1955–1959	Xi junior cohort	5.5
1960–1964	senior cohort	6.0
1965–1969	junior cohort	6.5

Tables 2 and 3 apply these generational cohort categories to the 16th (2002) and 17th (2007) CC Politburo leaderships.

Table 2
Leadership Generations in the 16th CC Politburo

<i>Leader</i>	<i>Birthdate</i>	<i>Generation</i>	<i>Expected retirement*</i>
Standing Committee			
Hu Jintao	1942	4.0	2012
Wu Bangguo	1941	4.0	2012
Wen Jiabao	1942	4.0	2012
Jia Qinglin	1940	4.0	2012
Zeng Qinghong	1939	3.5	2007
Huang Ju	1938	3.5	2007
Wu Guanzheng	1938	3.5	2007
Li Changchun	1944	4.0	2012
Luo Gan	1935	3.5	2007
Regular Members			
Wang Lequan	1942	4.0	2012
Wang Zhaoguo	1941	4.0	2012
Hui Liangyu	1944	4.0	2012
Liu Qi	1942	4.0	2012
Liu Yunshan	1947	4.5	2017
Wu Yi	1938	3.5	2007
Zhang Lichang	1939	3.5	2007
Zhang Dejiang	1946	4.5	2017
Chen Liangyu	1946	4.5	2017
Zhou Yongkang	1942	4.0	2012
Yu Zhengsheng	1945	4.5	2017
He Guoqiang	1943	4.0	2012

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Table 2 (continued)

<i>Leader</i>	<i>Birthdate</i>	<i>Generation</i>	<i>Expected Retirement*</i>
Cao Gangquan	1935	3.5	2007
Zeng Peiyan	1938	3.5	2007
Alternate Members			
Wang Gang	1942	4.0	2012

*Retirement dates are expected solely on the basis that the age 68 retirement norm continues to hold and that the CCP continues convening party congresses every five years. Obviously, Huang Ju, who died in 2006, and Chen Liangyu, who was purged on charges of corruption in 2006, did not reach their dates of expected retirement.

Table 3

Leadership Generations in the 17th CC Politburo

<i>Leader</i>	<i>Birthdate</i>	<i>Generation</i>	<i>Expected Retirement*</i>
Standing Committee			
Hu Jintao	1942	4.0	2012
Wu Bangguo	1941	4.0	2012
Wen Jiabao	1942	4.0	2012
Jia Qinglin	1940	4.0	2012
Li Changchun	1944	4.0	2012
Xi Jinping	1953	5.0	2022
Li Keqiang	1955	5.5	2027
He Guoqiang	1943	4.0	2012
Zhou Yongkang	1942	4.0	2012
Regular Members			
Wang Gang	1942	4.0	2012
Wang Lequan	1944	4.0	2012
Wang Zhaoguo	1941	4.0	2012
Wang Qishan	1948	4.5	2017
Hui Liangyu	1944	4.0	2012
Liu Qi	1942	4.0	2012
Liu Yunshan	1947	4.5	2017
Liu Yandong	1945	4.5	2017
Li Yuanchao	1950	5.0	2022
Wang Yang	1955	5.5	2027
Zhang Gaoli	1946	4.5	2017
Zhang Dejiang	1946	4.5	2017
Yu Zhengsheng	1945	4.5	2017
Xu Caihou	1943	4.0	2012
Guo Boxiong	1942	4.0	2012
Bo Xilai	1949	4.5	2017

Table 4 applies these generational cohort categories to the 11 current members of the Politburo who are eligible for reappointment in the upcoming leadership transition.

Table 4

Leadership Generations among Eligible Hold-Over Leaders for the 18th CC Politburo

<i>Leader</i>	<i>Birthdate</i>	<i>Generation</i>	<i>Expected Retirement*</i>
Xi Jinping	1953	5.0	2022
Li Keqiang	1955	5.5	2027
Wang Qishan	1948	4.5	2017
Liu Yandong	1945	4.5	2017
Liu Yunshan	1947	4.5	2017
Li Yuanchao	1950	5.0	2022
Wang Yang	1955	5.5	2027
Zhang Gaoli	1946	4.5	2017
Zhang Dejiang	1946	4.5	2017
Yu Zhengsheng	1945	4.5	2017
Bo Xilai	1949	4.5	2017

Finally, Table 5 charts the generational proportions involved among Politburo members appointed in 2002 and 2007 who were held over from service on the previous Politburo versus those who were new to the body, together with the breakdown of presumed holdovers from the 17th to the upcoming 18th Politburo.

Table 5

Generational Holdover vs. New Members on the 16th, 17th, & 18th CC Politburos

<i>Generation</i>	16th PB		17th PB		18th PB	
	<i>Holdovers</i>	<i>New</i>	<i>Holdovers</i>	<i>New</i>	<i>Holdovers</i>	<i>New</i>
3.5	4	4	0		0	0
4.0	5	8	13	1	0	0
4.5	0	4	3	4	7	?
5.0	0	0	0	2	2	?
5.5	0	0	0	2	2	?
Totals	9	16	16	9	11	14?

The data in these tables make possible some initial conclusions about the 18th Central Committee Politburo. First, all of the holdovers from the 15th CC Politburo appointed to the 16th in 2002 were elevated to the Standing Committee. In the upcoming leadership transition, presuming that the size of the Standing Committee remains at nine members, the number of possible holdovers from the 17th CC Politburo—11—exceeds the seven open seats, and so not all of the holdover members will be promoted to the Standing Committee.ⁱⁱⁱ

Second, the number of holdovers from the 17th CC Politburo who are likely to be appointed to the 18th is slightly larger than the number who were held over from the 15th

onto the 16th in 2002—a maximum of 11 (again, presuming Bo Xilai is reappointed) versus 9 in 2002. This means that holdovers from the 17th CC Politburo will likely serve as a bridge of political continuity with past policies in the new Politburo under Xi Jinping.

Third, the majority of 17th CC Politburo holdover leaders are members of Hu Jintao's junior cohort (Generation 4.5)—numbering 7 out of 11. This suggests that their retirement in 2017 will mean the departure of a significantly larger number of holdovers at the 19th CCP Congress than occurred at the 17th in 2007. The Generation 3.5 leaders (the junior cohort of Jiang Zemin's leadership generation) from the 15th CC Politburo members retained for membership on the 16th in 2002 was a minority of four, versus the five Generation 4.0 leaders (Hu Jintao's senior cohort) held over from the 15th to the 16th. And so the impact of the departure in 2007 of leaders of Jiang Zemin's generation was significantly less than will occur with the retirement in 2017 of leaders of Hu Jintao's. The impact of this is effectively to diffuse the transition between leadership generations across the anticipated two terms of Xi Jinping's tenure as general secretary, instead of repeating the sharp break between leadership generations that occurred at the 16th Party Congress in 2002.

Furthermore, among new appointees to the Politburo in 2002, half (8 of 16) were members of Hu Jintao's senior cohort and another quarter (4 of 16) were members of Hu's junior cohort. If those proportions provide any insight, the 18th Congress will likely see a major influx of Xi's leadership cohorts (Generations 5.0 and 5.5). The potential disruptions of generational leadership transition will also be softened, therefore, because leaders of the new Xi generation will gain a full term's experience on the Politburo before those of Hu Jintao depart altogether.

How much the relative deferment of the departure of Hu generation leaders from the Politburo suggested by these conclusions means for Xi Jinping's latitude in initiating new policy departures is not clear. In some sense, residual Hu generation leaders constitute an elder bloc serving in the Politburo, and so they may reflect a voice of seniority in Politburo debate. In that regard, they may also convey into the Politburo the views of the party's retired elders—Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, and, soon enough, Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, and others. At the same time, of course, neither retired nor serving leadership generations and cohorts are monolithic. They are riven by differences in policy predilection, ideological commitment, and experience, not to mention in personal and patron-client linkages.

It is commonly held that a new general secretary must bide his time in launching new departures in policy until he has consolidated his own base of power in the Politburo and beyond, an effort that may take several years. That was the case with Jiang Zemin, whose policy initiatives seemed to emerge only after major leadership changes in 1994–95, including the elevation of several Shanghai cronies into the Politburo and Secretariat and the takedown of the Beijing city leadership under Chen Xitong, a bastion of conservative resistance.

It is noteworthy, however, that this was not the case with Hu Jintao. Hu signaled his intention to move in new directions only three weeks after his appointment as party chief with his highly publicized visit to Xibaipo, location of the CCP's last headquarters before the move to Beijing in 1949, symbolically underscoring his forthcoming stress on "people-centered" policies. The following September, 10 months into his tenure, Hu launched his "scientific development concept"—his hallmark contribution to the grand treasure house of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought guiding the party.

In that light, Jiang's need to consolidate a base of power before making his mark with new policy departures reflected his ad hoc appointment as party chief in 1989, following the removal of Zhao Ziyang in the Tiananmen crisis. Hu Jintao's appointment as party chief, on the other hand, was anything but ad hoc; he had served 10 years on the Politburo Standing Committee, five years as PRC vice president, and eventually five years as vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. The initiatives Hu and Wen Jiabao launched early in their first terms as general secretary and premier, respectively, were foreshadowed in the report on the work of the Central Committee that Jiang Zemin delivered at the 16th Party Congress in 2002, and it is a reasonable surmise, therefore, that Hu's intentions were well known among the leadership and well vetted. Like Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping will have been thoroughly prepared to become party chief, and so any new departures he intends to pursue will similarly be well known to the current leadership and he will not need to wait to initiate them.

Age and Memory

As elder leadership generations move successively off the Politburo, the active memory of some of the most dramatic political events recedes with them, and as new generations move into posts on the Politburo, memories of more recent political turning points dominate their experiences. Table 6 shows the relative ages of successive leadership cohorts at the time of some major turning points in political history.

Table 6

Age of Successive Leadership Generations at Time of Major Political Turning Points

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Start of Cultural Revolution (1966)</i>	<i>1978 Third Plenum (Start of Reforms)</i>	<i>1989 Tiananmen Crisis</i>
3.0 (Jiang senior)	32–36	44–48	55–59
3.5 (Jiang junior)	27–31	39–43	50–54
4.0 (Hu senior)	22–26	34–38	45–49
4.5 (Hu junior)	17–21	29–33	40–44
5.0 (Xi senior)	12–16	24–28	35–39
5.5 (Xi junior?)	7–11	19–23	30–34
6.0 (?)	2–6	14–18	25–29
6.5 (?)		9–13	20–24

The import of these age differences is complex and difficult to disentangle from a variety of other considerations. But the experiences of each cohort in the Cultural Revolution may illustrate it. Leaders of Hu Jintao's senior cohort, like Hu himself, were

just completing their university educations as the Cultural Revolution started, and most saw their intended careers put on hold. Leaders in Hu's junior cohort were likely attending university as the Cultural Revolution began and so saw their educations swept up in the tumult of Red Guard politics of that day. Leaders of Xi Jinping's senior cohort were in middle school as the Cultural Revolution started and likely saw their student lives similarly swept up in the politics of the Red Guard movement. Xi himself was reportedly not permitted to become a Red Guard because his father Xi Zhongxun was on the wrong side of history and a major target of the Cultural Revolution. Leaders of Xi's junior cohort, such as Li Keqiang and Wang Yang, were in elementary school as the Cultural Revolution began and grew up with only immature understanding of the political chaos of the day. And leaders of the Sixth Generation will have no active memory of these events at all.

Educational Background

Politburo members of the Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao generations have been the best-educated leaders in PRC history. Among the 25 members of the 1982 12th CC Politburo appointed when Deng Xiaoping's reform coalition consolidated power, none had a university degree and only two had had any university-level education at all. Of the 24 Politburo members appointed to the Politburo at the 1997 15th Party Congress, when Jiang Zemin consolidated power, 17 had university degrees. Among the 25 members appointed to the 16th CC Politburo in 2002 led by Hu Jintao, 22 had university degrees. Finally, 23 of 25 members of the current Politburo have university degrees or prolonged university study, and six of those have postgraduate degrees.

The term "technocratic" has often been applied to Politburo members of both the Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao generations because of the heavy predominance of leaders holding academic degrees in engineering and the hard sciences. Among the 17 degree-holders in the 1997 Jiang Politburo, 14 were engineers, two had degrees in the hard sciences, and one (Li Lanqing) had a degree in enterprise management. In the 2002 Hu Politburo, 17 of 22 degree-holders were engineers, one (Wen Jiabao) held a degree in geology, and two held degrees in economics; in addition, eight of the nine members of the 2002 Politburo Standing Committee were engineers, with Wen Jiabao the ninth.

Members of the current Politburo under Hu Jintao's leadership display a new degree of diversity in academic credentials. Among the 23 with university education, only 11 are engineers, one holds a degree in geology (again, Wen Jiabao), and one studied mathematics (Li Yuanchao). The group also includes four with economics degrees and three in the humanities (Wang Gang, who studied philosophy, and Wang Qishan and Bo Xilai, who studied history).^{iv}

This trend toward more diverse educational background is likely to blossom in the upcoming Xi Politburo membership. Table 7 shows the educational credentials of the 11 leaders likely to be held over for reappointment to the Politburo at the 18th Party Congress.

Table 7
Educational Credentials among Eligible Holdover Leaders for the 18th CC Politburo

<i>Leader</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Degree</i>	<i>Postgraduate Degree</i>
Xi Jinping	Qinghua	Chemical engineering	LLD
Li Keqiang	Beijing	Economics	Ph.D. (Economics)
Wang Qishan	Xibei	History	
Liu Yandong	Qinghua	(Chemical engineering)*	LLD (political science)
Liu Yunshan	None		
Li Yuanchao	Fudan	(Mathematics)*	MA: Econ. management
Wang Yang	CPS**	Political economy	MS: Engineering
Zhang Gaoli	Xiamen	Economics	
Zhang Dejiang	Kim Il-song Univ.	Economics	
Yu Zhengsheng	Harbin Military Engineering Institute	Engineering	
Bo Xilai	Beijing	(History)*	MA (Journalism)

*Several years' study but no degree awarded.

**Central Party School.

Because the pool of leaders from which newly inducted Politburo members may be drawn displays even greater diversity than does the current Hu Politburo, this trend will accelerate. Careful surveys of up-and-coming leaders among current ministerial and provincial leaders and among party apparatchiks show contingents holding degrees in economics, law, and politics rivaling and in some instances even surpassing the numbers of those in engineering and the hard sciences.^v In addition, the numbers of up and coming leaders who hold postgraduate degrees is also rising.

This trend is unfolding for several reasons. For one thing, most Third and Fourth Generation leaders were trained in the 1950s and 1960s, when engineering and natural science disciplines promised good careers and were seen as politically safe in the ideologically charged atmosphere of those decades, when fields such as economics (that is, political economy) and history were susceptible to ideological taint. For another, leaders with backgrounds in economics, law, and politics are perhaps better suited to the tasks of effective governance in an economy and society transformed by three decades of Dengist reform, and so their rise may reflect deliberate selection in the processes by which leaders rise to the top. As this trend continues, the Chinese are, in this narrow sense at least, perhaps becoming more like us, bless their hearts.

Prospects for Leadership Solidarity

The assessment of likely attributes of the upcoming Xi Jinping Politburo leadership suggests that in several respects leaders will be a more diverse group than the members of the successive Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao Politburo memberships. If the patterns of consensus-driven collective leadership decision-making established under Jiang Zemin in the 1990s and consolidated under Hu Jintao continue, then one implication of growing

diversity among China's top leaders may be a growing difficulty in establishing consensus among them.

China has been governed by an oligarchy in the Jiang and Hu eras. In both periods, though most visibly in the Hu era, a variety of procedures and safeguards have been established to ensure balanced decision-making by a collective leadership of co-equal leaders. These include expansion of the Standing Committee to incorporate leaders representing all major institutional hierarchies and policy sectors; deliberate playing down of the special stature of the general secretary, rendering him first among equals among the rest of the Politburo leadership; balancing of party, state, and regional constituencies on the Politburo; and severe limitation of the presence of professional military leaders on the Politburo to inhibit the ability of the general secretary to use the PLA as a bloc to assert his overriding authority.

Solidarity in oligarchies suffers from two countervailing tendencies, one centripetal and the other centrifugal. On one hand, leadership collectives must guard against the attempt by any single leader—and especially the general secretary—from overwhelming the rest of the leadership and asserting dictatorial power, as Stalin did in the USSR in the late 1920s and as Mao did in the CCP in the early 1960s. On the other hand, the leadership collective must inhibit any leader bloc within the collective from reaching out to outside constituencies by means of demagogic appeals to enhance its power at the expense of the others.^{vi} In addition, two other dilemmas may cripple effective policy-making and trigger severe political consequences. One possibility is that members of the Standing Committee collective cannot agree among themselves among policy alternatives, leading them to defer decisions; the political danger here is policy stagnation. The other possibility stems from the deliberate specialization of each Standing Committee member in distinct policy sectors, intended to facilitate balanced decision-making. Such specialization may lead the members of the collective simply to defer to the authority and judgment of the leader in charge of the policy sector under debate. The consequent political danger here is undercoordinated and imbalanced decision-making.

The Jiang and Hu leadership collectives appear to have managed these dilemmas well. The leadership during Hu Jintao's second term may have in some degree suffered from policy stagnation over widespread expectations of political reform, and the recent Bo Xilai affair may reflect the Hu leadership collective's move to head off what it perceives as a potential centrifugal threat by demagoguery to leadership stability. But on the whole, neither the Jiang nor Hu leadership collectives displayed clear signs of a fundamental break among its members, whatever differences may have divided them.

Both the Jiang and Hu leaderships presided over periods of prolonged high-speed economic growth, interrupted by the need to curb high inflation from overheating in the mid-1990s and by the need for a major stimulus in face of the global economic downturn in the fall of 2008. In the former case, the Jiang leadership moved adroitly (perhaps abetted by the sidelining of Premier Li Peng by a heart attack) in 1994 to impose retrenchment on an overheating economy, an effort led by Executive Vice Premier Zhu

Rongji that whipped inflation by the end of 1996. In the latter case, Premier Wen Jiabao and the Hu Politburo delivered a major stimulus to the PRC economy in early November 2008, just weeks after the threat of the world economy's downturn became apparent. In contrast, the Deng Xiaoping leadership suffered a severe split over economic policy in the fall of 1988, both inspiring the emergent protests in Tiananmen Square in April 1989 and crippling the leadership's solidarity in addressing them.

The upcoming Xi leadership may face a more difficult challenge with regard to economic policy. Amid the once widespread expectations that China's high growth rates could continue indefinitely, the projections of an astonishingly large number of economists and observers of China's economy in recent months have turned sour. Whether because of the short-term dangers from a bubble in real estate or from declining exports to markets in Europe and elsewhere, or because of long-term challenges stemming from rising labor costs and the impact of demographic transition on the workforce, or from the need to move up the ladder of industrial production as producers in the developing economies compete with Chinese manufacturers, or the problems of delivering a soft landing in the transition from an export-led, high fixed investment-driven economy to one led by domestic consumption, prospects for China to continue the high rates of GDP growth it has enjoyed for three decades may be dimming. The National Reform and Development Commission has itself downgraded projections for economic growth in 2012. And a sample by foreign observers projects slowing growth rates in coming years anywhere between 4 and 7 percent.

If growth does decline to rates in this range, China will still see respectable growth, especially given trends in Europe, Japan, and the United States. But slower growth rates will bring new social stresses and political issues, as the Xi leadership will be forced to wrestle with the dilemmas of referreeing among constituencies pressing for expanded allocations and favorable policy treatment, be they the state-owned versus private sectors, scientific and technical institutions clamoring for investment in technology innovation, or the military and its rival services. This seems a recipe for a more contentious politics ahead that will confront a leadership that is in many ways more diverse and so harder to rally around a decisive consensus.

Notes

ⁱ In the run-up to the 2007 17th Party Congress, for example, Executive Vice Premier and Politburo Standing Committee member Huang Ju died and Shanghai party chief and Politburo member Chen Liangyu was removed for corruption. Despite Bo Xilai's recently being removed from his position as Chongqing party chief following the bizarre affair involving Chongqing police chief Wang Lijun in early February, he remains a Politburo member. It is not impossible that he will retain a seat on the Politburo in the coming leadership transition, and so he is included in the analysis here.

ⁱⁱ Since the author herself will turn 68 in 2012, she presumes on this basis that she is no longer eligible to stand for membership in the Politburo.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is possible that appointments to the new Standing Committee will include members who have not previously served on the Politburo itself. The most apparent possibility is Meng Jianzhu replacing Zhou Yongkang as the Standing Committee member in charge of internal security affairs. Meng currently serves

as state councilor in charge of internal security and is also deputy to Zhou on the CC Politics and Law Committee, the leading small group that coordinates and supervises internal security affairs.

^{iv} History in the PRC, of course, is considered not part of the humanities but rather a science, thanks to Marx having discovered the laws of human social development and so the “science” of human affairs. By this logic, the Chinese Academy of Sciences housed the PRC’s leading institutes of history until 1977, when the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was established and the Institutes of History, Modern History, and (in 1980) of World History were incorporated. As social sciences, the historical disciplines have always been subject to the “guidance” of Marxist-Leninist theory of historical materialism, a principle that applies today even though the practice of history evident in PRC history journals has evolved dramatically over the past three decades.

^v See these analyses by Cheng Li: “China’s Midterm Jockeying: Gearing Up for 2012—Part 1: Provincial Chiefs,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no.31 (February 2010); “China’s Midterm Jockeying: Gearing Up for 2012—Part 2: Cabinet Ministers,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no.32 (May 2010); and “China’s Midterm Jockeying: Gearing Up for 2012—Part Five: Party Apparatchiks,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no.35 (September 2011).

^{vi} The classic discussion of the dilemmas of oligarchy is in Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V, section 5.2-11.