

The Power Structure under the Leadership of Xi Jinping

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the first year and a half of the government of Chinese President Xi Jinping from two viewpoints essential for judging the vitality of the Chinese Communist Party: the legitimacy of rule and the party's governmental techniques. To strengthen the legitimacy of rule, the Xi government has fanned nationalism under the national goal of attaining wealth and power. The government has also been promoting the concentration of power into the hands of President Xi in order to establish a leadership essential to the implementation of comprehensive reforms. If reforms are implemented quickly and produce positive effects under the integrated leadership system, the legitimacy of rule is likely to be strengthened. However, it is necessary to have reservations about such optimism. First, as well as the costs that will be required during the difficult process of marketization, the cost necessary for suppressing ethnic minorities' and citizens' freedom of speech will continue to swell. Second, if we guess from China's recent bellicose diplomatic attitude, we cannot rule out the possibility that the leadership of the Xi regime has declined so much as to undermine the ability to make rational judgment at the national level. It is necessary to develop a multi-pronged strategy that seeks to establish a framework of multilateral cooperation to prevent China from behaving recklessly and to support the country's economic reforms and its enhancement of governance at the same time.

Keywords: government of Xi Jinping, legitimacy of rule, leadership, cost of governance
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I. Introduction

Two questions have attracted the attention of scholars up till now: Will single-party rule by the Communist Party of China (CPC) endure into the future? And what sources does the CPC, which has weathered the end of the Cold War, the spread of globalization, and other changes on the international political scene, draw on for its vital force?

These questions have been discussed from two perspectives so far. One is the legitimacy of the Party's domination. According to what Max Weber calls "rational-legal authority," one-party rule, which does not have such authority, must rely on ideology, norms, the leader's charisma, and the party's accomplishments in order to justify its control. With the shift to a market economy causing a loss of substance for socialist ideology, the party, seeking to rally the nation, began bringing patriotism to the fore. At the same time, the party has continually

emphasized its historic role in ousting the Japanese from China after 1945 and remaking China, once a quasi-colony, into a sovereign state and leading it, through policies of reform and openness, to become the world's second-largest economy. China is proud of escaping its "century of humiliation" as a quasi-colonial state and enjoying a status in the international community as the world's second largest economy, and the idea of a dictatorship for the sake of development is widely accepted by citizens, who view restrictions on freedom and democracy as unavoidable in order to obtain the political stability essential for economic growth.

The second perspective has to do with the party's governance technique. For example, Andrew Nathan concluded that China's authoritarian system gained stability with increasing flexibility through institutionalization (Nathan, 2003). David Shambaugh, bringing up the experiences of the former Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe for comparison, ascribed the CPC's longevity to continual bold adaptation (Shambaugh, 2008). Bruce J. Dickson identified cooptation and corporatism as means for ensuring the party's longevity and described how the party, from the 1990s onward, actively co-opted the intellectual elite and entrepreneurs into the party while maintaining control over various social groups (Dickson, 2000-2001; Dickson, 2010). Jessica C. Teets argued that party governance was improved by using an invigorated civic society, which gave more resilience to the party's existing consultative authoritarianism (Teets, 2013).

But others disagree. In "The End of the CCP's Resilient Authoritarianism?," Li Chen held that the "resilient authoritarianism" theory underestimates the power struggles and the dissident elements within the Party which are weakening one-party rule by delaying reforms and other changes (Li, 2012).

It is true that CPC rule faces risks in various areas. First, economic growth, the strongest element justifying the CPC's rule, is showing signs of slowing. The sluggish global economy is directly affecting China's export industries. It was thanks to large-scale public investment by the central and provincial governments, backed by economic stimulus measures valued at 4 trillion yuan, that the economy could grow at a rate of over 7% after the "Lehman shock" of 2007. But unrestrained public investment by provincial governments through their own investment companies, real estate developers, and front companies for financing led to building low-return infrastructure, duplicating construction projects, and over-production, and generated a vicious circle of excessive debt and policy "bubbles." To avoid a financial crisis originating in the provinces, the central government will have to change the country's economic structure while keeping in mind that it may have to intervene financially.

Wealth disparity, discrimination, injustice, and high-handed authoritarianism have generated social unrest. The benefits of investment-led growth have been concentrated in the hands of top party, government and military officials, and state-owned enterprises, and the current inability to effectively redistribute income merely continues to feed social discontent. In addition, riots and massacres by Uighurs, Tibetans, and others continue unabated. Spreading public discontent means more spending on public security.

These issues have become more serious over the past 15 years or so and have made the

need for bold reforms clear to party leaders. The problem today, however, is the lack of strong leadership in the party capable of carrying out sweeping changes. Compared to Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin, former party General Secretary Hu Jintao lacked both charisma and a power base. He did not have what it took to make top-to-bottom reforms, leading to a stagnant “lost decade” during his years in power.

In these circumstances, what is Xi Jinping, the top party, national, and military leader since the changeover in the government from 2012 to 2013, doing to expand the state and extend the party’s longevity? What limits does he face in these endeavors? In this paper I would like to examine what has taken place in the year and a half since the start of the Xi government, from the viewpoints of justification for control and the party’s governance methods.

II. Wealth, Power, and Nationalism to Justify Control

To reinforce justification for one-party rule, the Xi Jinping government has, since its inception, aimed to strengthen and enrich China.

II-1 Pursuit of Wealth

As noted earlier, unbridled investment by provincial governments has exposed China’s economy to the serious risk of excessive debt, and the imbalance of wealth is preventing the shift to consumption-led growth. While maintaining a balanced approach to avoid financial turmoil, Xi’s government must shift from an investment-led economic structure in order to give the economy greater vibrancy. To achieve this, Xi, continuing the economic policies of the Hu Jintao government, has emphasized further marketization and set out to redress inequality, and eliminate corruption.

II-1-1 Marketization

Marketization means eliminating government interference in economic activity and leaving economic activity to the market. Since its start, the Xi government has been consisting in taking measures toward marketization, which were also emphasized in the “Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms” (“the Decision”) adopted at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, strongly supporting the leaving of resource distribution to the market (*Xinhua-net* http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-11/15/c_118164235.htm ; same source hereafter).

Eliminating the central and regional governments’ authority over permits and approvals and delegating this to the private sector is one specific marketization measure taken by the Xi government. This was announced in January 2014 in the “Decision of the State Council on Matters concerning Administrative Approval Items to Be Cancelled and Delegated to Lower Levels” (PRC central government website <http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2014-02/15/>

content_2602146.htm). According to the “Report on the Work of the Government presented by Premier Li Keqiang (“the 2014 Report on Government Activities”) at the Second Session of the Twelfth National People’s Congress in March 2014, 416 items requiring administrative approval have either been abolished or delegated to lower-level governments in the past year, and over 200 additional items requiring State Council review and approval will be cancelled or delegated to lower-level governments (*People’s Daily Online, Japanese edition* <http://j.people.com.cn/94474/8568351.html>; same source hereafter).

In addition to reducing government functions, measures are being taken to streamline the government organizational structure. Where this is concerned, the Decision states that changes will be made “to strictly control the size of government bodies, appoint leading officials in strict accordance with designated government positions, and reduce the number of government organs and leading officials.” The 2014 Report on Government Activities stated that, based on the above policy, the government “will basically complete the reform of government bodies at the provincial, municipal and county levels, and continue to reform public institutions.”

Another important element for advancing marketization is the further reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This includes dissolving SOEs’ monopolies and oligopolies and promoting sounder corporate governance. The 2014 Report on Government Activities announced that it would draw up an act allowing non-state capital to participate in the investment projects of SOEs. It said that the government “will formulate measures for non-state capital to participate in investment projects of central government enterprises, and allow non-state capital to participate in a number of projects in areas such as banking, oil, electricity, railway, telecommunications, resources development and public utilities. We will formulate specific measures to permit non-public enterprise participation in franchising.”

At the First Session of the Twelfth National People’s Congress in March 2013, a proposal for reforming the State Council, including the abolition of the Ministry of Railways, was adopted. In August 2013, the State Council announced that ownership and management of railways, heretofore monopolized by the state, would be opened to provincial governments and private sector companies. While the Ministry of Railways is being abolished partly to address the corruption that came to light after the train collision at Wenzhou in July 2011, actual entry of the private sector into the railway business is viewed as a barometer of how far marketization in the above business sectors is proceeding.

II-2 Redressing inequality

Redressing inequality is another policy pillar. In February 2013, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security released a document titled “Deepening Systemic Reform of the Income Distribution System.” In this document, the government pledged to reduce income disparities by doubling per capita income for urban and rural residents by 2020 from where it stood in 2010 and at the same time raising the minimum wage, offering more subsidies for agriculture,

taxing high-income earners more vigorously, and expanding public investment in social security and employment measures (“關於深化收入分配制度改革的若干意見,” PRC website http://www.gov.cn/zwgg/2013-02/05/content_2327531.htm). The Decision set out how the government would “increase the proportion of state-owned capital gains turned over to public finance to 30 percent by 2020, to be used to ensure and improve the people’s livelihoods.” Under the catch phrase of “new-type urbanization,” the government has pledged to try to accelerate reform of the household registration system to give migrant workers living in urban areas non-farming registration, and to integrate the social welfare system, which currently consists of separate systems for urban and rural dwellers.

II-2-1 Eliminating corruption

Since taking over the reins of government, eliminating corruption has been Xi Jinping’s most high-profile policy. After a Politburo meeting convened by Xi in December 2012, the “requirements in eight aspects to improve the style of work and maintain close ties with masses” was announced. These included a call to shorten meetings, eliminate unnecessary documents, reduce entourages when public officials travel, and more stringent controls on the use of official vehicles (“中共中央政治局召開會議審議關於改進工作作風、密接聯繫群眾的有關規定分析研究二〇一三年經濟工作,” *People’s Daily Online* <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2012/1205/c64094-19793530.html>). The government expressed its opposition to the “four forms of decadence” (formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance), expected adherence to “the Three Rules” (prohibiting erection of new government buildings or renovating and expanding existing government buildings, and reducing the total number of government employees), and called for cutting back on the “three forms of public expenditure” (government spending on official overseas visits, official vehicles, and official hospitality), giving great prominence to Xi’s pledge to “beat tigers and flies” to eliminate corruption.

The result, noted in the 2014 Report on Government Activities, was that spending on official overseas visits, official vehicles, and official hospitality was reduced by 35 percent, and spending by provincial-level governments on official hospitality decreased by 26 percent. The Supreme People’s Procuratorate of the People’s Republic of China reported that the number of Party and government employees charged with embezzlement or bribery had increased 8.4 percent over the previous year to 51,306 (“2014 Report of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate of the People’s Republic of China (Complete Record),” *People’s Daily Online* <http://lianghui.people.com.cn/2014npc/n/2014/0310/c382480-24592900.html>¹).

The details of the Decision make it clear that Xi intends to keep up his anti-corruption

¹ Voting on the adoption of the “2014 Report of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate” was 2,402 votes for, 390 against, and 108 abstentions. Voting on the adoption of the “Report of the Supreme People’s Court” was 2,425 for, 378 against, and 95 abstentions. Both votes were notable for the number of against votes and abstentions, believed to be an expression of displeasure at the lax approach to corruption.

campaign. The Decision states that officials are not allowed to use government offices or homes beyond what regulations allow for; use official vehicles, have secretaries or a protection detail; or entertain in the line of duty. Rules concerning taking jobs in relatives' businesses, or serving or moving into positions as officers in official jobs or social organizations are strictly enforced, reemphasizing the prohibition on officials using their power or influence for the benefit of relatives or others to whom they are connected.

These policies are all practical measures for overcoming the problems that China faces. It is noteworthy that these policies have been clearly enunciated by the central leadership in the one or two years since the start of the new administration. But at the same time, one should also remember that these reforms—streamlining the government organizational system, revamping SOEs, liberalizing markets, redressing inequality, and stamping out corruption—are all difficult issues that past leaders have tried to address but left to their successors. Time is needed to judge the extent to which the reforms can actually be implemented.

II-3 Pursuing Power

The Xi Jinping government has emphasized “a strong China,” both domestically and abroad. The following is an overview of China’s initiatives for strengthening the military, securing air, land and sea territories, and addressing international relations.

II-3-1 Building up a strong military

Since his accession to the posts of General Secretary and head of the Central Military Commission, Xi Jinping has inspected each military region. At every given opportunity, he has stressed building up “a strong military” and “a military that can win wars.” With regard to building up a strong military, the Decision states, “with the aim of building up the people’s armed forces loyal to the CPC, having the ability to win wars, and able to uphold fine traditions under new conditions, we will endeavor to resolve the contradictions and problems that constrain the development of national defense and the armed forces, be innovative in developing military theories, enhance military strategic guidance, implement correct military strategy for the new era, and build a system of modern military forces with Chinese characteristics.” The 2014 Report on Government Activities also noted that “every effort should be made to reform, regularize, and legitimize the military and continually improve its deterrent abilities in an information society and its practical abilities, and strengthen its military strategic guidance meeting the needs of the times. In peacetime, its preparedness to fight and its management of our land, sea and air territories should be strengthened.” The military budget approved at the Second Session of the Twelfth National People’s Congress was 808.23 billion yuan (13 trillion 446.0 billion yen), a 12.2 percent increase over the previous year.

II-3-2 Securing land, sea and air territories through forceful means

While continuing to build up a strong military force, China has shown an uncompromising stance toward asserting and expanding its rights and interests in the air and on the seas. Xi Jinping has stressed on various occasions the need to build up China as a strong maritime power, saying that this is an important part of China's special brand of socialist enterprise. Xi has said that, while upholding peace, China will not abandon its rightful interests and cannot sacrifice its core interests. He indicated that while clearly delineating its sovereignty, China will shelve disputes and engage in joint development. (*People's Daily*, August 1, 2013)

To centralize decision-making and execution of maritime policy, State Council reforms in March 2013 established a new National Ocean Council and reorganized the State Oceanic Administration, amalgamating its executive agencies—the former State Oceanic Administration, China Marine Surveillance, the China Coast Guard (Ministry of Public Security), the China Fishery Law Enforcement (Ministry of Agriculture), and the Customs General Administration's Maritime Anti-smuggling Police Force—under the Ministry of Land and Resources.

Under this new administrative structure, confrontations around the Senkaku Islands have increased. Intrusions by Chinese ships into what Japan considers its territorial waters and surrounding areas continue unabated. On January 30, 2013, the PLA Navy's Jiang-wei-class frigate Lianyungang (522) locked its fire-control radar on the Murasame-class escort vessel Yuudachi of Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force. On May 29, 2014, a suspected instance of a Chinese warship locking fire-control radar onto a JMSDF escort vessel and a patrol plane was reported.

Similar incidents have been occurring in Japan's airspace. On November 23, 2013, China suddenly announced that it was designating an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea that includes airspace above the Senkaku Islands. It was also reported that PLA aircraft had near misses with SDF aircraft on two occasions, in May and June 2014.

China has also begun drilling for oil in the South China Sea, where similar territorial issues exist, and tensions with Vietnam, which is attempting to prevent this, are rising. On May 7, 2014, a China Coast Guard vessel and a police boat from Vietnam's navy clashed in the seas around the disputed Paracel Islands.

This bellicose stance, with China attempting to secure jurisdiction over transport routes for natural and energy resources, can be interpreted as a move to establish a fait accompli over what it views as its territorial waters and ADIZ.

II-3-3 Tense Diplomatic Relations

As a result, China's relations with Japan and countries in Southeast Asia with which it has territorial issues, and the United States, have worsened since the start of the Xi Jinping government.

(1) Relations with Japan

China has a dispute with Japan over the Senkaku Islands, but it is keeping political issues separate from economic matters. In other words, China is maintaining economic and cultural ties with Japan, from which it can gain practical advantages, but maintains an aggressive stance as far as diplomatic and security issues are concerned.

China has consistently claimed that Japan is engaging in dangerous provocations in the East China Sea and continues to vehemently criticize Japan. In the June 2014 near miss incident involving Chinese and Japanese military aircraft, for example, China insists that Japanese provocation was the cause, despite Japan's criticism of China's actions. In a June 6, 2014 statement, China Ministry of Defense spokesperson Geng Yansheng said that Japan had deceived the international community, tarnished the image of China's military... taken unscrupulous means to hide the truth and tried to say that "black" is "white" and maintained that this was a situation of the guilty party confessing first.

For some time now, China has linked its criticism of Japan with Japanese views on history and discussions of collective self-defense in Japan. For example, at a regular press conference on May 15, 2014, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Hua Chunying said, referring to the "Report of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security," that Japan has been acting one-sidedly in the military sphere since the start of the Abe administration, and that given the historical issues that exist, the Japanese stance on military affairs is sure to affect security in the region.

China has renewed its attacks on the history issue because of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's December 2013 visit to Yasukuni Shrine. The visit was roundly criticized around the world, beginning with the U.S. State Department, which expressed its "disappointment" at the visit. China's decision to try to get world opinion on its side, has encouraged turning the history issue into a diplomatic issue, as has Korea, which also disputes history issues with Japan. The 2014 Report on Government Activities, in an obvious reference to Japan, noted that "We will safeguard the victory of World War II and the postwar international order, and will not allow anyone to reverse the course of history."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, commenting on Sino-Japanese relations at a press conference during the National People's Congress, stated that "On issues of principle such as history and territory, there is no room for compromise. When China and Japan normalized diplomatic relations in 1972, the two sides reached an important common understanding and consensus on properly handling history, Taiwan, the Diaoyu Islands and other issues. Yet the recent comments and actions of the Japanese leader betrayed the spirit of 1972 and undermined the foundation of China-Japan relations. Instead of using pre-WWI Germany as an object lesson, why not use post-WWII Germany as a role model?"

The Chinese government has been actively reporting events connected with past Japanese atrocities. For example, in January 2014, the Memorial Hall of Ahn Jung-geun, a Korean independence activist, built at the request of the Korean government, opened in Harbin. In February, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted

a motion proposing to make September 3 “Victory of War of Resistance against Japan Day” and December 13, the date of the occupation of Nanjing by the Japanese Army, a “Day of National Condolence.” In June, the government applied to register documents relating to the Nanjing massacre and the comfort women as a Unesco Memory of the World. In the face of Japanese complaints, the government commented that the Japanese government shows no remorse about crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War... Japan, having been the one to invade and massacre, is yet trying to tamp down China’s voice. This thinking like a thief will eventually make Japan’s position untenable. (*People’s Daily*—International Edition, June 12, 2014)

(2) Relations with Vietnam

The start of drilling for oil by China in the Paracels in the South China Sea has stirred opposition in Vietnam, which also claims the islands. Vietnam has demanded that the drilling facilities be removed, and Vietnamese boats have rammed Chinese boats in protest. Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Hong Kei strongly condemned this behavior, claiming that Chinese boats have been rammed over 1,200 times by Vietnamese boats.

Both China and Vietnam have submitted papers stating their respective positions to the United Nations, and the exchange of words has escalated to involve an international body. While China insists that the two countries resolved the issue between themselves without resorting to an international court of law (according to a press conference held by Yi Xianliang, deputy head of the Borders and Maritime Affairs Bureau of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 13, 2014), talks in Hanoi between State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and other Vietnamese leaders on June 18 failed to make any progress.

The stinging criticism of Vietnam by Chinese officials is evidence that China views itself as a great power. On June 22, Sun Jianguo, deputy chief of the General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army, gave a talk at the World Peace Forum in Beijing. He said, referring to Vietnam and the Philippines, that “smaller countries should not bully others with support from major powers. Smaller countries have the responsibility not to hijack regional security for selfish interests.”

(3) Relations with the United States

Since 2012, China has held that a new type of great power relations should be forged with the United States and that the United States should have a similar perception. This shows China’s view of itself as a major power and its expectation that, in return for assenting to the United States’ presence in the Asia-Pacific region, the United States would express understanding for what China calls its core interests. In unofficial talks with U.S. president Barack Obama when Xi Jinping visited the United States in June 2013, he said “The vast Pacific Ocean has enough space for two large countries like the United States and China,” stressing the potential for China to build a cooperative relationship with the United States.

But following the U.S.’s cautious stance toward these developments, its “pivot to

East Asia” strategy, its declaring that the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands, and the statements of Secretary of State John Kerry and of then-White House press secretary Jay Carney on May 12 and 16, respectively, that China’s aggressive and provocative behavior was responsible for the clashes between Vietnam and China in the South China Sea, China adopted an overtly confrontational stance toward the U.S. presence in the region.

For example, at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, held in Shanghai in May 2014, Xi Jinping proposed a “New Asian Security Concept.” At this conference, which includes China, Russia and 26 Central Asian countries as members and where the U.S. and Japan have observer status, Xi stressed that under the New Asian Security Concept, “Asian problems should be solved by Asians themselves” and “No country should attempt to dominate regional security affairs or infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of other countries.” This, together with joint naval exercises held in the East China Sea by China and Russia around the same time, attracted attention as a movement to create a counterpoint to the U.S. on the issue of security in the Asian region. As for the specifics of the New Asian Security Concept, Xi maintained that “For most Asian countries, development means the greatest security and the master key to regional security issues.” Repeated references to “development” seem to indicate that the focus of the concept is on growth in the region, but the details remain murky.

The U.S. issued a clear rebuke to China, which could very well take an aggressive stance toward other countries, and has further clarified its “pivot to East Asia” policy. At the 13th IISS Asian Security Summit in Singapore on May 31, 2014, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, touching on China’s actions in the South China Sea, decried the fact that these were having a destabilizing effect on the international order and said that the U.S. would work to rebalance the situation. In a speech the next day, Lieutenant-General Wang Guanzhong, deputy chief of the General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army, accused Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US Secretary of Defence Hagel of “coordinating” and “supporting” each other in their comments targeted at China. He continued that “Hagel’s speech was full of hegemony, full of words of threat and intimidation. It was a speech to abet destabilizing factors to create trouble and make provocations. It was not a constructive speech.”

There have also been clashes between the U.S. and China over cybersecurity. In May, a U.S. federal grand jury indicted five PLA officers for stealing classified information in a cyber attack. This was a clear statement of the U.S.’s uncompromising position on protecting its cyberspace from China, an issue of concern for quite some time.

Members of the G7 Summit, meeting in Brussels in June, also expressed concern about attempts to use force to change the existing order. In a communiqué issued at the meeting, the leaders said, “We are deeply concerned by tensions in the East and South China Sea. We oppose any unilateral attempt by any party to assert its territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force.”

II-4 *Encouraging Nationalism*

“The China Dream,” a new slogan used by Xi Jinping, is beginning to take hold. After viewing an exhibition titled “The Road toward Renewal” on November 29, 2012, Xi said, “Nowadays, everyone is talking about the ‘China Dream.’ In my view, to realize the great renewal of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream for the Chinese nation in modern history. The China Dream has conglomerated the long-cherished aspiration of Chinese people of several generations, represented the overall interests of the Chinese nation and Chinese people, and has been a common expectation of every Chinese person.” (“General Secretary Xi Speaks of ‘the China Dream,’” *People’s Daily Online*, Japanese edition <http://j.people.com.cn/94474/8041295.html>).

On many subsequent occasions, he has also talked about “the China Dream” as “the great revival of the Chinese nation.” This slogan of the new government was developed soon after Xi became Party General Secretary in an attempt to bind the Chinese nation together, including the people in the regions where restive minorities reside, and also to brand the changeover as a new government, for both domestic and international consumption.

But binding the Chinese nation together is no easy task. Not only is China having to deal with rebellious Uighurs, it is also faced with the development of a distinctive identity in Taiwan. Taiwanese premier Ma Yingjiu, faced with declining support for his government, has attempted to leave a legacy of promoting closer ties with mainland China. In February 2014, Zhang Zhijun, director of the Taiwan Affairs Office of China’s State Council, and Wang Yuqi, Minister of the Mainland Affairs Council, met in Nanjing to confirm that they would discuss economic issues as well as other matters.

However, in Taiwan, students opposed to the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement occupied the Legislature over March and April, forcing the Ma administration to reevaluate its policy of rapprochement with the mainland. On June 12, Fan Liqing, spokeswoman with the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a press conference that “Issues concerning China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity should be decided by all Chinese, including compatriots in Taiwan.” Gravely highlighting the continuing distance between their respective positions, spokesman Ma Weiguo of Taiwan’s Office of the President, said that Taiwan’s 23 million citizens would decide on Taiwan’s future within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of China.

II-5 *Governance Methods for Concentrating Power in the Central Committee*

Since the start of his government, Xi Jinping has been implementing various measures to fight a network of vested interests and establish the leadership needed to swiftly execute economic reforms.

II-5-1 Power Struggles

The first step in a power struggle is to remove elements opposing the leadership. Power struggles are a regular occurrence whenever there is a change of administration. There was reportedly a fierce power struggle between figures close to Hu Jintao and others close to Jiang Zemin when Xi assumed the leadership. The result was that most of the seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee (Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Deqiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan, and Zhang Gaoli) are leaders who were close to Jiang Zemin. Thus the shuffle seemed like a victory for Jiang Zemin, since it had been decided that Hu Jintao himself would retire from all his posts, including that of chairman of the Central Military Commission. But an examination of news reports indicates that a struggle has been continuing to shut out leaders close to Jiang Zemin.

First, Bo Xilai, former secretary of the Chongqing Municipal Committee of the CPC and a former member of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau, whose patron was Jiang Zemin, received a life sentence after being charged with accepting bribes of 20 million yuan (320 million yen), embezzling 5 million yuan (80 million yen), and abusing his power while secretary of the Chongqing Municipal Committee of the CPC. In October 2013, the Shandong High People's Court sentenced Bo to life imprisonment, confiscated his assets, and stripped him of his political rights for life.

The focus of the struggle then shifted to Zhou Yongkang (former Politburo Standing Committee member and Secretary of the Central Politics and Law Commission of the Communist Party of China) and others allied with Jiang Zemin who had backed Bo Xilai. There have been mass arrests of leaders of the state security apparatus and of the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), organizations which are said to have accommodated Zhou in various ways. According to a Reuters dispatch of March 30, 2014, in addition to Zhou over 300 people, including his relatives and subordinates, have been detained and assets totaling over 90 billion yuan (1.4900 trillion yen) confiscated (<http://jp.reuters.com/article/topNews/idJPTYEA2U00420140331>). On July 29, it was announced that a case had been brought against Zhou.

Other cases include that of Gu Junshan, former Lieutenant General in the Military Logistics arm of the PLA, who was charged with corruption by the military prosecutor's office. In June, Liu Tienan, former vice head of the National Development and Reform Commission, was charged with bribery, and Xu Caihou, former Politburo member and vice head of the party's Military Commission, was stripped of party membership.

These individuals were all reported to have had ties to Jiang Zemin. Everyone is wondering who will be exposed and indicted next.

II-5-2 Building a Framework to Concentrate Power within the Central Committee

By establishing a new overall command framework which he heads within the Central Committee, Xi Jinping is attempting to carry out bold, swift reforms. The following lists the

main bodies he has newly created within the past six months.

(1) The central leading group on comprehensively deepening reforms

This group, established within the Central Committee according to the Decision taken at the 3rd plenary session of the 18th Central Committee, is in charge of overseeing overall reforms. It consists of six sub-groups, in charge of economic and ecological civilization reforms, civil law reforms, cultural reforms, social reforms, reforms to the party construction, and reforms to the discipline inspection system, respectively. The National Development and Reform Commission under the State Council had previously performed these functions, but the Commission had been attracting suspicion and was disbanded after its vice head, Liu Tienan, was charged with corruption in May 2013.

This new leading group was set up to signal that the party would be taking over the lead role in reforms from the government. Regarding the establishment of this group, the Decision said “to deepen reform comprehensively, we must enhance and improve the Party’s leadership, ensure that the Party plays its role as the leadership core in exercising overall leadership and coordinating all efforts, build the Party into an innovative, service-oriented and learning Marxist governing party, and improve the Party’s art of leadership and governance to ensure the victory of our reforms.”

The group is headed by Xi Jinping and deputy leaders Li Keqiang, Liu Yunshan, and Zhang Gaoli. The group’s first meeting took place on January 22, 2014, and the second on February 28 under the auspices of Xi. At these meetings, the operating rules for the leading group, work regulations for its office, membership of the six sub-groups, assignment of duties for carrying out the mandate of the Decision, priority areas for 2014, plans for legislation, and reforms proposed by the six sub-groups were adopted² (*People’s Daily Online*, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2014/0122/c1024-24199431.html>, PRC central government website http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2014-02/28/content_2625924.htm).

² Attending the first meeting were Ma Kai, member of Central Politburo, vice premier; Wang Huning, member of Central Politburo, chief, CPC Policy Research Office; Liu Yandong, member of Central Politburo, vice premier; Liu Qibao, member of Central Politburo, head of Central Propaganda Department; Xu Qiliang, member of Central Politburo, vice chairman, Central Military Commission; Li Jianguo, member of Central Politburo, deputy head, Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress; Wang Yang, member of Central Politburo, vice premier; Meng Jianzhu, member of Central Politburo, secretary, Central Politics and Law Commission; Zhao Leji, member of Central Politburo, head, Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee; Li Zhanshu, member of Central Politburo, head, General Office of the CPC; Du Qinglin, secretary, Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, deputy head, Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference; Zhao Hongzhu, secretary, Secretariat of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, deputy secretary, Central Committee for Discipline Inspection; Wang Chen, deputy head and head secretary, Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress; Guo Shengkun, member of the State Council, Minister of Public Security; Zhou Qiang, president of the Supreme People’s Court; Cao Jianming, procurator-general, Supreme People’s Procuratorate; Zhang Qingli, deputy head and chief secretary; Zhou Xiaochuan, deputy head, Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, and governor, People’s Bank of China; and Wang Zhengwei, deputy head, Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, head, State Ethnic Affairs Commission; and well as heads of other committees.

(2) The Central National Security Commission

To centralize decision-making and carry out maritime policies, under State Council reforms in March 2013, a new National Ocean Council was established and the State Oceanic Administration was reorganized, amalgamating its executive agencies—the former State Oceanic Administration, China Marine Surveillance, the Coast Guard Forces of the Ministry of Public Security, China Fishery Law Enforcement of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Maritime Anti-smuggling Police Force of the Customs General Administration—under the Ministry of Land and Resources.

The Central National Security Commission is in charge of overall security matters and is responsible for both national and internal security. It is headed by Xi Jinping and its deputy leaders are Li Keqiang and Zhang Dejiang. Its establishment was proposed in a communiqué issued at the 3rd plenary session of the 18th Central Committee and formally decided on January 24, 2014, at a meeting of the Central Politburo Standing Committee.

Although this commission is called a “national” commission, it is clear that it is actually under the party’s Central Committee. In addition to traditional security dependent on military power, its responsibility covers the entire scope of security, ranging from anti-terrorism and maintaining domestic security to economic security, cybersecurity, food safety, and disease prevention.

This Commission was established in response to the growing need for a department with comprehensive oversight of all the various aspects of security. But it was also established for the purpose of placing the military, in charge of external security and public security, and responsible for domestic security, firmly under the control of the party, to prevent any abuses of power. The Commission’s first meeting was held on April 15, 2014, after which it began its activities.

(3) Leading group for deepening reform on national defense and the military

The leading group for deepening reform on national defense and the military, overseeing reform of the military, is a new group under the Central Committee. This group is also led by Xi Jinping under the Central Committee.

In addition to its role of rooting out corruption in the military and scrutinizing its regulations, it is also tasked with modernizing its weapons systems, centralizing the command structure, and building a strong military. At its first meeting on March 15, 2014, Xi said that in order to effect reforms, the party must exert guidance on the military more firmly than before, uphold the character and tenets of the PLA more firmly, and continue the honorable tradition and superior style of the military ever more firmly; the military must focus on fighting and winning battles; and the party must set out firmly on the path of modernizing its structure (“習近平：以強軍目標引領國防和軍隊改革,” *Xinhua Online* http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-03/15/c_119785243.htm).

(4) Central Internet security and informatization leading group

The Central Internet security and informatization leading group was established, and it held its first meeting in February 2014. The aims of this leading group

are to attain network power appropriate to the Internet age by improving technological skills and controlling public opinion expressed on the Internet. The group is headed by Xi Jinping and its deputy leaders are Li Keqiang and Liu Yunshan.

At the group's first meeting, Xi stressed the importance of improving information technology and said that the group's long-term jobs were to exert thorough control of public opinion over the Internet, refine propaganda over the Internet, use the rules for communicating over the Internet to put forward the main message, generate positive energy, and cultivate the core values of socialism (“習近平：把我国從網絡大国建設成為網絡強国,” *Xinhua Online*

http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-02/27/c_119538788.htm).

(5) Centralizing power within the existing framework

Measures are continuing to centralize the leadership system within the existing framework. For example, the Decision proposes strengthening vertical guidance for the discipline inspection departments in party and government organizations at every level from the central government to all levels of provincial government. More stringent discipline inspection is indented to prevent cover-ups of corruption at the provincial level.

The Decision describes how authority over personnel matters, up to now in the hands of the secretary and deputy secretary of the discipline inspection department at all levels of provincial government handled by the party organization at the same level, will be handed to higher-level discipline inspection departments and departmental organizations.

In addition, the Decision announced a policy of sending personnel from the Central Discipline Inspection Committee to the central party and government bodies to conduct thorough inspections. The existing system of the premier overseeing the party's central leading group for finance and economy was also changed, making Xi himself the head of the group and chair of the group's meetings (“積極推動我国能源生產和消費革命加快實施能源領域重点任務重大举措,” *People's Daily*, June 14, 2014).

II-5-3 Exerting Stronger Macro Control over Provincial Areas

Regarding the various actions to centralize power taken by Xi Jinping, lastly I would like to touch on strengthening macro control over provincial areas, which the Decision described in these words. “We will appropriately increase the authority of office and responsibility of expenditure of the central government,” meaning that, in addition to national defense, diplomacy, and national security, the party has put the rules and management of a unified nationwide market under the central government, and that both the central and provincial governments will share authority over some aspects of social security and the construction and maintenance of important regional projects. The fact that it was repeated that a unified, nationwide market would be under the central government indicates a further push toward marketization under central government leadership.

The above-described steps to concentrate power in the Central Committee are generally

supported at this time. Although entrenched interests are expected to put up a strong fight, the public consensus appears to be that concentrating power in the Central Committee with General Secretary Xi at its head is necessary for going ahead with bold reforms.

III. Political Reforms Limited to Anti-Corruption Measures and Containing Autonomous Society

On the other hand, where political reform is concerned, Xi has presented no new ideas so far. Be it the rule of law or information disclosure, all his actions up to now have been directed at rooting out corruption and lack the vision for being inclusive of varied viewpoints or identities. In fact, there is a trend of repressing freedom of thought and expression in the name of stability at all costs.

III-1 Reforms for Honest Politics

The Decision touches on political system reform at some length and says that reform is needed for the sake of “the organic unity of upholding the leadership of the Party, the people being the masters of the country, and governing the country according to the rule of law” and to “accelerate socialist democracy in a systematic way by adopting due standards and procedures, build a socialist country with the rule of law... to develop people’s democracy with wider, more adequate and sound participation.” The 2014 Report on Government Activities also notes the need for building and strengthening the government itself.

But as far as the reforms themselves are concerned, reforms to autonomous systems for the public at large—the People’s Congress, the People’s Political Consultative Conference, the Ethnic Minority Autonomous Regional System, villagers’ committees, residents’ committee, the Staff and Workers’ Representative Congress, and so forth—have been carried out only within the existing framework, and nothing new has been put forth. And as far as channels through enabling citizens to participate in politics are concerned, government advisory councils, discussions, hearings, public opinion surveys, the petition system (in writing or through petitioning), the system for examining complaints against the government and so forth, existing systems are merely listed. All the actions that Xi is trying to take under the name of political system reform are aimed at eliminating corruption.

Take, first of all, firmly establishing the rule of law. At the 4th Study Session of the Central Politburo in February 2013, Xi said, in essence, that the government would push to pass scientific laws, firmly apply the law, and guarantee a fair judiciary and that all citizens should observe the laws. He continued that it was necessary for his government to firmly uphold the coordinated establishment of a nation, a government, and a society under the rule of law and to continue breaking new ground to establish governance under law (“習近平強調：依法治国依法執政依法行政共同推進,” *Xinhua Online* http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-02/24/c_114782088.htm).

The Decision clearly states that “no organization or individual has the privilege of overstepping the Constitution and laws,” and described specific directions for reform, such

as to “unify the management of staffs, funds and properties of courts and procuratorates below the provincial level and establish a judicial jurisdiction system that is appropriately separated from the administrative divisions.” All these reforms are designed to rectify distortions in trials resulting from collusion between the party/government and the judiciary, which can be seen as a partial step toward separating (the various strands of) authority. Further, to rein in the excessive repression of the domestic security apparatus which has overridden court procedures, it was decided to stop reeducation through labor, a system in effect since 1957. Thus, progress has been made from the viewpoint of tackling the institutionalization of coercion.

But at the same time, what Xi holds up as the “rule of law” is only being applied in the context of the anti-corruption fight, so there is naturally quite a gap between this and the guarantee of human rights and freedoms based on constitutional government that many reform-minded citizens have been hoping for.

Second is promoting information disclosure. Under the “sunshine fiscal policy,” the government has asked departments at all levels of provincial government to include all government revenues in their budgets and to disclose all budgets and financial statements, including “the three public expenditures,” to the public.

The Decision also mentions continuing to take action to establish a mutual control mechanism for decision-making, executive, and supervisory authority, but does not describe specific means for accomplishing this.

III-2 Containing Autonomous Society

In the above we have seen how channels for public political participation outlined by the Xi government have continued in the framework of existing systems and are not new.

Regarding the role of autonomous society, the Decision says the following concerning innovating in the social governance system: “We will persist in implementing system governance, strengthen leadership by the party committee, give full play to the leading role of the government and encourage and support the participation of all sectors of society, so as to achieve positive interaction between government management on the one hand and social self-management and residents’ self-management on the other.” This means, though, that the activities of social actors will be limited to the scope allowed under party and government leadership.

The Decision says that separation of government administration and social organizations will be effected in order to harness the vitality of social organizations. But mention of the role of social organizations is limited to “public services appropriate for social organizations to handle” and priority will be given to developing “trade associations and chambers of commerce, scientific and technological associations, charity and philanthropic organizations, and urban and rural community service organizations.” Conversely, the Decision states that more control will be exerted over social organizations in general and foreign NGOs carrying out activities in China. Social organizations are only considered significant in their role as

actors providing public services that the government cannot handle effectively.

Meanwhile, strict control continues to be exerted over autonomous social activities outside the scope of those described above.

Control over thought and opinion has become stronger since the start of the Xi government. In response to the new government's call for the "rule of law," since the 18th Party Congress, mainly reformist intellectuals have held rallies and forums demanding constitutional reform.

In November 2012, a "Reform Consensus Forum" organized jointly by the pro-reform magazine *Yanhuang Chunqiu* and the Constitutional and Administrative Law Research Centre of Peking University took place, which announced the "Reform Consensus Proposal" drafted by Zhang Qianfan, Jiang Ping, Zhang Sizhi, He Weifang and others and signed by 171 individuals. The proposal called for reforms in six areas: government according to the constitution, holding of democratic elections, respect for freedom of expression, deepening of the market economy, independence of the judiciary, and guarantee of the validity of the constitution. The magazine *Southern Weekly* was preparing to carry an article titled "The Dream of China, the Dream of Constitutional Government," which emphasized the importance of constitutional government based on the constitution, in its special New Year edition of 2013.

On the occasion of the 2013 National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 128 reformist intellectuals and citizens, quoting from the foreword of *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, published an open letter demanding constitutional government. They also posted a call for the National People's Congress to ratify the international statute on civic and political rights (the so-called statute B) on the Internet. This call incorporates a broad range of demands—freedom of expression and publishing; freedom of the person; judicial independence; curbs on the death penalty; direct elections for people's representatives at all levels of government, and administrative and chief administrators; abolition of the ordinance against assemblies, demonstrations or threats; abolition of the labor union law; freedom of association; freedom of religion and conscience; abolition of the crime of overthrowing the government (sedition); abolition of the household registration system; abolition of the 'one child policy'; reform of the Lawyer Law and independence for lawyers—and was signed by nearly 500 people. But this preliminary action by intellectuals and the media, which hoped for a more proactive stance toward constitutional government, was repressed by the government. After publishing a foreword titled "the constitution is the consensus for political system reform" in its New Year issue, *Yanhuang Chunqiu*'s website was suddenly shut down, and *Southern Weekly* was ordered to change the content of its article.

In May 2013, the General Office of the CPC distributed "Concerning the Situation in the Ideological Sphere" (Document No. 9) to party provincial offices and governments, and it was reported that a campaign to study the document had been organized ("中共下發意識形態文件 通報神龍不見首尾," BBC Chinese website http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/china/2013/05/130513_china_politics_ideology.shtml). A blog post by a professor at

the East China University of Political Science and Law noted that professors at his university had been briefed about “the seven unmentionables”— universal values; press freedom; civil society; citizens’ rights; the party’s past errors; the ‘privileged capitalistic class’; and judicial independence—and to avoid teaching these topics.

The exact content of Document No. 9 is not known, but in August *The New York Times* and the Hong Kong monthly *Mirror News* reported that the document had listed seven dangerous ideological currents undermining the party’s authority: Western constitutional democracy; universal values; civil society; new liberalism; press freedom and other Western-inspired views of the media; promoting historical nihilism; and sowing doubt about reform and openness. The reports described how party officials, in a call for renewed ideological discipline, were concerned about the spread of such “erroneous” ideas and assertions in China over the Internet and through underground channels and that they would remain vigilant against schemes to spread the influence of Western anti-China forces and anti-government forces in the ideological sphere. The reports added that officials asserted that authority over newspaper media must remain in the hands of comrade General Secretary Xi Jinping and the party Central Committee, and they called for reinforcing ideological education (“《明鏡月刊》獨家全文刊發中共9号文件,” Laqingdan <http://www.laqingdan.net/?p=2993>).

The clampdown is being directed by Liu Yunshan, head of the Politburo Standing Committee’s Central Spiritual Civilization Construction Guiding Committee, although some sources believe that Xi Jinping and other Central Committee leaders may not necessarily agree with it. But the Decision also states that “We will improve a linkage mechanism that integrates basic management, content management, industrial management, combats and prevents online criminal acts, improves the mechanism for dealing with online emergencies, and brings into being a framework of public opinion that combines positive guidance with management by law” and “We will make efforts to institutionalize press releases, strictly apply the professional qualification system for journalists, and attach more importance to application and management of new media, so as to promote orderly communication,” indicating that the official stance toward continuing control of the media and public opinion remains unchanged. This has been substantiated by the fact that the leadership has approved this policy. In fact, a Xinhua news item on June 18, 2014, reported that the National Newspaper, Publishing and Broadcasting Bureau had issued a directive banning news gathering, reporting, and critical news coverage by organizations not authorized to cover subjects outside their fields, and the opening of unauthorized websites (<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2014-06-18/161430384026.shtml>), an indication of a further government clampdown on the news media.

This year, 2014, is the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests, and numerous reformist intellectuals have been detained or arrested. Persons connected with the New Citizens’ Movement, which seeks to disclose political leaders’ assets, reported that the group’s leader Xu Zhiyong had been sentenced to four years in prison. Others, such as Liu Ping, human rights activist Wei Zhongping, and Li Sihua, also received jail sentences ranging

from three to six and a half years. Journalist Gao Yu was arrested and charged with leaking state secrets, and Yao Wentian, of Morning Bell Press, which published the book *Godfather of China Xi Jinping* in Hong Kong received a 10-year jail sentence for smuggling. Ilham Tohti, associate professor at Minzu University of China and human rights advocate for Uighurs, was arrested and jailed. Lawyer Pu Zhiqiang and others, attending a private meeting investigating the Tiananmen Square protests, were arrested and charged with incitement to rioting and unauthorized acquisition of private information. Lawyer Tang Jingling, attending a rally to protest the arrest of Pu and the others, was also arrested and charged with attempting to overthrow the government.

Free speech may be repressed even further, as the party prioritizes stability for the sake of reform and further centralizes power within the party's Central Committee. A passage in the Decision states that everyone shall work to build a "peaceful China" by strengthening overall measures for law and order, resolutely cracking down on violent terrorist crime, protecting the country's safety and creating a desirable social order. These words bring to mind the network of security cameras installed in the major cities for around the clock surveillance following Hu Jintao's push to build "peaceful cities" with the aim of creating a peaceful society.

But China is already part of the global discourse in society thanks to the spread of the Internet, and the anachronistic thought control and repression of free speech adopted for creating "a desirable social order" is a high-cost, low-return approach. The public's view that some freedoms have to be sacrificed in order to make China strong and prosperous may change, depending on the circumstances. It's also clear that the emphasis on a "strong" China is seriously undermining its soft power.

IV. Conclusion

As I have discussed, the Xi Jinping government has been concentrating power in its hands in order to make China wealthy and strong. The public is generally in favor of concentrating power, since strong leadership is necessary to take on the entrenched network of vested interests and push through economic reforms. The sweeping anti-corruption measures the government has taken also have public support. At this point, the government and citizens have reached a sort of mutual understanding by sharing hopes for speedy reforms. If, as the Decision says, "By 2020, decisive results will have been achieved in the reform of important areas and crucial segments," the hoped-for results will have been realized by that time under centralized leadership and justification for one-party rule will have been strengthened.

But this optimistic view needs to be examined from two perspectives. The first is the cost of governance. Carrying out reform speedily is a tall order. Even if the leadership, with Xi at its head, can function to give an organizational guarantee that the forces of resistance can be overcome, the risks inherent in the financial structure, looming social security outlays as the population ages, inequality in income distribution, and corruption and abuse of power are problems that cannot be remedied overnight. The only thing the central government can do is

use its abundant financial resources to overcome the hurdles and implement reforms as much as possible. The longer reforms take, the higher will be the cost of governance.

There is also the continually rising cost connected with the issues of identity and values, which cannot be solved by money. So far in 2014, there have been numerous incidents, for example the rampage at Kunming Station in March and the explosion at Urumqi Station at the end of April, fueled by dissatisfaction among minority groups. More stringent security measures only strengthen minorities' dissatisfaction, creating a vicious circle. Economic growth and the rallying cry of nationalism fail to fulfill the aspirations of people with many different identities. The cost of controlling thought and free speech in the age of the Internet, and of supervising the medium, is spiraling. Any further impinging on freedom of speech and the hearts and minds of the public in the name of stability and social order under a unified leadership will only widen the fissures in society.

One wonders whether China is prepared to bear these high costs of governance forever. To lessen that cost and create a more stable system, after centralizing power China will need to evolve its governance techniques to cooptation, corporatism, consultative authoritarianism or some other form that can better reflect more diverse values and benefits.

The second perspective is the question of whether Xi Jinping really has a firm grip on power. While it is true that systems have been created to centralize power in various areas, these do not mean that Xi's leadership has become stronger. There are two reasonable interpretations as to why China's leaders under Xi are carrying out anachronistic repression of freedom of speech in an attempt to stem the inflow of "Western" values, and acting aggressively toward other countries. Assuming that the situation will not escalate into all-out war, will China, believing that it is a great power, try to expand its maritime interests even at the cost of localized skirmishes? Or will various actors, including the military, decide on their own to act and spin out of control, with China having failed to develop useful intelligence? It would indeed be a tragedy if, as Li Chen argues, the country's governing powers were unable to show leadership in the face of party factional squabbles or resistance by opposition forces and the country were to split apart without the government being able to make practical decisions.

Countries everywhere will benefit from stability and growth in China. All countries, including Japan, should create a multinational framework for containing China's excesses and adopt a multidimensional strategy to support China's economic reforms and improve its governance.

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