

The Sixteenth National Party Congress: The Succession that Didn't Happen*

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ABSTRACT Although the 16th National Party Congress was billed as one of political succession, the stage clearly belonged to 76-year-old Jiang Zemin, whose political report endorsed his major themes, including the controversial proposal to admit entrepreneurs into the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Revisions to the Party charter endorsed Jiang's "three represents" and equated Jiang's accomplishments with those of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Hu Jintao, widely expected to be the star of the show, was reduced to applauding Jiang's accomplishments. Although Hu (59) was named general secretary of the CCP as expected, Jiang packed the Politburo and its Standing Committee with his allies and retained his position as head of the Party's Central Military Commission (CMC). Although Hu may eventually assume real power, the outcome of the congress made clear that meaningful political succession remains at least five years away. In forcefully asserting his power, Jiang opens up questions about the degree to which political governance, particularly at the top of the system, has been institutionalized.

The much-anticipated 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) finally got under way in Beijing on 8 November 2002, apparently after having been delayed from its original date in September. Indeed, this delay was one indication that the Party congress was not going to go as smoothly as many had anticipated. The original script – the one that had been sold abroad so vigorously – was that the congress would mark the first peaceful transfer of power in the history of the PRC from one set of leaders to a younger one. Institutionalization was the buzzword. Chinese politics had matured, procedures were recognized, and the "fourth generation" – headed by Hu Jintao – was to take over. There were always questions about what sort of lingering influence Jiang Zemin and his ageing "third generation" were likely to have, but most presumed that it would be little and would fade quickly. They were wrong.

The scenario for a smooth succession – at least one along the lines of passing power to Hu Jintao – developed a major hitch around May 2002 when rumours started that Jiang Zemin was seriously considering continuing as general secretary. It was said that both Hu Jintao and Zeng Qinghong, Jiang's right-hand man, had implored Jiang to stay on. Perhaps it was just hard bargaining, the sort that seems to occur every five years when the Party redistributes power, but soon other signs suggested that serious differences of opinion had developed. The annual Beidaihe conference was longer than usual; reportedly, the meeting broke during

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the Army Day (1 August) holiday and then reconvened. The first solid indication that preliminary agreement had been reached came on 26 August when a *People's Daily's* editorial announced that the 16th Party Congress would be convened on 8 November – after Jiang's trip to meet President Bush at his Crawford ranch and to attend the APEC summit in Mexico.¹

Even after that editorial, however, there was an unusual flurry of rumours about the size of the Politburo Standing Committee (whether it would be expanded from seven to nine members) and who might be appointed to that body. On the eve of Jiang Zemin's departure for Crawford, the *People's Daily* published an authoritative editorial.² Editorials normally follow Politburo meetings, a supposition given credence by Xinhua's announcement the same day that Beijing CCP secretary Jia Qinglin and Shanghai Party secretary Huang Ju would be “transferred to the centre.”³ Beijing mayor Liu Qi replaced Jia Qinglin as Beijing Party secretary, and Shanghai mayor Chen Liangyu replaced Huang Ju, making both eligible for Politburo seats. Two days later it was announced that Chongqing Party secretary He Guoqiang, reportedly the nephew of Mao Zedong's second wife He Zizhen, would replace Zeng Qinghong as head of the CCP Organization Department. At the same time, it was announced that Liu Yunshan, an official from Inner Mongolia, would replace Ding Guan'gen as head of the CCP Propaganda Department.⁴ Signs were mounting that this would be an unusual congress.

Apart from the speculation that punctuated the summer months, the 16th Party Congress differed from past precedence by having many of its most important themes anticipated by Jiang Zemin's speech on the 80th anniversary of the founding of the CCP on 1 July 2001. Building momentum for policy and personnel changes in the months prior to a congress is the normal practice: prior to the 13th Party Congress, the *People's Daily* reprinted, on 1 July 1987, Deng Xiaoping's speech “On the reform of the Party and state leadership system;” before the 14th Party Congress, Deng Xiaoping made his journey to the south to reinvigorate reform themes; and prior to the 15th Party Congress Jiang Zemin went to the Central Party School in May 1997 to criticize the Old Left (those ideologues associated with Deng Liqun who continue to embrace orthodox interpretations of Marxism-Leninism). Nevertheless, Jiang's “July 1 speech,” as it has become known, was unusual not only because it took place nearly a year and a half before the congress but also because it marked the most systematic rewriting of CCP ideology, perhaps ever. Jiang's call to admit “outstanding elements” of new social strata –

1. “Yi youyi chengji huanjie dang de shiliuda” (“Welcoming the 16th Party Congress with extraordinary achievements”), *Renmin ribao*, 26 August 2002.

2. “Zai ‘san ge daibiao’ zhongyao sixiang zhidao xia kuobu qianjin” (“Taking big strides under the guidance of the ‘three represents’”), *Renmin ribao*, 22 October 2002, retrieved from <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/8956/8960/20021022/847410.html>.

3. Xinhua, 22 October 2002, retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com.cb/newscenter/2002-10/22/content_604652.htm.

4. Xinhua, 24 October 2002, retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2002-10/24/content_607017.htm.

particularly “private entrepreneurs” – stirred tremendous controversy within the Party incurring the outspoken criticism of Deng Liqun and others. Just as controversial within the Party was Jiang’s call to “deepen” the Party’s understanding of labour and the labour theory of value, theoretical issues that lie at the very core of “scientific” Marxism.⁵ Party journals have taken up these themes with vigour in the year since Jiang’s speech, and in retrospect Jiang appears politically astute for getting these controversial themes out front – and for getting them accepted by the Party – before presenting his plans for the new leadership. Commentary in the days following the 16th Party Congress has thus revolved more around the personnel decisions than the ideological breakthroughs, but getting Jiang’s ideas accepted by the Party’s highest organ and written into the Party charter are just as critical.

Building a Middle-class Society

Jiang’s political report to the congress presented a vision of rapid economic growth that looks very much at home in the East Asian context. That is to say, it reflected a vision of China developing along the lines of China’s booming east coast metropolises, taking science and technology as the “key link” and being guided by a technocratic elite. Although the notion that the CCP’s political legitimacy, or at least the ability to continue in political power, is based on continued economic success has long been accepted, Jiang reiterated the idea with rare clarity and boldness: “If we deviate from development, it will be impossible for us to talk about upholding the Party’s advanced nature and its steadfastness.” Accordingly, he set the goal of quadrupling China’s GNP by the year 2020, just as Hu Yaobang in the 12th Party Congress called for a quadrupling of GNP by the year 2000.⁶

This vision of a high-tech, urbanized, globalized, economically competitive, professional, middle-class society – a type of Singapore writ large – rests heavily on cultivating and co-opting China’s entrepreneurial elite, which resides primarily in the private sector. While this goal may seem natural today, it was not 13 years ago when Jiang Zemin was named general secretary. Although Jiang appears to have had little control over the content of his speeches at that time, it is worth recalling the words of his 1989 National Day (1 October) speech: “The working class, especially industrial workers, are tightly bound together with modernized large-scale production; they are the representatives of the advanced forces of production and relations of production.” He went on to say, “A small number of people planned to create a so-called ‘middle class’ in China to

5. Joseph Fewsmith, “The 16th Party Congress: a preview,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 4.

6. All citations from Jiang’s work report are from Jiang Zemin, “Quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi shiye xinjunian” (“Comprehensively build a comparatively well-off society, open up a new phase in socialism with Chinese characteristics”), http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2002-11/17/content_632239.htm.

act as their basis of support so as to overturn our socialist system. This proves from the obverse side that we must whole-heartedly rely on the working class.”⁷

These words clearly placed Jiang and the CCP on the “wrong side of economic history” (to paraphrase President Clinton’s comment to Jiang), and Jiang has spent much of the last decade back-peddalling. Ever since Party cadres began to “jump into the sea” (*xiahai*) of business – around 1993 – the line between Party membership and entrepreneurship has become increasingly blurred. Theoretically, Party members who became private entrepreneurs should have been expelled from the Party because they were “exploiters.” At the same time, many localities adapted to the evolving economic landscape by simply ignoring Party regulations and recruiting private entrepreneurs into the Party. According to the research of Bruce Dickson, some 20 per cent of entrepreneurs are already in the Party.⁸

This situation not only presented a theoretical challenge to China’s stable of Marxist theoreticians but also a political obstacle to development. On the one hand, there was a real possibility that the talented, energetic and wealthy entrepreneurial and managerial elite would be pushed into political opposition. As Li Junru, vice-president of the Central Party School and close confidante of Jiang, put it, “One lesson of political parties that have lost their ruling positions in the late 20th and early 21st centuries is that they have lost the support of youthful entrepreneurs and young intellectuals.”⁹ One can either absorb such new economic actors into the Party or push them into opposition. On the other hand, the conservative opposition to Jiang’s vision of creating a super Singapore was sufficiently strong that it could, unless confronted, thwart Jiang’s developmental plans.

It was in this context that Jiang delivered his speech on the Party’s 80th anniversary. Jiang followed this initiative by laying down a prescription for developing a middle-class society at the 16th Party Congress. He repeatedly invoked the notion of a “comparatively well-off society” (*xiaokang shehui*) and stated frankly that “we should try to raise the proportion of the middle income group.” That Jiang could state this in an authoritative report to the Party’s highest body only 13 years after the *People’s Daily* repeatedly denounced the idea of a middle-class society demonstrates the distance that China, Chinese society and Jiang Zemin himself have travelled in that time.

Although Western analysts routinely dismiss the importance of ideology in China, it is of more than passing import when the CCP addresses

7. Jiang Zemin, “Zai qingzhu Zhonghua renmin gongheguo chengli sishi zhounian dahui shangde jianghua” (“Talk at the meeting celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the PRC”), in *Shisanda yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* (*Selected Important Documents since the Thirteenth Party Congress*), Vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp. 627–28.

8. Bruce Dickson, *Red Capitalists in China: The Chinese Communist Party, Private Entrepreneurs, and Political Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

9. Li Junru, “Zhengque lijie he jianchi dangde jiejixing” (“Correctly understand and uphold the Party’s class nature”), *Lilun dongtai*, 20 July 2001, p. 3.

the labour theory of value, one of the core concepts underlying “scientific socialism.” The labour theory of value lies at the very heart of Marxist ideology. Marx argued that “exploitation” was not a moral category but an intrinsic part of capitalism and that labour was composed of two parts, “socially necessary labour” and “surplus labour,” the latter of which was extracted by the capitalist as profits. Marx’s identification of the two components of labour as intrinsic parts of capitalism led him to identify himself as a “scientific socialist” in contrast to the many socialists (denigrated as “utopian socialists”) who merely protested the moral failings of capitalism. Without the labour theory of value, the whole edifice of Marx’s political economy falls. Chinese theoreticians clearly understand that the labour theory of value lies at the heart of the CCP’s claim to legitimacy. As two theoreticians (who favour revising Marx’s view) put it, “[I]f we negate Marx’s labour theory of value, it will negate Marxist economic theory at the root, negate scientific socialism, and negate more than 80 years of revolution and practice of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people.”¹⁰

Given the centrality of the labour theory of value to Marxism, Jiang could not refute it directly (without giving up the CCP’s claim to legitimacy), but his political report to the congress nevertheless went a long way in revising notions of labour and the labour theory of value, as they have been understood in China. As Jiang told the congress:

It is necessary to respect labour, knowledge, talent, and creation, and render it an important policy of the Party and the country and earnestly implement it in the entire society. It is important to respect and protect all labour that benefits the people and the society; whether it is manual or mental labour, simple or complex labour, all labour that contributes to our country’s modernization of socialism is glorious and should be recognized and respected All legitimate income derived from labour and non-labour should be protected. It is not appropriate to judge whether people are politically advanced or backward simply by whether they own property and how much property they own.

Labour, in Jiang’s words, is a “factor of production,” just as capital, technology and managerial expertise are.¹¹ This equation of labour and other factors of production hardly strikes the Western ear as strange, and that is just the point: Jiang has revised classic Marxist doctrine to the point where it seems familiar to those raised on free-market economics. Over the course of the past 13 years, CCP doctrine on labour and the development of a middle class has turned 180 degrees. This turn around,

10. Liu Keguo and Zhang Guiwen, “Shenhua laodong he laodong jiazhilun renshi de jidian sikao” (“Some thoughts on deepening our understanding of labour and the labour theory of value”), in *Lilun dongtai*, No. 1562 (10 May 2002), p. 16.

11. Although Jiang’s treatment of labour suggests that entrepreneurs, or many of them, are now part of the working class, a thesis suggested in recent Party writings, revisions to the Party charter did not remove the part that states that “class struggle continues to exist within a certain scope and under certain conditions can be exacerbated” This phrase, which is contained within the 1982 resolution on Party history as well, has been used at various times, including the period after Tiananmen, to justify harsh policies. Although Jiang’s “three represents” seem to remove the justification for such constitutional provisions, apparently Jiang did not feel the time was right to remove all references to class struggle.

no doubt, is a prime example of what Jiang meant in his report when he repeatedly told the Party to “keep up with the times” (*yushi jujin*).

Jiang’s emphasis on building a middle-class society did not mean that he completely ignored the needs of the interior and the growing inequalities of wealth, both of which have become politically sensitive. He explicitly noted the problems of intra- and inter-regional inequality and called for gradually reducing these gaps. He also called for building a better social security system. But these tasks were clearly subordinate to economic development, and that is being driven by the growth of the east coast.

Political Reform?

Just as Jiang’s vision seems rooted in the Singaporean experience, so too does his political programme. Jiang again made clear that he rejects “copying the model of Western political system wholesale,” though intriguingly he did not repeat the formulation of not copying the Western system of checks and balances (which strikes some Party theoreticians as useful in fighting corruption). Nevertheless, his report endorsed a number of types of limited political reform. For instance, Jiang called for expanding citizen’s participation in political affairs, albeit “in an orderly way.” He also stated importantly that “human rights are [to be] respected and guaranteed.”

Of greater practical implication was Jiang’s endorsement of grassroots democracy. He called for improving village autonomy, “democratic supervision” of cadres, and strengthening law. He underscored that “Party members and cadres, especially leading cadres, must be the models in abiding by the Constitution and law.” He also called for strengthening supervision over the use of power and for building a “social political civilization,” a formulation that now seems to be used to encompass a variety of demands for greater political reform.

This was hardly a programme of radical political change – on the contrary, its elitist vision is given away by Jiang’s call to exercise “scientific and democratic decision-making” – but it provides the political space necessary for continued experimentation with political reform at the village and perhaps the township level (no commitment was made to raise the level of direct elections, a step back from five years ago). The “inner-Party democracy” that Jiang called for is unlikely to lead to the real thing, but it is at least some recognition that the Party is itself part of the problem.

New Central Committee

Although Jiang called for building an “institutionalized, standardized, and procedure-based” system, the congress suggested a political process that was still far from that. Unlike the routinized process depicted in *China’s New Leaders*, the recent congress had all the earmarks of

backroom politics.¹² There is no evidence that China's Central Committee – new or old – had any input in the process, at least not as a body. On the contrary, it appears that Jiang Zemin and his allies cajoled, connived and coerced other members of the ruling elite until they capitulated, leading to a sweeping victory for Jiang's forces.

The congress ended on 14 November with a new Central Committee of 198 full members and 158 alternate members (compared with 193 and 151 in 1997). Institutionalization has had an effect on the turnover rate and composition of the Central Committee. Of those 198 full members, 112 were new, a turnover rate of 56 per cent – compared with 57 per cent last time. Similarly, the average age of the new Central Committee (55.13) was almost identical to the last one (55.9). The number of provincial representatives (65) was similar to the previous Central Committee (61), and the number of State Council seats was up somewhat (60 compared to 51). The number of women, never very well represented on the Central Committee, fell from 7 to 5 (2.5 per cent). Fifteen members were members of national minorities, about the same as last time (14).

The military appears to have maintained its status quo. Forty-four members of the uniformed military were appointed to the Central Committee (22 per cent), compared to 42 of 193 (22 per cent) at the 15th Party Congress. As with provincial representatives, military representation appears increasingly institutionalized. Heads or deputy heads (likely to move up to replace their retiring superiors) of general staff departments joined the Central Committee, as did the commanders and political commissars of the seven military regions, People's Armed Police Force and service arms.

These changes presented few surprises. However, the ageing Hua Guofeng (b. 1921) was finally retired, which was rather unexpected as Deng Xiaoping had granted him a lifetime seat. The only members of the new Central Committee born in 1937 (who should have been retired if the limit of 65 was adhered to) were Li Guixian, the former head of the People's Bank of China, and Xu Kuangdi, who was unceremoniously removed as mayor of Shanghai in May 2002.

The Politburo: Stacked for Jiang

When the first plenary session of the new 16th Central Committee ended its one-day session on 15 November, the new leadership of the CCP was finally unveiled (see table). Perhaps the only results that were fully anticipated were that Hu Jintao was named general secretary of the Party and that Wen Jiabao was appointed to the Politburo Standing Committee, placing him in position to be named premier at the National People's Congress meeting in spring 2003. Also anticipated was the retention of Luo Gan, Li Peng's protégé, who will continue to head the Political and Legislative Affairs Leadership Small Group. Less expected was the ouster of Li Ruihuan, the 68-year-old former carpenter with the populist touch, who was dropped from the Standing Committee despite

12. Andrew J. Nathan and Bruce Gilley, *China's New Leaders: The Secret Files* (New York: New York Review Books Collections, 2002).

being two years below the retirement age – apparently because he could not get along with Jiang Zemin. Another victim of Jiang’s displeasure was 66-year-old Li Tieying, son of Party elder Li Weihan and head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Li had apparently angered Jiang by not curtailing criticism of Jiang, and in particular his proposal to admit entrepreneurs into the Party, in the leftist journals *Zhongliu* (*Mainstream*) and *Zhenli de zhuiqiu* (*Quest for Truth*) when they were brought under CASS management.¹³ Li had also allowed criticism of *Research Report on Social Strata in Contemporary China*, written by Lu Xueyi, former head of CASS’s Sociology Institute, which depicted workers and peasants as falling to the bottom of society as the new managerial and technical elite rose to the top. Lu’s book, while well grounded academically, was also written to support Jiang Zemin’s “three represents.”¹⁴ These dismissals suggest the degree to which Jiang had decided – and was able – to act against his opponents.

Contrary to many expectations, the Politburo Standing Committee was expanded from seven members to nine. What was striking was the degree to which Jiang Zemin was able to stack the ruling body with his own associates. In addition to promoting Jia Qinglin and Huang Ju – names that had only surfaced in speculation shortly before the Congress – Jiang was able to place four other allies (Wu Bangguo, Zeng Qinghong, Wu Guanzheng and Li Changchun) on the Standing Committee. In addition, Jiang Zemin retained for himself the chairmanship of the Party’s Central Military Commission (CMC). Although some have argued that Jiang will resign from the Party CMC when the NPC meets in spring 2003 and changes in state positions, including the state CMC (identical in composition to the Party CMC), will be announced, any chance of that happening was squashed when Jiang and his aides told foreign dignitaries following the congress that Jiang will retain his seat on both bodies.¹⁵ The only question remaining is whether he will do so for a limited period of time – say, three years – or for a full five-year term.

Remarkably, provincial representation among the other 15 full members of the Politburo increased from five at the time of the 15th Party Congress to seven.¹⁶ This number may still change as members take up different positions (for instance, Sichuan Party secretary Zhou Yongkang

13. I am grateful to Anthony Saich for pointing this out. Since the congress, some have argued that the retirement of Li Ruihuan and Li Tieying was due to the institutionalization of the two term limit at one level, that is a full member of the Politburo who was not promoted to the Standing Committee would have to step down (Hu Jintao, who served two terms as a member of the Standing Committee, did not have to step down because he was promoted to general secretary). If so, this is a new rule; Tian Jiyun, who retired at the 16th Party Congress, served three and a half terms (since 1985) as a full member of the Politburo.

14. Lu Xueyi (ed.), *Dangdai Zhongguo shehui jieceng yanjiu baogao* (*Research Report on Social Strata in Contemporary China*) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2001).

15. Susan V. Lawrence, “Jiang will retain his post as Chinese military head,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 28 November 2002.

16. At the time of the 15th Party Congress, Li Changchun was Party secretary in Henan and Xie Fei was Party secretary in Guangdong (the other provincial representatives were Huang Ju from Shanghai, Jia Qinglin from Beijing, and Wu Guanzheng from Shandong). Xie Fei died in 1999, so provincial representation on the Politburo was reduced to four.

was appointed to the Secretariat and subsequently removed from Sichuan, reducing the number of provincial representatives from eight to seven); nevertheless, it is a striking increase in provincial representation. The implications of this change are not immediately clear. When provincial representation in the Politburo was increased from three to five in 1987, it seemed to give greater voice to the provinces. Nevertheless, in 1994 Premier Zhu Rongji carried out a sweeping change in the tax system that recentralized much fiscal power. Having said that, one has to wonder whether so many provincial leaders in the Politburo might not appeal for tax relief (local finances being as bad as they are) and/or delay in the implementation of various WTO regulations. This might be especially the case with Wen Jiabao as premier. Wen has a reputation as a consensus builder (rather than a head-cracker like Zhu Rongji), and was not a participant in the WTO negotiation process, so might not have as much commitment to it as his predecessors.¹⁷

No member of the uniformed military was appointed to the Politburo Standing Committee, while two – Cao Gangchuan and Guo Boxiong – replaced the military positions of Chi Haotian and Zhang Wannian (both vice-chairmen of the Central Military Commission, and Defence Minister and member of the Secretariat, respectively) on the Politburo. Interestingly, neither Cao nor Guo made the Secretariat; PLA representation on that body fell to Xu Caihou, deputy director of the PLA General Political Department (and likely to replace Yu Yongbo as the head of that department).

The composition of the Politburo is also striking because of its apparent bias towards the eastern seaboard. Five of the seven provincial representatives are from the coastal provinces (a figure that could be even more lopsided if Yu Zhengsheng is transferred from Hubei as some expect). Moreover, many of those on the Standing Committee – Huang Ju, Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun and Wu Guanzheng – served in coastal positions before assuming their new duties. The east coast developmental perspective such people bring to the Politburo is likely to mesh well with the technocratic orientation of others in the leadership. Although Hu Jintao served much of his career in the interior and Wen Jiabao is certainly well versed in agricultural issues, interior provinces are likely to find it difficult to get their voices heard at the highest level.

Most critical to Jiang's continued influence in the years to come is Zeng Qinghong's promotion. Speculation has mounted in recent years that Jiang has been unable at successive Party plenums to promote Zeng, who was an alternate member of the Politburo, to full membership of that body. The theory was that unless Zeng was promoted to full membership of that body, he would not be able to make it to the standing committee at the 16th Party Congress. The results of the Party congress make it apparent that these rumours were, at a minimum, exaggerated. No doubt Jiang had discussed Zeng's future with his most senior colleagues at one

17. Nicholas R. Lardy, *Integrating China into the Global Economy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002) p. 154.

Table 1: Politburo Membership

	Selected in 1997		Selected in 2002		
	DOB	Position	DOB	Position	
<i>Standing Committee (in rank order)</i>					
Jiang Zemin	1926	general secretary	Hu Jintao	1942	general secretary
Li Peng	1928	chairman, NPC	Wu Bangguo	1941	vice-premier
Zhu Rongji	1928	premier	Wen Jiabao	1942	vice-premier
Li Ruihuan	1934	chairman, CPPCC	Jia Qinglin	1940	CPPCC?
Hu Jintao	1942	vice-president	Zeng Qinghong	1939	Secretariat
Wei Jianxing	1931	head, CDIC	Huang Ju	1938	vice-premier?
Li Lanching	1932	vice-premier	Wu Guanzheng	1938	CDIC
			Li Changchun	1944	NPC?
			Luo Gan	1935	Pol-Legal Aff.
<i>Other Full Members (listed alphabetically)</i>					
Chi Haotian	1929	vice-chr., CMC	Cao Gangchuan	1935	PLA/Armaments
Ding Guan'gen	1929	Propaganda Dept	Chen Liangyu	1946	Shanghai PS
Huang Ju	1938	Shanghai PS	Guo Boxiong	1942	CMC, mbr.
Jia Qinglin	1940	Beijing PS	He Guoqiang	1943	Organization
Jiang Chunyun	1930	vice-chr., NPC	Hui Liangyu	1944	Jiangsu PS
Li Changchun	1944	Guangdong PS	Liu Qi	1942	Beijing PS
Li Tieting	1936	president, CASS	Liu Yunshan	1947	Propaganda
Luo Gan	1935	Pol-Legal Aff.	Wang Lequan	1944	Xinjiang PS
Tian Jiyun	1929	vice-chr., NPC	Wang Zhaoguo	1941	unannounced

Qian Qichen	1928	vice-premier	Wu Yi	1938	state councillor
Wen Jiabao	1942	vice-premier	Yu Zhengsheng	1945	Hubei PS
Wu Bangguo	1941	vice-premier	Zeng Peiyan	1938	SDPC
Wu Guanzheng	1938	Shandong PS	Zhang Dejiang	1941	Zhejiang PS
Xie Fei (d. Oct. 1999)	1932	Guangdong PS	Zhang Lichang	1939	Tianjin mayor
Zhang Wannian	1928	vice-chr., CMC	Zhou Yongkang	1942	Sichuan PS

Alternates

Wu Yi	1938	state councillor	Wang Gang	1942	General Off.
Zeng Qinghong	1939	Organization Dept.			

Notes:

DOB = date of birth; CDIC = Central Discipline Inspection Commission; PS = Party secretary; SDPC = State Development and Planning Commission. The positions of Jia Qinglin, Huang Ju and Li Changchun had not been announced at the time of writing; the positions listed are probable. Wang Zhaoguo was removed as head of the United Front Work Department following the congress; no new position had been announced at the time of writing.

Secretariat

Zeng Qinghong, Liu Yunshan, Zhou Yongkang, He Guoqiang, Wang Gang, Xu Caihou, He Yong

Central Military Commission

Chairman: Jiang Zemin

Vice-chairmen: Hu Jintao, Guo Boxiong, Cao Gangchuan

Members: Xu Caihou, Liang Guanglie, Liao Xilong, Li Jinai

or more meetings at Beidaihe, but there is no evidence that Zeng's name was ever forwarded to a meeting of the Central Committee. And any opposition to Zeng's promotion was obviously overcome in the weeks and months prior to the Party congress. Key to this was getting Jiang's "three represents" accepted by the Party; once Jiang was able to establish his ideological dominance with his "July 1 speech," then the way was paved to promote Zeng and other allies.

Zeng Qinghong will be critical to the operation of the Party in the coming months and years. He will no doubt head the Party affairs portfolio on the Politburo Standing Committee, and in that capacity will work closely with the newly appointed head of the Organization Department, He Guoqiang. Although little is known about He's political inclinations or alignments, it seems certain that Jiang and Zeng would not have permitted the promotion of someone they did not trust to such a sensitive position. Moreover, Zeng will run the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat, and it is possible that power will shift, as it did in the early 1980s, to the Secretariat and away from the Politburo Standing Committee.

The promotion of Zeng, son of former Interior Minister Zeng Shan, is also indicative of the increased influence of "princelings" (*gaogan zidi*). At the Politburo level, there is only one other *bona fide* princeling – Yu Zhengsheng, the son of former Tianjin mayor and minister of the First Machine-Building Ministry Huang Jing (whose original name was Yu Qiwei and who was Jiang Qing's husband in Qingdao in the 1930s).¹⁸ At the provincial level, however, several princelings did well. Xi Jinping, son of former Politburo member Xi Zhongxun, was moved from governor of Fujian to acting governor of Zhejiang just before the congress, and then was promoted to be Party secretary of Zhejiang when Zhang Dejiang was moved from Zhejiang to Guangdong (to replace Li Changchun). Wang Qishan, the son-in-law of long-time economic planner Yao Yilin, moved from director of the State Economic Structural Reform Commission to become Party secretary of Hainan. Bai Keming, whose father Bai Jian was Jiang Zemin's boss at the First Machine-Building Ministry, moved from being Party secretary in Hainan to being Party secretary in Hebei (as former Party secretary Wang Xudong moved to Beijing to replace Wu Jichuan as Minister of Information Industries). Other *gaogan zidi* are scattered throughout important administrative posts. These include Jilin governor Hong Hu (son of PLA veteran Hong Xuezhi), Liaoning governor Bo Xilai (son of Party elder Bo Yibo), and China Securities Regulatory Commission head Zhou Xiaochuan (son of Zhou Niannan).

18. On Yu Qiwei, see Ding Wang, *Li Changchun yu Guangdong zhengtan (Li Changchun and Guangdong's Political Stage)* (Hong Kong: Celebrities Press, 1998), p. 32. A fictionalized account of Yu Qiwei and Jiang Qing appears in Anchee Min's *Becoming Madame Mao* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), pp. 25–38 and pp. 94–95. I appreciate Nancy Hearst calling my attention to this important bit of Party history. Yu's mother was Fan Jin, former vice-mayor of Beijing and brother of Fan Wenlan, the famous historian. See "Wupi heima jiangjin shiliuda zhengzhiju" ("Five dark horses will enter the 16th Politburo"), *Qianxiao*, August 2000, p. 20.

To note that these people are *gaogan zidi* is not to say that they are not talented: Xi Jinping has a PhD from Qinghua University; Wang Qishan was important in the early agricultural reforms and has since served as head of the Construction Bank of China; and Yu Zhengsheng has served in a number of administrative positions, including as Party secretary of Qingdao. Moreover, *gaogan zidi* do not always see eye to eye. Indeed, in the list above, some, like Wang Qishan, seem closer to Zhu Rongji, while others, like Bai Keming and Bo Xilai, seem closer to Jiang Zemin, and yet others, like Xi Jinping, appear closer to Zeng Qinghong. Whatever divisions exist among such *gaogan zidi*, they do bring an elitist perspective that accords well with the east coast developmental perspective described above and is clearly contrary to the populist urges that have appeared in recent years in the writings of the New Left and the new nationalists. Unfortunately, it also coexists easily with corruption.

Although there has been a visible trend toward the technocratization of China's ruling elite for some years, the results of the 16th Party Congress are still striking. Four members of the Politburo Standing Committee are graduates of Qinghua University (Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Huang Ju and Wu Guanzheng); the other five graduated from technical schools. It is also a homegrown elite. Too young to remember pre-1949 China (or to receive anything resembling a traditional education) and too old to have studied in the West, this elite, however professionally competent and pragmatic, is remarkably circumscribed in educational terms. Only Luo Gan, a senior engineer, has studied abroad, and that was in East Germany and the Soviet Union.

Revising the Party Charter

Most recent Party congresses have made small, but important, changes to the Party charter, but the 16th Party Congress went way beyond the norm of recent years by introducing a wide range of changes to bring the Party charter in line with Jiang's "three represents." The changes begin with the opening declarative sentences of the General Programme. Whereas the previous charter stated: "The Chinese Communist Party is the vanguard of the Chinese working class; it is the loyal representative of the interests of all the nationalities in China; and it is the leadership core of China's socialist enterprise," the revised charter makes the CCP not only the vanguard of the Chinese working class but also "at the same time" the "vanguard of the Chinese people and of all the nationalities of China" and the "leadership core for [building] socialism with Chinese characteristics," thus edging the Party closer to the notion of a "Party of the whole people." The same opening paragraph also states that the Party "represents the development demand of the advanced forces of production, the progressive direction of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the vast majority of the Chinese people," thus defining the CCP in terms of Jiang's "three represents."

The General Programme also adds a paragraph praising Jiang Zemin's leadership over the past 13 years in leading China's development and in

particular for articulating the “important thought” of the “three represents,” which are described as “inheriting and developing” Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory, and as reflecting the “collective wisdom” of the Party – precisely the same language used to describe Deng Xiaoping’s theoretical contributions; Mao’s Thought is also described as the “collective wisdom” of the Party. There can be no doubt that the CCP has officially placed the “three represents” on a par with the thinking of Jiang’s two predecessors.¹⁹

The revised Party charter also states that “workers, peasants, members of the armed forces, intellectuals, and *advanced elements of other social strata*” [emphasis added] may join the Party, thus officially opening the door to the recruitment of private entrepreneurs and other middle class people. In other words, despite the controversy set off by Jiang’s “July 1 speech,” Jiang was able to get his demand for opening up the Party into the Party charter. Having said this, it is important to note that Jiang seems content to proceed cautiously in this regard. Despite rumours that one or more private entrepreneurs would be promoted to the Central Committee, only Zhang Ruimin, CEO of the Hai’er Corporation, which is at least nominally state owned, was named as an alternate member of the Central Committee – and his name was far down on the list (which is ordered according to the number of votes received).

Hu’s Role

Hu Jintao’s role – and indeed his future – is uncertain at this time. The congress was dominated by Jiang Zemin; Hu only spoke briefly at the news conference that introduced the new Politburo Standing Committee and then mainly to praise the “three represents.” Jiang Zemin has continued to dominate the front page of the *People’s Daily* and when it listed China’s leadership on 15 November, Jiang was listed first, ahead of Hu Jintao. When Hu delivered an inner-Party acceptance speech, he promised to “seek instruction and listen to the views” of Jiang Zemin, indicating either that the Party congress passed a secret resolution to consult Jiang, as it did in 1987 when it promised to consult a retiring Deng Xiaoping, or that Hu’s speech itself constituted such a commitment.²⁰

Similarly, when Zeng Qinghong spoke at the Central Party School on 29 November (a speech that probably indicates that Zeng will take over as president of the Party school), he used the formulation “under the firm leadership of the Party centre with Hu Jintao as general secretary” – a

19. It has been noted that the second paragraph of the Party charter states that the CCP takes “Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and the important thought of the ‘three represents’ as its guide to action” without naming Jiang. But it should be noted that when Deng Xiaoping’s ideas first entered the Party charter in 1992, Deng was similarly not named. His name was added in 1997.

20. Erik Eckholm, “China’s new leader promises not to sever tether to Jiang,” *The New York Times*, 21 November 2002, p. A1.

phrasing that put the emphasis on the Party centre as exercising “firm leadership” and hardly singling out Hu as the “core.” At the time of writing, no adjustments in China’s critical leadership small groups had been announced. Jiang Zemin heads three of the most critical portfolios: the foreign affairs, Taiwan affairs and national security leadership small groups.

Moreover, when one looks at the new Politburo Standing Committee, it is surprising that the *only* member who will be 70 and thus forced to retire at the 17th Party Congress in 2007 is Luo Gan. Thus, there is no obvious and natural route for Hu to become general secretary in reality as well as in name, even in five years, though he may still do so. Indeed, when one looks at the members of the Politburo not on the Standing Committee – those in a position to move up to the Standing Committee in five or ten years – it appears that Jiang has packed that body with his supporters as well. Apart from Wang Zhaoguo, Liu Yunshan and maybe Wang Lequan, it is difficult to spot people who might be considered Hu’s protégés. It is difficult to imagine Hu emerging as a powerful, independent leader under such circumstances.

It is, of course, not clear that Hu Jintao should be viewed as in opposition, or potential opposition, to Jiang or allies such as Zeng Qinghong. Nevertheless, it is clear that Deng Xiaoping named Hu to the Politburo Standing Committee at a time when he was less than satisfied with Jiang’s performance. Hu has never developed the sort of close and easy relationship with Jiang that Zeng Qinghong enjoys, and that fact has set off many stories in Beijing about Jiang’s efforts to remove Hu. Despite such stories, however, Hu rose in the Politburo Standing Committee rankings from seventh to fifth place following the 15th Party Congress in 1997, and he was named vice-president of the PRC in March 1998 and then as vice-chairman of the CMC in September 1998. All these moves came after Deng’s death and suggested that Jiang had come to accept Hu as his political successor after all. However, the 16th Party Congress reopens all the old questions about the relationship between Jiang and Hu; if Jiang had come to trust Hu and view him as the legitimate political successor, why would he stack the Politburo and its Standing Committee with so many of his own allies? Although Hu may yet work his way to occupy real power – as Jiang Zemin did in the years after his appointment as general secretary – the path for doing so is by no means clear.

Conclusion

Although the authoritative call to admit entrepreneurs into the Party and to build an “institutionalized, standardized, and procedure-based” political system should be welcomed, the de-railing of succession plans that have long been in place and the apparent packing of the leadership with people from one group within the Party suggests anything but institutionalization and the development of “inner-Party democracy.”

Moreover, the promotion of people rumoured to be involved in large-scale corruption to the highest level of power suggests that it will be difficult for the CCP to crack down on corruption. Indeed, the combination of personal factionalism and corruption that seem to characterize many in the new leadership appears to send a powerful signal to lower levels in the Party that they may engage in such behaviour as well – as long as they are loyal to Jiang and his allies. If that message goes forth, it could be deeply destabilizing.

Nevertheless, the congress projects a different message as well – that Jiang is serious about creating a middle class society and making China a modernized nation. If Jiang and his allies can quadruple China's GNP over the next 20 years as they have pledged, China will be a profoundly different society, indeed, one with little need for a Communist Party. This congress also makes clear the extent to which Jiang wants to secure his historic legacy. He only raised his "three represents" in February 2000; as the opposition to Jiang's ideas about admitting entrepreneurs to the Party suggests, two years is not enough time to institutionalize a new approach to politics. Ironically, now that Jiang has given up the post of general secretary, he appears to have enhanced his ability to carry out his programme. What will he do with it? Liu Ji, Jiang's advisor and former vice-president of CASS, declared that the 16th Party Congress was as significant as any Party conference in CCP history, including the Zunyi Conference in 1935, the Third Plenum in 1978, and even the birth of the CCP in 1921. Whether this is simply empty bravado or whether it indicates the existence of a series of reform plans yet to be unveiled is unknown, but surely Liu Ji was closer to the mark when he said that the recent congress will "decide the CCP's rise or decline in the twenty-first century."²¹ The 16th Party Congress may well go down as an historic turning point in the CCP's history – just not the one most expected.

21. Liu Ji, "Shiliuda jiang jue ding dang zai 21 shiji de xingwang" ("The 16th National Party Congress will decide the Party's rise or decline in the 21st century"), *Nanfang zhoubao*, 7 November 2002, p. 1.