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Reading tea leaves: Predicting the 2012-2013 leadership change in PRC

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How do we know the change is coming?

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Not a trivial question – typically, changes of leadership in totalitarian/authoritarian regimes are rarely orderly and usually hard to predict (see North Korea, or recent Gordon G. Chang’s prediction in Foreign Policy)

Even in China, with all the available information the question is how much we *really* know about the contenders

„Predicting changes in China’s top leadership has always been notoriously hazardous to the reputations of those who undertake it.“ Alice Miller



Changing patterns

Changing political landscape (,heroes‘ vs. ,technocrats‘)

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- One man to rule them all (Mao Zedong)
- Circle of power (Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin)
- Balance of factions (Hu Jintao)
- Balance of constituencies (5th generation) → institutionalization

Changing norms

- retirement of leaders at the age of 68

Changing information flows

- ,beijingology‘
- new sources of information (media, scholars, etc.)

New rules not rigid but increase the sense of stability and predictability



Process of leadership change

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Stage 1: introduction of the candidate(s)

Stage 2: judging his/their performance

Stage 3: building coalitions

Stage 4: transfer of power

- president & secretary general & chairman of Central Military Commission
- chairman of NPC, prime minister and lower political positions
- military and bureaucracies



Who after Hu? Forming a new Politburo

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-14 out of 25 members will retire in 2012 (incl. 7 out of 9 members of the Standing Committee)

- **institutional balance :**

- state apparatus x party apparatus x provinces x military
(since 1987 limited to 2 or fewer members)
- hedging against dominance of one institutional section

- **balance of provinces?**

- 4 coastal, 2 inland
- Wang Yang vs. Bo Xilai



Who after Hu? Forming a new Politburo

*Projected 2012 Politburo Standing Committee Line-Up**

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

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

Alice Miller: *The 18th Central Committee Politburo: A Quixotic, Foolhardy, Rashly Speculative, But Nonetheless Ruthlessly Reasoned Projection, China Leadership Monitor, No. 33, Summer 2010*



Cross-Strait relations after 2012

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- depends primarily on the result of Taiwanese elections
- suggestions of different personal preferences of new leaders (Xi Jinping)
- however, must be weighed against the mechanisms of collective leadership (balance of hardliners and moderates) and the course set by predecessors (e.g. Anti-Secession Law 2005)



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Thank you for your attention!

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