

Politics

The big shake-up

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I. Mr Hu's big challenge

As he approaches the completion of his first five-year term as China's top leader, Hu Jintao appears a bundle of contradictions. He poses as a populist leader representing the interests of the people, but advocates a constricted "intra-party" democracy enjoyed only by the party elite and not the general public. He repeatedly states that China will not emulate Western democracy, but invites Chinese scholars to lecture at Politburo study sessions on Western culture, social welfare systems, and political institutions. Such sessions would have been considered inconceivable instances of "spiritual pollution" and "bourgeois liberalisation" only a decade ago. Finally, he launches severe crackdowns on media coverage of sensitive issues, while at the same time pushing both Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and government agencies to make information more accessible to the public.

These contradictions, far from being the signs of a weak and incoherent leader, are elements of a cogent strategy to deal with the complex needs of the nation and the Party. The major challenges are to:

- Accelerate the market reforms required by China's growing integration into the global economy, but at the same time redistribute wealth to poorer areas and establish a social safety net.
- Suppress rampant local corruption, and make the political system more responsive and accountable to the citizenry, but at the same time not undermine CCP rule.
- Broaden the power base of the CCP by recruiting entrepreneurs, but at the same time prevent the party from becoming captive to the narrow interests of a rich elite.

More broadly, Mr Hu's activities can be seen as an effort to create a permanent foundation of legitimacy for the CCP as a governing party. After effectively abandoning communist ideology in the 1980s, the CCP during Jiang Zemin's stewardship (1989-2002) relied for its legitimacy almost entirely on its promise of rapid economic growth. While it delivered on that promise, the party also bred corruption on a gigantic scale, and presided over an increasingly unequal society of economic winners and losers. By the time Mr Hu took power, the "we-will-make-you-rich" social contract was clearly at risk of disintegrating.

Mr Hu's response to this challenge was to propose the ideal of a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*) administered by a more efficient and responsive government bureaucracy, with a disciplined party acting as the standard-setter for government competence, responsiveness and cleanliness. To implement the strategy of the harmonious society, Mr Hu has executed a massive reorganisation of personnel at the provincial and local level, combined with a swathe of reforms designed to reduce corruption and make government more efficient and accountable. Four key government and party reforms are: 1) the "law of avoidance", under which officials are not allowed to hold

Making things legitimate

Table I
Provincial leaders and their affiliations, February 2007

Province/City	Position	Name	Age	Appointed	Education	Major	Political network
Anhui	Party Secretary	Guo Jinlong	60	2004	College	Physics	
	Governor	Wang Jinshan	62	2003	M.A.	Economics	
Beijing	Party Secretary	Liu Qi	65	2002	M.A.	Engineering	Princeling
	Mayor	Wang Qishan	59	2003	College	History	
Chongqing	Party Secretary	Wang Yang	52	2005	M.A.	Management	CCYL
	Mayor	Wang Hongju	62	2003	College	Mathematics	
Fujian	Party Secretary	Lu Zhangong	55	2004	College	Engineering	CCYL
	Governor	Huang Xiaojing	61	2004	College	Engineering	
Gansu	Party Secretary	Lu Hao	60	2006	College	Engineering	
	Governor	Xu Shousheng	54	2006	M.A.	Economics	
Guangdong	Party Secretary	Zhang Dejiang	61	2002	College	Economics	CCYL
	Governor	Huang Huahua	61	2003	M.A.	Party Affairs	
Guangxi	Party Secretary	Liu Qibao	54	2006	M.A.	Economics	CCYL
	Governor	Lu Bing	63	2003	College	History	
Guizhou	Party Secretary	Shi Zhongyuan	61	2005	College	Politics	
	Governor	Lin Shusen	61	2006	College	Engineering	
Hainan	Party Secretary	Wei Liucheng	61	2006	College	Engineering	Oil Industry
	Governor	Luo Baoming	55	2007	M.A.	History	
Hebei	Party Secretary	Bai Keming	64	2002	College	Engineering	Princeling
	Governor	Guo Gengmao	57	2006	M.A.	Politics	
Heilongjiang	Party Secretary	Qian Yunlu	63	2005	College	Economics	CCYL
	Governor	Zhang Zuoyi	62	2003	College	Russian	
Henan	Party Secretary	Xu Guangchun	63	2004	College	Journalism	Shanghai Gang
	Governor	Li Chengyu	61	2003	Junior college	Party Affairs	
Hubei	Party Secretary	Yu Zhengsheng	62	2001	College	Engineering	Princeling
	Governor	Luo Qingquan	62	2003	M.A.	Party Affairs	
Hunan	Party Secretary	Zhang Chunxian	54	2005	M.A.	Management	CCYL
	Governor	Zhou Qiang	47	2006	M.A.	Law	
Inner Mongolia	Party Secretary	Chu Bo	63	2001	College	Engineering	CCYL
	Governor	Yang Jing	54	2004	Junior college	Chinese	
Jiangsu	Party Secretary	Li Yuanchao	57	2002	Ph.D.	Law	CCYL/Princeling
	Governor	Liang Baohua	62	2003	College	Journalism	
Jiangxi	Party Secretary	Meng Jianzhu	60	2001	M.A.	Engineering	Shanghai Gang
	Governor	Wu Xinxiong	58	2006	College	Engineering	
Jilin	Party Secretary	Wang Min	57	2006	Ph.D.	Engineering	CCYL
	Governor	Han Zhangfu	53	2006	College	Economics	
Liaoning	Party Secretary	Li Keqiang	52	2004	Ph.D.	Economics	CCYL
	Governor	Zhang Wenyue	63	2004	College	Geology	
Ningxia	Party Secretary	Chen Jianguo	62	2002	Junior college	Economics	CCYL
	Governor	Ma Qizhi	64	1998	College	History	
Qinghai	Party Secretary	Zhao Leji	50	2003	College	Philosophy	CCYL
	Governor	Song Xiuyan	52	2004	M.A.	Party Affairs	
Shaanxi	Party Secretary	Li Jianguo	61	2002	College	Chinese	CCYL
	Governor	Yuan Chunqing	55	2006	Ph.D.	Economics	
Shandong	Party Secretary	Zhang Gaoli	61	2002	College	Economics	
	Governor	Han Yuqun	64	2003	College		

Province/City	Position	Name	Age	Appointed	Education	Major	Political network
Shanghai	Party Secretary*	Han Zheng	53	2006	M.A.	Economics	Shanghai Gang Shanghai Gang
	Mayor	Han Zheng	53	2003	M.A.	Economics	
Shanxi	Party Secretary	Zhang Baoshun	57	2005	M.A.	Economics	CCYL
	Governor	Yu Youjun	54	2005	Ph.D.	Philosophy	
Sichuan	Party Secretary	Du Qinglin	61	2006	M.A.	Law	CCYL
	Governor	Jiang Jufeng	59	2007	College	Political Eco.	
Tianjin	Party Secretary	Zhang Lichang	68	1997	Junior college	Management	
	Mayor	Dai Xianglong	63	2002	College	Economics	
Tibet	Party Secretary	Zhang Qingli	56	2005	College	Party Affairs	CCYL
	Governor	Qiangba Puncog	60	2003	College	Engineering	
Yunnan	Party Secretary	Bai Enpei	61	2001	College	Engineering	CCYL
	Governor	Qin Guangrong	57	2007	M.A.	Management	
Xinjiang	Party Secretary	Wang Lequan	63	1995	M.A.	Party Affairs	CCYL
	Governor	Simayi Tielwaerdi	63	2003	College	Mathematics	
Zhejiang	Party Secretary	Xi Jinping	54	2002	Ph.D.	Law	Princeling
	Governor	Lü Zushan	61	2003	M.A.	Party Affairs	

Source: Author research *Acting

top leadership positions in the province of their birth; 2) term limits; 3) reduction of the number of the deputy party secretaries in provincial-level leadership; and 4) regulations requiring high-ranking officials to report the income of family members. These reforms are institutionally more significant than the last major government shake-up, the administrative reforms under premier Zhu Rongji in the late 1990s which saw the streamlining of many central government agencies and a dramatic reduction in the number of central-government officials. The current reforms also have the far-from-unintended side effect of consolidating Mr Hu's personal authority.

This ambitious programme raises two questions. First, will it succeed in restoring the legitimacy of the CCP, plagued as it is by corruption, bureaucratic inertia and other symptoms of a decaying Leninist party? Second, what impact will it have on the contentious relationship between the central and local governments, which lies at the heart of many of China's governance problems?

II. Hand on the reins: the new provincial elite

The tightening of Hu Jintao's grip on the provincial leadership tier is clear. In September 2002, as he ascended to the leadership of the CCP, only five of the 62 provincial leaders (governors and party secretaries) came out of Mr Hu's power base, the China Communist Youth League (CCYL; see box, "League of extraordinary gentlemen" on next page). By mid-2005 that number had risen to 13 and it now stands at 20. By contrast only one provincial chief position has been awarded in the past three years to an official with ties to Shanghai and the Jiang Zemin coalition (see Table 1).*

As a group, these provincial chiefs constitute a new leadership elite aligned with Hu Jintao's "populist" developmental strategy, in contrast to the "elitist" strategy pursued by the Jiang Zemin leadership of the 1990s. These provincial chiefs with CCYL back-

*Xu Guangchun, a former Shanghai bureau director for Xinhua News Agency and Jiang protégé, was appointed Henan Party secretary in 2004. Han Zheng, mayor of Shanghai and a member of the "Shanghai gang", was also appointed the city's acting party secretary last fall after the arrest of city party secretary Chen Liangyu.

Provincial penetration

League of extraordinary gentlemen

The China Communist Youth League (CCYL) is a membership organisation for people aged 14-28. Its main function is to identify and develop new Communist Party leaders. At the end of 2005, the CCYL had 72m members and 191,000 full-time cadres (many of whom are older than the age limit for ordinary members). The CCYL's mission statement calls the organisation the "reserve army" for the Party. In addition to providing ideological training, the league runs a variety of social service programmes and operates several prominent media outlets, notably the *China Youth Daily* newspaper.

Many current provincial leaders were Hu Jintao's junior colleagues at the national and provincial leadership of the CCYL in the early 1980s when Mr Hu served on the CCYL Secretariat. Although it is difficult to trace each leader's precise associations with Mr Hu, one can reasonably assume that they have known one another, through CCYL work, for over two decades. Mr Hu's closest friends in the CCYL network are believed to be Li Keqiang (Liaoning party secretary), Li Yuanchao (Jiangsu party secretary), Wang Yang (Chongqing party secretary), Zhang Baoshun (Shanxi party secretary), and Liu Qibao (Guangxi party secretary).

grounds have the following characteristics:

Young and educated

- They are relatively young, with a median age of just over 56, compared to 61 for non-CCYL provincial leaders. Zhou Qiang, the new governor of Hunan, is only 47.

Thirteen of the 20 have postgraduate degrees and three hold doctorates.

- Only one has an engineering background, a sharp contrast to engineering bias of the older leaders.
- Most are not mainly known for their economic management credentials; instead they have strong backgrounds in sociopolitical issues, or in agriculture and rural development.
- Most had previous provincial-level leadership experience, mainly in interior or northeastern provinces.
- Several have experience in legal affairs and party discipline agencies; the State Council secretariat, or major news organisations such as *People's Daily*, *Xinhua News Agency* and *Guangming Daily*.
- Almost none are "princelings" – scions of high-ranking official families.*

Table 2
Township official reshuffling in Hunan province, spring 2006

	Before	After	Change
Number of deputy Party secretaries	7,993	2,362	-70%
Number of Party committee members	17,473	12,945	-26%
Share of committee members with junior college education	77.8%	86.9%	9.1%
Share of female members	7.7%	10.0%	2.3%

Source: Author research

*The major exception is Jiangsu Party Secretary Li Yuanchao, whose father Li Gancheng served as Party secretary of Changzhou city in the early 1950s and vice mayor of Shanghai before the Cultural Revolution.

Retiring the dinosaurs

Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, China was a gerontocracy, run from behind the scenes by a club of octogenarians (led by Deng Xiaoping) known as the “Eight Immortals”. Since then the Party has tried to push down the average age of leaders at many levels, and age limits are gradually being formalised. In the 16th Party Congress, in 2002, the Party Organisation Department followed three age-related guidelines in selecting candidates for the Central Committee: 1) with few exceptions, full and alternate members on the old Central Committee nominated for re-election should be less than 64 years old; 2) full ministers and provincial chiefs nominated for new memberships should be less than 62; and 3) the nominated vice ministers and deputy province chiefs should be less than 57.

More recently, the Organisation Department set age limits for key provincial posts, as follows:

Provincial party secretary/governor – reappointment	65
Province party secretary/governor – new appointment	63
Deputy party secretary - reappointment	63
Deputy party secretary – new appointment	61
Standing committee members – reappointment	60
Standing committee members – new appointment	58

The gradual shifting of top provincial leadership positions has been complemented by a far more sweeping reshuffle of provincial, municipality, county and township governments and Party committees, which began in June 2006 and will end in June this year. About 170,000 officials are undergoing a process of review, reappointment, and reelection. Many local leaders will retire or step down to make way for newcomers.

The Chinese authorities consider this reshuffle one of the three largest turnovers of local elites since China began its economic reform in 1978. The first occurred in the mid-1980s when Deng Xiaoping promoted a generation of young, well-educated technocrats to replace veteran communist ideologues. The second took place in the mid-1990s when Jiang Zemin called for the promotion of entrepreneurial leaders who could accelerate economic growth. This third elite turnover is intended to steer China towards a more sustainable economic development path, and to make government more efficient and accountable. Among other things, the reshuffle aims to significantly reduce the number and improve the qualifications of local party officials (see Table 2).

Both at the provincial chief station and at lower levels, promotion priority is now given to officials with a background in the CCYL or other party organisational or propaganda work, and for higher posts experience in backward areas counts for more than experience in the rich coast. In principle, officials with this sort of background are less susceptible to corruption than those who have spent most of their time directly concerned with economic affairs. The rise of the CCYL leadership group may help restrain the enormous power of business interests, many of which cluster around state-owned enterprise groups in construction, energy, telecommunication, transportation, and banking. Constraining business power is one of Mr Hu’s explicit goals: in a May 2006 Politburo study session, he criticised these business interest groups for undermining “social fairness”.

Youth is another key criterion: on average, new local leaders with a CCYL background

Shuffling in a new elite

are five to ten years younger than other leaders at the same level. This gives them a tremendous leg up for future advancement in a personnel system that places a large and increasing emphasis on age limits for officials (see box, “Retiring the dinosaurs”). A final distinguishing feature of the new leadership group is that, despite the absence of democracy, public evaluation now plays a significantly larger role in the selection of local leaders, with “popularity indices” often used to evaluate candidates.

There are, however, downsides to this new leadership elite. Its lack of economic experience could cause a deterioration in economic management. None of the 20 provincial chiefs with CCYL backgrounds have had previous leadership experience in foreign trade or investment, and only one leader (new Jilin Governor Han Changfu) has experience in finance. Similarly, among the eight ministers on the State Council and directors of the CCP central departments with CCYL backgrounds, none has leadership experience in foreign trade, investment or finance. Moreover, the preference given to officials who have devoted their careers to party organisational and propaganda work is likely to further drive many talented young people away from government service and into careers in business – a trend that is already well under way. Unless the government can recruit some of the nation’s “best and brightest”, especially those with expertise in information technology, metropolitan administration, foreign trade, and finance, China will have a difficult time overcoming its domestic socioeconomic challenges and integrating into the global economy.

III. Making the Party work better

The elevation of a new leadership elite is occurring in the context of sweeping reforms designed to make the Party and government mechanisms work better. Since Mr Hu took office in late 2002, the CCP Central Committee has issued half a dozen important documents formalising previously incoherent or *ad hoc* procedures for the nomination, selection, inspection, and resignation of local Party and government leaders. This is a larger body of regulations on elite recruitment than in any previous period of CCP history.

Job descriptions

For example, the *Regulations of the Selection of the Party and Governmental Officials* (February 2003) specify that a candidate for a leadership post at the county level or above must have at least a bachelor’s degree, a minimum of three months of training in a Party school or other executive training program, and five years of work experience. This document also mandates a limit of two five-year terms for all positions. Age limits have been set for positions at all levels of government, and in principle senior officials are not supposed to work in the localities where they were born. (The latter rule, which descends from Imperial China’s “law of avoidance”, is designed to prevent the development of entrenched and corrupt local elites). A Central Committee resolution from 2004 stipulates that members of local Party standing committees must undergo the following selection process: 1) public evaluation in the locality; 2) an opinion survey; 3) performance analysis; 4) interview of the candidate by a selection and inspection team sent by the CCP Central Committee or by a higher level Party committee; and 5) a comprehensive assessment by the organisation department of the higher level party committee that will make the recommendation.

These regulations sound impressive but their implementation is mixed. The author’s research suggests that term limits and age limits are enforced 90-95 percent of the time. Inspections of local officials by the CCP’s Central Discipline Inspection Com-

Table 3
Provincial top leaders working in their birth province, 2006

	Number	Share of total, %
Party secretary	2	6
Governor	14	45
Secretary of discipline commission	11	35

Source: Author research

Table 4
Top-tier provincial leaders by province of origin, 2006

	Number	% of total
Born in province	280	46%
Born outside province	315	51%
Unknown	21	3%
Promoted from same province	523	85%
Brought from outside (after 2002)	93	15%

"Top-tier provincial leaders" includes all standing-committee members of the provincial party committees, and all governors and vice governors.

Source: Author research

mission (CDIC) and Organisation Department have become more frequent and systematic, but this sort of top-down management is inherently limited in its ability to ferret out malfeasance. In at least one key area Party management reforms have run aground. The "law of avoidance" is enforced almost universally at the level of the provincial party secretary, but compliance drops off substantially at lower levels (Tables 3 and 4). In other words, there is an increasing tendency for provincial and local governments to be monopolised by local elites.*

Paradoxically, "liberal" Party reforms accentuate this process. Most key local personnel appointments, for instance, are now supposed to be voted on by the local party committee in a secret ballot. This makes it almost impossible for outside candidates to be selected, since majority blocs of local insiders can always promote their own. Similarly, to the extent that local public evaluation increases in importance, well-known local leaders will always have the edge over outsiders. Preventing local governments from being captured by local elites that are unresponsive either to their constituents or to central government mandates is one of the most crucial tasks now facing the Hu administration.

IV. Central-local dynamics: think national, blame local

The central Party and government have employed three key tactics in their campaign to rein in unaccountable local governments: selecting non-native provincial party secretaries, imposing term limits on all offices, and perhaps most important, a technique that can be called "think national, blame local".

The most concrete instance of this technique is the release, beginning a few years ago, of statistics on "mass incidents" of social unrest. These attracted widespread international notice when the central government admitted that the number of such incidents rose from 58,000 in 2003 to 74,000 in 2004 and 87,000 in 2005. Official

*The Mao-era party was actually quite rigorous about ensuring that Party officials rotated frequently and served rarely or not at all in their home jurisdictions. A study of Wuhan from 1949-65 found that 91 percent of officials were outsiders.

Internal democracy

Masters of cadre studies

Soon after Hu Jintao took over as general secretary of the Communist Party, the Party's Organisation Department announced that between 2003 and 2008, all officials at the county and bureau level or above must have at least three months of training. About 500 provincial/ministerial leaders, 8,800 prefecture/division leaders, and 100,000 county/bureau officials must participate. This mid-career training serves multiple purposes: ideological indoctrination, political networking, disciplinary reinforcement, and professional development.

The Central Party School (CPS) in Beijing has played the most important role in the mid-career training of the Party elite. With a faculty of 600, including 168 professors and 159 associate professors, the school has 1,600 students each semester and grants about 10 PhDs and 40 masters degrees each year. Party schools in each province train lower-level officials. During Mr Hu's term the Central Committee has also established three national executive leadership academies (*guojia ganbu xueyuan*) in Shanghai, Jiangxi and Shaanxi. Both the Central Party School and these three new academies frequently invite foreign speakers and host international conferences on domestic and global issues.

Global studies

The Organisation Department also sends officials abroad for training. Between 1998 and 2005, about 300 Chinese officials earned masters degrees at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. Most were sent by provincial party committees; the central Organisation Department itself annually selects 10 promising mayors to participate in the programme. The Organisation Department also has a five-year deal with Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, through 2008, under which 300 senior Chinese leaders will attend a semester-long training course. In 2006 the department signed another agreement with Beijing University, Columbia University, the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) and the London School of Economics, for an "advanced training program of global public policy". This aims to broaden the global perspective of prefecture- and bureau-level Chinese officials and to strengthen their managerial skills. The Organisation Department estimates that by 2008, at least one or two leaders in 80 percent of the county or bureau-level agencies in the country will have had some foreign training.

media sources also reported that the number of protest participants nationwide rose from 740,000 in 1994 to 3.1m in 2003. But many outside analysts failed to grasp the significance of the fact that these statistics were released at all – astonishing in itself, since just a few years earlier such numbers would have been deemed state secrets.

Mr Hu's purpose in publicising these numbers was two-fold. First of all, he demonstrated to both the Chinese public and the political establishment the urgency of a major policy shift, away from the growth-at-all-costs paradigm of the 1990s. Second, he reinforced the notion that society's major ills exist at the local, not the national level. This enables him to attack a range of sensitive social problems – including corruption in the Party – without undermining the Party's overall legitimacy. If things go wrong, local leaders will be blamed.

This blame game justifies the imposition of a raft of non-economic mandates on local governments. These include the recently unveiled "Green GDP" (a system of accountability for environmental protection), energy efficiency targets, and targets for work-related accidents, road deaths, and coal-mine related deaths. The central government has also tried hard to push downwards the responsibility for dealing with individual cases of wrongdoing. New regulations governing citizen petitions for redress, adopted

Table 5

Nine to watch: top candidates for the new Politburo

	Position	Age	Network
Han Zheng	Shanghai mayor & acting secretary	53	Shanghai gang
Li Keqiang	Liaoning party secretary	52	CCYL
Li Yuanchao	Jiangsu party secretary	57	CCYL
Liu Qibao	Guangxi party secretary	54	CCYL
Wang Yang	Chongqing party secretary	52	CCYL
Xi Jinping	Zhejiang party secretary	54	Princeling
Yuan Chunqing	Shaanxi governor	55	CCYL
Zhang Baoshun	Shanxi party secretary	57	CCYL
Zhao Leji	Qinghai party secretary	50	Unknown

Source: Author research

by the State Council in 2005, emphasise “territorial jurisdiction” and the “responsibility of the departments in charge”. The national leadership encourages citizens to go through a step-by-step appeals process rather than heading straight to Beijing. In the words of an official of the State Letters and Visits Bureau, these regulations aim to make “local authorities more accountable”.

All this is well and good, but there are some practical problems. Most significantly, a number of Mr Hu’s administrative reforms work at cross-purposes. On the one hand, the provincial Party secretary is now seen as the point person for the central authorities: his source of power comes from the centre, not local elites, and he is also accountable to the centre for solving social as well as economic problems. On the other, Mr Hu has imposed a new rule that all major provincial decisions may not be taken by the Party secretary alone, but must be subject to a vote by all members of the provincial Party committee. As noted above, these Party committees are increasingly dominated by local insider groups. Both measures aim at increasing accountability in government: the first by forcing the Party secretary to take responsibility for what goes on during his watch, the second by reducing the power of individual bosses. But in practice, the two principles are contradictory.

*Accountable upwards,
answerable downwards*

V. Setting the course for China’s future

The reorganisation of local-level cadres is a prelude to the reshuffling of the top-level national leadership that will occur at the 17th National Congress of the CCP this autumn, which will see the formation of a new Politburo and its Standing Committee. An estimated 60 percent of all high-ranking leaders are due to retire, including about half of the members of the Secretariat, Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee. The position of the top leadership in China’s provincial level administrations has often been a stepping-stone to these supreme political offices. Several of Hu Jintao’s CCYL protégés, now in provincial leadership, are well placed to leap into senior national leadership positions (see Table 5).

These new provincial chiefs’ rapid rise to power and their collective characteristics echo Hu Jintao’s new mandate, which emphasises social harmony and social justice over GDP growth and market competition. They are interested in achieving a more regionally-balanced and environmentally-friendly development strategy. In a broader perspective, Hu Jintao aims to effectively control the provincial and local governments through both government reform measures and his own political network.

No one knows whether Hu and his successors can handle the serious problems

plaguing the CCP – rampant official corruption, ideological incoherence, bureaucratic inertia, and perhaps most importantly, economic localism. However, the fact that the Chinese leaders are fully aware of these challenges and are interested in dealing with them seriously may help them forestall a collapse of the one-party regime. Hu's success or failure in elevating his protégés at the next Party Congress, and subsequently at pushing through balanced-growth policies, will be crucial indicators of China's political and economic trajectory over the next decade.