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In a Fortnight: Manila's Pivot Toward Beijing

In mid-October, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte visited China. His visit was marked by a recalibration in Philippine policy toward China and the announcement of economic and military "separation" from the United States.

The reversal in relations is striking. Under the previous Aquino administration, the Philippines had acted as the primary and most direct challenger to Chinese claims in the South China Sea, bringing a case against the PRC in the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). After the PCA ruled against Chinese territorial claims, Chinese officials and scholars were incensed. One article by China International Studies Institute scholar Jia Xiudong (贾秀东) advised the Philippines to "give up its fantasy as soon as possible…China will not sit idly by" (CIIS.org, July 22). President Aquino expanded military cooperation with the United States, and he began an ambitious modernization plan for the Philippine Armed Forces (PAF). Other nations in ASEAN, also feeling threatened by the extent of Chinese claims, began to take harder stances. Indonesia, long irritated by Chinese fishing boats' activity in the Natuna Shoals, blew up over a hundred captured Chinese fishing vessels and began rearming nearby islands (*China Brief*, March 25).

Duterte's election in May put the Philippines on an entirely different course. Bombastic rhetoric aside, President Duterte's recalibration toward China has its roots in the Philippines economic situation. An unabashedly domestically focused president, Duterte has taken up crime and economics as his main issues. Though his calls for killing drug dealers has largely alienated his administration, China expressed support for the Philippines efforts to deal with its drugs problem, something with which China itself is also

struggling (See *China Brief*, March 24). An examination of economic fundamentals and China and the U.S.'s respective foreign policy provides useful context for understanding Duterte's shift.

The Philippines trails its neighbors in terms of a number of important economic indicators and moving Filipinos out of poverty will require additional foreign investment and a better business climate. Duterte has announced a new development plan for the Philippines entitled "AMBISYON NATIN 2040" whose plans for "a prosperous, predominantly middle-class society where no one is poor" by 2040 at least rhyme with China's plans to build a "moderately prosperous society" (小康社会) (neda.gov.ph, October 14; Seeking Truth, April 30, 2015). Duterte's trip to Beijing yielded promises of $24 billion worth of loans and infrastructure projects (ABS-CBN, October 21). China's lifting of restrictions on Philippine exports could further raise this number.

Understanding the Shift: Economic Quick Facts

Metric	China	Philippines	Malaysia
GDP (PPP)	$20 trillion	$793 billion	$800 billion
GDP /capita (PPP) 2015, USD	$14,340	$7,282	$26,211
Population (2016 est.)	1.37 billion	102 million	30.9 million
Population Density (km²)	121	336	92
Area (km²)	9,596,960	300,000 (roughly the size of Arizona)	330,803
FDI as a percent of GDP (2015)	2	2	3.7

Sources: IMF, CIA World Factbook, World Bank

China is already the Philippines largest trade partner. In 2014, the Philippines exported $19 billion dollars-worth of computers and commodities to China, accounting for 24 percent of its total exports. In 2015 bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to $45.6 billion (MOFCOM, February 5). By contrast, total U.S.-Philippines trade was $18 billion for that year (Census.gov, [accessed November 9]). The combination of existing economic influence, Duterte's domestic focus and Beijing's eagerness to both expand foreign markets and achieve policy goals created the environment for the Philippines to realign itself.

Strategically both the Philippines and China have much at stake. The Philippines' turn inward appears to be mirrored in Duterte's priorities for the Philippines Armed Forces. On October 10, Duterte issued an executive order reorganizing the cabinet structure and increasing the PAF's role domestically by making the Secretary of National Defense the Chair of the "Security, Justice and Peace Cluster" (gov.ph, October 14). Such a focus on improving domestic stability rather than confronting China might have to do with Duterte's conception of the balance between the two states. Even with an influx of jet aircraft and new ships from Korea, Japan and the United States in recent years, the Philippine Armed Forces are inadequately equipped to even consistently patrol the disputed areas. Former Department of Foreign Affairs Albert del Rosario sought "clarification" of whether the U.S. considered its Mutual Defense Treaty extended to protecting these areas—without result. For Duterte's administration, making a deal that would allow access to Scarborough Shoal and other parts of the South China Sea without a confrontation with China is not an empty gesture for Filipinos. More than 1 million Filipinos fish for a living and these areas are the site of intense competition (FAO.org, Accessed November 9). For its part, after Duterte's trip China has made it clear that granting access to the area in no way diminishes its sovereignty over the area and "the situation has not changed" (FMPRC, October 31).

Strategically, any lever to strain U.S.-Philippine relations works to China's advantage. Historically the Philippines have been a stepping-stone for projecting U.S. air power on to the Asian mainland—B-17s were deployed to Clark Air Field in the months before Pearl Harbor as a hedge against a restive Japan. **[1]** U.S. P-8 surveillance aircraft flying out of the same base kept close tabs on China's island-building campaign. Until its closure in 1991, Subic Naval Base was the largest U.S. naval facility in the world, and has since continued to host U.S. vessels. Just as U.S. presence on Okinawa, elsewhere in Japan and to a lesser extent, Guam, makes Chinese leaders uncomfortable, the ease of access and planned expansion of U.S. basing in the Philippines poses a direct threat to Beijing.

Malaysia appears to be making a similar move. In 2015, Xi Jinping met Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperating (APEC) meeting, emphasizing that China considers the bilateral relationship with Malaysia "a priority" (Xinhua, November 17, 2015). Prime Minister Najib Razak visited Beijing shortly after Duterte and landed a number of economic and military agreements (SCMP, October 31). Malaysia's total trade in 2015 with China was $59 Billion, $46 Billion with the United States (MOFCOM, April 1; Census.gov, [accessed November 9]). Malaysia also hosts regular P-8 flights, and it frequently participates in joint U.S. military exercises. If Beijing can use economic incentives to decrease U.S. access to these areas, it will place real strategic costs on U.S. forces operating in the Pacific.

China's use of economic carrots continues to be effective from the Baltic to the South China Sea. With continuing economic contraction at home, and bad bets abroad, such as in Venezuela, the sustainability of economic incentives is far from certain. However, Xi's strategy in buying China diplomatic breathing room has paid off. Though the outgoing U.S. administration made some moves to gain influence with China's traditional supporters in ASEAN, such as Laos, it is clear that China's large overall economic engagement in the region—and targeted diplomatic overtures—have won this round for influence in Southeast Asia.

Notes:

1. Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Chapter 3, Available here http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/5-2/5-2_3.htm
2. Remarks by Air Force Combatant Commander General Herbert Carlisle, CSIS, Military Strategy Forum: General Herbert "Hawk" Carlisle on Air Combat Command: Today's Conflicts and Tomorrow's Threats

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Xi Jinping Uses New "Leadership Core" Status to Boost His Faction

By Willy Lam

The just-ended Sixth Plenum of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee elevated President Xi Jinping to the status of "core of the leadership." However, few concrete measures to fight corruption, were announced at the four-day conclave. This is despite the fact that the leitmotif of the Sixth Plenum was to revise regulations on "norms of political life" as well as "intra-Party supervision." Even though the official media has noted that fighting graft will be facilitated by a top leader with overriding authority, tough measures obliging senior cadres to disclose their assets and those of their close kin failed to be passed by the 370-member Central Committee. And while the plenum communiqué stressed "intra-Party democracy," Xi's continuing consolidation of power calls into question institutional reforms that were made by late patriarch Deng Xiaoping.

The Sixth Plenum communiqué released on October 27 emphasized that all CCP members must "closely unite around the CCP Central Committee with Xi Jinping as the core" (Xinhua, October 28; China Daily, October 27). Xi is not the only leader to have attained "core" status. Jiang Zemin, who was CCP general secretary from 1989 to 2002, was referred to as the "core of the third-generation leadership." However, when fourth-generation leaders Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao came to power, Jiang's "core" status faded into irrelevance. However, Xi is simply "core of the leadership"—there is no qualification that he is "core of the fifth-generation leadership." His "core" status therefore transcends term limits, tenure or retirement age (BBC Chinese, October 28; Radio Free Asia, October 28). By securing the "leadership core" designation Xi has confirmed widespread speculation he may rule for at least three terms, that is, until the 21st Party Congress in 2027 (See *China Brief*, March 7).

Xi and his close associates, including Li Zhanshu (栗战书), Director of the CCP General Office have been scheming for the investiture of the "core" title since 2014. In a September 2014 article on the need for cadres to profess "absolute loyalty" to the top leadership, Li wrote that "any leadership collective must have a core; a leadership without a core [figure] is untenable" (People's Daily Online, September 29, 2014). Last January, a dozen-odd regional officials became the first to hail Xi as "the core of the CCP leadership" (Ming Pao [Hong Kong], February 3; Phoenix TV, January 31). But this apparently elicited opposition from politicians not associated with the inchoate Xi Jinping faction. During the meeting of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in March, none of the dozens of top cadres who gathered in the capital used this elevated designation for Xi. However, Li, who has a very high chance of being promoted to the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) next year, revived the "core" issue in a series of speeches last August (Radio French International Chinese Service, August 12; Sing Tao Daily News [Hong Kong], August 11).

Xi already has personal control over areas ranging from foreign and military policies to Party affairs and economy and finance. This is due to his leadership of up to ten top-level decision-making bodies directly under the PBSC, including the Central Military Commission, the Central National Security Commission, the Central Leading Group on Finance and Economics and the Central Leading Group on Comprehensively Deepening Reform. The intensity of allegiance that cadres must profess to the "core" is astounding. "In upholding Party leadership, we must first of all insist upon the concentrated and united leadership of the *dangzhongyang* [党中央, Party central authorities]," the Sixth Plenum communiqué said. It urged all Party members to "self-consciously remain in a high degree of unison in thought and action with the *dangzhongyang*." That "core" Xi is the personification of the *dangzhongyang* is clear: the document emphasized that "for a country and a political party, the leadership core is of utmost importance."

What will Xi use his new powers for? As Beijing-based historian Zhang Lifan pointed out, "Xi has won a tough battle by finally acquiring the 'core' status." Zhang added that this designation of unchallenged supremacy would enable the supreme leader to ensure that more members of his Xi Jinping Faction—which is made up principally of associates and underlings of Xi's when he worked in Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces as well as Shanghai—to be promoted to the Central Committee and the Politburo at the 19th Party Congress in late 2017 (Apple Daily [Hong Kong], October 27; Radio Free Asia, October 24). In the past six months or so, a dozen-odd Xi protégés from Zhejiang Province alone have been elevated to posts that will entitle them to membership in the Central Committee or even the Politburo. Prominent among them are the just-appointed Mayor of Beijing Cai Qi (蔡奇, a former executive vice-governor of Zhejiang); Party Secretary of Jiangsu Province Li Qiang (李强, former Zhejiang governor); Acting Governor of Shanxi Province Lou Yangsheng (楼阳生, former head of the United Front Department of the Zhejiang Party Committee), Governor of Shaanxi Province Hu Heping (胡和平, former Head of the Organization Department of the Zhejiang Party Committee) and the Governor of Jiangxi Province Liu Qi (刘奇, former Party boss of the Zhejiang city of Ningbo) (Ming Pao, October 30; South China Morning Post, October 30; Apple Daily, October 24).

At the same time, "core" Xi is expected to move more aggressively against so-called conspiratorial groups and cliques in the Party which refuse to profess allegiance to the paramount leader. In a much noted speech earlier this year to the Central Commission on Discipline Inspection, the nation's highest-level graft-buster, Xi warned against "careerists and conspirators" wreaking havoc on Party discipline and threatening Party unity. (Xinhua, May 3; People's Daily, January 14). The communiqué warned against *liangmianren* (两面人, "two faced people") who were plotting to advance their careers through "exchanging flattery and favors." At a press conference one day after the Sixth Plenum, Deputy Director of the CCP Organization Department Qi Yu struck the same note about "a small minority of senior cadres with overweening ambitions and lust for power." These bad apples were accused for "forming cliques and factions" so as "to boost their selfish interests and to seek high positions." "They have severely

damaged Party unity and [the principle of a] centralized and united leadership," Qi said (People's Daily, August 28; Wen Wei Po [Hong Kong], August 28). While the mainland media has never mentioned Xi's turf warfare against two rival CCP cliques—the Shanghai Faction led by former President Jiang and the Communist Youth League Faction (CYLF) headed by former President Hu Jintao—it seems clear that the warnings against establishing anti-Xi groupings are also made with these two power blocs in mind (See *China Brief*, May 11).

In an apparent effort to pacify cadres and Party members who have reservations about Xi becoming the equivalent of the "Great Helmsman," the plenum communiqué indicated that the CCP had not departed from the idea of a "collective leadership." New regulations on Party life and Party discipline—which will be released later this month—would be geared toward fostering "intra-Party democracy." "Democracy within the Party is the life of the Party," the document said, adding that Party members should have the right to express their views. "No Party organs or individuals can infringe upon the democratic rights of Party members," it said.

The "collective leadership" advocated by Xi, however, is a far cry from that championed by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s. In order to prevent the return of Mao-style dictatorship, Deng indicated that China should be run by a leadership collective roughly equivalent to the PBSC. Within such a framework, the general secretary can be described as a first among equals. And should there be seminal disagreements among PBSC members over policy, votes should be cast, in which case the weight of the general secretary's vote is equal to that of his colleagues. Moreover, each PBSC member has a distinct portfolio. And unless there is a crisis, the general secretary is not supposed to meddle with how his PBSC colleagues handle their portfolios. Particularly after acquiring the "core" status, however, Xi towers above other PBSC members, who must periodically seek his guidance and approval (Liberty Times [Taipei] October 29; Voice of America Chinese, May 16; New York Times Chinese Edition, June 2, 2015).

The best example of Xi riding herd over his PBSC colleagues is the much-diminished "economic tsar" role of the premier of the State Council Li Keqiang, who is ranked No. 2 in the CCP's pecking order. From the days of Deng to the 18th Party Congress, the premier usually heads the Central Leading Group on Finance and Economics—and he has the ultimate say over financial, economic and related policies. Soon after he took over power in late 2012, however, Xi arrogated to himself the leadership of the CLGFE. Premier Li, a CYLF stalwart who is former President Hu's confidant, has to seek Xi's approval for major financial and economic decisions (Radio Free Asia, June 1; Voice of America Chinese Service, May 11). In recent months, there is evidence that Xi is trying to marginalize the third-ranked PBSC member, National People's Congress chairman Zhang Dejiang. Zhang, who is close to the Shanghai Faction, is in charge of the legislature as well as policy over Hong Kong. In the past month or so, *Sing Pao*, a pro-China paper in Hong Kong which is close to Xi camp has lambasted Zhang's "devastating failures" in Hong Kong policies (Hong Kong Economic Journal, November 1; Hong Kong Free Press, October 3).

What about new and thorough-going measures to promote clean governance and to eradicate corruption? The Sixth Plenum communiqué stressed the importance of "the Party exercising control over itself and Party [leaders] running with Party with severity." Leaders in particular would be subjected to tight scrutiny as "all Party members are equal before Party discipline and there is no special privilege [for top officials] regarding Party discipline." While the full text of the revised regulations on "intra-Party discipline" has not yet been released, it is clear that earlier proposals about an "assets-disclosure sunshine regulation" were voted down by the Central Committee. This regulation would have obliged Central Committee members and other senior cadres to disclose their assets as well as those of their spouses and children. Moreover, top officials must tell the public whether their close kin have foreign passports or residence permits (Wen Wei Po, October 24; Hong Kong Economic Journal, October 13). Instead, the plenum document merely emphasized that senior cadres must "set themselves up as an example" of clean governance and that they must pay close attention to the business activities of their family members (Xinhua, October 29).

In the run-up to the Plenum, senior cadres reiterated that the Party itself could take care of problems including graft and other economic crimes through "self-purification, self-improvement, self-renewal and raising [the Party's] own competence." While CCDI chief Wang Qishan referred to the difficulty of "a patient performing surgery on himself," the Party leadership has rejected suggestions about giving powers to forces outside the Party—including the media—to help monitor corruption (Ming Pao, October 23). This is partly due to President Xi's insistence that cadres and Party members must have "self-confidence" in the path, theories, institutions and culture of the Party. The Communiqué has reinforced the Xi administration's belief in the Party's ability to cure itself by urging members to pay more attention to "culture, morality, honesty and the sense of honor and shame."

Analysts familiar with Beijing's decades-old anti-corruption crusade, however, have cast doubt on the efficacy of "self-improvement" measures such as cultivating high moral standards. Wang Yukai (汪玉凯), a professor at the National Academy of Administration and a frequent commentator on the issue of clean governance, said that only "tough, undiluted institutional arrangements" would have a big social impact. Apart from regulation on the disclosure of the assets and foreign nationalities of senior cadres and their close kin, Wang noted that special privileges accorded top-level national and local officials such as housing and other perks "should be standardized and rendered public" (Ta Kung Pao [Hong Kong], October 24). It is beyond doubt that Xi has been more successful in tackling graft than his predecessors. His no-holds-barred power grab—and the favoritism and cliquishness exposed by the fast-track promotion of Xi protégés to top positions—could create the kind of special privileges that are deemed the hotbed of corruption.

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Downsizing the PLA, Part 2: The Potential for Social Instability

By John Chen

Note that this is Part 2 of a two-part series on the PLA's planned personnel cuts. Part 1 can be found here.

Part 1 of this series examined the mechanisms for downsizing the PLA by 300,000 personnel, including two-year enlistees, noncommissioned officers (NCOs), and officers before they meet their mandatory retirement age. The article described what benefits each officer and enlisted member is entitled to based on their grade and years of service. Part 2 assesses the PLA's ability to carry out the force reduction from 2.3 to 2.0 million (about 11 percent of total PLA strength) by the end of 2017. Can national level or local governments and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) find jobs for all the downsized personnel entitled to an equivalent civilian government or SOE position? Has the central government allocated enough resources to pay legally mandated benefits and pensions? Most importantly, will sending a large percentage of downsized personnel back to their home provinces have a negative impact on social stability?

Current conditions in China exacerbate the challenges of executing the force reduction. After decades of rapid growth, China's economy is slowing to a "new normal" of 6–7 percent growth (The World Bank, August 11). The government is embarking on "structural reforms" to reduce overcapacity in the steel and coal sectors, potentially shedding millions of jobs, many in the economically depressed Northeastern rust belt (Xinhua, July 11). These circumstances will complicate efforts to implement the current and any future PLA force reductions, and the contours of the actual downsizing could aggravate tensions between local governments and the PLA. However, the troop reduction is unlikely to generate a "perfect storm" of social instability that could immediately threaten Communist Party rule.

Does China Have Enough Resettlement Capacity?

According to the 2001 Provisional Measures for Resettling Transferred Officers [军队转业干部安置暂行办法] and 2011 revisions to the Enlisted Personnel Resettlement Regulations [退役士兵安置条例], discharged NCOs with more than 12 years of service, division-leader grade officers with less than 30 years of service, and battalion-leader grade officers or lower with less than 20 years of service are entitled to civilian jobs with equivalent pay and benefits. **[1]** The process of finding jobs for personnel that leave the PLA before their mandatory retirement age based on their grade is broadly referred to as resettlement [安置]. Can local governments and SOEs find positions for all these personnel? **[2]** Officer resettlement statistics from past years suggest that officer resettlement this year will be difficult but not unprecedented. A 2013 *Caixin* article noted that from 2008 to 2012, the number of resettled officers that transferred to civilian positions in all of China numbered anywhere from 39,000–56,000 during years when the PLA was not carrying out announced downsizing, and a *Beijing Daily* article reported that 77.5 percent of the 40,000 officers resettling in 2014 chose to transfer to civilian positions (Caixin, April 27, 2013; *Beijing Daily*, September 4, 2015). With officers making up at least half of the 300,000-man reduction, at least 150,000 officers will leave the PLA in the 24-month period from January 2016 to December 2017 (China Youth Daily, June 13). Assuming that percentage holds and none of the 150,000 downsized officers choose full retirement, local governments could expect 116,350 downsized officers to transfer to civilian government or SOE jobs, or about 58,125 officers per year. **[3]** These figures are roughly consistent with a recent government announcement that the 58,000 PLA and People's Armed Police (PAP) officers would be resettled in 2016 (*PLA Daily*, September 1). These are daunting figures for local governments, but not necessarily unworkable ones.

The above calculations do not fully capture the scale and logistical difficulty of downsizing and resettlement. The statistics above represent the reduction in billets required for the PLA to reach its desired end strength of 2 million. The PLA will likely reduce by *more* than 300,000 personnel to account for new enlisted and officer intake, further straining the PLA bureaucracy charged with reviewing civilian transfer applications and coordinating resettlement. The resettlement burden could increase substantially should the PLA reduce more than the stated 150,000 officers. The figures above do not account for the approximately 150,000 downsized enlisted personnel; resettlement statistics for eligible senior NCOs are scarce, and without more detailed information, the scale of the NCO resettlement problem remains extremely difficult to estimate.

On the whole, finding civilian government and SOE jobs for the numbers of downsized officers and senior NCOs will present a significant but likely manageable challenge for Chinese authorities. This will prove more difficult in localities already undergoing economic distress, and resettling NCOs could amplify these difficulties, although the lack of resettlement statistics for NCOs makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the severity of the problem. The information available on officer resettlement shows that the amount of officers that must be given civilian government jobs does not appear to be dramatically higher than the historical figures from recent years, suggesting that resettlement capacity will be strained but not overwhelmed over the course of the downsizing.

What Might Troop Reduction Cost?

The same laws that govern PLA personnel discharge options also specify one-time separation allowances and on-going full or partial pensions for retirees, officers and NCOs who undertake to find their own jobs outside the military, and personnel disabled as a result of their service. The Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for providing local governments the resources to make these payments. During the March 2016 National People's Congress, the government pledged to spend nearly 40 billion RMB ($6 billion) on personnel discharge expenses, including vocational education subsidies for enlisted men and resettling disabled enlisted men and retiring military personnel, representing a 12.7 percent increase over last year (*PLA Daily*, March 9). Some commentators have argued that the announced expenditure is insufficient—Retired PLA General and military commentator Wang Hongguang (王洪光) estimated that a sum of at least 60 billion RMB ($9 billion USD)

would be required for downsized officers alone, even if most of the officers elected to participate in independent job selection (*Global Times*, March 7). Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that the troop reduction will incur a hefty bill, and that Beijing may not have allocated sufficient funds to the effort.

The individual-level costs of downsizing are potentially enormous. The PLA and the central government must account for the costs of both pension payments and one-time buyouts, all based on rank, duty-grade, and time in service of the downsized personnel. One-time buyouts alone could amount to hundreds of thousands of RMB per soldier per year. Though current official information on the exact pay of PLA officers is scarce, one *Global Times* article reported that an Army second lieutenant [少尉] (platoon leader grade) is paid roughly 3,000 RMB ($450) a month, while a lieutenant colonel [中校] (regiment leader grade) is paid approximately 5,000–6,000 RMB ($750–900) a month (*Global Times*, January 19, 2015). Based on this information and the regulations outlined in Part 1 of this article, one-time payments alone could range from 11,750 RMB ($1,760) for a conscript to over 216,000 RMB ($32,335) for an officer participating in independent job-search. These payments could be larger if more high-level NCOs and officers are downsized, possibly reaching 56,000 RMB ($8,340) per NCO and 440,000 RMB ($65,900) and up for lieutenant colonels and higher. Factoring in 80 percent, partial pensions for independent job-seekers and full pensions for retiring officers would further drive up the costs of the force reduction.

The aggregate costs of downsizing can accumulate rapidly. If 150,000 officers are downsized, with 77.5 percent choosing civilian transfer, and no retirements—Chinese authorities would have to resettle some 116,250 officers into civilian positions and dole out one-time job-search payments for 33,750 others. The one-time payments alone for such a downsizing would amount to nearly 9 billion RMB ($1.35 billion) at a minimum, and would increase to some 40 billion RMB ($6 billion) if only higher-level officers were downsized. **[4]** These rough calculations do not include payments for downsized NCOs and conscripts, partial pensions for eligible officers, pensions for retiring officers, compensation for disabled personnel, or the sundry benefits discharged PLA personnel are entitled to—all factors that will significantly inflate the total cost of the troop reduction.

Neither the low nor the high estimates represent realistic troop reduction scenarios, but they put the budget figures cited by the Chinese government and Wang Hongguang into context. The 40 billion RMB ($6 billion) expenditure announced by the Chinese government appears to impose some constraining financial parameters on PLA and civilian planners. Several factors could inflate the cost of the downsizing beyond the relatively conservative estimates explored here. Demobilizing more than 150,000 officers or a disproportionate number of higher-ranking officers could further raise costs. The number of disabled and retiring veterans included in the downsizing will likely increase costs both in the immediate and in the near future. The rough tabulations and considerations discussed here indicate that the government's apparent largesse in veteran spending is not as generous as it initially appears.

Will the Troop Reduction Cause Social Instability?

The potential for the downsizing to create social instability is probably the single weightiest concern for the Chinese government. **[5]** Authorities have some reason for wariness: veterans complain that state-owned companies often renege on promised benefits and local officials embezzle funds meant for veterans. Lack of official response has even prompted a number of prominent public protests over the last year. In October, more than 1,000 veterans gathered outside the Ministry of Defense to call for the full payment of benefits. In July, 4,000 veterans assembled at the offices of the Central Military Commission (CMC) for the same reasons (*The Wall Street Journal*, April 26; *New Tang News*, July 18). **[6]**

The troop reduction will inevitably increase tensions between local governments and the central government and the PLA. Official media writings acknowledge these difficulties, noting that local governments will bear the heaviest burden of finding

jobs for transferred officers and emphasizing the importance of alleviating this pressure (*China Youth Daily*, March 3). The requirement that downsized personnel return to their home provinces virtually ensures that the troop reduction will impact Chinese provinces unevenly, as local governments in economically depressed regions of China will be charged with finding jobs for discharged personnel. This could be harder if the PLA decides to cut large numbers of higher-ranking officers, who are entitled to scarce high-paying jobs.

Though the potential implications for social instability are serious, a number of factors could mitigate the problems of the ongoing troop reduction. Expertise gained from past troop reductions, general demographic characteristics of the downsizing, and the government's active efforts to strengthen supervision of veterans' affairs may help attenuate the difficulties of the current troop reduction effort.

First, the PLA and the Chinese government have extensive experience managing troop downsizing, with at least 11 large force reductions since 1949. Past reductions have been much larger and were accomplished in part by transferring personnel to the People's Armed Police (*PLA Daily*, November 18, 2015; *China Brief*, March 24). Recent downsizing efforts were similar in size, scale, and method to the current downsizing. For instance, the 1997 troop reduction cut 500,000 troops over three years, and the most recent troop reduction in 2003 downsized 200,000 troops over two years (*PLA Daily*, November 18, 2015). Though historical experience is no guarantee that Chinese authorities will successfully navigate the ongoing downsizing, both the PLA and the relevant civil authorities have gained substantial insight into the possible problems associated with large troop reductions.

The demographics of the downsizing may also be less problematic than it initially appears. Though dissatisfied veterans might pose a political risk for China's leaders, they may constitute a relatively small percentage of downsized personnel. Officers transferred to civilian jobs should be mollified by a position with equivalent pay and benefits, while retired officers can expect extensive benefits and a full pension. The biggest losers of the downsizing will be those officers that choose independent job-searching but subsequently have difficulty finding work on their own. Statistics from 2014, however, indicate that only 22.5 percent of the discharged officers choose independent job-search, amounting to an estimated 11,600 to 13,000 officers per year during the downsizing (*Beijing Daily*, September 4, 2015). This is no small figure, but authorities have already stepped up efforts to help these officers find employment by organizing conferences and teaching entrepreneurship skills (*PLA Daily*, August 9). The government also announced the "Four Relaxations" [四个放宽], loosening regulations on resettlement location, time in service for civilian transfer and independent job-search, and hardship posting eligibility in order to ease the burden of resettlement (*PLA Daily*, September 1).

The transfer of PLA personnel to state-owned enterprises (SOEs) may also prove less painful than speculated. Statistics from past years suggest that only 1.5 to 2 percent of eligible officers are placed into SOEs, totaling 1,162 officers per year for the current troop reduction. Past economic reforms split SOEs into public and commercial categories, with several "strategic" industries kept under strict government control that will face a strong mandate to find jobs for discharged PLA personnel (*Beijing Daily*, September 4, 2015; Ministry of Finance, December 30, 2015). Though the percentage of enlisted personnel transferred to SOEs is unknown, the government has reportedly made accommodation for enlisted personnel, announcing that 5 percent of jobs at SOEs would be reserved for downsized soldiers (*Reference News*, December 30, 2015).

On a broader level, the central government and the PLA have undertaken several steps meant to strengthen supervision of veterans' affairs and eliminate corruption in the system. An October 2015 report indicated the PLA is considering establishing an independent body responsible for veterans' affairs (*China Daily*, October 9, 2015). The PLA's recent organizational reforms dismantled the four general departments that previously handled veterans' affairs for themselves, and placed the newly formed Organ Affairs General Management Bureau [中央军委机关事务管理总局] in charge of veterans' affairs under direct CMC supervision (*PLA Daily*, April 20).

[7] Changes in military discharge policy covered in Part 1 of this article have expanded and codified benefits for discharged personnel, and current policy allows the central government to simply assign officers to jobs outside their home province if necessary (News of the Chinese Communist Party, January 19, 2001). Pronouncements from the highest levels of China's leadership warn against contravention of discharge and resettlement policy (*People's Daily*, December 28, 2015; *Beijing Daily*, July 15). Xi's ongoing anti-corruption campaign continues to apprehend corrupt officials, and may have a deterrent effect on administrators that misappropriate veterans' benefits.

Conclusion

The PLA and the relevant civilian agencies are aware of the potential negative impact on morale and social stability and have worked hard to anticipate and ameliorate problems from past force reductions. Expanding and increasing benefits to demobilized conscripts, providing more exit opportunities to NCOs in the form of education stipends, and clarifying the civilian transfer process for officers all represent calculated efforts by the Chinese government to soften the negative impact of force reductions on discharged personnel. These efforts are being put to the test by the latest round of troop downsizing.

The availability of better (or even basic) statistics would enable PLA and China watchers to study the effects of personnel reduction with much greater fidelity. Information on PLA officer pay scales, updated numbers of conscripts, NCOs, and officers in the force, percentage of officers that retire, records of resettlement of officers by province, and numbers of positions available for civilian transfer would shed more light on a topic Beijing has intentionally said little about. Further research on military housing policy and *hukou* regulations for downsized personnel would illuminate the geographic contours of the resettlement problem in better detail.

Nonetheless, an examination of Chinese discharge and resettlement processes yields important insights into the prospects for a successful PLA force reduction. Tensions will be most aggravated in the localities hit hardest by the economic downturn that face underfunded mandates to find jobs for discharged PLA personnel. Challenges such as increased costs are serious but solvable: the government would likely find the monetary resources needed to make military discharge and pension payments if serious threats to social stability emerge. Furthermore, recent veteran protests appear to be aimed at eliciting central government pressure to rectify local injustices and protect veterans' rights, rather than directing dissatisfaction at the Communist Party and the central government (New Tang News, July 18). Even if social instability rises to a level that requires suppression, the Chinese internal security apparatus has amply demonstrated its ability to stifle any substantial disruption of social stability. The Party's ability to control, co-opt, coerce, or otherwise suppress dissent is well-documented by past incidents and verified by the Party's continued rule.

The biggest challenge will be finding civilian positions for discharged personnel in poorer parts of China. Failure on this front could exacerbate tensions between the PLA and local governments, and more importantly, between the PLA and a Communist Party obliged to care for its military. For the moment, this challenge does not seem to be a severe threat to Party rule. The above analysis suggests that the PLA and the Chinese government are well-positioned to mitigate the difficulties that might arise from the force reduction, in spite of a slowing economic growth rate and increased competition for private-sector jobs.

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Notes

1. See Figure 2 in Part 1 of this series for an overview of military discharge and resettlement policies.
2. The responsibility of finding jobs for returning veterans falls to local People's Armed Forces Departments [人民武装

部], amongst other local government agencies. See: Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, "2006 National Defense White Paper," Xinhua, December 2006. http://www.mod.gov.cn/affair/2011-01/06/content_4249948_2.htm

3. This is almost certainly not a realistic assumption. In the absence of reliable data describing the percentage of retiring officers nationwide, however, assuming no officer retirements helps illustrate a worst-case scenario for local governments charged with finding positions for officers.
4. The bare minimum estimate assumes only second lieutenants are transferred and captains choose independent job-searching, and the higher estimate assumes only colonels are downsized. These are not realistic assumptions, but they help scope the financial burden the troop reduction will impose.
5. Maryanne Kivlehan-Wise, "Demobilization and Resettlement: The Challenge of Downsizing the People's Liberation Army," in *Civil-Military Relations in Today's China*, eds. David M. Finkelstein and Kristen Gunness (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 257.
6. These protests are, unsurprisingly, not covered by official state media.
7. Mark A. Stokes and Ian Easton, "The Chinese People's Liberation Army General Staff Department: Evolving Organizations and Missions," in Kevin Pollpeter and Kenneth W. Allen, *The PLA as Organization v2.0* (Vienna, VA: DGI, 2015), pp. 160—161.

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China's Influence in Uzbekistan: Model Neighbor or Indifferent Partner?

By Julie Yu-Wen Chen and Olaf Günther

In offering his condolences on the death of Uzbek President Islam Karimov in Setepmber, Chinese president Xi Jinping expressed that the Chinese people had lost a true friend. Earlier, in late June Xi had delivered a speech in Uzbekistan's parliament in which he called for both countries to work together to create the "new glory for the Silk Road" (Xinhua, June 21). To promote this idea, and in fulfillment of his promise to the Uzbektanis to revive the Silk Road as part of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, Xi and Karimov opened a new electrified railroad connecting the Ferghana Valley with the Uzbekistan capital, Tashkent. The Chinese-built railroad was a major development in China-Uzbek relations.

This railroad and the overall improvement in relations are the result of years of effort Xi and his predecessor, Hu Jintao. According to the the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, bilateral trade and economic relationship has developed well and China is now Uzbekistan's second-largest trade partner and the largest single investor (MOFCOM, June 20). The contractual value of projects started by China in Uzbekistan reached $6.83 million this year, with an accumulative turnover of $4.75 billion.

At the individual level, however, Uzbeks do not appear to have been effected much by this investment and high-level meetings. Statistics from internet search engines such as Googles Trends and Yandex, Uzbekistanis' interest in China on the Internet has not changed much since 2013. Apart from the major economic centers of Tashkent and Samarkand, the search word "China/китай" plays a minor role in public communications. This supports the idea that Xi was right to stress the importance of creating new cooperative models when he spoke to parliamentarians in Uzbekistan. Sino-Uzbek relations have certainly improved compared to two decades ago when Uzbekistan first established

diplomatic relations with China upon attaining independence. At that time, their economic relations were limited to a small-scale exchange of goods. China was viewed by many observers as an underdeveloped country warranting little attention. Furthermore, the fact that Uzbekistan and China do not share a border made trade between the two countries costly due to transit costs. Instead, attention was focused on South Korea, which was the first to invest in Uzbekistan on a large scale with its Daewoo car industry.

Now, two decades after Uzbekistan's independence, bilateral economic ties between the two countries have slowly improved from informal trade to technological cooperation and major investment activities. For instance, Huawei, the major Chinese telecommunication company is now Uzbekistan's largest telecom provider. The signing of a strategic partnership between Beijing and Tashkent in 2012 played a vital role in deepening the ties.

As members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), both China and Uzbekistan have used this platform for security and economic cooperation. In terms of security, Uzbekistan as a traditional transit country holds strategic transit corridors from East to West similar to Afghanistan. Despite not sharing a border with China, Uzbekistan is an important security partner for China in order to maintain inner stability of Central Asia and cooperate in the fight against Islamic fundamentalism.

Although political, security and economic cooperation has been fostered at the level of high politics and mainstream media in Uzbekistan portraying China in a positive way, it was unclear what how local Uzbekistanis perceive China after 25 years of independence. **[1]** Uzbekistan's closed political environment poses significant challenges when conducting widespread surveys on this issue. With the assistance of a local scholar in a high academic position in the country, we conducted a survey based on a non-random sampling of Uzbekistanis in the first half of 2016.

In total, we collected data from 255 students at a number of universities in Nukus, a large city in Western Uzbekistan. **[2]** One can consider the sample as a group of future elites who are educated and can be more internationalized than the rest of the society. Studying the views of future elites in an authoritarian regime such as Uzbekistan is meaningful because future elites are more likely than normal citizens to have come from elite families and/or with elite ties to affect policy changes. They are also more likely to be the kind of people who can make influence on Uzbekistan's future development.

As the data set is small and based on non-random sampling, one cannot claim that the results represent the views of the entire or the majority of Uzbekistan's population. Despite its limitations the data provides a rare snapshot of Uzbek's views of China.

Perception of Economic Exchanges

When asked whether they have heard of OBOR, 80.4 percent of respondents said no. If those who said that they are not sure are included, the result rises to 92.9 percent. Most Uzbeks have simply never heard of OBOR. The fact that OBOR is not widely reported in Uzbekistan's media and that not all of our respondents daily follow news from other countries explains why OBOR is not on the locals' radar. A search of Centrasia.ru, the major hub for newspapers in Central Asia reveals that only a few articles from the region refer to OBOR. Media coverage of China in Uzbekistan is only half of the coverage China receives in Kyrgyzstan. However, other surveys conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, show a similar lack of awareness of OBOR. Despite Beijing's efforts in advocating OBOR in Central Asia and beyond, it has not been able to make its work known at the local and civilian level. TOBOR is largely engaged only at the level of high politics in Central Asia, led by a limited number of elites who have more clear interests in benefiting from cooperating with Beijing.

Despite our respondents' ignorance of OBOR, they are not entirely unaware of China's influence. After all, decades of dominance of Chinese goods such as textiles, shoes and technical products in their local bazaars have secured a general awareness of Chinese economic activities in their country. When asked whether they had ever heard about Chinese

investments in Uzbekistan, every second respondent knew about economic interactions between China and Uzbekistan. For years, the focus of Sino-Uzbek economic ties was on small-scale trade. With the signing of more bilateral economic agreements since 2002, investments have risen, albeit on a small scale, in areas such as machinery, oil and basic infrastructure building.

Perception of China's International Influence

The legacy of the Soviet-Union and Central Asia as a part of Russia's area of influence is strong, though attitudes are changing. When asked which country has the biggest influence in Asia most respondents considered Russia (34.9 percent) and China (29 percent) to have the biggest influence. Russia slightly outnumbered China in this regard. However, most respondents believed that the situation will reverse in ten years, with 36.1 percent of respondents choosing China and 20 percent choosing Russia. Given the Soviet legacy in Uzbekistan, Russia's high ranking by respondents to the first question is expected. But the role China plays and is expected to play in the eyes of the respondents is higher. Some two decades ago, expectations for Japan and South Korea would have dropped China down at least to the fourth place. Now China already ranks second, and respondents displayed an awareness that China's influence would rise in the future.

Table 1: **Country with the Biggest Perceived Influence in Asia**

Country	**Now**	**In 10 Years**
Japan	11 (4.3 %)	17 (6.7 %)
China	74 (29 %)	92 (36.1 %)
India	0 (0 %)	4 (1.6 %)
Russia	89 (34.9 %)	51 (20 %)
U.S.	24 (9.4 %)	27 (10.6 %)
South Korea	7 (2.7 %)	13 (5.1 %)
Turkey	13 (5.1 %)	4 (1.6 %)
Saudi Arabia	4 (1.6 %)	5 (2 %)
Other	0 (0 %)	6 (2.4 %)
No/unclear answer	33 (12.9 %)	36 (14.1 %)
Total	255	255

China's political and economic system are often seen as presenting an alternative to Western-style democracies. When asked which country should be a model for Uzbekistan's future development, respondents offer a different picture. In fact, an overwhelming majority of respondents (46.7 percent) think that Uzbekistan should just follow its own model for future development. This could be interpreted as either a result of nationalist sentiment, which is common among newly independent states of Central Asia, or the respondents' practical awareness that no other country's model can be easily applied to Uzbekistan. Karimov publicly expressed on several occasions the notion of an Uzbekistan model, which emphasized a gradual path of development and avoided the negative effects of market economy reform. His remarks could have made an impact on the beliefs of the respondents. It is worth noting that the Russian model was supported by only 11 percent of respondents, far behind the answer "my country should follow its own model." After the Russian model, the Japanese model garnered 8.2 percent and the Chinese model got 7.5 percent of support. Although respondents understand China's rising influence in Asia, respondents do not seem to believe that the Chinese model can help Uzbekistan's development.

Table 2: **Which Country Should Be a Model for Your Country's Future Development?**

Country	Numbers of Respondents
Japan	21 (8.2 %)
China	19 (7.5 %)
India	0
Russia	28 (11 %)
U.S.	7 (2.7 %)
Singapore	2 (0.8 %)
Malaysia	1 (0.4 %)
South Korea	10 (3.9 %)
Turkey	11 (4.3 %)
Saudi Arabia	0
My country should follow its own model	119 (46.7 %)
Other	3 (1.2 %)
No answers	34 (13.3 %)
Total	255

Perception of China's Cultural Influence

In terms of cultural exchanges, Uzbekistan has had a long history of interaction with China. China's

softpower has left a long trail of footprints in Persian and Turkic parts of Central Asia.

In the 20th century, the capital of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, served throughout Soviet times as the center for Chinese studies. Beginning in 1957, people from all over Central Asia came to Tashkent to learn Mandarin. After becoming indedpendent in 1991 Uzbekistan has received support from the Chinese government to continue Mandarin education. The Confucius Institute in Tashkent is not only the first Confucius Institute in Uzbekistan, but also the first in Central Asia. Opened in 2005, it has functioned like other Confucius Institutes around the world with the mission to promote Mandarin teaching as well as cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries.

The survey and interviews revealed a second image of China beyond being an economic and political power. When asked where people can go to learn Chinese in Uzbekistan, almost every second student (45.5 percent) knows where to learn Chinese. This result explains the outward directed intention of many students in Uzbekistan. Studying in Uzbekistan often means finding a way to get jobs in more developed countries, such as Arab countries, European countries or the United States. Studying the Chinese language in the 1990s was seen as an exotic discipline. **[3]** Now Chinese is viewed as economically rational to study and many students have the intention to get stipends to study in China.

Conclusion

Local Uzbekistanis' perception of China varies depending on the issue. Respondents seem to have some impression of China's increasing cultural, economic and political influences. However, they do not necessarily know details of projects, such as the OBOR, nor do they believe that the Chinese model of development can be easily adopted for Uzbekistan's own development. The recent death of President Karimov and uncertainty around the future leadership of Uzbekistan might shift the direction of Uzbekistan's foreign policy. To what extent this change will affect Sino-Uzbek relations at the level of high politics as well as Chinese investments in Uzbekistan has yet to be seen. At the civilian level, as our survey indicates, existing local perceptions of China will be stable and will not experience major change even if there is a shift of Sino-Uzbek relations in higher political and economic levels.

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Notes:

1. Xi Jiao, "Critical Discourse Analysis of China's Images in Mainstream Central Asian Online Media: The Example of Uzbekistan," (批评性话语分析视阈下中亚主流网络媒体中的"中国形象"研究——以乌兹别克斯坦为例), *Science & Technology Vision*, No. 23, 2015, pp. 109–110.
2. We began with 257 observations all university students aged 20–30 at the city branch of Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute, Karakalpak State University, the Nukus branch of Tashkent State Agrarian University, and the Nukus branch of the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture. Two were excluded due to the respondents being from Turkmenistan.
3. Telephone interview with a teacher on Chinese language at the Oriental Institute of Tashkent, 10th August 2016.

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The Cultural Revolution at 50

By Yevgen Sautin

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the official start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). Though for many of China's youth it is a little-remembered period or a vaguely described part of history books, the political turmoil of the time has continued to have a profound influence on modern society. An examination of Chinese treatment of the

period provides useful insights into the current political climate.

Although by no means exhaustive, this analysis illustrates several distinct trends in China's modern interpretation of the Cultural Revolution. Most visibly, there is a clear desire by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to look past the Cultural Revolution and limit coverage of the period since it harms the Party's overall image. A second notable trend is the general lack of interest in the period among younger Chinese scholars. The last theme, ironically, is the continued salience of the legacy of political violence in contemporary Chinese discourse and the use of the Cultural Revolution in various contemporary information campaigns.

Changes in the Official Narrative

In May of this year, both the People's Daily and the Party's theoretical journal, *Qiu Shi* (*Seeking Truth*/求是), ran official statements on the Cultural Revolution (Seeking Truth, May 17). The language was terse and reiterated that the ten-year period was a mistake and that similar errors will not be tolerated again. The articles followed a familiar formula and called for history to be used as a reference to improve the pace of current national development. Common to almost every article on the issue were references to the watershed 1981 "Resolution on Certain Historical Issues" (历史问题决议) which unequivocally repudiated the Cultural Revolution and criticized Mao Zedong for various excesses, paving the way for a significant scale down of his cult of personality. Noticeably absent, however, was commentary on the legacy of the Cultural Revolution and its long-term effects on Chinese society and political thought. This has not always been the case.

In contrast with the official comments made this year, the 1981 Resolution left no doubt about how Deng Xiaoping and the second generation of Chinese political leaders viewed the Cultural Revolution's place in China's history:

> *(19) From 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution caused the Party, the country, and the people to endure the most serious setback and loss since the [founding of the PRC]. The Cultural Revolution was launched and led by [Mao Zedong]… (20) The history of the Cultural Revolution demonstrates that the main tenets of the Cultural Revolution, which were put forth by [Mao Zedong], are incompatible with Marxism-Leninism and China's reality. [Those tenets'] appraisal of China's class conditions, as well as Party and state political conditions at the time was completely incorrect.* **[1]**

The 1981 conference convened at a time when the more liberal elements of the CCP wanted to take criticism even further and directly denounce Mao Zedong. In the immediate years prior to the conference, several prominent victims of the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward such as Liu Shaoqi and Peng Dehuai were rehabilitated while some of the perpetrators were put on trial. The final position adopted then, represented a compromise, and should not be seen as outside the norm of what the Party would normally tolerate. Although some of China's most ardent critics at the time said the resolution did not go far enough, the conference generally succeeded in its initial objective to admit, study, and correct mistakes of the past. Thirty years later, China's official position on the Cultural Revolution, while still critical, does not begin to approach the previous levels of criticism and reflection, particularly when it comes to assigning blame for its origins.

Growing disinclination to address in depth sensitive topics in China's history can also be seen in the coverage of this year's 95th anniversary of the CCP's founding. Despite the heavy focus on Party history this year, most publications glossed over or omitted entirely any direct mention of Mao's culpability in unleashing the Cultural Revolution (Seeking Truth, July 21). The Xinhua special video production for the 95th anniversary of the CCP's founding, "Red Spirit," made no mention of the Cultural Revolution or the Great Leap Forward, only stating that the Party had gone through "great difficulties" on its road toward building socialism in China (Xinhua, June 20). Even when the editorial line admits to mistakes such

as the Cultural Revolution and reiterates calls for using history as a mirror, no discussion is made of the mistakes' origin or how to guard against their reoccurrence (Xinhua, August 12).

Although Party history is once again covered in almost exclusively positive language, the Cultural Revolution itself is paradoxically not taboo for Chinese official outlets. In fact, the period is sometimes evoked in rather unexpected places. A *Qiu Shi* article criticizing "Western universal values" argued that the experiences of the Cultural Revolution show China the dangers of dogmatism and following theories not grounded in China's reality (Seeking Truth, August 5). While at first glance it may seem strange that the Cultural Revolution is conjured up in an argument extolling China's own development model, the reference suggests that Chinese authorities are keenly aware of just how visceral any associations with the period are for most Chinese citizens. By putting the Cultural Revolution with its discredited universal applicability side by side with "Western universal values" China's state outlets are hoping the domestic Chinese audience will associate the chaotic process of democratization with the chaos endured from 1966–76.

The Cultural Revolution and China's Elite

The narrative that Xi Jinping has taken China on a "left turn" is quite popular among the mainstream media and many China watchers. Indeed, under Xi Jinping's leadership terms such as the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" or "against the Party and against socialism" (反党反社会主义) have remerged in official discourse for the first time since Deng Xiaoping's reforms and opening of the country (China Media Project, December 30). Despite an increase in "red" rhetoric, it is unlikely that Xi Jinping or anyone else in senior leadership looks favorably upon the years of the Cultural Revolution. In 2000, while still a provincial official, Xi Jinping spoke candidly about the personal hardships endured by him and his family during the Cultural Revolution (People's Daily, September 11). When it comes to official pronouncements, Xi Jinping is far more fond of quoting Han Feizi (韓非子) and other Chinese classical legalist scholars who stressed strict abidance of the law than rehabilitating the political rhetoric of the Red Guards (People's Daily, March 1).

That does not mean however that the ghosts of the Cultural Revolution have been fully expunged. For one, Xi Jinping has been clear that he does not support efforts to revisit the pre-reform period, stating that: "One cannot use the subsequent thirty years to repudiate the preceding thirty years (不能用后三十年否定前三十年) (BBC Chinese, May 10)." In addition, among many party elders and rank-and-file members, the defense of the Party's history is much more than just an effort to preserve legitimacy and power, it is a deeply personal mission. Outside the Party, the period is also romanticized by some who lived through it. As a result, it is unsurprising that the disgraced former Chongqing head Bo Xilai, was able to build a considerable popular following by playing Maoist songs and using 1960s slogans.

One particularly burdensome legacy of the Cultural Revolution, crude political discourse, while never entirely went away, has witnessed a clear resurgence. For instance, several iterations of "[We cannot] allow the eating of the Communist Party's food by those who smash the Communist Party's pots" (不允许吃共产党的饭，砸共产党的锅) appeared in various official publications starting from late 2014 **[2]**. Such language has direct antecedents to slogans used by the Red Guards during struggle sessions. Chinese intellectuals have noted the language of violence and hate directed toward political opponents as one of the most deleterious long-lasting effects of the Cultural Revolution.

Views among China's Intellectuals

Despite apparent pressure to curtail coverage of the anniversary, the Cultural Revolution has received a more thorough analysis in non-state media outlets (Duowei News, May 15). Consensus Net (共识网), a news and commentary portal that aggregates content and also features original contributions from commentators and public intellectuals ran several articles on the Cultural Revolution coinciding with the anniversary. Although the publications discuss different aspects of the Cultural Revolution, they all demon-

strate its continued importance to China's contemporary society and politics. A consistent theme in several intellectual publications is the dismay at the general lack of interest in the period among China's younger scholars. This observation is indicative of a broader apathy to contemporary Chinese history among the post-1980s generation that has been noted elsewhere. **[3]**

Since formal education was severely disrupted during the Cultural Revolution, an entire generation was largely shaped and educated by the struggles of the Cultural Revolution; when combined with the fact that the subsequent generations have only been partially exposed to the history of the period, a ripe environment has been created for invented and mythologized interpretations of the period. Du Yingguo (杜应国), a retired researcher from Guizhou's provincial literature and history research center has shown how several myths regarding the root causes of the Cultural Revolution have emerged over the years. One, is the mistaken belief that Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution as an effort to fight growing bureaucratism (Gong shi, May 3). This view is particularly popular among Western scholars and obscures linkages between the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution and earlier Anti-rightist purges of the 1950s. According to Du, the Cultural Revolution was the culmination of an increasingly extreme hunt for "capitalist roaders," "revisionists," and other enemies inside and outside the Party. Du's observation is not a pedantic one: it discredits today's leftist revisionist narratives in China extolling the pre-Reform period which in the context of modern anti-corruption campaigns and bureaucratic indifference are quite popular among some segments of the population. Du also takes issue with the characterization of the Cultural Revolution as a mass movement (文革大民主的形式). Even though millions of people were swept up in the tidal wave of struggle, the movement was centered on cities and served political aims of Mao and other Cultural Revolution backers.

Wuhan University's Dr.Yu Chongsheng's (虞崇胜) work addresses the continued effects of the Cultural Revolution most directly (Gong Shi, April 19). Dr. Yu sees the root of violence during the Cultural Revolution in Maoist rhetoric. Class struggle, the obsession in rooting out enemies (with an emphasis that identifying enemies precedes identifying allies) all predetermined that the Cultural Revolution was going to be a bloody internecine conflict. Unfortunately, the language and consciousness of struggle has persisted in China long after the end of the Cultural Revolution. And even though reforms from above have made significant legal and ideological changes such as formally abolishing the criminal charge of being a counterrevolutionary (反革命) in 1997 or revising the Party position away from calling for class struggle, change has been slower in the people's consciousness. In fact, Yu Chongsheng's argument can be taken a step further in light of the steady return to fore of old communist slogans from the pre-reform era and the propensity for using crass comments mentioned earlier.

The liberal Chinese journal Yanhuang Chunqiu (炎黄春秋), which recently closed after undergoing an editorial reshuffle at the behest of the Chinese National Academy of Arts, has until now been willing to take up highly iconoclastic positions on numerous issues surrounding Party and state history. The journal was run by retired Party cadres and has long held a position of particular importance among China's liberal intelligentsia. Due to its small circulation and Party roots, the magazine was tolerated by Chinese authorities. Perhaps tellingly, there are rumors that the recent closure was prompted by the magazine's planned special issue for the Cultural Revolution's anniversary (Duowei News, May 15).

The magazine limited its coverage of the anniversary to an article by Jin Daliu (金大陆), an expert on the Cultural Revolution. Jin lamented the polarization of views on the Cultural Revolution in today's China (Yanhuang Chunqiu, May 13). According to him, Leftists are willing to steadfastly defend the Cultural Revolution because they wish to preserve the legacy and image of PRC's early history. On the other end of the spectrum, right wing sentiment calls for collective punishment and contrition which is unfeasible and highly divisive. Both views are ultimately counterproductive and make it more difficult for genuine reconciliation. As is the case with other Chinese intellectuals, Jin is worried that the new generation of

Chinese scholars are uninterested in Cultural Revolution. This can be explained in part by the risks of jeopardizing academic careers, but the result is that Chinese historians may actually fall behind their Western counterparts in the research of this crucial period in China's history.

In addition to running Jin Daliu's commentary, Yanhuang Chunqiu also republished Zhang Wentian's (张闻天) recollections from the later stages of the Cultural Revolution (Yanhuang Chunqiu, April 9). Zhang was part of the 28 Bolsheviks and filled several important posts in the PRC before being denounced during the Cultural Revolution. **[4]** Under great personal risk, he kept a private journal throughout the period where he criticized the social and political strife of the time. His writing, offering lucid analysis at a time of great unrest, explores the role of the separation between the Party and the masses in fomenting the Cultural Revolution. According to his observations, there was a need to renounce the use of violence to settle disputes. Going further, Zhang saw the need for real ability to criticize and supervise Party and state activity by the people. Moreover, concern for the people's material wellbeing in his words is not "taking the capitalist road" and comports with Leninist ideals. Throughout his diary, he emphasizes that the Party is the servant of the people and the people are masters, not the other way around. Even when reprinted, such rhetoric coming from a personage of impeccable revolutionary credentials is still a direct challenge to the political status quo in China.

Conclusion

In Western media and China circles, the 50th anniversary of the Cultural Revolution was met with noted interest. Most of the commentary focused on the question of could a similar calamity happen again in contemporary China. When looking at China's discourse around the 50th anniversary, one finds little concern among either state or intellectual sources for a repeat of the Cultural Revolution. However, the Cultural Revolution continues to influence political rhetoric and popular understanding of state affairs. Despite its importance to China's reality, one sees general disinterest among younger Chinese experts and the slow but steady effort by the state to reduce coverage of the Cultural Revolution. Such trends while not exactly portentous, ensure that the long shadow of the Cultural Revolution will not be lifted anytime soon.

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Notes

1. Full text of the 1981 "Resolution on certain questions in the history of our party since the founding of the People's Republic of China." Chinese Here. English Here.
2. In 2014, the PLA Daily ran an article criticizing Party members who besmirch the Party and abuse their positions. The article used the bowl metaphor and was quickly picked up by many other outlets.
3. See for example, Lim, Louisa. The People's Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen Revisited (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)
4. A faction of Moscow-trained CCP members who played an important role in the Party's pre-Long March history. Their defeat at the Zunyi conference (遵义会议) marked the ascent of Mao Zedong to power.

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