

## Hu's New Deal and the New Provincial Chiefs

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Any major shift in the strategic development of a country cannot be achieved without the presence of a large, unified group of governing elites who support the plan. Hu Jintao's New Deal is certainly not an exception. An analysis of the 29 top provincial leaders who have been appointed since Hu became president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in March 2003 shows that he has selected many like-minded provincial leaders to carry out his New Deal policies.<sup>1</sup>

Most of these new provincial leaders are relatively young; they typically advanced their careers from the grass roots and local administration; most have postgraduate degrees (mainly in economics, the social sciences, and the humanities); and many worked in rural areas early in their careers and later gained experience by managing large cities. Many had close ties with Hu during the early years of their careers as Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) officials. Equally significantly, the experience and outlook of many of these provincial chiefs mirror those of their "role models" Hu and Wen Jiabao, in terms of their substantial work experience in China's inland region as well as the image of themselves they choose to present to the general public.

A growing number of Chinese scholars are labeling the development strategy under the Hu Jintao administration the New Deal, and history may judge it as such.<sup>2</sup> It has been more than a quarter century since Deng Xiaoping launched economic reforms in 1978. Students of contemporary China generally identify the dynamic and complicated post-1978 period as the Reform Era. The label New Deal suggests that epochal changes are under way under the new leadership—the so-called fourth generation of leaders.

Within roughly a year after their appointments as China's top leaders, President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao have already changed the course of China's development. Turning away from the single-minded focus on coastal development at the expense of the vast inland region, the obsession with gross domestic product (GDP) growth without regard for employment and social issues, and the failure to deal with growing economic disparity that characterized their predecessors' approaches, Hu and Wen have stressed the need to achieve more-balanced regional economic development, social fairness, and political institutionalization—the three main objectives of New Deal policies.<sup>3</sup>

It is still far too early to predict whether Hu, Wen, and their like-minded colleagues will be able to achieve these declared objectives, which would make their development strategy as pioneering as Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States. There is, of course, no indication that China's new leaders intend to alter the political system in a way that would do away with one-party rule in the near future. This approach is understandable because Reform Era leaders in China—from Deng to Jiang to

Hu—have all chosen the path of evolution rather than revolution to transform China's economic and sociopolitical system. The New Deal approach of the current top leaders is a strategy for the Chinese government to regain legitimacy and to improve the well-being of the Chinese people while preventing a potential sociopolitical revolution that could lead to the collapse of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The ultimate goal of the New Deal is not to disintegrate the People's Republic of China, but to make the country economically strong, politically stable, socially fair, and internationally respected.

Whether Hu's New Deal will lead to a more accountable and legitimate political regime is, of course, a matter of intellectual debate at this point. But, the success or failure of this strategic shift in leadership approach under Hu and Wen not only will have profound implications for this most populous country in the world, but also will have significant ramifications that extend far beyond China's borders. Despite the importance of the subject, it has yet to receive the thorough investigation that it deserves, especially by overseas scholars who study China. Some China watchers might be suspicious about the degree of real power that Hu and Wen will be able to wield to promote their own policies, while others are skeptical that any innovative change can be achieved under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>4</sup>

This article examines the characteristics of the top provincial leaders in China (party secretaries, governors, and their deputies) who have been appointed since the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) held in March 2003. During the meeting of the NPC, Hu and Wen respectively became president and premier of the state, signifying the beginning of the Hu-Wen administration. Since then, their New Deal approach has gradually been revealed.<sup>5</sup> An analysis of the appointments of new provincial leaders can shed valuable light on the policy orientation and implementation of the Hu-Wen administration. Specifically, there are three reasons why one should pay attention to these new appointees.

First, since more-balanced regional economic development is a central objective of the New Deal, provincial leaders are clearly key players in this strategic shift. The relationship between the Hu-Wen team and provincial chiefs is crucial for the implementation of the New Deal. Wu Jinglian, a prominent economist who once served as an adviser to former premier Zhu Rongji, recently observed that a significant challenge for new Premier Wen Jiabao will be to reduce the number of state bonds and cool down overheated local investment in many Chinese cities.<sup>6</sup> According to Wu and some other Chinese economists, deficit spending by provincial, municipal, and other local levels of government may cause a major financial and sociopolitical disaster in the country.<sup>7</sup> Many believe that this upcoming crisis can only be resolved by a good working relationship between the Hu-Wen team and provincial chiefs. Examining the background and experience of these new appointees, especially their leadership skills and political associations with Hu and Wen, is crucial to understanding the current and future course of regional development in China.

Second, previous studies have shown that many of Jiang Zemin's protégés are princelings who advanced their careers in coastal regions and have experience in the fields of finance, trade, foreign affairs, information technology, the oil industries, and

education. In contrast, most of Hu's associates advanced their political careers through local and provincial administration; many have worked in the areas of party organization, propaganda, and legal affairs; and some were officials of the Chinese Communist Youth League. These individuals often come from less privileged families and less advanced provinces, a provenance similar to the backgrounds of Hu and Wen.<sup>8</sup> It will be interesting to see whether this distinction of bureaucratic affiliation affects the appointment of new provincial chiefs and how the checks and balances on power will operate at the provincial level under the new leadership.

Third, many of these newly appointed provincial leaders are in their 40s or 50s. They are the rising stars in the Chinese political leadership. An analysis of their career paths, generational attributes, and political associations is instrumental for better assessing the future of Chinese political succession.

## Rationalities of Hu's New Deal

Almost immediately after he assumed the position of general secretary of the CCP in November 2002, Hu Jintao characterized his administration as the one that "governs in the interest of the people" (*zhizheng weimin*). This attitude contrasts with that of his predecessor, Jiang Zemin, who had a reputation for representing the interests of the rich and powerful. Hu's economic and sociopolitical program consists of three interrelated themes: (1) more-balanced regional economic development, (2) increased concern for social justice and fairness, and (3) greater political transparency and institutionalization.

Although the third generation leaders (Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, and Zhu Rongji) announced their strategic plan to develop China's western region in 1999, observers both in China and abroad generally considered their announcement only lip service because, under the leadership of the third generation, resources were disproportionately allocated to the coastal cities, especially Shanghai and Beijing. Hu and the fourth generation of leaders, however, are now effectively implementing their western development policies. Furthermore, since becoming premier in March 2003, Wen has aggressively promoted the so-called northeastern rejuvenation.<sup>9</sup> Just as Jiang claims credit for the coming-of-age of Shanghai and some other coastal cities in the country, Hu and Wen understand that their legitimacy and legacy in Chinese domestic affairs will largely depend on the success of their western development strategy and the northeastern rejuvenation in the remaining years of this decade and the next.

At the Third Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP, which was held in mid-October 2003, Hu and Wen outlined their overall plans for China's economic growth, with the purpose of achieving more-balanced development in five main interconnected areas: across geographical regions, between urban and rural areas, between economic growth and social improvement, between the needs of the people and the sustainability of the environment, and between the promotion of foreign trade and the need to stimulate China's domestic market.<sup>10</sup>

The need to balance all these factors is obviously a crucial concern for the new leaders. As Hu Angang, a distinguished economist at the Center for China Studies at Qinghua University who frequently briefs top leaders, bluntly observes, “China is presently experiencing the world’s largest economic restructuring, largest unemployment wave, most salient gap between urban and rural areas, fastest-growing economic disparity, most serious corruption and loss of state assets, and largest scale of environmental degradation.”<sup>11</sup> With respect to ecological degradation and the overexploration of natural resources, a Chinese official source shows that, among the 45 kinds of principal mineral reserves that China possesses, only six will be sufficient to meet the country’s needs in 2020.<sup>12</sup>

Unbalanced economic development has intensified social unfairness and injustice, which is the second main concern that the New Deal seeks to redress. For example, the rural population accounted for 60 percent of the national total in 2000, but governmental expenditure in rural areas was only 5 percent of the national total.<sup>13</sup> In 2002, the average income of urban residents was three times that of rural residents. According to a study conducted by researchers at the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), if one takes into consideration indirect monetary factors such as medical care, education, and insurance, urban residents’ income is as much as six times that of rural residents.<sup>14</sup> The difference in GDP per capita between Shanghai and Guizhou, for example, increased from 7.3 times greater in 1990 to 12.9 times greater in 2002.<sup>15</sup>

Unfairness is also evident in the distribution of delegates to the National People’s Congress. Based on the regulations of the NPC, every 960,000 people in rural areas are appointed one delegate, while in urban areas every 260,000 people are appointed one delegate. Meanwhile, the proportions of workers and peasants among the delegates of the NPC decreased from 26.7 percent and 20.6 percent at the Fifth NPC in 1978 to 10.8 percent and 8 percent at the Ninth NPC in 1998, respectively.<sup>16</sup>

Hu and Wen appear to recognize the magnitude of social resentment and political threat faced by the CCP. Unlike Jiang with his elitist policy orientation, both Hu and Wen take a populist approach to governance. Their populist approach is evident in many aspects, including their effective leadership in managing the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003. Hu and Wen made frequent visits to poor areas during the holidays and ate dumplings with farmers and miners. Hu constantly emphasized government accountability and thus dismissed irresponsible high-ranking officials. Wen shook hands with AIDS patients on World AIDS Day.

More importantly, Hu and Wen have adopted more-favorable policies toward the agricultural sector, ordering all business firms to pay overdue wages to migrant workers immediately and abolishing many restrictions on migrants in cities. For example, according to statistics recently provided by the Ministry of Construction, a total of 21.5 billion yuan in overdue wages was paid to migrant workers last year.<sup>17</sup>

The third major component of the New Deal is greater political transparency and institutionalization. Examples of this trend within the Hu administration include the daily

release of information regarding the SARS epidemic or the avian flu, regular and more frequent press conferences on current events, 24-hour news coverage, and the public release of the proceedings of CCP Politburo meetings. These actions may herald even more important changes in state-society relations.

Political institutionalization refers to institutional mechanisms that restrain individual power. Such restraints apply to three main areas: (1) political norms and procedures, (2) formal rules and regulations, and (3) institutional checks and balances. While it is debatable whether any institutional checks and balances are present in today's Chinese political system, China appears to be making the transition from "strong man" politics with an all-powerful, godlike, charismatic single leader to an institutionalized collective leadership.

One important change in decision-making procedure under the Hu administration has been to reduce the power of the top leader (*diyi bashou*) at various levels of leadership.<sup>18</sup> This new procedure will allow members of the party committee to use their voting power to shape policy decisions—whether on personnel appointments, foreign investment, or resource distribution. Even more importantly, some rules and regulations have been remarkably well implemented in recent years. Term limits and the age requirement for retirement, first introduced by Deng in the early 1980s, are now enforced at all levels of leadership with the exception of the very top echelon.<sup>19</sup>

Term limits specify that an individual leader cannot hold the same position for more than two terms of five years each. The age requirement dictates that leaders above a particular level cannot exceed a certain age limit. For example, ministers, provincial party secretaries, provincial governors, and top officers in all types of service and military regions may not be older than 65. Their deputies may not be older than 63. Presently, all 62 provincial party secretaries and governors have been appointed to their current positions within the past 10 years; therefore, all abide by the term limit rules. With respect to age, all provincial party secretaries and governors are younger than 65, thus meeting the age requirement.

In February 2004, the Chinese authorities published two documents, Regulations of Internal Supervision of the CCP and Disciplinary Penalties of the CCP, to intensify the country's anticorruption campaigns. Of course, these measures are presently only regulations and rules on paper. It is unclear whether Hu and Wen will be able to meet growing public demand to curtail rampant official corruption, especially with respect to the large cases that may involve former or current Politburo members. However, the fact that these two documents were finally initiated under the leadership of Hu and Wen is a significant achievement. Reportedly, it took "13 years of preparation" for the CCP to issue these two documents, the first official anticorruption measures taken by the CCP in its 55-year history of ruling the country.<sup>20</sup>

In the year since Hu, Wen, and other members of the fourth generation took over the top leadership, a total of 21 ministerial and provincial leaders have been charged with corruption.<sup>21</sup> The indicted leaders include former party secretary of Hebei Cheng Weigao, former party secretary of Guizhou Liu Fangren, former party secretary of Hubei

Zhang Guoguang, former governor of Yunnan Li Jiating, former vice governor of Liaoning Liu Ketian, former vice governor of Hebei Yi Fukui, former vice governor of Zhejiang Wang Zhongli, and former vice governor of Anhui Wang Huaizhong.<sup>22</sup> Wang Huaizhong was executed in early 2004. Li Jiating and Yi Fukui were both sentenced to the death penalty with a two-year suspension. The three former provincial party secretaries mentioned are still under trial and criminal investigation.

In light of the rampancy of official corruption in Chinese society during the Reform Era, the Chinese public may still believe that these high-ranking leaders were caught for their illicit actions because they did not have powerful patrons in the top leadership. These disgraced provincial leaders are largely seen as scapegoats who were singled out by the new leaders to improve the image of the CCP. However, these severe punishments may, in fact, have frightened a large number of corrupt officials, forcing them to either stop or better conceal their illicit behavior. Not surprisingly, it has been reported that approximately 8,000 corrupt officials have escaped overseas during the past three years.<sup>23</sup>

During the same period, China's national and provincial television and other media outlets have constantly highlighted cases of corruption scandals. The dilemma for Hu and Wen is clear—they need to consolidate institutional mechanisms in order to deal with official corruption effectively, but at the same time they must prevent both a vicious conflict within the top leadership and a sociopolitical uprising at the grassroots level of Chinese society. In this context, the new appointments of provincial leaders are often seen as indicators of the real power of Hu and Wen, as well as testimony to the success of their New Deal policies.

## Recent Reshufflings of Provincial Leaders

According to both the CCP constitution and the PRC constitution, party and government leadership at both the national and provincial levels is scheduled to undergo major changes every five years during the respective meetings of the new congresses. But, this rule does not prevent sporadic reshuffling due to deaths, illnesses, firings, promotions, et cetera.

Changes occur more frequently at the provincial level of leadership than at the national level because, despite some important new institutional procedures and rules, the central authorities continue to practice *nomenklatura*, the Soviet-style cadre appointment system.<sup>24</sup> The selection and movement of top provincial leaders have always been the prelude for the next round of political battles between various factions in the national leadership.<sup>25</sup>

Provincial leaders experienced a large-scale reshuffling prior to the 10th NPC held in March 2003. Table 1 shows that as a result of that major reshuffling, the average ages of current provincial leaders in the government (governors and vice governors), the provincial people's congresses (chairs and vice chairs), and the provincial people's political consultative conferences (chairs and vice chairs) were lower than those of their

predecessors by an average of 3.3 years, 3.7 years, and 4.6 years, respectively. After this reshuffling, those governors and vice governors who were 50 years old or younger accounted for 43.6 percent of all provincial governors and vice governors.<sup>26</sup> Fifty-five vice governors were about 45 years old. The youngest was Lu Hao, the 35-year-old vice mayor of Beijing.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1**

*Change in the Average Age of Leaders of Three Governmental Bodies at the Provincial Level in China (2003–4)*

<b>Level of leaders</b>	<i>Average age before 2003</i>	<i>Current average age</i>	<i>Difference in average ages</i>
Provincial governors and vice governors	54.9	51.6	– 3.3
Chairs and vice chairs of provincial people’s congresses	62.7	59.0	– 3.7
Chairs and vice chairs of provincial people’s political consultative conferences	63.9	59.3	– 4.6

SOURCE: *Renmin ribao* (People’s Daily), April 14, 2003, 4. Data tabulated by author.

Throughout PRC history, the people’s congresses and the people’s political consultative conferences have not had much power, a situation that remains true today. Yet because of the rapid change in Chinese society during the past two decades, especially with the rise of the Chinese middle class and the pressure from emerging nongovernmental organizations, members of these two institutions have become more outspoken and have played a more important role in representing social groups.

In response to this change, CCP authorities have appointed many relatively young and promising leaders, rather than leaders about to retire, to preside over these two institutions. At present, among the 31 province-level administrations, 24 party secretaries concurrently serve as chairs of the provincial people’s congresses. The seven exceptions are the provincial party secretaries in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hubei, Guangdong, and Xinjiang, who are concurrently Politburo members, and the party secretary of Tibet.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the provincial people’s political consultative conferences no longer complain that their opportunities for career advancement are limited. For example, the new governor of Liaoning, Zhang Wenyue, was transferred from the position of chair of the Liaoning People’s Political Consultative Conference. Sun Shuyi, an alternate to the 16th Central Committee of the CCP, currently serves as chair of the Shandong People’s Political Consultative Conference. He may be promoted to a higher position in the near future. Huang Yaojin, the newly appointed deputy head of the CCP Organization Department, was transferred from his previous post as vice chair of the Shanghai People’s Political Consultative Conference.

Table 2 shows the provincial chiefs (party secretaries and governors) who have been appointed to their current positions since the 10th NPC, which was held in March 2003. Altogether, 15 provincial chiefs have been serving in their current positions for less than a year, accounting for 24 percent of the total number of provincial chiefs. Even in the year after the large-scale reshuffling that takes place every five years, China's provincial chiefs have had such a high turnover rate. This statistic indicates the fluidity of leadership change at the provincial level.

Among these 15 leaders, two were transferred from positions at the same rank in other provinces. Wang Qishan was transferred from the post of party secretary of Hainan to serve as mayor of Beijing during the SARS crisis in spring 2003. Su Rong, another rising star in China's provincial leadership, was transferred from the post of party secretary of Qinghai to serve as party secretary of Gansu. Four leaders, including 52-year-old Fujian Party Secretary Lu Zhangong and 47-year-old Qinghai Party Secretary Zhao Leji, have been promoted from their positions as governor in the same province. New Hainan Governor Wei Liucheng and new Heilongjiang Governor Zhang Zuoji were transferred from their ministerial posts in the central government. Seven other new governors (in Liaoning, Shanxi, Qinghai, Neimenggu, Guangxi, Tibet, and Hunan) were all promoted from deputy posts within the same provinces. Three new governors are ethnic minorities; they are 51-year-old Neimenggu Governor Yang Jing (Mongolian), Guangxi Governor Lu Bing (Zhuang), and Tibet Governor Xiangba Pingcuo (Tibetan).

Table 3 shows the deputy provincial leaders (deputy secretaries, vice governors, and their equivalents) who have been appointed to their current positions since March 2003. Although there were more provincial deputy positions than there were seats of provincial chiefs, the turnover rate was much lower among deputy provincial leaders. In all, 14 deputy leaders were appointed between March 2003 and February 2004.<sup>28</sup> Most of them were in their early 50s or late 40s. Eight are alternate members of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP. The relatively young age and the memberships in the 16th Central Committee of these deputy provincial leaders indicate that they are likely to be promoted to even higher positions in the coming years.

Two phenomena in the career moves of these deputy provincial leaders deserve particular attention. First, former deputy party secretary of Tianjin Xia Baolong and former party secretary of Ningbo city in Zhejiang Huang Xingguo were transferred to each other's province. Neither of them had previously worked in areas outside their native provinces. Both are alternate members of the 16th Central Committee, are in their early 50s, and hold postgraduate degrees. Their transfers to positions in other provinces will broaden their leadership experience, thus preparing them for further promotion.

Second, many deputy provincial leaders previously held, or currently hold, top leadership positions in the capital cities or large cities of provinces. Examples include Huang Xingguo (former party secretary of Ningbo), Bayinqolu (current party secretary of Ningbo), Li Zhanshu (former party secretary of Xi'an), Yuan Chunqing (current party secretary of Xi'an), Yang Yongmao (former party secretary of Harbin), Du Yuxin (current party secretary of Harbin), Jiang Daming (current party secretary of Jinan), Li Jinzao (former party secretary of Guilin), and Yu Youjun (former mayor of Shenzhen).



**Table 2**  
*Background of Newly Appointed Provincial Chiefs (since March 2003)*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Previous position</i>	<i>Main political career and/or connection</i>	<i>Experience in other provinces</i>	<i>Educational background</i>
Wang Qishan**	1948	Shandong	Mayor, Beijing (2003–)	Party secretary, Hainan (2002–3)	Princeling; career in banking, finance; close ties with Zhu Rongji	Guangdong (1997–2000), Hainan (2002–3)	History (Northwestern University)
Lu Zhangong**	1952	Zhejiang	Acting party secretary, Fujian (2004–)	Governor, Fujian (2002–)	Provincial leadership; close ties with Wei Jianxing	Zhejiang (1988–96), Hebei (1996–98)	Engineering (Heilongjiang School of Engineering)
Wei Liucheng*	1946	Henan	Governor, Hainan (2003–)	President, China Offshore Oil Co. (1999–2003)	Career in oil industry; close ties with Zeng Qinghong, Wu Bangguo	None	Engineering (Beijing Institute of Petroleum)
Zhang Wenyue*	1944	Fujian	Governor, Liaoning (2004–)	Deputy party secretary, Liaoning (2001–)	Career in geological work; close ties with Wen Jiabao	Sichuan (1969–86), Xinjiang (1995–2001)	Engineering (Beijing Institute of Geology)
Zhang Baoshun*	1950	Hebei	Governor, Shanxi (2004–)	Deputy party secretary, Shanxi (2001–)	Career in CCYL; close ties with Hu Jintao	None	M.A., economics (Jilin University)
Yang Chuantang*	1954	Shandong	Governor, Qinghai (2004–)	Deputy party secretary, Qinghai (2003–)	Career in CCYL; close ties with Hu Jintao	Shandong (1972–93), Tibet (1993–2003)	M.A. program, economics (CASS)
Yang Jing*	1953	Neimenggu	Governor, Neimenggu (2004–)	Deputy party secretary, Neimenggu (2003–)	Career in CCYL, local administration	None	M.A. program, management (CASS)
Lu Bing	1944	Guangxi	Governor, Guangxi (2003–)	Vice governor, Guangxi (1993–2003)	Career in local administration	None	History (Guangxi Normal College)
Zhao Leji**	1957	Qinghai	Party secretary, Qinghai (2003–)	Governor, Qinghai (2000–2003)	Career in local administration	None	Philosophy (Beijing University)
Zhang Zuoji**	1945	Heilongjiang	Governor, Heilongjiang (2003–)	Minister, Labor and Social Security (1998–2003)	Career in central government	Shaanxi (1991–93)	Russian (Heilongjiang University)
Xiangba Pingcuo*	1947	Tibet	Governor, Tibet (2003–)	Party secretary, Lhasa city, Tibet (1999–2003)	Career in local administration	None	Engineering (Chongqing University)
Zhou Bohua	1948	Hunan	Governor, Hunan (2003–)	Vice governor, Hunan (1993–2003)	Career in local administration	None	M.A. (Central Party School)
Wang Xiaofeng**	1944	Hunan	Party secretary, Hainan (2003–)	Governor, Hainan (1998–2003)	Career in local administration	Hunan (1970–93)	Engineering (Beijing Institute of Mining)
Song Fatang**	1940	Shandong	Party secretary, Heilongjiang (2003–)	Governor, Heilongjiang (2000–2003)	Career in local administration	Shandong (1964–99)	Chinese (Qufu Normal College)
Su Rong**	1948	Jilin	Party secretary, Gansu (2003–)	Party secretary, Qinghai (2001–3)	Career in local administration	Jilin (1974–2001), Qinghai (2001–3)	M.A., economics (Jilin University)

SOURCE: The author's database on Chinese provincial leaders.

NOTES: \*\* = member of 16th Central Committee of CCP, \* = alternate member of 16th Central Committee of CCP, CCYL = Chinese Communist Youth League, CASS = Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

**Table 3**  
*Background of Newly Appointed Deputy Provincial Leaders (since March 2003)*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Previous position</i>	<i>Main political career and/or connection</i>	<i>Experience in other provinces</i>	<i>Educational background</i>
Liu Yupu*	1949	Shandong	Deputy party secretary, Guangdong (2004–)	Head, Organization Department, Guangdong (2000–2004)	Career in CCYL, local administration; close ties with Zhu Rongji	Shaanxi (1995–2000)	M.A., economics (Central Party School)
Cai Dongshi	1947	Guangdong	Deputy party secretary, Guangdong (2004–)	Head, Propaganda Department, Guangdong (2003–4)	Chief of staff; close ties with Li Changchun	None	Chinese (Zhongshan University)
Xia Baolong*	1952	Tianjin	Deputy party secretary, Zhejiang (2003–)	Deputy party secretary, Tianjin (2002–3)	Career in CCYL, local administration	Tianjin (1973–2003)	Ph.D., political economy (Beijing University)
Huang Xingguo*	1954	Zhejiang	Deputy party secretary, Tianjin (2003–)	Party secretary, Ningbo city, Zhejiang (1998–2003)	Career in local administration; chief of staff	Zhejiang (1972–2003)	M.A. program (Central Party School)
Jiang Daming*	1953	Shandong	Party secretary, Jinan city; deputy party secretary, Shandong (2004–)	Head, Organization Department, Shandong (1998–2004)	Career in CCYL; close ties with Hu Jintao	None	M.A., economics (Harbin Institute of Technology); M.A., politics (Central Party School)
Li Zhanshu*	1952	Hebei	Deputy party secretary, Heilongjiang (2003–)	Party secretary, Xi'an city, Shaanxi (2002–3)	Career in CCYL, local administration; close ties with Hu Jintao	Hebei (1975–94), Shaanxi (1998–2003)	M.A. program (CASS)
Yang Yongmao*	1947	Heilongjiang	Deputy party secretary, Shaanxi (2003–)	Party secretary, Harbin city, Heilongjiang (2002–3)	Career in CCYL, local administration; close ties with Hu Jintao	Heilongjiang (1964–2003)	M.A. program, management (Harbin Institute of Technology)
Yuan Chunqing*	1952	Hunan	Party secretary, Xi'an city, Shaanxi (2003–)	Deputy party secretary, Shaanxi (2001–)	Career in CCYL; close ties with Hu Jintao	None	M.A., law (China's University of Political Science and Law)
Du Yuxin*	1953	Heilongjiang	Party secretary, Harbin city, Heilongjiang (2003–)	Standing member, Heilongjiang (2002–3)	Career in local administration	None	M.A. program (Central Party School)
Bayinqolu	1955	Neimenggu	Party secretary, Ningbo city, Zhejiang (2003–)	Vice governor, Zhejiang (2001–3)	Career in CCYL; close ties with Hu Jintao	Neimenggu (1976–93)	M.A., economics (Jilin University)
Li Jinzao	1958	Hubei	Vice governor, Guangxi (2003–)	Party secretary, Guilin city, Guangxi (2001–3)	Career in local administration	None	Ph.D., economics (CASS)
Zhang Qunshan	1953	Hebei	Vice governor, Guizhou (2003–)	Head, Economic Commission, Guizhou (2003)	Career in local administration	None	M.A. program, economics (South China Institute of Science and Technology)
Zhong Yangsheng	1948	Guangdong	Vice governor, Guangdong (2003–)	Head, Propaganda Department, Guangdong (2000–2003)	Career in local administration	None	Ph.D., philosophy (CASS)
Yu Youjun	1953	Jiangsu	Vice governor, Hunan (2003–)	Mayor, Shenzhen city, Guangdong (2000–2003)	Career in local administration	Guangdong (1971–2003)	Ph.D., philosophy (Zhongshan University)

SOURCE: The author's database on Chinese provincial leaders.

NOTES: \* = alternate member of 16th Central Committee of CCP, CCYL = Chinese Communist Youth League, CASS = Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

A number of newly appointed city chiefs previously served as deputy provincial leaders, which are higher-ranking positions in the Chinese political system. For example, Party Secretary of Ningbo Bayinqolu previously served as vice governor of Zhejiang, Mayor of Shenzhen Li Hongzhong was executive vice governor of Guangdong, and Party Secretary of Xi'an Yuan Chunqing previous held the position of deputy secretary of Shaanxi. Some observers refer to this career pattern as the "Li Yuanchao model."<sup>29</sup> Party Secretary of Jiangsu Li Yuanchao first served as deputy party secretary of Jiangsu in 2000 and then served as party secretary of Nanjing city for about two years before being appointed party chief of the province in 2002. Experience as a party chief in a major city appears to be a stepping-stone to advance one's political career.

Relatively young age and broader leadership experience are considered favorable attributes for a leader's further career advancement. Those new appointees in their 50s or younger are on the fast track for promotion. Most of them currently work in the inland provinces. Table 2 shows that among the 15 new provincial chiefs, 10 work in inland provinces: Shanxi, Qinghai (both secretary and governor), Neimenggu, Guangxi, Heilongjiang (both secretary and governor), Tibet, Hunan, and Gansu. The appointments of the five other new provincial chiefs in coastal provinces were the results of unexpected circumstances (e.g., the firing of the former Beijing mayor, an illness of the former party secretary of Fujian, and vacancies resulting from other leaders' promotions or transfers). This phenomenon suggests that Hu and Wen are focusing on selecting provincial chiefs from the inland provinces, where Hu and Wen advanced their own political careers.

## New Provincial Leaders' Characteristics That Correspond to Hu's New Deal

Hu and Wen portray themselves as the "president of the people" and the "premier of the people," respectively. Similarly, the newly appointed provincial chiefs often follow the model of their national leaders and present themselves as the "secretary of the people" (*pingmin shuji*) or the "governor of the people" (*pingmin shengzhang*). For example, "I'm determined to become the governor of the people" was new Hunan Governor Zhou Bohua's opening statement at his first press conference.<sup>30</sup> Premier Wen told reporters that he had visited 1,800 of China's 2,500 counties. Following his example, the new governor of Qinghai, Yang Chuantang, claimed that he visited 70 of Tibet's 74 counties when he was deputy governor of Tibet.<sup>31</sup> These new provincial chiefs not only are concerned about the growth of GDP in their provinces, but also pay greater attention to the issues of employment, social welfare, and economic disparity than did their predecessors.<sup>32</sup>

Among the 29 newly appointed provincial leaders, reportedly only Beijing Mayor Wang Qishan is a princeling; his father-in-law is the late Yao Yilin, former vice premier of the State Council. Mayor Wang, however, is a popular leader known for his down-to-earth leadership style and his talent in crisis management. His courage, energy, honesty, and common sense during the SARS crisis earned him great respect from the residents of Beijing. Moreover, in contrast to most princelings, such as Bo Xilai (former governor of Liaoning and new minister of trade) and Xi Jinping (party secretary of Zhejiang), who are

notorious for their obsession with political networking and nepotism, Wang Qishan has always taken on tough issues throughout his career, including localism and financial scandals in Guangdong and property squabbles in Hainan.<sup>33</sup>

Most of these newly appointed provincial leaders come from humble family backgrounds. Many were “sent-down youths” who worked as farmers during the Cultural Revolution. Examples include Zhao Leji in Qinghai, Liu Yupu in Liaoning, Zhang Qunshan in Guizhou, Yang Chuantang in Shandong, and Lu Zhangong and Jiang Daming in Heilongjiang. New Governor of Shanxi Zhang Baoshun started his career at age 18 as a dockworker in his native city, Qinghuangdao, Hebei. Wang Qishan, who was born into a family of college professors in Beijing, spent years working in a farm in Yan’an.

Enormous physical hardship and an ever changing political environment during their formative years nurtured in these leaders valuable traits such as adaptability, endurance, and grassroots consciousness. The fact that most of these new provincial leaders advanced their careers from China’s poorest region indicates that they will be more sensitive to the needs and concerns of the inland provinces and so-called weaker groups.

A significant number of these new appointees served as leaders in the agricultural sector for many years. Among the 15 new provincial chiefs, for example, seven (Guangxi Governor Lu Bing, Neimenggu Governor Yang Jing, Fujian Party Secretary Lu Zhangong, Gansu Party Secretary Su Rong, Heilongjiang Party Secretary Song Fatang, Hainan Party Secretary Wang Xiaofeng, and Tibet Governor Xiangba Pingcuo) have leadership experience as party secretary in a county. In addition, Beijing Mayor Wang Qishan worked in the field of rural development from 1982 to 1988, the period during which China made remarkable progress in rural reforms.

All these characteristics of newly appointed provincial leaders are consistent with the objectives of Hu’s New Deal. Their down-to-earth leadership style, humble family backgrounds, formative experience as “sent-down youths,” awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of the poor and less privileged people, career advancement through work in rural and economically less advantaged areas, and administrative experience in provincial capital cities all reflect the populist approach of governance of the Hu-Wen administration.

In some respects, the characteristics of these newly appointed provincial leaders contrast directly with those of Bo Xilai, former governor of Liaoning and the new minister of trade. As a princeling whose father is a good friend of Jiang Zemin, Bo has advanced his career through nepotism and favoritism. He has been quite calculating in choosing leadership assignments that could easily and quickly demonstrate his “achievements.” As a top leader in Dalian, Bo bragged about planting a large area of grass in the city. But in fact, as many Chinese critics bluntly pointed out, it is much easier to plant grass than to plant trees. It takes only weeks or months for grass to grow, but years and decades for trees to grow. In a city that lacks water, and thus needs trees

rather than grass, Bo's symbolic gesture shows that he is concerned only about his own "image project," not about the long-term development of Dalian.<sup>34</sup>

Wen Shizhen, party secretary of Liaoning, recently stated that expanding wealth in Chinese cities should not come at the expense of rising poverty in rural areas. He illustrated the growing disparity between the cities and the countryside in China by stating: "Cities are built like those in Europe, and the rural areas look like those in Africa." Some observers believe that Secretary Wen used this analogy to criticize his former colleague, Bo Xilai, who allocated too many resources to cities like Dalian and neglected rural development during his tenure as the governor of Liaoning.<sup>35</sup>

Critics also observe that, while Bo often claims that he would deal with official corruption seriously, according to the statistics released by Xinhua News Agency on official corruption scandals by province in 2003, Liaoning was at the top of the list. Liaoning had 8,486 cases, or about four times the number in Hebei, the province with the second highest number of cases (2,479).<sup>36</sup>

During the past year, Bo Xilai has portrayed himself as a "leading regional voice" for northeastern rejuvenation, often articulating his vision for the future of Liaoning and the future of the northeastern region under this new strategic plan.<sup>37</sup> Ironically, no progress has been made with respect to Liaoning's rejuvenation, and the governor left for a higher position in the central government.

The person who succeeded Bo Xilai as the governor of Liaoning is Zhang Wenyue, a longtime friend of Premier Wen. Both Wen and Zhang attended the Beijing Institute of Geology in the 1960s, and both joined the CCP at school in 1965. After graduation, both went to work in the difficult field of geological research (Wen in Gansu and Zhang in western Sichuan). They advanced their professional and political careers step-by-step as technicians, engineers, team leaders, and bureau chiefs. It is reported that when he was vice minister of geology and mineral resources, Wen promoted Zhang to become director of the bureau of geology and mineral resources in Sichuan.<sup>38</sup> Not surprisingly, Wen now has his trusted friend as a major player in the northeastern rejuvenation, the strategic development plan personally drafted by Premier Wen. More personnel changes are likely to occur in China's northeastern provinces.

## Hu's Men: Provincial Leaders with a Youth League Background

Most newly appointed provincial leaders advanced their careers step-by-step through local administration. Tables 2 and 3 show that roughly half of these leaders have never worked in other provinces. None of these 29 newly appointed provincial leaders was transferred from Shanghai or Jiangsu, the regions closely controlled by Jiang Zemin. Instead, many new top provincial leaders accelerated their careers through the Chinese Communist Youth League, and some have close ties with Hu Jintao, former secretary of the CCYL. Zhang Baoshun (governor of Shanxi), Liu Yupu (deputy party secretary of Guangdong), Yuan Chunqing (party secretary of Xi'an), Li Zhanshu (deputy party secretary of Heilongjiang), and Jiang Daming (party secretary of Jinan) all served in the

secretariat and the central committee of the CCYL (or its general office) during the early 1980s, when Hu Jintao was in charge of the CCYL. In addition, Yang Jing (governor of Neimenggu), Xia Baolong (deputy party secretary of Zhejiang), and Yang Yongmao (deputy party secretary of Shaanxi) all served as CCYL officials at the lower level of the organization in the early 1980s. Governor of Qinghai Yang Chuantang's tenure as a CCYL official did not occur concurrently with Hu's tenure as secretary of the CCYL, but Yang's political career path appears to have followed that of Hu: first serving as CCYL secretary at the provincial level, then attending the Central Party School (CPS), and then working as a provincial leader in Tibet.

All these nine provincial leaders with CCYL backgrounds are alternate members of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP and are rising stars in the Chinese leadership. Because of their close ties with Hu Jintao and their similar political backgrounds, they are important allies for Hu's New Deal policies.

Hu's power has been further consolidated by the fact that a majority of these newly appointed provincial leaders attended the CPS when Hu was president of the school. For example, Liu Yupu studied in a master's program at the CPS between 1995 and 1998, and Jiang Daming attended the school between 1998 and 2001. Zhou Bohua, Huang Xingguo, and Du Yuxin also received their postgraduate degrees at the CPS in a program designed for high-ranking ministerial and provincial leaders. Detailed information about their association with Hu Jintao at the CPS is not available, but it is clear that the CPS has functioned as a training ground for high-ranking leaders. Many "promising leaders" were not only designated for such training, but also kept under close scrutiny during their studies at the CPS.

Tables 2 and 3 show that a majority of these new provincial leaders hold postgraduate degrees, especially the deputy provincial leaders (13 out of 14, or 93 percent). Four leaders—Xia Baolong, Li Jinzao, Zhong Yangsheng, and Yu Youjun—hold doctoral degrees. In addition to the five leaders who received their postgraduate education at the CPS, five obtained their advanced degrees from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and three hold master's degrees from Jilin University. These three institutions often provide midcareer degree programs or part-time postgraduate programs.

In contrast to the top national leaders in both the third and fourth generations who were predominantly engineers-turned-politicians, a large number of new provincial leaders majored in economics, the social sciences, and the humanities. Table 2 shows that those provincial chiefs who studied engineering, economics, and the social sciences or the humanities are evenly distributed (one-third for each academic field). However, as shown in table 3, none of the new deputy provincial leaders majored in engineering, 11 (79 percent) studied economics, the social sciences, and law, and the other three (21 percent) majored in humanities such as Chinese or philosophy.

The educational backgrounds of the new provincial leaders may suggest that the dominance of technocrats in the Chinese leadership will come to an end in the near future. This trend may be a sign of a strategic shift under Hu's New Deal from single-

minded emphasis on economic growth and gigantic construction projects to a broader and more cohesive focus on the need to uphold social fairness and social justice in China.

## Conclusion

Any major shift in the strategic development of a country cannot be achieved without the presence of a large, unified group of governing elites who support the plan. Hu's New Deal is certainly not an exception. An analysis of the 29 top provincial leaders who have been appointed since Hu became president of the PRC in March 2003 shows that he has selected many like-minded provincial leaders to carry out his New Deal policies.

Most of these new leaders are relatively young; they typically advanced their careers from the grass roots and local administration; most have postgraduate degrees (mainly in economics, the social sciences, and the humanities); and many worked in rural areas early in their careers and later gained experience by managing large cities. Many had close ties with Hu Jintao during the early years of their careers as CCYL officials. Equally significantly, the experience and outlook of many of these provincial chiefs mirror those of their "role models" Hu and Wen, in terms of their substantial work experience in China's inland region as well as the image of themselves they choose to present to the general public.

It remains to be seen whether Hu's growing power and his New Deal policies will expand to other geographical regions, such as Shanghai and Jiangsu, and to other bureaucratic constituencies, such as trade and finance. The success or failure of Hu's New Deal will undeniably have profound implications for the most populous country in the world.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The author thanks Sally Carman and Jennifer Schwartz for suggesting ways to clarify this article.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Kang Xiaoguang, a prominent scholar in the Center for China Study at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, observes that the term "new deal" (*xinzheng*) has become one of the most commonly used words—both among the Chinese public and intellectual communities—to refer to the policy orientation of the new leadership. See <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, December 30, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of New Deal policies and politics, see Cheng Li, "The 'New Deal': Politics and Policies of the Hu Administration," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 38, nos. 4–5 (December 2003): 329–46.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Bi Gong, "Xinren Hu Jintao? Youyici tianzhen de dengdai" (What's new about Hu Jintao? Naively waiting for another chance), <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, March 1, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> The new policy orientation, as noted by many think-tank members of the Chinese government and overseas observers, was evident even during the first hundred days of the Hu administration. *South China Morning Post*, June 28, 2003, and *Xingdao ribao* (Singapore Daily), July 14, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Wu Jinglian's remarks were quoted in Ma Ling and Li Ming, *Wen Jiabao* (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 2003), 243.

<sup>7</sup> Some scholars in the Development Research Center of the State Council argue that the risk involved in deficit spending by local governments in the country has become the greatest threat to China's economic security and social stability. See <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, February 23, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> For a further discussion of the contrast between Jiang's associates and Hu's followers, see Cheng Li, "Zhonggong di shiliujie zhongyang weiyuanhui renshi goucheng jiqi quanli junheng" (The 16th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Paths to membership and balance of power), in *Hu Jintao shidai de tiaozhan* (Challenges for the Hu Jintao era), ed. Ding Shufan (Taipei: Xinxinwen Publishing House, 2002), 16–52, and Cheng Li, "Emerging Patterns of Power Sharing: Inland Hu vs. Coastal Zeng?" *Asia Program Report* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) 105 (September 2002): 28–34.

<sup>9</sup> For more discussion of the northeastern rejuvenation, see Cheng Li, "China's Northeast: From Largest Rust Belt to Fourth Economic Engine?" *China Leadership Monitor* 9 (winter 2004).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.xinhuanet.com>, October 15, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Hu Angang, "Dierci zhuanxing: Cong jingji jianshe wei zhongxin dao zhidu jianshe wei zhongxin" (The second transition: From economy-centered growth to institution-building-centered development), in *Dierci zhuanxing: Guojia zhidu jianshe* (The second transition: Institution-building by the state), ed. Hu Angang, Wang Shaoguang, and Zhou Jianming (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2003), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ma Ling and Li Ming, *Wen Jiabao*, 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.xinhuanewsnet.com>, February 26, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> *Shijie ribao* (World Journal), January 12, 2000, sec. A, p. 9, and <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, December 30, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Hu Angang, "Dierci zhuanxing," 15–16.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, February 27, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> As Wang Yukai, professor at the National School of Administration, observed, the newly issued regulation on CCP interparty supervision aims to tighten supervision over the party's leading officials at all levels across the country, including the paramount leader, to "fill the existing supervision loopholes." See <http://www.china.org.cn>, February 18, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Some Chinese public intellectuals, such as Hu Angang, argue that the term limits and the age requirement for retirement should also apply to the very top leaders in the CCP. See Hu Angang, "Dierci zhuanxing," 14.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, March 2, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> *Dongfang ribao* (Eastern Daily), February 29, 2004, 1.

<sup>22</sup> For a list of ministerial and provincial leaders who were fired due to corruption charges in 2003, see *Shijie ribao*, February 27, 2004, sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, March 2, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion on the origins and characteristics of the *nomenklatura* system in the Soviet Union and China, see Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class: An Insider's Report*, trans. Eric Mosbacher (New York: Doubleday, 1984), and Johns Burns, "China's Nomenklatura System," *Problems of Communism* 36, no. 5 (September/October 1987): 36–51.

<sup>25</sup> Zhiyue Bo, "The Provinces: Training Ground for National Leaders or a Power in Their Own Right?" in *China's Leadership Transition: Prospects and Implications*, ed. David M. Finkelstein and Maryanne Kivlehan (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 66–117.

<sup>26</sup> *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), April 14, 2003, 4.

<sup>27</sup> For more discussion of Lu Hao, see Cheng Li, "The Emergence of the Fifth Generation in the Provincial Leadership," *China Leadership Monitor* 6 (spring 2003).

<sup>28</sup> The real number may be higher, since some appointments of deputy provincial leaders were not reported immediately by the national media.

<sup>29</sup> *Shijie ribao*, December 18, 2003, sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, March 2, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Dongfang ribao*, February 29, 2004, 1.

<sup>33</sup> For more discussion of Wang Qishan's administrative and political achievements, see *Shijie ribao*, February 22, 2004, sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Zhongguo gongshang shibao* (China Business and Commerce Times), February 22, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> *Shijie ribao*, February 25, 2004, sec. C, p. 1.



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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.xinhuanet.com>, February 5, 2004, and <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, February 19, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> See Cheng Li, "China's Northeast."

<sup>38</sup> *Shijie ribao*, February 18, 2004, sec. C, p. 1.