



Economists have long doubted the accuracy of Chinese official figures. So do Chinese officials such as Party Vice-Premier Li Keqiang. He told U.S. diplomats in 2007 that Chinese GDP figures are “man made” and could not be trusted.

His comments are described in a confidential cable released by **WikiLeaks** of a conversation between U.S. Ambassador to China Clark Randt and Li Keqiang, who could be the Chinese regime’s next leader. During a dinner in Liaoning Province, Li said he used three figures to gauge the economy of the province - electricity consumption, the volume of rail cargo and the amount of loans disbursed.

The cable says, “By looking at these three figures, Li said he can measure with relative accuracy the speed of economic growth. All other figures, especially GDP statistics, are ‘for reference only,’ he said smiling.”

When compiled into an index by *The Economist* magazine, Li’s three preferred figures paint a picture of a dynamic but volatile economy where GDP growth has plunged this year by half.