

Finally, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) has initiated the long-awaited action of taking down Zhou Yongkang. This intense political drama, titled "The Battle at Zhongnanhai," started in early 2012 when Wang Lijun, then the Chongqing police chief, attempted to defect to the U.S. It was followed by the downfall of Bo Xilai, Xu Caihou, and over 40 high ranking officials. It finally climaxed in the caging of the Zhou "tiger." It seems the curtain may soon close on this drama, but will it?

A People's Daily commentary said the Zhou takedown "is not the end." Xi Jinping, the current top leader of China, was reported to have said the anti-corruption campaign has reached a "stalemate," but he is willing to continue the fight even at the cost of his personal life or personal fame.

What's going on? Is this a life or death battle? Is more drama yet to be displayed?

To answer these questions, let us first take a look at the current stage of the battle: What is happening and why?

For readers who are not familiar with the term "hunting 'tigers,'" Xi Jinping has used it to refer to the CCDI's anti-corruption campaign against high-ranking officials. The CCDI has also introduced the terms "big tigers" (top-level officials) and "old tigers" (retired top-level officials). Zhou Yongkang, a Politburo Standing Committee member and the security czar in China, is the largest "big tiger" to be caged so far.

The ongoing anti-corruption campaign is probably the biggest political battle at Zhongnanhai since the arrest of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. It is the alliance of Xi Jinping and Wang Qishan, with the support of Hu Jintao, against the Jiang Zemin's faction.

The attempted political coup to overthrow Xi triggered the conflict. So far, Bo, Xu Caihou, and Zhou have been taken down.

The reason that Jiang's faction decided on such a coup was to ensure that their policy of persecuting Falun Gong would continue and would be kept secret so that they would not be charged with crimes against humanity.

A life or death battle is unfolding in China. Xi has expressed that he is willing to give his life in the fight, while Jiang fears for the loss of his, should the Falun Gong issue be redressed. What will be the end of the hunters and "tigers" story is yet to be seen.

Background

People who understand China's politics know that anti-corruption is, itself, not the purpose. Rather, it is a weapon in a political battle. The widespread corruption problem in China emerged from Jiang Zemin's rule by corruption. Jiang was the head of the CCP from 1989 to 2002. China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping chose him after Deng expelled then CCP General-Secretary Zhao Ziyang during June 4th movement. When Jiang came to power, he didn't have much leverage over officials. So he used corruption to lure and to control them – letting them be corrupt in exchange for their loyalty. As a result, corruption exploded under his rule. Jiang's successor Hu Jintao didn't try to stop corruption, though he used the anti-corruption charge in a few political battles.

The current battle at Zhongnanhai takes the form of an anti-corruption campaign, with the highlights of Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping jointly hunting down Bo Xilai (2012-2013) and Xi caging Zhou Yongkang (2013-2014). It is actually a battle with deeper political reasons between Jiang Zemin's faction and the alliance of Xi Jinping and Hu Jintao.

To understand the battle, let us first review the key top officials who are involved.

Jiang Zemin's Faction

Jiang Zemin (江泽民): The former top leader of the CCP and China from 1989 to 2002. Jiang has held the three top titles: the General Secretary of the CCP, the President of China, and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC).

Zeng Qinghong (曾庆红): Jiang's political adviser and "power broker." He served as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and as the Vice President of China. He is the number two figure in Jiang's faction.

Zhou Yongkang (周永康): A key member of Jiang's faction. He served as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee from 2007 to 2012 and as the Party Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Committee. In that position, Zhou oversaw China's entire security apparatus and its law enforcement institutions. His power stretched into the prosecutor and court systems, the police force (including 1 million armed police), the paramilitary forces, and China's intelligence organs.

Bo Xilai (薄熙来): A key member in Jiang's faction. From 2007 until 2012, he served as a member of the CCP Politburo and as the Chongqing Party Secretary.

Xu Caihou (徐才厚): A key member of Jiang Zemin's faction. He served as the Vice Chairman of the CMC from 2004 to 2012. He provided strong support to Jiang and successfully minimized Hu Jintao's influence over the military though Hu held the title of CMC Chairman.

The Xi and Hu alliance

Hu Jintao (胡锦涛): The former top leader of the CCP and China from 2002 to 2012, took over the three top titles from Jiang in a bumpy transition that lasted from 2002 to 2004. Once the General Secretary of the Communist Youth League, Hu was able to rely on officials with Youth League experience to develop his faction, which was also called the Youth League faction.

Wen Jiabao (温家宝): Hu's strong supporter. He served as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee from 2002 to 2012 and as the Premier of the State Council from 2003 to 2013.

Xi Jinping (习近平): The current top leader of the CCP and China. In a smooth transition from 2012 to 2013 he took over the three big titles from Hu Jintao. Xi does not have a faction.

Wang Qishan (王岐山): Xi's strong supporter. Currently, he serves as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and as the Party Secretary of the CCDI. He is the main executor of the hunting "tigers" campaign.

The Xi-Hu alliance includes Xi and Wang, Hu's Youth League faction, and the princelings (the second generation of former CCP top officials) who were initially watching the battle and then vowed, at the beginning of 2014, to support Xi.

The following is a quick replay of the major events in the battle:

February 6, 2012 – Wang Lijun, former Chongqing police chief and henchman for Bo Xilai, went to the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu seeking political asylum. Wang revealed many secrets about Bo and his group to the U.S. This event started the downfall of Bo and many others.

March 15, 2012 – Bo Xilai was removed from his official posts while being investigated. On August 22, 2013, he was tried for corruption, bribery, and abuse of power. He was sentenced to life in prison.

December 13, 2012 – The CCDI started a corruption investigation into Li Chuncheng (李春城), an Alternate Member of the CCP Politburo and Vice Party Secretary of Sichuan. Li was loyal to Zhou Yongkang and was the first ministerial-level official in Zhou's entourage to be taken down.

By July 31, 2014, according to Sohu.com, the CCDI had taken down many "tigers," including one national-level official (Zhou Yongkang), three deputy-national-level officials (Sohu.com only listed two, missing Bo Xilai), four ministerial-level officials, 38 vice-ministerial-level officials, and over 200 department- and deputy-department-level officials.

On June 30, 2014, the CCDI announced the downfall of another "big tiger" in the military: Xu Caihou. He was expelled from the Party and the military will prosecute him.

On July 29, 2014, Zhou Yongkang was taken down, marking the first time in the past 35 years that a CCP Politburo Standing Committee member was taken down publicly.

II. Analysis of the Battle

It Is a Tough Battle

It was hard to hunt down the “big tigers.” It took 18 months, from March 2012 to September 2013, to put the Bo “tiger” into a cage. Hunting down the Zhou “tiger” took an even longer time. Zhou was said to have lost power in the summer 2012, or even as early as March 2012, but it was not until July 2014 that the CCDI announced his downfall.

One reason was that Zhou was very powerful. When he was in power, he protected Bo so that Bo’s case could not develop quickly. When he lost power, it was still hard to touch him. Zhou’s empire, centered around the Political and Legal Affairs Committee, was called the “second Central Committee.” It could even block Hu Jintao’s directives from being implemented when Hu was the head of the CCP.

Thus, to hunt down the Zhou “tiger,” the CCDI started with his followers. Among the 44 officials at the vice-ministerial level or higher whom the CCDI has taken down since December 2012, more than 20 were said to have close ties or financial connections with Zhou. Many of them were Zhou’s secretaries, worked under Zhou when he was in charge of the oil system, Sichuan Province, or in the Political and Legal Affairs Committee.

The Battle Is Bigger Than What It Appears

Actually, the forces in the battle included more than just Zhou and Bo fighting Xi and Hu. Even for the two and one-half years when Zhou and Bo were no longer in power, Xi and Hu faced a strong force of resistance. That force either attacked Xi and Hu directly or created social turmoil to distract them and threaten their reign. ***Here are some examples.***

On the night of March 19, 2012, four days after Hu and Wen striped Bo of his power, people heard gunshots and reported seeing soldiers enter Beijing. One version of the story is that Zhou ordered armed police to surround Zhongnanhai to perpetrate a coup, which Hu defeated by ordering the military to enter Beijing. Another version is that, when the CCDI tried to get a key witness in Bo’s case out of Zhou’s hands, the two sides clashed and shots were fired.

In the summer of 2012, the conflict involving the Diaoyu Islands, over which both China and Japan claimed sovereignty, burst into the open. The temperature of this patriotic movement shot up so high that anti-Japan demonstrations were held in over 100 cities in China. One banner displayed at the demonstrations said, “The Diaoyu Islands belong to China; Bo Xilai belongs to the people.” One interpretation was that protecting the Diaoyu Islands was the smoking gun; protecting Bo was the real goal. Someone created the Diaoyu Islands issue to distract Hu and also use it to fake public support for Bo.

On October 26, 2012, the New York Times reported the corruption case involving Wen Jiabao’s family on its front page. A wealth of information had been fed to it to substantiate the facts. Though corrupt officials were everywhere in China, this report singled out Wen, a strong supporter of Hu in taking down Bo.

On October 28, 2013, three days after the Shandong High Court rejected Bo Xilai’s appeal, a

car exploded on Tiananmen Square, causing five deaths and 38 injuries. It is hard to believe a few Uyghurs, as blamed by the Chinese government, could do it by themselves because Tiananmen Square is one of the most well-guarded places in China.

On January 21, 2014, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) published a document listing the offshore companies that the relatives of current and retired CCP Politburo Standing Committee members held in their names. The list included Xi Jinping, Wen Jiabao, Li Peng, Hu Jintao, and Deng Xiaoping. Jiang Zemin, Zeng Qinghong, and Zhou Yongkang were not mentioned.

On March 1, 2014, black-clad attackers hacked with knives through crowds at the train station in Kunming, Yunnan Province, killing 29 and injuring more than 140. Though the Yunnan government quickly blamed the Uyghurs for this “terrorist action,” there was a strong suspicion that the forces that backed Zhou might have stirred up this social turmoil.

Then a series of bombs and clashes developed in Xinjiang involving the Uyghurs and the police. The first event, a bombing at the Urumqi Train Station, which caused three deaths with 79 injured, occurred on May 1, 2014, when Xi Jinping was visiting Xinjiang.

The resistance to Xi’s corruption campaign was so strong that it is no wonder Xi mentioned giving up his life to continue the fight.

The Wide-spread Story of a Political Coup Explains the Resistance

The story that has been widely circulated is that Zhou and Bo had planned a coup to dethrone Xi and had started implementing the plan. Unfortunately, Wang Lijun revealed the plan to the Americans when he went to the U.S. Consulate. One version of the coup that was planned was:

First, Bo would continue his high-profile “singing the ‘red’ and fighting the ‘black’” campaign in Chongqing to build up his fame. Singing the “red” was to sing the popular Party-praising songs to earn support from the leftists in China. The fighting the “black” campaign claimed the goal of eradication of triads, while it really would allow Bo to steal huge amounts of money by targeting rich businessmen.

Second, in later 2012, Bo would become a member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee and take over Zhou’s Political and Legal Affairs Committee position during the CCP leadership transition. Bo would inherit enormous power from Zhou.

In his new post, Bo would extend his fighting the “black” campaign nationwide and use it to coerce other officials. He would also expand the already-too-big police force, especially the armed police. In the meantime, he would keep buying overseas media and use them to release negative information about Xi Jinping.

Finally, in 2014, Bo would carry out a political coup to force Xi to step down and hand power over to him.

A Hong Kong magazine *Multiple Faces* claimed that, when ransacking Zhou's home, Xi found a list of Bo and Zhou's cabinet members.

The ICIJ report supported the coup theory. The Chinese version of ICIJ's web page stated that ICIJ had received 2.5 million files about the offshore accounts two years earlier. That would be late 2011, suggesting that the political coup had already been placed in action – to spread negative information about Xi.

The coup group involved more than Zhou and Bo.

First, someone was organizing the resistance force when Zhou and Bo were no longer in power. There were reports that Zeng Qinghong was behind it.

Second, since Zhou and Bo are key members of Jiang's faction, it was natural for them to share their plan with Jiang and Zeng. Also, Jiang's political status and Zeng's political talents would be very valuable in consummating the coup.

Third, from the facts that Xi stated that "Zhou Yongkang is not the end", that the CCDI's "old tiger" cage remains empty, that Xi is willing to risk his life in the battle, and that Wang Qishan called this battle a critical political issue in which officials need to decide which side to take, one can infer Xi and Wang are now against Jiang and Zeng.

Therefore, this was a life and death battle between the Jiang faction and the Xi-Hu alliance.

Why Jiang's Faction Took on a Coup

Why did the two groups engage in such a high-stake battle?

For Xi, the answer is simple. Jiang's fraction was planning a coup to overthrow him and kept fighting him when he started to take out the conspirators. Xi had no choice but to hunt down his enemies, whether they were on the front-line or acted behind the scenes. Otherwise, he would lose his political life.

However, the motivation for Jiang's faction is puzzling.

True, Bo Xilai himself had a strong incentive to perpetrate a coup. He would become China's top leader, which he could not attain in any other way.

For other top guns in Jiang's faction, such as Zhou, Xu, Zeng, and even Jiang himself, their motivations were somewhat of a mystery. At the time when they planned the coup, they were either retired or about to retire. For retired officials, a political coup would not enhance their power too much, but they risked losing everything if they failed. These veteran politicians should know how to calculate the political risks.

However, despite the risks and in spite of the severe consequences if they failed, they went forward with the coup.

What was their motivation? What was worth that much risk?

As there was no obvious reward for them, it would have to be to avoid a dreadful threat. Let's see what that threat could be. A valid answer would have to satisfy two conditions: one, there was a threat with devastating consequence to them; and two, they perceived that they had a solution to resolve the threat once they had total control.

A Collision of Political Views?

Resolving irreconcilable gaps in political views is a valid reason for a political coup. However, that is unlikely to be the cause here.

First, when the coup was planned (say in 2010 or so), Xi was the "crowned prince." In the Chinese political system, the "crowned prince" acted cautiously to avoid making any mistakes. It would have been hard to tell what Xi's real political stand was until he took over the scepter.

Second, the coup group didn't have any strong political aspirations of their own. Bo's show of singing the "red" tried to appeal to the leftists, but overall, under Jiang's leadership, his faction didn't take any strong ideological position, either left or right. In fact, the "three represents," Jiang's highest contribution to CCP theory, was criticized by the leftists as "allowing capitalists to join the communist party."

Third, there was no drastic difference on foreign policy either. China's top leaders are practical. They want to have a bigger influence on the international stage, but they are smart enough to recognize the U.S.' dominant position. From Jiang to Hu to Xi, there have not been any major policy changes. The current confrontations with Japan, the Southeast Asian countries, and Hong Kong were rather chaos that Jiang's faction created for Xi. They were unlikely to be the foreign policies that either Xi or Jiang's faction wanted to take when they were in control.

Securing Political Power and Preempting Xi?

This is unlikely because, when Jiang's faction decided on the coup, Xi probably didn't have a plan to take them down or strip them of power. What actually happened later was Xi's forced response to the coup.

If the concern was to continue to hold power, a safer and less risky option would have been either to recruit Xi into Jiang's faction or form an alliance with Xi. Xi and Jiang (including Zeng) shared their princeling status. Also Jiang nominated Xi as the core of the fifth generation of the CCP leaders. Jiang could have connected to Xi instead of taking him down.

Keeping the CCP in Power?

Yes, given China's social problems, there was a legitimate threat that the CCP might fall, which would lead the end of Jiang's faction as well.

However, Jiang's group didn't have a solution to prevent it, because they were the ones largely

responsible for the following social problems:

Official corruption: Jiang's faction was much more corrupt than Hu's Youth League faction, because Jiang had chosen to rule by corruption and promoted corrupt but "loyal" officials.

Wealth parity: The richest group in China is the princelings, who, because of their control of business sectors, have been raking in huge amounts of money. Jiang, Zeng, Zhou, and Bo's sons are all billionaires. Zhou's son Zhou Bin once said that he wouldn't talk about any business if his profit was less than 100 million yuan (U.S. \$16 million). Again, Jiang's faction created this problem, so it couldn't correct it.

Tension/confrontation between officials and the public: Jiang's faction's solution for "maintaining stability" was to throw in more police to silence people. No one expected them to come up with a better cure.

Thus, though the CCP's fall was a legitimate threat to Jiang's faction, it had no solution to save it. A coup would not have helped.

Avoiding Having to Face Corruption Charges?

Since officials in Jiang's faction are much more corrupt, they might feel the danger of being sued. However, in China's political game, anti-corruption is a weapon used to go after political enemies. As long as Jiang's faction was not Xi's enemy, it did not have to worry.

Furthermore, following a long CCP tradition, Jiang, Zeng, Zhou, and Xu would be exempt from corruption charges, as they would never apply to Politburo Standing Committee members or retired top officials.

Maintaining Their Family's Financial Territory?

Jiang, Zeng, and Zhou's children all had enormous wealth. Zeng Qinghong's son Zeng Wei, for example, bought the whole Luneng Group with a net worth of 110 billion yuan (U.S. \$18 billion) by only spending 70 million Yuan (U.S. \$11 million).

If Jiang, Zeng, and Zhou were no longer in power, their children might see a potential loss of privileges in business. However, the CCP still kept its tradition of honoring the incumbent leaders, so their families could still enjoy privileges. For example, after Li Peng retired in 2002, his family still held onto the electricity industry.

Moreover, their families had already collected huge wealth. Would these veteran politicians risk their political lives for marginal financial gains?

Avoiding Redressing the June 4th Movement?

Redressing the June 4th movement was always a threat to Jiang Zemin. Due to the hard-line approach he had taken in Shanghai, after the June 4th movement, he was promoted as the

CCP's new leader.

However, the Tiananmen Square Massacre was not a big political burden for members of Jiang's faction. They moved up after Jiang attained power after the June 4th massacre. Also, it was Deng and the other senior CCP leaders, not Jiang, who made the decision to suppress to movement. Jiang was only a local executor and the biggest beneficiary.

Would Jiang's faction attempt a coup to prevent the redressing of the June 4th Massacre? Unlikely.

Fears of Falun Gong Drove Jiang's Faction to Battle

The only thing that could unite Jiang's faction together was the handling of Falun Gong.

What Is the Falun Gong Issue?

The official website of Falun Dafa explains Falun Gong as follows:

Falun Dafa (also called Falun Gong) is an advanced self-cultivation practice of the Buddha School. Falun Dafa was founded by Mr. Li Hongzhi, the practice's master. It is a discipline in which "assimilation to the highest qualities of the universe – Zhen, Shan, Ren (Truthfulness, Compassion, Forbearance) – is the foundation of practice. Practice is guided by these supreme qualities, and based on the very laws which underlie the development of the cosmos."

As a practice with both exercises and spiritual cultivation, Falun Gong was very effective in healing and fitness and in providing spiritual guidance sorely lacking under Communist dogma. It was introduced to the public in China in 1992. By 1999, it had spread to a hundred million people (U.S. Department of State estimated 70 million. One third of the 60 million Chinese Communist Party members and a large number of high-ranking officials practiced Falun Gong.

The Jiang faction saw the danger in allowing the practice to proliferate. First, it could not accept the fact that, after more than 40 years of Marxist indoctrination, so many people, including Communist Party members, would look elsewhere for moral and spiritual guidance. Second, because of its atheist nature and its propensity for control, the CCP saw any spiritual practice that the Party did not officially sanction as a threat. Third, as Jiang used corruption to lure and control officials, he saw the practice of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Forbearance as a direct threat to his ability to lead.

On July 20, 1999, Jiang started the anti-Falun Gong campaign.

Jiang installed a security agency called the "610 Office" (named for the date of its creation on June 10, 1999) within the CCP system to carry out the anti-Falun Gong campaign. It was the implementation arm of the Central Leading Group on Dealing with Falun Gong, also known as the Central Leading Group on Dealing with Heretical Religions. The 610 Office could use all the powers of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee to accomplish its task: the elimination of Falun Gong. It gave itself three months. That did not quite work out.

The CCP wanted to “transform” Falun Gong practitioners, by making them write and sign statements not to practice Falun Gong. It employed various methods to achieve this goal: create propaganda to denounce Falun Gong, deprive practitioners of health care and pensions, fire practitioners from their jobs, implicate their families, throw them into brainwashing centers, mental hospitals, forced-labor camps (“re-education through labor” camps), or prisons, where the brutal torture often resulted in disability or death.

According to the Falun Dafa Information Center, an organization focused on gathering persecution information, “over 3,000 deaths [of Falun Gong practitioners] have been documented, as well as over 63,000 accounts of torture. An estimate of the real figure puts the actual death toll in the tens of thousands.”

Organ Harvesting

Among all the tortures that Falun Gong practitioners have reported to the international community, the most shocking accusation was the harvesting of organs from live Falun Gong practitioners to sell to those in need of a transplant.

The story, almost too dreadful to believe, was first revealed in March 2006, when a woman claimed that as many as 4,000 Falun Gong had been killed for their organs at the hospital where she had worked. She also said that her husband, a surgeon at the same hospital, outside the northeastern city of Shenyang, had disclosed to her that he had removed corneas from the living bodies of 2,000 Falun Gong adherents.

Two prominent Canadian human rights lawyers, former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia Pacific David Kilgour and Nazi hunter and human rights attorney David Matas, launched their own investigation into this allegation. In July 2006, they published a [140-page report](#) and drew “the regrettable conclusion that the allegations are true.”

The report stated, “The [organ harvesting] allegations, if true, represent a disgusting form of evil which, despite all the depravities humanity has seen, are new to this planet.” If it is proved to the world that it is true, it will likely lead to the downfall of all officials who participated in it, and to the collapse of the CCP.

Jiang’s Faction Was the Main Force in Persecuting Falun Gong

Obviously, Jiang was the primary culprit in the persecution.

Jiang kept promoting the officials who persecuted Falun Gong most fiercely. As those people kept moving up, they became a major force within Jiang’s faction.

Zhou Yongkang was an example. According to the *World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong*, “From 1999 to 2002, when Zhou was the Sichuan Provincial Party Secretary, he used all major events to push the persecution of Falun Gong... His active drive of the persecution was recognized and appreciated by Jiang Zemin. In 2002, with no work experience in the Public Security system at

all, Zhou was assigned to Minister and Party Secretary of the Public Security Ministry and the Deputy Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee...”

Bo Xilai is also a die-hard persecutor of Falun Gong. Fifteen Falun Gong practitioners were tortured to death when Bo was the mayor of Dalian, Liaoning Province. Then Bo got promoted to the Deputy Party Secretary and Governor of Liaoning. By November 16, 2003, there were 92 deaths of Falun Gong practitioners in Liaoning, making it the fourth largest province in death toll numbers.

Jiang Weiping, a news reporter from Hong Kong's *Wen Wei Po*, explained why Bo Xilai wanted to persecute Falun Gong. In 1999, he asked Bo's chauffeur Wang, “[Bo] has a higher education. Why does he persecute Falun Gong so brutally?” Wang replied, “Jiang Zemin likes Bo and wants to install him as the next CCP leader after Hu Jintao. So Jiang told Bo, ‘You must show toughness, just as Hu did by suppressing the Tibetan riots in 1989. Then you will be qualified to rise.’” Thus, Bo took brutally suppressing Falun Gong as an opportunity for him to demonstrate his political talent and decisive character.

The Falun Gong Issue Is the Jiang Faction's Greatest Fear

Because Jiang's faction is filled with officials who have been involved in the persecution of Falun Gong, redressing the Falun Gong issue or even just exposing the nature of the persecution is a dreadful threat to them. If the live organ harvesting allegations were proven true, those involved would face more than ordinary punishment; they would hardly be thought of as human.

The same fear and the same fate bound these officials together. To them, the best option was to maintain the current persecution policy and keep the international community in the dark on this issue.

However, they could not trust Xi to do it for them since Xi had not gotten his hands dirty with Falun Gong practitioners' blood. With no political liability on this issue, Xi would be free to stop the persecution or continue the current policy.

Jiang's faction couldn't take a risk with Xi. They had to do everything in their power to prevent the Falun Gong issue from being redressed. The best and safest option was to push a person with Falun Gong blood on his hands to the top position of power.

That person was Bo Xilai.

Since the normal approach to get Bo Xilai to the top position wouldn't work, the Jiang faction then decided on a coup.

Some Clues that the Battle Is Related to Falun Gong

Though the battle at Zhongnanhai was caused by the Jiang faction's fear of redressing the Falun Gong issue, the motivation was deeply covered and fights were happening on many non-Falun Gong fronts. However, one can still see some traces of the Falun Gong issue behind

the gunsmoke.

International Pressure on Organ Harvesting

As there were reports that Wang Lijun handed information to the U.S. about harvesting the organs of live Falun Gong practitioners, both the U.S. and the European Parliaments have brought up the issue of organ harvesting on a number of occasions.

On May 24, 2012, U.S. State Department mentioned “[O]verseas and domestic media and advocacy groups continued to report instances of organ harvesting, particularly from Falun Gong practitioners and Uyghur’s” in its “2011 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices Report.”

On October 4, 2012, 106 U.S. Congress members sent a letter to call on the State Department to release information it might have about organ transplant abuses in China. It specifically requested the release of any information that Wang Lijun might have provided about organs harvested from still-living practitioners of Falun Gong.

On December 11, 2013, the European Parliament passed a resolution denouncing organ harvesting in China. It specifically mentioned Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups.

On July 21, 2014, U.S. Congressman Christopher Smith, Co-chairman of the *Congressional-Executive Commission on China* stated, “The systematic torture and attempted eradication of the Falun Gong will be seen as one of the great shames of Chinese history... Chinese officials must understand there are consequences to the arbitrary detention, torture, psychiatric experimentation, and organ harvesting experienced by Falun Gong practitioners.”

The U.S. Congress is currently working on House Resolution 281, to denounce organ harvesting in China, especially “against large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners.” This resolution passed the Foreign Affairs Committee on July 30, 2014, and will move to the House floor for a vote.

Recently, the U.S. administration also advocated more for Falun Gong practitioners.

In the newly published “International Religious Freedom Report for 2013,” the U.S. State Department mentioned the still-imprisoned Li Chang, a primary coordinator of Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing. At the news conference on the release of the report, Tom Malinowski, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the Department of State, criticized the CCP’s “banning outright” policy against Falun Gong and other religious and spiritual groups. He called for the release of the human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng who was arrested by the CCP for defending Falun Gong practitioners.

Both the release of the religious freedom report and Manlinowski's press conference happened on July 28, 2014, one day before the CCDI officially announced the downfall of the Zhou "Tiger."

The Downfall of Li Dongsheng

On December 20, 2013, Xinhua announced the downfall of Li Dongsheng, the head of the 610 Office. The Xinhua announcement stated, "The reporter obtained information from the CCDI, that the Deputy Director and Office Manager of the CCP's Central Leading Group on Dealing with Heretical Religions, Deputy Party Secretary and Vice Minister of the Public Security Li Dongsheng was undergoing the Party organization's investigation for allegations of serious violations of the [Party's] discipline and the law."

Li has two titles. The Vice Minister of the Public Security is more important and well known to the public. The title of Deputy Director of the Central Leading Group on Dealing with Heretical Religions, which manages the Falun Gong issue, is much less known. Xinhua listed Li's Falun Gong job before his title with the Public Security Ministry, highlighting Li as a primary persecutor of Falun Gong.

Conclusion

The ongoing anti-corruption campaign is probably the biggest political battle at Zhongnanhai since the arrest of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. It is the alliance of Xi Jinping and Wang Qishan, with the support of Hu Jintao, against the Jiang Zemin's faction.

The attempted political coup to overthrow Xi triggered the conflict. So far, Bo, Xu Caihou, and Zhou have been taken down.

The reason that Jiang's faction decided on such a coup was to ensure that their policy of persecuting Falun Gong would continue and would be kept secret so that they would not be charged with crimes against humanity.

A life or death battle is unfolding in China. Xi has expressed that he is willing to give his life in the fight, while Jiang fears for the loss of his, should the Falun Gong issue be redressed. What will be the end of the hunters and "tigers" story is yet to be seen.