

## Hu's On First? "Who is in charge of China?"

By John Kusumi

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The Chinese Communist Party has always been a power struggle in motion. Recently, the power struggle burst into public view, and Beijing's officials have become so tight-lipped that an official newspaper (the *Global Times*) has published an editorial urging Beijing to break its "radio silence."

As reported in *The Epoch Times*, "The anonymous editorial calls on the party's highest authorities to clarify the situation....it...reveals confusion about who is now in charge of the country."

Western reporters, looking for a quick way to write the story, tend to begin with Wang Lijun's dramatic flight to the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu on Feb. 6, when he tried to defect or obtain asylum from the United States. U.S. officials declined to fulfill his request, but they spent the night debriefing Wang and taking documents that Wang had brought with him. It seems that Wang revealed plans for a coup d'etat.

A U.S. official told Bill Gertz, who wrote in the Washington Free Beacon that "Wang possessed invaluable knowledge of...the efforts of the hardliners like Zhou Yongkang and Bo Xilai to upset the smooth succession of Xi Jinping."

### Coup d'etat?

Xi Jinping, currently Vice President, is on track to become President in a leadership transition slated to begin later this year. "To upset the smooth succession" is polite terminology, or diplomatic understatement, for a coup d'etat.

Wang was also exposing corruption on the part of his boss, Bo Xilai, who was the top Communist Party Secretary in Chongqing, known as a neo-Maoist "princeling" in Chinese politics. Bo led a campaign of "singing red songs," in which there was organized mass singing of Maoist-era communist songs, bringing back the sounds of China's disastrous Cultural Revolution, a tragedy / travesty of 1966 - 1976.

It was under reported in the U.S. that on Feb. 7, the U.S. Consulate was surrounded by not one -- but two -- sizeable mobilizations of armed security forces. Those two mobilizations were from two different factions in China's power struggle.

The first mobilization was 70 police cars, armored personnel carriers, and tanks from Chongqing, led by Huang Qifan, the mayor of Chongqing, at the behest of Bo Xilai.

The second group was Sichuan Provincial National Security and police, mobilized at the behest of Beijing's Ministry of State Security.

The Chongqing forces surrounded the consulate up until noon on Feb. 7, at which time they

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were expelled by the provincial forces. While the Chongqing faction wanted to take custody of Wang Lijun, at the end of day he was taken to Beijing.

The Chongqing faction has been crumbling ever since then. Bo Xilai was sacked on March 15, after Premier Wen Jiabao closed the National People's Congress with a press conference -- and unique remarks -- on March 14.

Wen said, "The present Chongqing municipal Party committee and the municipal government must reflect seriously and learn a lesson from the Wang Lijun incident." That was a tip off to the smack down which was coming the next day.

Wen also said, "The mistakes of the Cultural Revolution and feudalism have not been completely eliminated." This was an open rebuke to the neo-Maoist strain of communism that was represented by Bo Xilai, who was fired the next day.

After Wang and Bo, the tip of the spear would logically move to Zhou Yongkang, who serves or served on the nine-member Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), the top committee of CCP leadership. On the PSC, Zhou was a patron to Bo Xilai, and was a supporter for Bo to join the PSC in the next leadership shuffle. Zhou could also be thought of as a neo-Maoist hardliner who was anti-American abroad and brutally despotic at home.

On March 19, rumors swirled that a military coup had taken place in Beijing. The rumor turned out to be false, but plausible.

### **'Social stability'**

China analysts have noted that China recently spends more money on its internal security -- to "maintain social stability" -- than it spends on its military. Hence, the internal security apparatus is beyond that of its external security apparatus. And, what minister had that budget -- larger than the armed forces? Zhou Yongkang.

From the Politburo Standing Committee, Zhou led the Political and Law Committee, with authority over the paramilitary People's Armed Police along with courts and prosecutors. This is a weakness of the Communist Party system. One man had far too much power, domestically. Zhou Yongkang could be judge, jury, and executioner -- and is the only man who could credibly mount a forcible, armed coup against the other top Communists.

The false-but-plausible rumor of a coup has led to a swirl of additional rumors. Throughout the week of March 19 - 23, we have observed:

- The Twitter-like Sina Weibo blocked searches for "coup," "Bo Xilai," and "Zhou Yongkang."
- This was a bad week in which to be a Ferrari dealer in China. "Ferrari" was also blocked as a search term. Rumors were swirling that a high-level somebody had perished when a red Ferrari

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crashed in Beijing on March 18.

- Bo Xilai is reported to be under house arrest.
- Zhou Yongkang is said to have lost the power struggle and to have been arrested.
- The Financial Times (a UK paper) quoted an unnamed source who said, "Mr Zhou had been ordered not to make any public appearances or take any high-level meetings and was 'already under some degree of control.'"
- The purge is said to have widened to include Jia Qinglin and Li Changchun, two more members of the nine-member Politburo Standing Committee.
- Holes appeared in the Great Firewall of China -- the system of filtering the internet. Certain people including Zhou Yongkang and the propaganda minister Li Changchun were known to be champions of internet censorship. During this week, it became possible for netizens in China to search and retrieve results for forbidden terms such as Falun Gong and June 4 (the date of the Tiananmen Square massacre).

### Fall from power

Notably, when Falun Gong persecution is exposed, together with its raft of crimes against humanity, this is a blow against the perpetrators. The persecution was ordered by former President Jiang Zemin, and conducted or supported by the others who are now in trouble and falling out of power: Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, Zhou Yongkang, Luo Gan, Bo Xilai, Wang Lijun.

It is a happy day for Falun Gong when Maoist websites are going down, and Falun Gong websites are coming up. The perpetrators and persecutors are falling from power.

At mid-week, it was announced that 3,300 local secretaries, under Zhou's Political and Law Committee, are required to attend "ideological training sessions" at the behest of Beijing. There, they will study Hu Jintao's theory of Scientific Development. The announcement made no mention of Zhou Yongkang.

This seems to be convincing evidence that the power struggle is going favorably for the Hu - Wen faction. However, there have been no definitive statements to place closure on the matter of this power struggle. This led to the Thursday editorial by the *Global Times* that basically asked for central guidance as to "Who's in charge, here?"

By the end of the week it seemed that China's Internet censors could no longer figure out which rumors to promote, and which rumors to hide.

On Friday, March 23, this office (the *China Support Network*) moved to appear on *New Tang Dynasty Television*

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, to demand freedom for Chinese dissidents and three key reforms: freedom of speech, abolition of laogai (reform-through-labor camps), and abolition of laoiao (administrative detention).

China Support Network founder John Kusumi said that in his view, "It's time to be singing the blue songs and hitting the red."

*John Kusumi is founder and Emeritus director of [China Support Network](#)*