

China Politics Weekly

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Dear friends and colleagues,

I am back from Beijing. Thanks to all of you who took time to meet and share your thoughts on current developments. I'll publish some impressions from the trip next week.

CPW is proud to be publishing its 50th issue this week- when I started the newsletter in early 2014 there was no guarantee that we would make it to issue 5, much less 50. Over that time readership has grown from eight close friends to 1,200 dedicated China watchers. I thank all of you for your support.

While happy with the progress that has been made, there is much more that I would like to do. First and foremost, I would like to create a database whereby users would be able to search leaders' activities by person, place, issue area and date. I have already worked with a designer and the interface is beautiful and easy-to-use. I think it would be a great contribution to all interested in China's policymaking. However, to build, populate and maintain the database will take time and money, both of which are in short supply at CPW HQ. If you or your organization would be interested in sponsoring or collaborating on this project, please get in touch.

There are plenty of other ways that readers can help CPW, including:

- Spread the word. If you like CPW, please tell your friends.
- Intern at CPW. There are several projects that we would like to undertake in the coming months that will require more manpower. If you or somebody you know would be interested in working with CPW, let us know.
- Help me monetize this, if only indirectly. For multiple reasons, I have no plans to charge for CPW, but I do need to make a living. If you or your company needs any China-related counsel, research or investment support, don't hesitate to get in touch. My network of associates and I have experience across a broad range of sectors and disciplines.

Your comments and feedback are always welcome. Old issues are always available at www.chinapoliticsweekly.com. Sign up or unsubscribe by sending an email to info@chinapoliticsweekly.com.

Sound and fury

Official Q1 growth, announced Wednesday, may have come in right on target at 7%, but the economy looks increasingly shaky as other indicators point to significant weakness. Of particular worry was nominal GDP, reported to have grown at only 5.8%. That nominal GDP came in so much lower than real GDP signals that

China may be entering into deflation or that the real GDP number was manipulated. There is a good chance both are true.

As growth slows, Premier Li seems increasingly frustrated. For the second week in a row he berated officials for failing to carry out reforms in an efficient and timely manner. Li called ministries' efforts to carry out reforms a "joke" and asked why policies approved at by the central government are not implemented.

The Premier's comments were reported in official media and are meant to send a message to officials in Beijing and around the country. Li's tough words and acidic tone are supposed to convey his seriousness and determination. Unfortunately for the Premier, the effect- at least to my ears- is to show a government in dysfunction and a leader powerless to rectify the situation.

PBSC Week in Review

Xi Jinping	Apr 17	Xi spoke with Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud by telephone.
	Apr 14	Xi received credentials from nine new ambassadors to China. <i>Including from South Korea, United Kingdom, South Africa, Kazakhstan and Thailand.</i>
Li Keqiang	Apr 17	Li inspected China Development Bank and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.
	Apr 15	Li chaired an executive meeting of the State Council. <i>Meeting reviewed an NDRC report outlining economic reform priorities for the year. Focused on five points:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. To properly handle the relationship between the government and the market. Efforts need to be stepped up to streamline administration and delegate power, cancel more administrative approvals, and deepen reform of the commercial system. The government needs to provide more opportunities for mass entrepreneurship and innovation, and increase public products and services. The government also needs to continue to boost employment and improve the quality and effectiveness of economic growth.</i><i>2. To focus on the current problems of the economic slowdown, and take reform measures to stimulate market vitality, including attracting social investment by promoting public-private partnerships in the public sphere to better unleash consumption potential.</i><i>3. To better utilize the market mechanism by increasing basic public services in fields such as education, health and culture to promote social equality and improve people's lives.</i><i>4. To strictly implement reform policies and measures. Duties and responsibilities should be made clear; inspections and evaluations should be conducted; and reforms should be based on laws and regulations.</i><i>5. To pool efforts of all regions and departments, and boost economic growth and employment with new reform measures.</i>

	Apr 14	Li chaired a seminar on China's economy with economists and corporate leaders. <i>Sale of Piraeus Port to COSCO looks likely to proceed despite Economy Minister George Stathakis's statement in February that the port would "remain permanently under state majority holding...as we made clear from the first day."</i> Li met with a trade delegation from Japan led by former chief cabinet secretary Yohei Kono. <i>"It goes without saying that over the past two years Sino-Japanese ties have faced difficulties, and both sides wish to improve things," Li said.</i> Li spoke with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras by telephone.
	Apr 13	Li attended and gave the keynote address at the 54th Annual Session of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization. Li met with United States Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker. <i>Pritzker led trade delegation that was first to be labeled as "presidential mission".</i>
Zhang Dejiang	Apr 12-15	Zhang went on inspection tour to Henan.
Yu Zhengsheng	Apr 17	Yu met with King Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia.
	Apr 16	Yu chaired a CPPCC chairmen's meeting.
Liu Yunshan	Apr 11-13	Liu went on inspection tour to Guangxi.
Wang Qishan	Apr 19	Wang addressed a training session for new CDIC accreditation agencies.
Zhang Gaoli	Apr 14	Attended seminar on the economy. <i>You can see from pictures that Zhang was there, but strangely he is not listed as an attendee in any of the official reports of the meeting, even though other vice premiers are reported as attending....</i>
	Apr 13	Zhang met with Belarusian deputy director of the Presidential Office Nikolay Snopkov.

About CPW

China Politics Weekly aims to keep business leaders, investors, diplomats, scholars and other China hands up to date on important trends in China. It is produced by Trey McArver, a London-based consultant providing advice and intelligence to firms and investors engaged in China and the region. You can find out more about Trey and CPW in [this interview](#).

Want to help? Please tell us how we can make this newsletter more useful to you. Feedback on both form and content are always welcome, as are suggestions for topics to be covered. Please contact us at info@chinapoliticsweekly.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

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