

China Politics Weekly

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Dear friends and colleagues,

Happy May Day!

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Still waiting for Xi to lead

Friday's Politburo meeting focused on economic work, and in particular discussed how to counter the "relatively high downward pressure on the economy". However, those looking for a clear vision on how the Party plans to do that were left disappointed. There was no new thinking on offer. Instead, the message was to stay the course, with Xi repeating that the five principles of "innovation, coordination, green growth, opening up, and sharing" should guide economic work. As to what that means in practice, there was little guidance.

As I noted in a [recent piece for the FT](#), progress on economic reform has been disappointing, and future prospects are not promising:

There has been little progress in implementing the promising reform package announced in November 2013. What has been achieved is the following: business registration has been simplified, administrative approvals have been reduced and some factor prices have been liberalized. But promises to reform state-owned enterprises and open the sectors they dominate have stalled. Meanwhile, recently announced "supply side" reforms offer no new thinking.

The failure of reforms is due in part to President Xi Jinping's leadership – or lack thereof. Xi has centralized policy making in organizations under his control but failed to provide leadership on economic policy. In areas where sensible policies have been formulated, implementation has not been successful owing to conflicting priorities between central and local governments. Until these two issues are resolved, the outlook for reform will remain poor.

How much control is enough?

On the political front, things have been more interesting. Xi addressed meetings on religion and cyberspace in his latest efforts to stress the need for Party control of information and ideology. But he also visited Xiaogang village in Anhui, where he praised the farmers who defied authorities and undertook agricultural reforms in 1978. The next day he also said that the Party should "accept constructive criticism and be more tolerant and inclusive, even if some opinions are biased or incorrect".

There has been a lot of resistance in some quarters to the increasing demands for ideological orthodoxy and restrictive information environment that have been hallmarks of Xi's tenure. Does Xi sense that he might have gone too far?

PBSC Week in Review

Xi Jinping

Party General
Secretary; PRC
President;
Chairman of
Central Military
Commission

- Apr 29** **Xi chaired a Politburo meeting.**
Focused on the economic situation and economic work.
- Xi attended and addressed a Politburo study session.**
The group study focused on the history of the Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road.
- Apr 28** **Xi addressed the opening ceremony of the foreign ministers' meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).**
Full text of his speech (in Chinese).
Xi continuing to put his personal weight behind promoting CICA.
- Xi met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.**
- Apr 27** **Xi returned to Beijing.**
- Apr 26** **Xi spoke at a meeting with a group of scientists and researchers, model workers and young representatives in Hefei, Anhui Province.**
Full text of his speech (in Chinese).
- Apr 25** **Xi visited Xiaogang village, Fengyang county, Anhui.**
Birthplace of the household responsibility system.
- Xi chaired and spoke at a symposium on village reform in Xiaogang, Anhui.**
- Xi sent a written instruction to a national meeting on the building of judicial workforce.**
- Apr 24** **Xi went on inspection tour to Lu'an, Anhui.**
- Xi sent instructions to an event celebrating the establishment of China Space Day.**
Said that "becoming an aerospace power has always been a dream we've been striving for".
- Apr 23** **Xi addressed a work conference on religion.**
Basically said to make sure that religion was not used as a way to undermine the Party. "We should guide and educate the religious circle and their followers with the socialist core values, and guide the religious people with ideas of

unity, progress, peace and tolerance... We must resolutely guard against overseas infiltrations via religious means and prevent ideological infringement by extremists”.

Apr 22 Xi sent a letter of congratulations to Tsinghua University on its 105th anniversary.

Apr 21 Xi issued a written instruction on protecting people’s interests in petitioning.

Apr 20 Xi inspected the Central Military Commission joint battle command center.

Xi sent a message of congratulations to Raul Modesto Castro Ruz on his re-election as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Apr 19 Xi chaired a symposium on cyberspace security and informatization. Suggested that “cyberspace be imbued with positive energy and mainstream values, in the hope of creating a clean and righteous environment.” Experts attending included Jack Ma, chairman of Alibaba, Wu Manqing, chief engineer of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation, Ren Zhengfei, CEO of Huawei, and Tong Liqiang, director of the Beijing municipal cyberspace information office.

Xi met with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key.

Xi met with former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson.

Li Keqiang
Premier

Apr 30 Li met with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida.

Apr 29 Li attended a Politburo meeting.

Li attended a Politburo study session.

Apr 27 Li chaired an executive meeting of the State Council. The meeting decided to accelerate education development in the central and western regions, tap the potential of cultural and historical relics, and passed a draft plan for regulations on irrigation and water conservancy.

Li met with Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Political, Law and Security Affairs Luhut Panjaitan.

Apr 26 Li visited a farm produce market while on an inspection tour in Chengdu, Sichuan.

Li returned to Beijing.

- Apr 25** **Li visited an earthquake memorial hall while on an inspection tour in Lushan County, Sichuan.**
- Apr 24** **Li sent instructions to the event celebrating the establishment of China Space Day.**
- Apr 22-23** **Li chaired a work conference on religion.**
- Apr 21** **Li issued a written instruction on protecting people's interests in petitioning.**
- Apr 20** **Li chaired an executive meeting of the State Council.**
The meeting discussed plans to develop a transportation infrastructure for poverty alleviation, build demonstration bases for mass entrepreneurship and innovation, and create policy measures to promote import and export.
- Li sent a message of condolences to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after the earthquake in Kumamoto, Japan.**
- Apr 19** **Li met with Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar.**
- Li met with former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien.**
- Li attended a symposium on cyberspace security and informatization.**

Zhang Dejiang
*Chair of the
National People's
Congress*

- Apr 29** **Zhang attended a Politburo meeting.**
- Zhang attended a Politburo study session.**
- Apr 28** **Zhang chaired a meeting of NPC chairpersons.**
- Zhang chaired and spoke at the closing meeting of the NPC bimonthly session.**
The session passed the Foreign NGO Management Law, which will take effect on Jan 1, 2017.
- Apr 27** **Zhang chaired a meeting of NPC chairpersons.**
- Apr 26** **Zhang attended a symposium to commemorate the centenary birthday of former Chinese Vice President Rong Yiren.**
Full text of his speech (in Chinese).

- Apr 25** **Zhang chaired a meeting of the NPC Standing Committee.**
- Zhang Dejiang presided over the opening meeting of the NPC bi-monthly session.**
Lawmakers decided that the latest draft of the Foreign NGO Management Law was ready for voting.
- Apr 22-23** **Zhang attended a work conference on religion.**
- Apr 17-20** **Zhang went on an inspection tour to Hubei Province to investigate implementation of the Food Safety Law.**

- Yu Zhengsheng**
Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
- Apr 29** **Yu attended a Politburo meeting.**
- Yu attended a Politburo study session.**
- Apr 25** **Yu met with a Taiwanese delegates to the congress of members of the Association of Taiwan investment firms on the mainland (ATIEM).**
- Apr 22-23** **Yu attended and spoke at a work conference on religion.**
- Apr 21** **Yu chaired a bi-weekly symposium of the CPPCC.**
The meeting called for improvements to hospice care and better palliative therapy.
- Apr 19** **Yu returned to Beijing.**
- Apr 18** **Yu met with Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama in Accra, Ghana.**
- Yu held talks with Ghanaian Parliament Speaker Edward Korbly Doe Adjaho in Accra, Ghana.**
- Yu and Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama attended the inauguration ceremony of a gas power station project of a local subsidiary of Shenzhen Energy of China in Accra, Ghana.**

- Liu Yunshan**
Head of Party Secretariat; Head of Propaganda
- Apr 29** **Liu attended a Politburo meeting.**
- Liu attended a Politburo study session.**
- Liu met with a Japanese delegation led by Taku Yamasaki, former secretary-general of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party.**
- Apr 28** **Liu attended and handed out diplomas at the Party School spring graduation.**

Apr 22-25 **Liu went on an inspection tour to Shaanxi Province.**
He visited villages, companies and colleges and called for better Party building.

Apr 22-23 **Liu attended a work conference on religion.**

Apr 19 **Liu attended a symposium on cyberspace security and informatization.**

Liu met with former president of Tanzania and chairman of Tanzania's ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party.

Wang Qishan
Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection

Apr 29 **Wang attended a Politburo meeting.**

Wang attended a Politburo study session.

Apr 22-23 **Wang attended a work conference on religion.**

Apr 20 **Wang attended and spoke at a training session for leaders of discipline inspection units.**

Zhang Gaoli
Executive Vice Premier

Apr 29 **Zhang attended a Politburo meeting.**

Zhang attended a Politburo study session.

Apr 22 **Zhang delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of the High-Level Event for the Signature of the Paris Agreement at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, USA.**

Full text of his speech (in Chinese)

Zhang met with United States Secretary of State John Kerry at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, USA.

Zhang met with French President Francois Hollande at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, USA.

Apr 21 **Zhang met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the UN headquarters in New York City, USA.**

Zhang met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's special envoy for cities and climate change Michael Bloomberg in New York, USA.

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](#).

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