

# China Politics Weekly

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Dear friends and colleagues,

Thanks to all of those in Beijing who took time to meet this week. I'll give some takeaways from my trip in next week's newsletter. Your comments and feedback are always welcome. Old issues are always available at [www.chinapoliticsweekly.com](http://www.chinapoliticsweekly.com). Sign up or unsubscribe by sending an email to [info@chinapoliticsweekly.com](mailto:info@chinapoliticsweekly.com).

## National security starts at home

Xi chaired a seminar on national security work last week. Readers should note that this was *not* a national work conference (*quanguo gongzuo huiyi*) but rather a seminar (*zuotanhui*) which is less formal. It also does not appear to have been a meeting of the mysterious National Security Commission (NSC), though members of the commission were in attendance and Xi was identified in reports as chairman of the commission.

At the seminar, Xi reiterated his idea of an “overall national security outlook” first laid out in April 2014. At that time, Xi explained that national security was all-encompassing and included the eleven fields of political security, homeland security, economic security, cultural security, societal security, scientific and technological security, information security, ecological security, resource security, and nuclear security.

Xi seems to have narrowed the focus at last week's seminar, saying that there are five priority areas for national security going forward: politics, the economy, sovereignty, society and the internet. (that's still a pretty big list)

Although Xi mentioned the turbulent international environment, the overwhelming focus remains on internal security. Law and order and “social management” received pride of place in Xi's speech; the internet was another area of focus. Also included was the need to ensure the safe production of dangerous chemicals – an apparent nod to the Tianjin explosion in August 2015.

Is the “overall national security outlook” a far-sighted move to coordinate safety across areas and organizations? Or in its broadness does it suffer the same incoherence as the “new development concepts” – Xi's signature initiative on the economic front?

For now it is difficult to tell, both because of the opacity of the NSC and the fact that the “overall national security outlook” is still evolving. The stated purpose of the meeting was, in fact, to hear reports and solicit opinions on how to improve national security work, which implies that Xi and other top leaders are still working to refine the concept.

## Let the (guessing) games begin!

Four officials gave reports at the meeting: State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun, Xinjiang Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, Executive Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Zhang Yesui and Hubei Party Secretary Jiang Chaoliang.

Guo and Chen both look headed to the Politburo.

Many interpret the defiant behavior of Foreign Minister Wang Yi overseas as part of his jockeying to take over from Yang Jiechi as State Councilor in charge of foreign affairs. There is a possibility that Yang will retain his role, but if he moves on, then Zhang Yesui looks to be Wang's top contender for the job.

[I'm guessing some diplomats on this list have strong hunches on this point. Please let me know what you think!]

Finally, Jiang Chaoliang is an interesting choice to give a report on national security. He has spent most of his career in the financial sector, most recently as Chairman of Agricultural Bank of China from 2012 to 2014 (he was subsequently governor of Jilin before being appointed Hubei Party Secretary in October last year). That he is now addressing the highest leaders in the land on national security would look to be a sure sign that his future is bright.

Finally, Zhongnanhaiologists will have noted that Sun Zhengcai was seated three places higher than Hu Chunhua at the seminar. Is that meaningful? We're unlikely to have any answers until the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, so for now we can do nothing but speculate.

## PBSC Week in Review

<b>Xi Jinping</b> <i>Party General Secretary; PRC President; Chairman of Central Military Commission</i>	<b>Feb 19</b>	<b>Xi exchanged congratulations with President of Argentina Mauricio Macri on the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.</b>
	<b>Feb 17</b>	<b>Xi chaired a seminar on national security work.</b>  <b>Xi sent instructions to the Overseas Chinese Affairs Work Conference.</b> <i>Xinhua says: "It has been a key task for the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the state to encourage overseas Chinese as well as returned Chinese and their relatives to play a positive role in realizing the great revival of the Chinese nation". Line between Huaren and Huaqiao increasingly blurred, and China in recent years being more assertive in protecting overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, potentially complicating relations with those countries. Estimated that there are as many as 50 million overseas Chinese.</i>
	<b>Feb 13</b>	<b>Xi sent condolences to Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain over the terrorist attack in Sindh Province.</b>  <b>Xi attended and spoke at the opening session of a workshop on the 6th Plenum held at the Central Party School.</b> <i>For senior ministerial and provincial officials. Xi said "Leading officials should strengthen their political capability, firm their political ideals, uphold political direction, be steadfast in their stance and strictly observe political rules."</i>
<b>Li Keqiang</b> <i>Premier</i>	<b>Feb 17</b>	<b>Attended seminar on National Security Work.</b>  <b>Li sent instructions to the Overseas Chinese Affairs Work Conference.</b>

	Feb 13	Chaired workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum at Central Party School.
<b>Zhang Dejiang</b> <i>Chair of the National People's Congress</i>	Feb 15	Zhang held talks with Speaker of the Mozambique Parliament Veronica Macamo.
	Feb 14	Zhang chaired an NPC Standing Committee chairperson's meeting. <i>Next NPC Standing Committee meeting will be February 22-24.</i>
	Feb 13	Attended workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum at Central Party School.
<b>Yu Zhengsheng</b> <i>Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference</i>	Feb 16	Yu chaired a biweekly CPPCC symposium. <i>Discussed pre-school education.</i>
	Feb 14	Yu met with Speaker of the Mozambique Parliament Veronica Macamo.
	Feb 13	Attended workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum at Central Party School.
<b>Liu Yunshan</b> <i>Head of Party Secretariat; Head of Propaganda</i>	Feb 16	Liu attended and spoke at the closing of the workshop to study the 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum for ministerial and provincial level officials at the Central Party School.
	Feb 13	Attended workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum at Central Party School.
<b>Wang Qishan</b> <i>Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection</i>	Feb 13	Attended workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum at Central Party School.
<b>Zhang Gaoli</b> <i>Executive Vice Premier</i>	Feb 15	Zhang met with Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller. <i>Said they should "conduct further research" on the two proposed Russia-China gas pipelines. Hardly sounds like things are moving forward.</i>
	Feb 13	Attended workshop on 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenum at Central Party School.

### **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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