

China Politics Weekly

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Dear friends and colleagues,

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All energies look to be focused on finishing up the 13th Five-Year Plan ahead of March's *lianghui*. After a stormy year for the economy, firms and investors – not to mention the Chinese people – are eager to see how the Chinese leadership plans to right the economic ship.

Those looking for leadership and guidance from Xi will have been so far disappointed. His recent statements have been full of contradictions. Last week, he told officials to “stabilize short-term growth” while also “planning for longer-term development”.

The much trumpeted “supply-side reforms” have looked similarly confused.

We still have another month to go before the FYP is announced, and there is clearly a lot of debate about economic policy taking within the Party. Unfortunately, thus far signs point to only modest tweaks of the current ill-conceived approach.

Xi is the most powerful leader since Mao, but on economic policy he is failing to lead.

PBSC Week in Review

Xi Jinping

Jan 29

Xi chaired a meeting of the Politburo.

The meeting reviewed the government work reports submitted by “leading groups” of the standing committees of the NPC, the State Council, the CPPCC, Supreme People’s Court and Supreme People’s Procuratorate.

Xi chaired a study session of the Politburo.

Xi ordered officials to have an accurate understanding of the country’s strategic focuses for economic and social development and demanded concrete actions to turn the blueprint for the 13th FYP into reality.

Xi chaired a gathering to extend New Years greetings to all people from non-communist parties, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and those without affiliations.

Jan 28 **Xi sent a congratulatory message to Nguyen Phu Trong on his re-election as Vietnam's communist party chief.**

Xi and co. definitely happy that Trong won out over Dung, but fundamental differences remain and tensions will persist.

Xi published sent a written instruction to the meeting of the State Council Food Safety Commission.

Is this an area of policy success? Seemed like there used to be a major food safety scandal every month (gutter oil, cadmium rice, etc.), but it seems that there are fewer now. Are stepped up efforts at regulation and enforcement bearing fruit? Or am I just out of the loop now that I no longer live in China?

Xi attended a concert for retired military officials and veterans to celebrate the new year in Beijing.

Jan 27 **Xi met with United States Secretary of State John Kerry.**

All reports are that Kerry failed to win support for new sanctions on DPRK.

Jan 26 **Xi chaired a meeting of the Central Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs.**

Xi urged authorities to formulate targeted and specific plans to deliver supply-side structural reform. He also stressed the importance of extensively researching current economic conditions; how reform tasks should be specified; and establishing a system to designate and track responsibility. Xi also called for invoking greener agendas in cities.

Xi appointed a new ambassador to Colombia.

Li Keqiang	Jan 29	Li attended a meeting of the Politburo.
		Li attended the Politburo Study Session.
	Jan 28	Li and International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde spoke on the phone.
		Li published a written instruction on food safety.
	Jan 27	Li chaired an executive meeting of the State Council.
		<i>The meeting discussed financial measures to boost industrial efficiency, methods for integrating "Made in China 2025" and "Internet Plus", eliminating fees for government-controlled funds, and protecting 'left-behind' children in rural areas.</i>
	Jan 26	Li chaired a symposium to solicit opinions from leaders of non-Communist political parties, officials of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and prominent figures without party affiliation on the draft of the annual government work report and the 13th FYP.

		Li attended a meeting of the Central Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs.
	Jan 25	Li sent a congratulatory message to the new Croatian parliament cabinet leader Tihomir Oreskovic.
Zhang Dejiang	Jan 29	Zhang attended a meeting of the Politburo.
		Zhang attended the Politburo Study Session.
Yu Zhengsheng	Jan 29	Yu attended a meeting of the Politburo.
		Yu attended the Politburo Study Session.
		Yu attended a gathering to extend New Years greetings to all people from non-communist parties, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and those without part affiliations.
Liu Yunshan	Jan 29	Liu attended a meeting of the Politburo.
		Liu attended the Politburo Study Session.
	Jan 27	Liu chaired the plenary meeting of the Central Commission for Guiding Ethic and Cultural Progress. <i>Liu said that the people's faith in the country's independent "path, theory and system" should be further boosted, and that the government should raise public awareness of new governing concepts and strategies.</i>
	Jan 26	Liu visited Chinese scientists including nuclear weapons expert Cheng Kaijia and Nobel laureate Tu Youyou. <i>He extended New Year's greetings on behalf of Xi and the CCP Central Committee.</i>
Wang Qishan	Jan 29	Wang attended a meeting of the Politburo.
		Wang attended the Politburo Study Session.
Zhang Gaoli	Jan 29	Zhang attended a meeting of the Politburo.
		Zhang attended the Politburo Study Session.
		Zhang attended a gathering to extend New Years greetings to all people from non-communist parties, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and those without part affiliations.
	Jan 28	Zhang chaired a meeting of the State Council Food Safety Committee.

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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