

A COUNTRY WITH NINE PRIME MINISTERS: CHINA'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

As global politics is increasingly dependent on elite interactions at the highest levels, China possesses unique human resources in this regard. With all nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) having the same status in the Chinese political hierarchy, they have all functioned as “prime ministers” in the country’s external relations. Instead of a country of one prime minister, China is a country of nine prime ministers.

This research attempts to reveal China’s global management strategy through a systematic study of foreign visits by all nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee. It will look at what countries they visit, what deals they make with host countries, and evaluate the extent to which their visits constitute some coherent grand global strategy for China.

I. Introduction

As global politics is increasingly dependent on elite interactions at the highest levels, China possesses unique human resources in this regard. With all nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) having the same status in the Chinese political hierarchy, they have all functioned as “prime ministers” in the country’s external relations. Instead of a country of one prime minister, China is a country of nine prime ministers.

This research attempts to reveal China's global management strategy through a systematic study of foreign visits by all nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee. It will look at what countries they visit, what deals they make with host countries, and evaluate the extent to which their visits constitute some coherent grand global strategy for China.

II. China's Top Leaders: A Team of Rivals or A Team of Partners

In the literature on China's elite politics, top leaders in China are usually portrayed as a team of rivals.¹ Borrowing a popular phrase from American politics,² Li Cheng painted the picture of China's top leadership as a house divided between populists and elitists. The populists, as described by Li Cheng, are mostly members of the *tuanpai*—the Chinese Communist Youth League group led by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. The elitists essentially consist of princelings—children of former high-ranking officials. This team of rivals, according to Li Cheng, espoused different lines of policies. The populists are more concerned about the plight of underprivileged in less developed areas of China, while the elitists are more interested in market liberalization and the continued development of the private sector in coastal areas.

It is true that as any organization anywhere in the world, the top leadership of the Chinese Communist Party is not immune to internal competition and rivalry. Moreover, China's political elites can be divided into different categories according to their family background, educational credentials, and work experiences.³ But it is a mistake to classify Wen Jiabao as a member of *tuanpai* as Wen has never worked in a youth league organization. It is farfetched to characterize these different family backgrounds, educational credentials, and work experiences as bases of political rivalry. It is misleading to extrapolate policy implications based on these artificial factional divisions.

Take Xi Jinping for example. As son of Xi Zhongxun, a veteran revolutionary, Xi Jinping is indeed a "princeling". But his rise in politics is not necessarily all due to his background as a princeling. His early rise is in fact due to the combination of his princeling status and the close association of his father to members of the Youth League Group. A significant turning point in his political career came on 1 June 1985, his 32nd birthday. On that day, he went to Xiamen as vice mayor. His promotion to this position was made possible because of two veteran leaders of the Youth League. One was Hu Yaobang, the then general secretary of the CCP, and one was Xiang Nan, the then first party secretary of Fujian.

The three men—Hu Yaobang, Xiang Nan, and Xi Zhongxun—had good relations with one another. Although Hu is not known to have had a close relationship with Xi Zhongxun before 1978,⁴ he was a political patron of Xi Zhongxun. He was one of the supporters for Xi Zhongxun's rehabilitation in 1978. Xi began to work closely with Hu

¹ Cheng Li, "China's Team of Rivals" *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2009): 88-93.

² See Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

³ For detailed analyses of "factional groups," see Bo Zhiyue, *China's Elite Politics: Political Transition and Power Balancing* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2007) and *China's Elite Politics: Governance and Democratization* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010).

⁴ See Chen Liming, *Hu Yaobang Zhuan* (Hong Kong: Xiafeier Chuban Youxi Gongsi, 2005).

Yaobang in the Secretariat in 1980 when he was transferred back to Beijing from Guangdong, and he was the only defender of Hu Yaobang when Hu was wrongfully dismissed by a group of veteran leaders. Xiang Nan had even closer relations with Xi Zhongxun. Xiang Nan's father, Xiang Yunian,⁵ had worked with Xi Zhongxun during the Yan'an period. Xiang Nan himself joined Xi Zhongxun for a trip to North Korea in October 1982.⁶ Xiang Nan worked in the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League under Hu Yaobang's leadership in the 1950s.⁷ Because of this special relationship, Xi Jinping was "airlifted" from Hebei to Xiamen as vice mayor in June 1985.

A black horse as a result of elite bargaining at the Seventeenth Party Congress in October 2007, Xi Jinping was not a rival to Hu Jintao but has since faced rivalry from a number of competitors. His potential challengers were not necessarily all members of the Youth League Group, and some princelings were in fact the most serious contenders. Bo Xilai, a Politburo member and party secretary of Chongqing, was one of the princelings who attempted to contend with Xi for the topmost position in the Party. Son of Bo Yibo, a veteran revolutionary with more seniority in the Party and the government than Xi Zhongxun, Bo Xilai has also gained substantial local and central management experiences. He was promoted to the Politburo at the Seventeenth Party Congress and was sent to Chongqing in November 2007 as party secretary. With better educational credentials and administrative achievements, Bo was one of the strongest contenders.

In other words, there are rivalries among top elites in China. But these rivalries do not lie neatly between artificial factions of elitists (aka. princelings) versus populists (aka. youth league group/tuanpai).

Moreover, the top leaders also constitute a team of partners, especially in terms of China's foreign relations. They have a clear division of labor in dealing with foreign countries, and they work together to improve China's image in the world.

In spite of its authoritarian appearances, China's political system does have some features that enable it to deal with foreign countries effectively.⁸ First, China is both a parliamentary system and a presidential system. By constitution, China is a parliamentary system and the premier of the State Council is the most important administrator. For other parliamentary systems in the world, especially those in Western Europe, the premier plays an important function as the face of China. China is also a presidential system because the president is also the general secretary of the CCP, the most powerful person in the system. For presidential systems elsewhere such as the United States of America, France, and Russia, the president represents the People's Republic of China. Second, China has both unicameral and bicameral legislature. For those countries where the lower chamber is more powerful, the chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee is the right person to communicate with. For those countries where the upper chamber is also very important, the chairman of the Chinese National People's Political Consultative Conference functions as a representative of China's upper house.

⁵ For Xiang Yunian's biographical information, see <http://baike.baidu.com/view/342727.htm>.

⁶ Wu Ming, *Xu Jinping Zhuan* (Hong Kong: Xianggang Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 2008), p. 124.

⁷ Ai Yanghua and Chen Xiaoming, *Gongqingtuan Shili* (Carle Place, New York: Mirror Books, 2009), p. 53.

⁸ For some preliminary discussions of China's political features, see Bo Zhiyue, "China's Model of Democracy," *International Journal of China Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2010): 102-124.

Third, China is both a normal state and a communist state. In addition to its normal functions, China's top leaders could also work cordially with other communist countries in the world. Those leaders who have no other portfolios than party affairs could also visit their comrades in other communist countries as representatives of China.

III. Foreign Visits by "Nine Prime Ministers"

The First Plenum of the Seventeenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held on 22 October 2007 produced a Politburo of 25 people, including nine standing members. As a one-party system, the members of the Politburo Standing Committee are the most powerful political figures in China. They are in fact all "prime ministers."

1. Wen Jiabao's Foreign Visits

First, Premier Wen Jiabao, no. 3 ranking official on the Politburo Standing Committee, is of course a prime minister. As the head of the State Council, he manages domestic as well as foreign relations on behalf of the Chinese national government. As the top administrator of the State Council, he has visited 28 countries (35 times) between October 2007 and February 2011. Clearly, Wen's visits are mostly focused on Asia and Europe. He visited 16 countries in Asia (18 times) and 10 countries in Europe (14 times).

The Asian countries Wen visited include India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, South Korea, Pakistan, Singapore, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. He visited Thailand twice in 2009 because he had to go back again for a series of regional meetings due to the chaos in the country on the earlier occasion. Wen also visited Japan twice: once in 2008 and once in 2010. Of course, the most important visit to Japan occurred in 2007. It was the first time in five years that a Chinese top leader visited Japan, and Wen's visit was characterized as "an ice-melting trip."⁹ His trip to Japan in 2008 was for a conference on partnership among China, Japan, and South Korea, and He went to Japan for an official visit in 2010.

The 10 European countries Wen visited include Belgium (twice), Belarus, Britain, Czech Republic, Germany (twice), Greece, Italy, Russia (three times), Spain, and Switzerland. Wen has been to Brussels twice but visited Belgium only once. His first trip to Brussels in January 2009 was to visit the headquarters of the European Union.¹⁰ He paid an official visit to Belgium in October 2010.¹¹ Wen indeed visited Germany twice. He paid an official visit to the country as a part of his five-nation tour of Europe in January 2009. During his visit, he issued a joint statement with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on stabilizing world economic order.¹² On 5 October 2010, at the invitation of Angel Merkel, Wen made an unscheduled visit to Germany¹³ and issued a

⁹ For details, see <http://news.sina.com.cn/z/wjbvisitjapan/index.shtml>.

¹⁰ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2009-01/30/content_1217081.htm.

¹¹ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-10/04/content_1715653.htm.

¹² For the joint statement in Chinese, see http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2009-01/29/content_1217071.htm.

¹³ http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/dbjvosnhy/content-2/detail_2010_10/06/2708578_0.shtml.

joint news statement with her.¹⁴ Wen has been in Russia three times. He made an official visit to Russia in October 2007 as a part of his four-nation tour in Central Asia and Eastern Europe.¹⁵ He paid another official visit to Russia one year later, in October 2008.¹⁶ He paid the third official visit to Russia in November 2010.¹⁷

Wen only visited one African country during the period of October 2007 to February 2011. In November 2009, he visited Egypt officially and also participated in the opening of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum scheduled in the country. He did not visit any country in Latin America. Nor did he visit any country in Oceania. He went to the United States twice in 2008 and 2010, both for the UN High-Level Meeting on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other UN functions.¹⁸

2. Li Keqiang's Foreign Visits

To some extent, Wen's foreign visits were complemented by those conducted by Li Keqiang, executive vice premier and No. 7 ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Groomed as Wen's heir apparent, Li has been gaining experiences in both domestic and foreign affairs. He has taken a number of important policy portfolios. He is head of a leading small group on deepening medical and health reform (国务院深化医药卫生体制改革领导小组), vice chairman of the National Energy Commission, and chairman of the Food Safety Commission of the State Council.¹⁹

He has also visited 13 countries in five separate trips abroad by February 2011. He visited Indonesia, Egypt, and Kuwait from 20 to 30 December 2008;²⁰ visited Turkmenistan, Finland, and Uzbekistan from 23 to 29 June 2009; and visited Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea from 29 October to 5 November 2009.²¹ He also visited Switzerland and attended the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland from 25 to 29 January 2010.²² In January 2011, Li Keqiang visited three major countries in Europe: Spain, Germany, and Britain.²³ He was the first top Chinese leader to visit

¹⁴ For the joint statement in Chinese, see http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-10/06/content_1716018.htm.

¹⁵ <http://www.chinamil.com.cn/site1/2007ztpdd/2007wjbcfyosg/index.htm>.

¹⁶ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2008-10/28/content_1132782.htm.

¹⁷ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-11/23/content_1750923.htm.

¹⁸ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2008-09/23/content_1102659.htm; and http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-09/21/content_1707442.htm.

¹⁹ For details, see Bo Zhiyue, "Li Keqiang: a Premier in the Making" *EAI Background Brief* no. 571 (28 February 2011), East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

²⁰ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lkq0812/>.

²¹ <http://www.news.cn/world/lkqcfdyz/>.

²² http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-01/29/content_12899136.htm.

²³ Before the trip, Li had published three articles in these countries. His article, "Trabajemos de la mano" ("Work hand in hand") was published in Spanish in *El País* on 3 January 2011 (source: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/Trabajemos/mano/elpepiopi/20110103elpepiopi_12/Tes) (an English translation "China and Spain: A brighter future through win-win cooperation" can be found at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-01/03/c_13675031.htm). His article, "Vorteile für beide Völker" ("Benefits to Both Peoples") was published in German in *Sueddeutsche* on 5 January 2011 (source: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/chinas-vize-premier-li-keqiang-oeffnung-zum-gegenseitigen-nutzen-1.1042949>). His article, "The world should not fear a growing China" was published in English in *Financial Times* on 9 January 2011 (source: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/64283784-1c23-11e0-9b56-00144feab49a.html#axzz1E0ad8ze9>).

foreign countries in the first year of a new decade, and his visits were high-profile.²⁴ During this trip, Li made pledges to support the euro and EU economy.²⁵

Li Keqiang's visit to Australia in 2009 was particularly noteworthy. In that year, Sino-Australian relations were strained after China arrested four employees of Rio Tinto for industrial espionage, presumably as a response to Australia's refusal for a US\$19.5 billion deal involving Chinalco (a Chinese state-owned enterprise).²⁶ Moreover, in the aftermath of the Urumqi Riots in Xinjiang, Beijing had another row with Australia over a documentary that was scheduled to be shown at the Melbourne International Film Festival. Entitled "The 10 Conditions of Love," the film describes the life of Rebiya Kadeer, an exiled Uyghur leader. Beijing believes that her World Uyghur Congress is a front for terrorists pushing for a separate East Turkistan homeland and demanded the organizers of the festival to drop the film. But Australia was defiant.²⁷

One of the major achievements of Li Keqiang's visit to Australia was the issuance of a joint statement on 30 October 2009. According to this joint statement, both sides expressed their willingness to continue their economic and trade cooperation; Australia agreed to respect China's core interests; and Australia confirmed its position that had been consistent since 1972 that Australia respects China's sovereignty and territorial integrity over Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang.²⁸ This is significant because Li had been able to secure Australia's consent on China's core interests over Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang one month before similar terms were entered in a joint statement between President Hu Jintao of the PRC and President Barack Obama of the United States.

Li's stature increased in January 2010 when he attended the World Economic Forum at Davos in Switzerland. China came out first from the global economic crisis and has been a major contributor to the recovery of the world economy. Premier Wen Jiabao became a superstar at the World Economic Forum one year earlier, and it is Li Keqiang's turn to represent one of the largest economies in the world. China overtook Germany in 2007 as No. 3 economy in the world and was poised to take over Japan as No. 2 economy by the end of 2010. Li gave a keynote speech on 28 January 2010 and fielded a number of questions from the audience.²⁹

In January 2011, Li Keqiang was the first top Chinese leader to visit foreign countries. He visited Spain, Germany, and Britain. This visit was very important for China's relations with the European Union. The European Union, in particular the euro zone, was suffering from confidence crisis. After Greece had just been bailed out, Portugal, Ireland, and particularly Spain were also facing the same crisis of sovereign debt. Flush with cash, China came to the rescue. During his visit to Spain, Li pledged to buy as much Spanish public debt as its Greek and Portuguese debt holdings combined. According to a report from *El País*, these would add up to around six billion euros in

²⁴ <http://www.news.cn/world/lkqcfoszg2010/>

²⁵ For an official assessment of the trip, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-01/14/c_12978737_4.htm.

²⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/16/world/asia/16riotinto.html>.

²⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2009/jul/15/rebiya-kadeer-melbourne-film-festival>.

²⁸ For the joint statement in Chinese, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2009-10/31/content_12365154.htm.

²⁹ For details, see Hong Qing, *Ta Jiang Shi Zhongguo Da Guanjia: Li Keqiang Zhuan* (Carle Place, NY: Mirror Books, 2010), pp. 433-442.

Spanish government bonds.³⁰ That was a major boost to the confidence in the Spanish public debt in particular and to the confidence in the euro zone in general. In addition, he closed deals with Spain, Germany, and Britain worth of US\$21.4 billion altogether.

3. Hu Jintao's Foreign Visits

As concurrent general secretary of the CCP and chairman of the Central Military Commission, President Hu Jintao is indeed the most powerful person in China. Since he is head of foreign affairs leading small group of the CCP, he is in fact in charge of China's external relations.

In the period of October 2007 to February 2011, Hu's foreign travel was only a bit less than that of Wen Jiabao. He visited 27 countries for 34 times. Obviously, Asia was also Hu Jintao's focus. He visited nine countries 12 times. The Asian countries he visited include Japan (three times), Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea (twice), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Clearly, as Premier Wen Jiabao, Hu also paid a lot of attention to Japan and South Korea. Following Wen's successful visit to Japan in 2007, Hu conducted another goodwill visit to Japan in 2008. During his five-day "warm spring" state trip from 6 to 10 May 2008, Hu met with Japanese Emperor Akihito three times in four days, a rare honor extended to a foreign guest.³¹ He had extensive discussions with the then Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and issued a joint statement with him on promoting strategic and mutual beneficial ties.³² He also gave a keynote speech at Waseda University (早稻田大学)³³ and played table tennis with a Japanese player, Ai Fukuhara.³⁴ He went to Japan again in July 2008 for a G-8 meeting and the third time in 2010 for the APEC meeting.

Hu Jintao visited South Korea twice between October 2007 and February 2011. He made a state visit to South Korea from 25-26 August 2008, right after a successful Olympic Games in Beijing. Hu issued a joint communiqué with his counterpart, President Lee Myung-bak, reaffirming the strategic partnership between the two countries.³⁵ Both sides pledged to work more closely with each other in political cooperation, trade and economic cooperation, cultural and educational exchanges, and international cooperation on global and regional issues. This was his second state visit to South Korea, and his last state visit was in 2005. Hu went back again in November 2010 for a G-20 Summit.

Europe is also an important region for Hu Jintao. He visited nine countries in the region during this period. He visited one country (Greece) in 2008, five countries (Britain, Russia, Slovakia, Croatia, and Italy) in 2009, and three countries (Russia, Portugal, and France) in 2010. It is noteworthy that Hu also made frequent trips to Russia. He visited Russia in 2009 and 2010. He made a state visit to Russia in June 2009, as a part of a three-nation tour as well as a couple of international meetings (a meeting of the Shanghai

³⁰ <http://www.whatsonxiamen.com/invest635.html>.

³¹ <http://china.huanqiu.com/roll/2008-05/105833.html>.

³² For a Chinese version, see <http://china.huanqiu.com/roll/2008-05/105849.html>. For an English translation, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/08/content_8124331.htm.

³³ For a complete text, see <http://china.huanqiu.com/roll/2008-05/106561.html>.

³⁴ Originally, Fukuda was planning to play with Hu but he backed off later on. For details, see <http://china.huanqiu.com/roll/2008-05/105845.html>.

³⁵ For a complete text in Chinese, see <http://news.sohu.com/20080825/n259201548.shtml>.

Cooperation Organization and a summit meeting of the BRIC countries).³⁶ He attended the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War in Moscow in May 2010.

Hu's top priority in foreign relations, of course, is the United States. He visited the United States once a year from 2008 to 2011. Relations with the sole superpower have been the most important bilateral relations for China, and Hu has paid particular attention to the development of the relationship. He attended two G-20 meetings in the United States in 2008 and 2009 and one nuclear summit in 2010. He paid a state visit to the United States in January 2011. That was his only state visit to the United States as president of China and will be his last.

Hu also visited countries in Latin America. He visited Costa Rica, Cuba, and Peru in 2008 and Brazil in 2010. Within nine days, from 17 to 26 November 2008, Hu visited three Latin American countries and Greece, covering a distance of 40,000 kilometers.³⁷ According to Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, President Hu promoted international cooperation on global financial crisis, made proposals for further cooperation among APEC countries and regions, and developed bilateral relations with the three Latin American countries and Greece. In April 2010, Hu originally planned to visit three more Latin American countries, Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela. But he had to shorten his visit to Brazil and cancel his visits to Chile and Venezuela because of a major earthquake in China.³⁸

Hu also visited African countries. A popular Chinese leader among African countries, Hu visited four African countries in February 2009. These include Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, and Mauritius. Altogether, Hu has visited 23 African countries since 1999 as a Chinese leader and 18 countries as China's president.

4. Xi Jinping's Foreign Visits

Xi Jinping, vice president of China and the heir apparent to Hu Jintao, has also visited many foreign countries. As a part of grooming process, Xi has been able to visit far more countries as vice president of China than Hu did at a similar stage of his career. Since he became vice president of China in March 2008, Xi has already visited 32 countries, while Hu visited only 17 countries during his entire five-year term as vice president of China. In other words, in his first three years in office as vice president of China, Hu only visited four foreign countries; but Xi visited 32 countries in his first three years in office as vice president of China. Moreover, Hu's initial foreign visits were all African countries and Xi's first foreign visits were Asian countries.

Altogether, Xi has made seven separate trips abroad so far. In his first trip abroad, he visited five Asian nations from 17 to 25 June 2008. The first country he visited was North Korea, an important strategic ally of China. He was the first Politburo Standing Committee member to visit the country since 2005 when Hu Jintao paid an "official and friendship" visit to the country. During this trip, Xi had meetings with Korean Workers' Party General Secretary Kim Jong-il, Supreme People's Assembly Presidium President Kim Yong-nam, and Supreme People's Assembly Presidium Vice President Yang

³⁶ <http://kr.china-embassy.org/chn/xwxx/t566900.htm>.

³⁷ <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/news/2008/11-27/1465690.shtml>.

³⁸ <http://www.chinaemb.or.kr/chn/zgzt/0/t682004.htm>.

Hyong-sop.³⁹ Xi also paid a visit to Mongolia, the first visit by a Politburo Standing Committee member since 2003 when Hu Jintao made a state visit to the country as president of China.⁴⁰ During the visit, Xi had meetings with the then Mongolian President Nambaryn Enkhbayar and the then Mongolian Premier Sanjaagiin Bayar and reaffirmed Sino-Mongolian friendship and partnership.⁴¹ Xi also visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Yemen during his maiden trip abroad.

In 2009, Xi visited 15 countries in three trips. From 9 to 22 February 2009, he visited Mexico, Jamaica, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, and Malta. During his trip to Mexico, Xi made some strong remarks about foreign intervention in China's internal affairs. During his meeting with Chinese Embassy staff and overseas Chinese on 11 February 2009, Xi said "Foreigners who have eaten their fill and have nothing better to do than point their fingers at our affairs. China does not, first, export revolution; second, export poverty and hunger; and third, cause trouble for you. What else is there to say?"⁴² During his visit to Malta, Xi left his calligraphic remarks in a notebook.⁴³

During his second trip in 2009, Xi traveled to five European countries: Belgium, Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania from 7 to 21 October. This trip took place immediately after the Fourth Plenum of the Seventeenth Central Committee at which Xi Jinping failed to enter the Central Military Commission. During his visit to Germany from 10 to 14 October, Xi apparently ignored international protocols and passed on gifts and greetings from a former leader of China instead of current ones. During his meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 12 October 2009, Xi passed on two books by Former President Jiang Zemin along with Jiang's greetings to the hostess. He did not mention either President Hu Jintao or Premier Wen Jiabao.⁴⁴

In his third trip abroad in 2009, Xi visited four Asian countries. He visited Japan, South Korea, Myanmar, and Cambodia from 14 to 22 December. His visit to Japan was very controversial. According to the Japanese royal protocol, foreign leaders who want to meet with the Japanese emperor have to put forth their request one month earlier. But Xi made his request very late, probably less than three weeks before the meeting. According to Shingo Haketa,⁴⁵ Grand Steward of the Imperial Household Agency since 1 April 2005, his agency received the request for Xi to meet with the Japanese Emperor on 15 December 2009 on 26 November 2009, only 20 days before the meeting. On the very next day, 27 November, the agency told the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to decline the request because of the one-month rule. Ten days later, on 7 December 2009, Hirofumi Hirano,⁴⁶ the Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Yukio Hatoyama administration, called Shingo Haketa and said that they understand the rules but hope for the agency to grant the request in the light of importance of the Japan-China relations. Shingo Haketa replied, "The rule was created to protect the emperor's health, and the government should respect the rule. Regardless whether a country is big or small and politically important or not, they have all shown respect for the rule and followed the practice." However, in the

³⁹ For details, see <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/xjp0617/>.

⁴⁰ For Hu's state visit, see <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/8198/27227/index.html>.

⁴¹ For details, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-06/19/content_8402667.htm.

⁴² For a video clip of Xi's remarks, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtw32rdaik0>.

⁴³ For a copy, see <http://bbs.54xsr.com/redirect.php?tid=25616&goto=lastpost>.

⁴⁴ For a detailed report, see <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/news/2009/10-13/1906562.shtml>.

⁴⁵ For his biographical information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shingo_Haketa.

⁴⁶ For his biographical information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hirofumi_Hirano.

evening of 10 December, the agency received a phone call from the office of the Prime Minister, requesting to grant the meeting request of Xi Jinping and the meeting finally got approved.⁴⁷ But Shingo Haketa held a press conference on 11 December, three days before Xi's arrival, complaining about the whole affair. He accused Ichiro Ozawa, the then general secretary of the Democratic Party of Japan, of manipulating the then Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama to use the emperor for political purposes.⁴⁸ Some right-wing forces were mobilized to oppose Xi Jinping's visit and his meeting with the Japanese Emperor.⁴⁹

Xi's meeting with the Japanese Emperor on 15 December caused quite stir among some Japanese. In contrast to President Barack Obama of the United States who gave Emperor Akihito a 90-degree deep bow one month earlier,⁵⁰ Xi barely lowered his chin as a gesture of greetings to the Japanese Emperor.⁵¹ For some Japanese, this was a show of disrespect for the Japanese emperor; and for some Chinese, Xi was doing great standing up straight in front of the Japanese emperor.⁵²

Xi made another three trips abroad in 2010 and visited 12 countries in the year. In his first foreign trip in March 2010, Xi visited four European countries. He visited Russia, Belarus, Finland, and Sweden. In Russia, he met with President Dmitry Medvedev, Premier Vladimir Putin, State Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov, and closed deals worth US\$6.7 billion.⁵³ In Belarus, he met with Vladimir Andreichenko (speaker of the House of Representatives), Boris Batura (the then speaker of the Council of the Republic), Sergei Sidorsky (the then prime minister of Belarus), and closed deals worth US\$3.4 billion.⁵⁴ In Finland, he met with President Tarja Halonen, the then Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, and Parliament (the Eduskunta in Finnish) Speaker Sauli Niinistö. In Sweden, Xi met with Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden since 15 September 1973. During the meeting, the King mentioned Xi's visit 31 years earlier.⁵⁵ According to Geng Biao's biography, Geng visited Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Iceland in 1979 as vice premier.⁵⁶ As Geng Biao's personal secretary, Xi must have also tagged along. Xi began to work for Geng in April 1979 after his graduation from Qinghua University, and Geng left Beijing on 12 May 1979 for a four-nation trip in Europe.⁵⁷

In his second trip in 2010, Xi visited four countries. He visited Bangladesh, Laos, New Zealand, and Australia from 14 to 24 June. In Bangladesh, Xi met with President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed, National Assembly (or Jatiyo Sangshad in Bangladesh) Speaker Md. Abdel Hamid, and Bangladesh Nationalist Party

⁴⁷ For a report in this regard, see <http://bluegreen-iza.iza.ne.jp/blog/entry/1364257/>.

⁴⁸ <http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/emperor-meets-with-chinas-rising-leader-xi-amid-controversy>.

⁴⁹ For a video clip, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxUqEELUSag&feature=watch_response.

⁵⁰ For a photo of Obama's deep bow, see http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33978533/ns/politics-white_house/.

⁵¹ For a photo of Xi's meeting with the Japanese emperor, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2009-12/15/content_12650121.htm.

⁵² http://bbs.tiexue.net/post_4699971_1.html.

⁵³ http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-03/24/content_13232804.htm.

⁵⁴ http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-03/26/content_13247800.htm.

⁵⁵ http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-03/31/c_128887.htm.

⁵⁶ <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/wjrw/lrfbzjbzzl/t9064.htm>.

⁵⁷ <http://www.0769fish.com/a/20110123/1668.html>.

(BNP) Chairwoman Khaleda Zia.⁵⁸ In Laos, Xi met with Lao People's Revolutionary Party General Secretary and President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Lieutenant General Choummaly Sayasone, Vice President Bounnhang Vorachith, and the then Premier Bouasone Bouphavanh.⁵⁹ In New Zealand, Xi met with Prime Minister John Key and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Bill English and attended a seminar on Sino-New Zealand Free-Trade Agreement.⁶⁰ In Australia, Xi met with the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, President of the Senate John Hogg, Speaker of the House of Representatives Henry Jenkins, Leader of the Opposition in the Australian House of Representatives and Federal Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia Tony Abbott, and Governor-General of Australia Quentin Bryce.⁶¹

Compared to Li Keqiang's visit to Australia less than eight months earlier, Xi's visit was more ritualistic and less consequential. The two met a similar set of Australian politicians but came out with different results. Li Keqiang clinched a very important joint statement with Kevin Rudd, which had strong implications for another more important joint statement between China and the United States. Xi's visit was a "kiss of death" for Kevin Rudd, who stepped down the day (24 June 2010) when Xi returned to Beijing from Australia.⁶² Most importantly, while Xi was traveling around with no significant tasks, he was absent from a very serious debate on political reform in Hong Kong as the head of the Coordinating Small Group on Hong Kong and Macao Affairs of the CCP Central Committee (中央港澳工作协调小组组长).⁶³ It was probably Hu Jintao who handled the Hong Kong affairs at this critical juncture.⁶⁴ Hu was in Beijing from 13 to 23 June 2010, and the Democratic Party of Hong Kong had its critical meeting on 21 June to accept a modified version of the proposal for political reforms in Hong Kong.⁶⁵

In his third trip abroad in 2010, Xi visited four countries. He visited Singapore, South Africa, Angola, and Botswana from 14 to 24 November. In Singapore, Xi met with Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and Deputy Prime Minister Wong Ken Seng. Xi went to Singapore with an important message: China does not pose any threat to any country in the world. "A prosperous and stable China," as he stated in his speech at the reception for celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Singapore on 15 November, "will not pose any threat to any country in the world but will only bring about more development opportunities."⁶⁶ In South Africa, Xi met with Vice President Kgalema Motlanthe and National Assembly Speaker Max Sisulu and attended the Fourth Plenum of the Sino-South African Bilateral Committee.⁶⁷ In Angola, Xi met with President José Eduardo dos Santos and Vice President Fernando da Piedade Dias dos

⁵⁸ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/xjp0610/mjl.htm>.

⁵⁹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/xjp0610/lw.htm>.

⁶⁰ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/xjp0610/xxl.htm>.

⁶¹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/xjp0610/adly.htm>.

⁶² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Labor_Party_leadership_election,_2010;
http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-06/24/c_12259263.htm.

⁶³ <http://news.sohu.com/20071110/n253167108.shtml>.

⁶⁴ For details, see <http://www.zaobao.com.sg/special/china/hk/pages2/hk100710.shtml>;
<http://www2.news.sina.com.hk/cgi-bin/nw/show.cgi/2/1/1/1774791/1.html>.

⁶⁵ <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2010-06-22/084917689813s.shtml>.

⁶⁶ http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-11/15/c_12776841.htm.

⁶⁷ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/xijinpings/cf.htm>.

Santos.⁶⁸ In Botswana, Xi met with President Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama and Vice President Lieutenant General Mompoti Sebogodi Merafthe.⁶⁹

5. Wu Bangguo's Foreign Visits

Wu Bangguo, No. 2 ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee and chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, has acted as the "speaker of the House" on the international stage. Since he became chairman of the NPC Standing Committee in March 2003, he has visited 42 countries 45 times. After he was reelected as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee in October 2007, he has visited 17 countries in five separate trips.

His first trip abroad in 2008 covered five African countries. He visited Algeria, Gabon, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Seychelles from 3 to 14 November. In Algeria, Wu met with Speaker of the National People's Assembly (APN) Abdelaziz Ziari and President of the Council of the Nation Abdelkader Bensalah.⁷⁰ In Gabon, Wu met with President Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Senate Rose Francine Rogombé, and President of the National Assembly Guy Nzouba-Ndama.⁷¹ In Ethiopia, Wu met with President Girma Wolde-Giorgis, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi Asres, Speaker of the House of Federation Degefe Bula, and the then Speaker of the House of People's Representatives Teshome Toga Chanaka.⁷² In Madagascar, Wu met with the then President Marc Ravalomanana, the then Prime Minister Charles Rabemananjara, the then President of the National Assembly Jacques Hugues Sylla, and President of the Senate Yvan Randriasandratiniony.⁷³ In Seychelles, Wu met with President James Michel and Speaker of the National Assembly Patrick Herminie.⁷⁴

In 2009, Wu Bangguo made two trips abroad. In his first trip, he visited three European countries—Russia, Austria, and Italy—from 13 to 24 May. In Russia, Wu met with President Dmitry Medvedev, Chairman of the Federation Council Sergay Mironov, and State Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov.⁷⁵ In Austria, Wu met with President Heinz Fischer, Vice Chancellor and the then Acting Chancellor Josef Pröll, President of the National Council Barbara Prammer, and the then President of the Federal Council Harald Reisenberger.⁷⁶ In Italy, Wu met with President Giorgio Napolitano, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, President of the Chamber of Deputies Gianfranco Fini, President of Lombardy Region Roberto Formigoni, and President of the Tuscany Regional Council Alberto Monaci.⁷⁷

⁶⁸ The president and the vice president are cousins. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fernando_da_Piedade_Dias_dos_Santos.

⁶⁹ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/207554/index.html>.

⁷⁰ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg1103/aejly.htm>.

⁷¹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg1103/jp.htm>.

⁷² <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg1103/aseby.htm>.

⁷³ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg1103/mdjsj.htm>.

⁷⁴ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg1103/sse.htm>.

⁷⁵ http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg_cf/olszx.htm.

⁷⁶ President of the Federal Council of Austria serves a term of six months. There are two presidents of the Federal Council per year. For a list of presidents of the Federal Council of Austria, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_Federal_Council_of_Austria.

⁷⁷ http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbg_cf/xdlzx.htm.

In his second trip abroad in 2009, Wu visited Cuba, Bahamas, and the United States from 1 to 13 September.⁷⁸ In Cuba, Wu met with President Raúl Castro, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Fidel Castro, and President of the National Assembly of People's Power Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada. In Bahamas, Wu met with Governor-General Sir Arthur Foulkes, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, Speaker of the House of Assembly Alvin Smith, and President of the Senate Lynn Holowesko.⁷⁹ In the United States, Wu met with President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, the then Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, President pro tempore of the Senate Danial Ken Inouye, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.⁸⁰ Obviously, Wu's visit to the United States was one of the most important foreign visits by a top Chinese leader in the year.

Wu Bangguo made two more foreign trips in 2010. In his first trip abroad, he visited France, Serbia, and Switzerland from 7 to 20 July. In France, Wu met with President Nicolas Sarkozy, Prime Minister François Fillon, President of the Senate Gérard Larcher, and President of the National Assembly Bernard Accoyer.⁸¹ In Serbia, he met with President Boris Tadić, Prime Minister Mirko Cvetković, and President of the National Assembly Slavica Đukić Dejanović.⁸² In Switzerland, Wu met with the then President of the Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Council of States Erika Forster-Vannini, and the then President of the National Council Pascale Bruderer Wyss.⁸³ Wu Bangguo also attended the Third World Conference of Speakers of Parliament held in Geneva, Switzerland. The conference was convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the broad theme for the conference was "Parliaments in a world of crisis: securing global democratic accountability for the common good."⁸⁴ Wu attended the opening ceremony on 19 July and gave a speech on "The International community is obliged to realize the millennium development goals."⁸⁵

In his second foreign trip in 2010, Wu visited three Asian countries. He visited Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand from 3 to 13 November. In Cambodia, Wu met with King Norodom Sihamoni, Prime Minister Hun Sen, President of the Senate (Protsaphea) Chea Sim, and President of the National Assembly Heng Samrin.⁸⁶ In Indonesia, Wu met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Vice President Boediono, and Speaker of the People's Representative Council Marzuki Alie.⁸⁷ In Thailand, Wu met with President of the Senate Prasobsook Boondech and Speaker of the House of Representatives Chai Chidchob.⁸⁸

6. Jia Qinglin's Foreign Visits

⁷⁸ <http://www.news.cn/world/wbg200908/>.

⁷⁹ <http://www.news.cn/world/wbg200908/bhmzx.htm>.

⁸⁰ <http://www.news.cn/world/wbg200908/mgzx.htm>.

⁸¹ http://www1.www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-07/10/content_1650768.htm.

⁸² http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-07/15/c_111955135.htm.

⁸³ http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-07/16/c_12342144.htm.

⁸⁴ <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/speakers10.htm>.

⁸⁵ http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-07/19/c_12350092.htm.

⁸⁶ http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-11/03/c_12735211.htm.

⁸⁷ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbgcf201011/ynzx.htm>.

⁸⁸ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/wbgcf201011/tgzx.htm>.

Jia Qinglin, No. 4 ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee and chairman of the Chinese National People's Political Consultative Conference (CNPPCC), has acted as the "president of the Senate" on the international stage. Since he became chairman of the CNPPCC in March 2003, he has visited 44 countries. After he was reelected as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee in October 2007, he has visited 19 countries in five separate trips.

In his first foreign trip in 2008, Jia visited four European countries. He visited Romania, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia from 4 to 14 May. In Romania, Jia met with President Traian Băsescu, President of the Senate Dan Mircea Geoană, and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Roberta Alma Anastase.⁸⁹ He gave a speech to a full session of the Senate.⁹⁰ In Hungary, Jia met with the then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány and the then Speaker of the National Assembly Katalin Szili.⁹¹ In Slovenia, Jia met with President Danilo Türk, the then Prime Minister Janez Janša, and President of the National Council Blaž Kavčič.⁹² In Croatia, Jia met with the then Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and President of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić.⁹³ Because of the strong earthquake in Sichuan, Jia decided to curtail his trip and left for China on 14 May 2008.⁹⁴

In his second trip abroad in 2008, Jia visited four Asian countries. He visited Jordan, Turkey, Laos, and Cambodia from 23 November to 6 December. In Jordan, Jia met with King Abdullah II, the then Prime Minister Nader Dahabi, the then President of the Assembly of Senators Zaid al-Rifai, and Speaker of the House of Deputies Abdul Hadi Majali.⁹⁵ In Turkey, Jia met with President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the then Speaker of the Parliament Köksal Toptan.⁹⁶ In Laos, Jia met with Lao People's Revolutionary Party Politburo Member and President of the Lao Front for National Construction⁹⁷ Sisavath Keobounphanh, the then Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh, President of the Laos National Assembly Pany Yathotu, Vice President Bounnhang Vorachith, and Former President and Former Chairman of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Khamtai Siphandon.⁹⁸ In Cambodia, Jia met with King Norodom Sihamoni, Prime Minister Hun Sen, President of the Senate (Protsaphea) Chea Sim, and President of the National Assembly Heng Samrin.⁹⁹

In 2009, Jia had one foreign trip. He visited the Philippines, Peru, Ecuador, and Brazil from 19 to 30 November. In the Philippines, Jia met with President Maria Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Acting Speaker of the House of Representatives Amelita Villarosa,

⁸⁹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/jql200805/lmny.htm>.

⁹⁰ For the complete text of his speech, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-05/06/content_8111252.htm.

⁹¹ Katalin Szili was speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary from 15 May 2002 to 14 September 2009. For details, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katalin_Szili.

⁹² <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/jql200805/slwny.htm>.

⁹³ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/jql200805/kldy.htm>.

⁹⁴ http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-05/15/content_8172648.htm.

⁹⁵ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/34961/139050/139051/index.html>.

⁹⁶ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/34961/139050/139052/index.html>.

⁹⁷ This is the Lao equivalent of China's People's Political Consultative Conference. For details, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lao_Front_for_National_Construction.

⁹⁸ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/34961/139050/139053/index.html>.

⁹⁹ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/34961/139050/139054/index.html>.

and President of the Senate Juan Ponce Enrile.¹⁰⁰ In Peru, Jia met with President Alan Gabriel Ludwig García Pérez and President of the Congress Luis Alva Castro.¹⁰¹ In Ecuador, Jia met with President Rafael Correa Delgado and President of the National Assembly Fernando Cordero Cueva.¹⁰² In Brazil, Jia met with the then President Luiz Inácio Lula, President of the Senate José Sarney, the then President of the Chamber of Deputies Michel Miguel Elias Temer, and the then Chief Justice Gilmar Ferreira Mendes.¹⁰³

In 2010, Jia took two trips abroad. In his first trip, he visited Cameroon, Namibia, and South Africa from 23 March to 1 April. In Cameroon, Jia met with President of the National Assembly Cavayé Yéguié Djibril and gave a speech at the National Assembly of Cameroon.¹⁰⁴ In Namibia, Jia met with Chairman of the National Council Asser Kuveri Kapere.¹⁰⁵ In South Africa, Jia met with President Jacob Zuma and Chairman of the National Council of Provinces Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu.¹⁰⁶

In his second trip abroad in 2010, Jia visited Syria, Poland, Oman, and Kazakhstan from 29 October to 11 November. In Syria, Jia met with Prime Minister Muhammad Naji al-Otari, Speaker of the Parliament Mahmoud al-Abrash, and Deputy Chairman of the National Progressive Front Suleiman Kaddah.¹⁰⁷ In Poland, Jia met with President Bronisław Maria Komorowski, Prime Minister Donald Franciszek Tusk, and Marshal of the Sejm Grzegorz Juliusz Schetyna.¹⁰⁸ In Oman, Jia met with Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said.¹⁰⁹ In Kazakhstan, Jia met with President Nursultan Abishuly Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Karim Qajymqanuly Massimov, Chairman of the Senate Qasım-Jomart Kemelulı Toqayev, and Chairman of the Mazhilis (lower house of the Parliament) Aslan Mussin.¹¹⁰

7. Li Changchun's Foreign Visits

Li Changchun, No. 5 ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee in charge of propaganda, has also visited many countries in the world. Since his entry into the Politburo Standing Committee in November 2002, he has visited 36 countries altogether. Since he was reelected into the Politburo Standing Committee in October 2007, he has visited 15 countries in four separate trips.

In 2008, Li visited five countries in one trip. He visited Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Syria from 22 March to 4 April. In Algeria, Li met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the then Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem, and President of the People's National Assembly Abdelaziz Ziari.¹¹¹ In Mauritania, Li met with the then

¹⁰⁰ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/45579/10428199.html>.

¹⁰¹ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/105667/105735/105739/index1.html>.

¹⁰² <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/105667/105735/105739/index1.html>.

¹⁰³ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/45579/10509436.html>.

¹⁰⁴ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/11211062.html>.

¹⁰⁵ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/11236690.html>.

¹⁰⁶ <http://cppcc.people.com.cn/GB/45579/11301119.html>.

¹⁰⁷ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/13091324.html>.

¹⁰⁸ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/105667/105735/105739/index.html>.

¹⁰⁹ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/13150071.html>.

¹¹⁰ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/13171149.html>.

¹¹¹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc200803/aejly.htm>.

President Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, the then Prime Minister Zeine Ould Zeidane, and President of the National Pact for Democracy and Development (ADIL) Yahya Ould Ahmed El Waghef.¹¹² In Morocco, Li met with Prime Minister and Istiqlal Party Leader Abbas El Fassi and the then President of the Assembly of Councilors Mustapha Okacha.¹¹³ In Tunisia, Li met with the then President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the then President of the Chamber of Deputies Fouad Mebazaa, and the then General Secretary of the Constitutional Democratic Rally Hédi M'henni.¹¹⁴ In Syria, Li met with President Bashar al-Assad, Prime Minister Muhammad Naji al-Otari, and Ba'ath Party leaders.¹¹⁵

In 2009, Li Changchun visited four countries in one trip. He visited Australia, Myanmar, Japan, and South Korea from 20 March to 7 April. In Australia, Li met with the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the then Leader of the Liberal Party Malcolm Bligh Turnbull, and the then Minister for the Environment, Heritage, and the Arts Peter Garrett.¹¹⁶ In Myanmar, Li met with the then Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Than Shwe, the then Prime Minister Thein Sein, and the then First Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo.¹¹⁷ In Japan, Li met with the then Prime Minister Taro Aso, the then head of the Liberal Democratic Party Hirofumi Hosoda, the then head of the Democratic Party of Japan Ichiro Ozawa, Chairman of the Japanese Communist Party Kazuo Shii, and leaders of other political parties in Japan.¹¹⁸ In South Korea, Li met with President Lee Myung-bak, the then Prime Minister Dr. Han Seung-soo, the then Speaker of the National Assembly Kim Hyong O, the then Chairman of the Grand National Party Park Hee-Tae, and President of the Democratic Party (DEP) Chung Se-kyun.¹¹⁹

In 2010, Li Changchun took two trips abroad. In his first trip, Li was scheduled to visit six countries, including Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, Romania, and Montenegro. However, due to the Yushu Earthquake, he only managed to visit two countries. He visited Germany and Turkey from 12 to 17 April. In Germany, Li met with the then President Horst Köhler and the then Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.¹²⁰ In Turkey, Li met with President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan.¹²¹ Because of a strong earthquake in Yushu in Qinghai Province, Li decided to postpone his visits to Saudi Arabia, Ireland, Romania, and Montenegro and went back to China in the morning of 17 April.¹²²

In his second foreign trip in 2010, Li visited four countries. He visited Estonia, Montenegro, Ireland, and Iran from 21 to 30 September. In Estonia, Li met with Prime Minister Andrus Ansip and Speaker of the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) Ene

¹¹² <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc200803/mltny.htm>.

¹¹³ http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-03/29/content_7878847.htm.

¹¹⁴ http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-04/01/content_7897204.htm.

¹¹⁵ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc200803/xly.htm>.

¹¹⁶ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc0903/adly.htm>.

¹¹⁷ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc0903/md.htm>.

¹¹⁸ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc0903/rb.htm>.

¹¹⁹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc0903/hg.htm>.

¹²⁰ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc20100409/dgzx.htm>.

¹²¹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcc20100409/teqzx.htm>.

¹²² http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-04/17/c_1238957.htm.

Ergma.¹²³ In Montenegro, Li met with the then Prime Minister Milo Đukanović¹²⁴ and Speaker of the Parliament and President of the Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (SDP) Ranko Krivokapić.¹²⁵ In Ireland, Li met with President Mary Patricia McAleese¹²⁶ and Prime Minister (Taoiseach in Irish) Brian Cowen.¹²⁷ In Iran, Li met with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad¹²⁸ and Speaker of the Parliament Ali Ardashir Larijani.¹²⁹

8. He Guoqiang's Foreign Visits

He Guoqiang, No. 8 ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee in charge of party discipline, also paid visits to foreign countries. He has visited 13 countries in three separate trips altogether since October 2007.

In 2008, He visited four countries. He visited Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, and Angola from 22 June to 4 July. In Cuba, He met with President Raúl Castro, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Fidel Castro, and First Vice President of the Council of State and Council of Ministers José Ramón Machado Ventura.¹³⁰ In Trinidad and Tobago, He met with President George Maxwell Richards and Prime Minister Patrick Augustus Mervyn Manning.¹³¹ In Brazil, He met with the then President Luiz Inácio Lula, the then President of the Senate Garibaldi Alves Filho, the then President of the Chamber of Deputies Arlindo Chinaglia, and the then President of Worker's Party Ricardo Berzoini.¹³² In Angola, He met with President José Eduardo dos Santos and General Secretary of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) Juliao Mateus¹³³

In 2009, He visited four countries. He visited Egypt, Spain, Jordan, and Mongolia from 13 to 27 June. In Egypt, He met with the then President Hosni Mubarak, Secretary-General of the National Democratic Party (NDP) Mohamed Safwat El Sherif, and Minister of International Cooperation Fayza Abul Naga.¹³⁴ In Spain, He met with King Juan Carlos I, Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Congress of Deputies José Bono Martínez, Leader of the People's Party Mariano Rajoy Brey, and the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) Francisco Frutos Gras¹³⁵ In Jordan, He met with the Acting King and Prince Ali bin al Hussein,¹³⁶ the then Prime Minister Nader Dahabi,¹³⁷ the then Minister of Planning and International Cooperation

¹²³ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/lcccfoy4g2010/asny.htm>.

¹²⁴ http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-09/26/c_12608552.htm.

¹²⁵ http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2010-09/25/content_1709659.htm.

¹²⁶ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-09/28/content_1711434.htm.

¹²⁷ Brian Cowen will remain in his office until 9 March 2011. For details, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Cowen.

¹²⁸ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-09/29/content_1712419.htm.

¹²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Larijani.

¹³⁰ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgq0806/gb.htm>.

¹³¹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgq0806/tlnd.htm>.

¹³² <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgq0806/bx.htm>.

¹³³ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgq0806/agl.htm>.

¹³⁴ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgq200906/ajzx.htm>.

¹³⁵ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgq200906/xbyzx.htm>.

¹³⁶ <http://news.cctv.com/xwlb/20090625/108793.shtml>.

¹³⁷ <http://tv.people.com.cn/GB/61600/9537459.html>.

Suheir al-Ali, and Chairman of the Jordan Investment Board (JIB) Maen Nsour.¹³⁸ In Mongolia, He met with the new President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj,¹³⁹ the then Prime Minister Sanjaagiin Bayar, and Speaker of the State Great Khural Damdiny Demberel.¹⁴⁰

In 2010, He visited five countries. He visited Italy, Iceland, Norway, Lithuania, and Turkmenistan from 6 to 19 June. In Italy, He met with President Giorgio Napolitano, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, Chairman of the Democratic Party of Italy Pier Luigi Bersani, and President of the Tuscany Regional Council Enrico Rossi.¹⁴¹ In Iceland, He met with President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, and Foreign Minister Össur Skarphéðinsson.¹⁴² In Norway, He met with Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, and Party Secretary of the Norwegian Labor Party Raymond Johansen.¹⁴³ One of the most important tasks for He Guoqiang to do in Norway was to persuade the Norwegian government to intervene in the work of the Nobel Committee as several political dissidents including Liu Xiaobo, Hu Jia, and Gao Zhisheng had been nominated for Nobel Peace Prize of 2010.¹⁴⁴ Apparently, He Guoqiang was not very successful because Liu Xiaobo was later awarded the peace prize in October 2010. In Lithuania, He met with President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius.¹⁴⁵ In Turkmenistan, He met with President Gurbanguly Mälikgulyýewiç Berdimuhamedow, Speaker of the Assembly of Turkmenistan Akja Nurberdiyewa, and First Secretary of the Political Committee of the Turkmen Democratic Party Kasymguly Babayev.¹⁴⁶

9. Zhou Yongkang's Foreign Visits

Zhou Yongkang, No. 9 ranking member of the Politburo Standing Committee in charge of law and order, also has had opportunities to visit foreign countries. Since his entry into the Politburo Standing Committee in October 2007, he has visited seven countries in three separate trips.

In 2008, Zhou visited three countries. He visited Vietnam, Indonesia, and Australia from 28 October to 10 November. In Vietnam, Zhou met with the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nông Đức Mạnh,¹⁴⁷ Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng, the then Executive Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Trương Tấn Sang,¹⁴⁸ Politburo Member and Minister of Public Security Lê Hồng Anh, and Politburo Member and Party Secretary of the Ho Chi Minh City Le Thanh Hai.¹⁴⁹ In Indonesia, Zhou met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the then Vice President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, and the then Speaker of the People's Representative Council

¹³⁸ <http://newyork.china-consulate.org/chn/xw/t569114.htm>.

¹³⁹ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/9553743.html>.

¹⁴⁰ http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2009-06/26/content_11608089.htm.

¹⁴¹ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/heguoqiang/cf.htm>.

¹⁴² <http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/heguoqiang/cf.htm>.

¹⁴³ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgqcf/nwzx.htm>.

¹⁴⁴ http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2724&Itemid=171.

¹⁴⁵ http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2010-06/16/content_1628586.htm.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/hgqcf/tkmzx.htm>.

¹⁴⁷ He was succeeded by Nguyễn Phú Trọng at the 11th National Party Congress on 19 January 2011. For details, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nguy%E1%BB%85n_Ph%C3%BA_Tr%E1%BB%8Dng.

¹⁴⁸ He is expected to be elected state president of Vietnam by the National Assembly in May 2011.

¹⁴⁹ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/137122/137123/index.html>.

Agung Laksono.¹⁵⁰ In Australia, Zhou met with the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the then Foreign Minister Stephen Francis Smith, and Premier of the Western Australia Colin James Barnett.¹⁵¹

In 2009, Zhou visited two countries. He visited Sudan and South Africa from 16 to 21 November. In Sudan, Zhou met with President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, Vice President Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, and Deputy President of the National Congress Party Nafi'a Ali Nafi'a.¹⁵² In South Africa, Zhou met with President Jacob Zuma.¹⁵³

In 2010, Zhou visited two countries. He visited North Korea from 9 to 11 October and India from 31 October to 2 November. In North Korea, Zhou met with General Secretary of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) Kim Jong-il and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong-nam.¹⁵⁴ In India, Zhou met with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President of the Indian National Congress Sonia Gandhi.¹⁵⁵

IV. Concluding Remarks

Evidently, in terms of foreign relations, China indeed possesses unique human resources. Because of their equal status in the Chinese political hierarchy, all nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee have functioned as prime ministers. Since they occupy different positions in the Chinese system, they were invited by their appropriate counterparts in other countries. Premier Wen Jiabao is a prime minister, so is Executive Vice Premier Li Keqiang who has been groomed to be next premier. President Hu Jintao is the head of state with a lot of power because of his party and military positions, do is Vice President Xi Jinping who is the heir apparent to Hu Jintao. Wu Bangguo, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, acts as speaker of the "House," and Jia Qinglin, chairman of the Chinese National People's Political Consultative Conference, is treated as president of the "Senate". Li Changchun, He Guoqiang, and Zhou Yongkang have no portfolios in the national government, but they are treated as top Party leaders in other countries.

In terms of frequencies, Premier Wen Jiabao is the champion (Table 1). He visited foreign countries 35 times from October 2007 to February 2011. President Hu Jintao was the second, 34 times. Vice President Xi Jinping visited foreign countries 32 times. Jia Qinglin and Wu Bangguo were less frequent, 19 and 17 times respectively. Li Changchun visited 15 foreign countries, and Li Keqiang and He Guoqiang 13 countries each. Not surprisingly, Zhou Yongkang, who has the least connection to foreign affairs, visited the smallest number of foreign countries during the period. He visited only seven countries altogether. Altogether, the nine "prime ministers" visited foreign countries 185 times during the period.

¹⁵⁰ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/137122/137124/index.html>.

¹⁵¹ <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/137122/137125/index.html>.

¹⁵² <http://www.news.cn/world/zyk0911/sdzz.htm>.

¹⁵³ <http://www.news.cn/world/zyk0911/nfzx.htm>.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/zhouyongkang/cf.htm>.

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/zhouyongkang/cf.htm>.

The top leaders had different numbers of foreign visits in different years. Premier Wen Jiabao was the only top leader who paid foreign visits in the aftermath of the Seventeenth Party Congress in 2007. President Hu Jintao visited most countries in 2008. He visited 10 countries in that year. In 2009, Vice President Xi Jinping visited most countries. He visited altogether 15 countries in that year, more than President Hu Jintao (who visited 13 countries) and Premier Wen Jiabao (who visited 10 countries). In 2010, Premier Wen Jiabao visited most countries (15 altogether), followed by Vice President Xi Jinping (12 countries). Vice Premier Li Keqiang was the first top leader to visit foreign countries in 2011. He visited three European countries. President Hu Jintao made his first as well as his last state visit to the United States in 2011.

In terms of continental distributions, the Chinese leaders visited Asian countries most, followed by European countries (Table 2). They visited 69 Asian country/times, 58 European country/times, 26 African country/times, and 17 Latin American country/times. They visited North America eight times, Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) six times, and one Pacific country. In terms of individual years, there seems to be some patterns. In the last months of 2007, the Chinese leaders visited both Asian and European countries. In 2008, Asia and Africa appeared to be the top priority. In 2009, Europe, Asia, and Latin America received a lot of attention. In 2010, Asia and Europe were important destinations for the Chinese top elites. In the beginning of 2011, Europe and the United States were major places for Chinese diplomatic efforts.

In terms of individual countries, the Chinese leadership has both width and depth in its diplomatic outreach (Table 3). During this period of October 2007 to February 2011, the nine Chinese top leaders visited 93 countries 185 times. Japan, Russia, and the United States top the list with seven visits each. President Hu Jintao visited Japan three times during this period: twice in 2008 and once in 2010. Premier Wen Jiabao visited Japan twice: once in 2008 and once in 2010. Li Changchun and Xi Jinping both visited Japan in 2009. Hu Jintao visited Russia twice: once in 2009 and once in 2010. Wen Jiabao visited Russia three times: once in 2007, once in 2008, and once in 2010. Wu Bangguo visited Russia in 2009, and Xi Jinping visited Russia in 2010. Hu Jintao visited the United States four times: once every year since 2008. Wen Jiabao visited the United States twice: once in 2008 and once in 2010. Wu Bangguo visited the United States in 2009.

Germany and South Korea are also very important for China. The Chinese leaders visited them five times each. Wen Jiabao visited Germany twice: once in 2009 and once in 2010. Xi Jinping, Li Changchun, and Li Keqiang visited the country in 2009, 2010, and 2011, respectively. Hu Jintao visited South Korea twice: once in 2008 and once in 2010. Wen Jiabao visited South Korea in 2010. Li Changchun and Xi Jinping both visited the country in 2009.

Australia, Brazil, Italy, and Turkmenistan received the top Chinese leaders four times each during the period. Zhou Yongkang visited Australia in 2008, Li Changchun and Li Keqiang in 2009, and Xi Jinping in 2010. He Guoqiang visited Brazil in 2008, Xi Jinping and Jia Qinglin in 2009, and Hu Jintao in 2010. Wu Bangguo and Hu Jintao visited Italy in 2009 and He Guoqiang and Wen Jiabao in 2010. Interestingly, Turkmenistan was also prominent as a hot destination for the top Chinese leaders. Wen Jiabao, Hu Jintao, Li Keqiang, and He Guoqiang visited the country in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively.

Eighteen countries received three Chinese leaders each. These countries include Belgium, Britain, Cambodia, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. It is notable that Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, and Singapore are among the list. Xi Jinping, He Guoqiang, and Wen Jiabao visited Mongolia in 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively. Li Changchun and Xi Jinping visited Myanmar in 2009, and Wen Jiabao in 2010. Xi Jinping, Wen Jiabao, and Zhou Yongkang visited North Korea in 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively. Wen Jiabao visited Singapore in 2007, Hu Jintao in 2009, and Xi Jinping in 2010.

Eighteen countries received two top Chinese leaders each. These countries include Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Croatia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Jordan, New Zealand, Peru, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Syria, Tajikistan, and Vietnam. Notably, Algeria, France, and India saw two Chinese leaders in one year. In 2008, Li Changchun and Wu Bangguo both visited Algeria. In 2010, Wu Bangguo and Hu Jintao both visited France. In 2010, Zhou Yongkang and Wen Jiabao both visited India. Finally, 48 countries received one top Chinese leader each during the period. These countries are spread in different continents.

Clearly, because of its unique human resources, China has been able to conduct summit foreign policies in a broader scope than many other countries. Because of its mixed system, China appears to different countries as a country of different systems. For the presidential systems, China is a presidential system where the president is the most powerful person. For the parliamentary systems, China is a parliamentary system where the premier is the head of the government. For unicameral parliamentary systems, China is a unicameral system. For bicameral systems, China seems to have both the “Senate” and the “House”. For a few remaining communist countries, China is a communist state where top party leaders are also top state leaders.

Table 1 Foreign Visits by Politburo Standing Committee Members

Name	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Hu Jintao		10	13	10	1	34
Wu Bangguo		5	6	6		17
Wen Jiabao	5	5	10	15		35
Jia Qinglin		8	4	7		19
Li Changchun		5	4	6		15
Xi Jinping		5	15	12		32
Li Keqiang		3	6	1	3	13
He Guoqiang		4	4	5		13
Zhou Yongkang		3	2	2		7
Total	5	48	64	64	4	185

Source:

<http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/index.htm>

Note:

These are visits conducted between October 2007 and January 2011.

Table 2 Continents Visited by Politburo Standing Committee Members

Continent	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Africa		11	8	7		26
Asia	3	22	18	26		69
Europe	2	6	22	25	3	58
Latin America		6	10	1		17
North America		2	2	3	1	8
Oceania		1	3	2		6
Pacific			1			1
Total	5	48	64	64	4	185

Source:

<http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/index.htm>

Note:

These are visits conducted between October 2007 and January 2011.

Table 3 Countries Visited by Politburo Standing Committee Members

Country	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Japan		3	2	2		7
Russia	1	1	2	3		7
United States		2	2	2	1	7
Germany			2	2	1	5
South Korea		1	2	2		5
Australia		1	2	1		4
Brazil		1	2	1		4
Italy			2	2		4
Turkmenistan	1	1	1	1		4
Belgium			2	1		3
Britain			2		1	3
Cambodia		1	1	1		3
Cuba		2	1			3
Egypt		1	2			3
Indonesia		2		1		3
Kazakhstan		1		2		3
Laos		2		1		3
Mongolia		1	1	1		3
Myanmar			2	1		3
North Korea		1	1	1		3
Singapore	1		1	1		3
South Africa			1	2		3
Spain			2		1	3
Switzerland			1	2		3
Thailand			2	1		3
Turkey		1		2		3
Uzbekistan	1		1	1		3
Algeria		2				2
Angola		1		1		2
Belarus	1			1		2
Croatia		1	1			2
Finland			1	1		2
France				2		2
Greece		1		1		2
Hungary		1	1			2
India				2		2
Jordan		1	1			2
New Zealand			1	1		2
Peru		1	1			2
Romania		1	1			2
Saudi Arabia		1	1			2
Slovakia		1	1			2
Syria		1		1		2
Tajikistan		1		1		2
Vietnam		1		1		2
Austria			1			1
Banamas			1			1
Bangladesh				1		1
Botswana				1		1
Bulgaria			1			1
Cameroon				1		1
Canada				1		1
Colombia			1			1
Costa Rica		1				1
Czech Republic			1			1
Ecuador			1			1
Estonia				1		1
Ethiopia		1				1
Gabon		1				1
Iceland				1		1
Iran				1		1
Ireland				1		1
Jamaica			1			1
Kuwait		1				1
Lithuania				1		1
Madagascar		1				1
Malaysia			1			1
Mali			1			1
Malta			1			1
Mauritania		1				1
Muritus			1			1
Mexico			1			1
Montenegro				1		1
Morocco		1				1
Namibia				1		1
Norway				1		1
Oman				1		1
Pakistan				1		1
Papua New Guinea			1			1
Philippines			1			1
Poland				1		1
Portugal				1		1
Qatar		1				1
Senegal			1			1
Serbia				1		1
Seychelles		1				1
Sudan			1			1
Sweden				1		1
Tanzania			1			1
Trinidad and Tobago		1				1
Tunisia		1				1
Venezuela			1			1
Yemen		1				1
Total	5	48	64	64	4	185

Source:

<http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/index.htm>

Note:

These are visits conducted between October 2007 and January 2011.