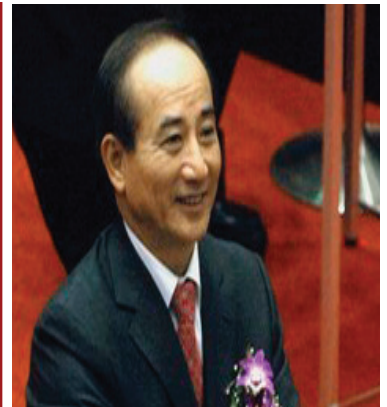




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Wang Jin-pyng, speaker of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan

*China Brief is a bi-weekly journal of information and analysis covering Greater China in Eurasia.*

*China Brief is a publication of The Jamestown Foundation, a private non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. and is edited by L.C. Russell Hsiao.*

*The opinions expressed in China Brief are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Jamestown Foundation.*



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**In a Fortnight**

By L.C. Russell Hsiao

**ENERGY SECURITY THE CENTERPIECE OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

The 2008 People's Republic of China (PRC) White Paper on Diplomacy placed energy security as a major centerpiece of the country's foreign policy. The White Paper represents "China's foreign policy and China's view on the international situation and introducing the status of China's foreign relations in the previous year" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, July 18). According to a Chinese report based on an exclusive preview granted to the Hong Kong-based newspaper *Wen Wei Po* a day before its official launch, the first chapter of the White Paper is reportedly on "The Issue of Energy Security During the Period of High Oil Prices," in which it states that the current high oil demands have put enormous strain on global energy security, and have grave implications for the global economy, security and political stability (*Wen Wei Po*, July 18). According to the White Paper, in 2007 competition for global energy resources has become more severe, while regional competition has exacerbated the global energy security problem. The White Paper asserts that high oil prices have increased global inflationary pressure, undermined the international financial system, added an economic burden for oil importing countries, and under the current high risk environment, the problem of high oil prices is becoming increasingly conspicuous (*Wen Wei Po*, July 18). The White Paper further states that under globalization, energy security is increasingly a global problem, the majority of countries cannot escape international cooperation to achieve the guarantees of energy security. The rise of oil prices, from a long term perspective, is not beneficial for both oil producing and consuming countries. The international community needs to move forward with dialogue and cooperation, to seek a common solution to the problem of high oil prices (*Wen Wei Po*, July 18). The White Paper specifically emphasized that China is currently the world's second largest producer and consumer of energy, and therefore an indispensable part of

the global energy market, and is increasingly playing a prominent role in ensuring global energy security (*Wen Wei Po*, July 18).

#### TAIWAN'S PARLIAMENT TO OVERSEE CROSS-STRAIT NEGOTIATIONS

The speaker of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan (parliament), Wang Jin-pyng, arrived in Washington, D.C. on July 24 for a week-long visit, marking the highest level visit by a ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party member to the United States since the transfer of power to the new administration (*Singtao Daily*, July 18). Speaking on July 29 at the Washington, D.C.-based think tank, the Heritage Foundation, Wang emphasized the enduring ties between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the United States. In a speech entitled "New Beginnings in a Strong Alliance," Wang laid out the concerns of the new Taiwanese administration toward the requested arms package, but presented an optimistic outlook on the future of U.S.-Taiwan relations.

Wang announced that plans are underway in the parliament to create a committee that will conduct oversight over current cross-strait negotiations. Wang assured that legislative oversight will play a complementary role to the executive and party-to-party track as already laid out by the flurry of cross-strait dialogue spearheaded by Vice President Vincent Siew's participation at the Boao Forum and Chiang Pin-kung, chairman of the revitalized Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF). Legislative oversight, according to Wang, is meant to safeguard the interests of the Taiwanese people, based on the following three principles: one, Taiwan's sovereignty; two, Taiwan's national security; three, the rights of 23 million citizens of Taiwan.

Wang's remarks are considered significant by many analysts of cross-strait relations and Taiwan's domestic politics especially when weighed in terms of Taiwan's current domestic political climate. In what appears to be an affront on President Ma Ying-jeou's flagging satisfaction rating, Wang, when asked after his remarks during questions and answers, went at length to dispel the notion that there is bad blood between Wang and Ma, particularly following the heated race between the two for the KMT chairmanship. According to polls released by the non-partisan Global View Survey Research Center on July 28, Ma's satisfaction rating has fallen from 58.3 percent in May to 27 percent in two months since assuming office. The same poll indicates that 60.4 percent are currently dissatisfied with Ma's performance, which increased from 11.9 percent in May (Global Views Survey Research Center, July 28).

Mr. L.C. Russell Hsiao is Associate Editor of *The Jamestown Foundation's China Brief*.

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## CCP Launches Personnel Reform to Stem "Mass Incidents"

By Willy Lam

While political reform is off the agenda, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has taken some visible steps toward improving the quality of its cadres in light of the large number of unexpected and near-disastrous "mass incidents" in this critical Olympic year. For example, the low caliber of central and local officials has been demonstrated by the failure of those in five western provinces to either pre-empt or adequately handle the "Tibetan uprising" this spring (*China Brief*, May 13); the large number of "tofu," or shoddily constructed, school buildings exposed by the Sichuan earthquake (*China Brief*, June 4); and pervasive reports about collusion between police and underground gangs that was behind the riots in the provinces of Guizhou and Yunnan the past several weeks (China News Service, July 24; Xinhua News Agency, July 25). These disturbing incidents have notably stoked concerns among the party's top brass over shaken public confidence in the capabilities of the CCP.

The dubious quality—particularly in terms of efficiency and clean governance—of huge numbers of what Chairman Mao called "servants of the masses" has prompted the leadership under President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao to launch what could be the largest-scale personnel reform scheme since the mid-1990s. Moreover, CCP authorities have asked the chiefs of cities, counties and townships to periodically meet "petitioners"—a reference to peasants and workers with grievances against the regime—so that grassroots cadres can improve their "constituency" work through personally defusing what party officials call "inner contradictions among the people" (*renmin neibu maodun*).

Politburo members handling organizational matters, including Vice-President and Politburo Standing Committee member Xi Jinping, have reiterated Beijing's commitment to filling mid- to senior-ranked posts with reliable and competent candidates. In national conferences on personnel reform during the past month, Xi and CCP Organization Department Director Li Yuanchao also enunciated a set of new requirements for 21<sup>st</sup> century cadres. Xi, who doubles as president of the Central Party School, noted that party and government officials should have five basic qualifications: they "must be cognizant of