



CSA20140811

CHINASCOPE Analysis Series

The Battle at Zhongnanhai (Revised)

October 2014

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Don’t underestimate the drama. It is a battle between China’s current top leader Xi Jinping and a former top leader, Jiang Zemin, with the full support of Jiang’s faction. Also, it breaks the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) long tradition of confining their operations and in-fighting to a closed circle. It is the first time that the CCP has openly displayed its internal struggle on the world stage and it even uses the world stage to conduct its campaign.

For a battle with such high stakes, it means life and death to those involved. Xi Jinping was reported to have said that he is willing to continue the fight even at the cost of his personal life or personal reputation. [2] He could lose more than just his political life. The August 2014 issue of Hong Kong’s *Trend Magazine* quoted a source identified as “a top Chinese Communist Party official who said that Xi Jinping has, to date, survived six assassination attempts” and that “it was CCP officials who had hired assassins to kill Xi.” [3]

Political researchers around world are scratching their heads, trying to figure out what is going on in China and what will happen next.

For readers who are not familiar with the terms “tiger” and “fly,” the CCP’s Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) used them in its anti-corruption campaign to refer to corrupt high-ranking and lower-level officials, respectively. The CCDI has also introduced the terms “big tigers” (top-level officials) and “old tigers” (retired top-level officials). [4] Zhou Yongkang, a Politburo Standing Committee member and the security czar in China, is the largest “big tiger” to be caged so far. The *New York Times* introduced a term “spider” for Jiang Zemin, referring to his ability to build the large web that constitutes his faction. Of course, if he is hunted down, in the CCDI’s terms, Jiang will be called an “old tiger.”

I. Background and Key Politicians

A brief review of the CCP’s history is helpful to understand the current battle.

In the CCP's own categorization, it has five generations of leadership. Mao Zedong led his comrades through decades of wars and eventually took control of China in 1949. Mao thus became the undisputable head of the first generation of leaders. Deng Xiaoping who was also a paramount leader, due to his personal charisma and his experiences in Mao's era led the second generation.

Deng later chose Jiang Zemin as the leader of the third generation (1989 – 2002) and Hu Jintao as the leader of the fourth generation (2002 – 2012). Jiang and Hu jointly picked Xi Jinping as the leader of the fifth generation (2012 – present).

Deng installed Jiang Zemin in the top position during the 1989 student democratic movement. At that time, Deng just expelled then CCP Secretary-General Zhao Ziyang and needed a new leader figure. Jiang was the Party chief of Shanghai and had taken a hardline approach to the appeals for democracy in Shanghai. This won Deng's heart because he had ordered military action against the students at Tiananmen Square. Thus, Jiang rose to the top after holding a local post.

With a weak background and a lack of natural authority, Jiang did not have a coterie of followers. To develop his own network, Jiang used corruption as a reward to buy loyalty from officials. He was thus able to build a large following of cadres ready to do his bidding. This became the Jiang faction.

Some key members of Jiang's Faction are: Zeng Qinghong , the number two figure in the faction and Jiang's political adviser and "power broker," who served as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and as the Vice President of China from 2002 to 2007; Zhou Yongkang, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and China's security Czar from 2007 to 2012; Bo Xilai, a member of the CCP Politburo and Chongqing Party Secretary from 2007 to 2012; and Xu Caihou, the Vice Chairman of the CMC from 2004 to 2012. In the current Politburo Standing Committee, three are said to be in Jiang's faction: Zhang Dejiang, Liu Yunshan, and Zhang Gaoli.

Deng also picked the fourth generation leader, Hu Jintao. Since Hu had previously worked as the General-Secretary of the Communist Youth League, he promoted many officials with Youth League experience during his term. Those people are called the Youth League faction.

Jiang did not choose Hu as his successor but he could not challenge Deng's decision. He did something creative during the 2002/2003 power transition when he was expected to hand over all three major titles he held to Hu. He passed Hu the titles of

General Secretary of the CCP and President of China, but he kept one title by arranging for his loyalists in the military to propose that he keep the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) for two more years.

Jiang also made sure that his faction controlled more seats in the Politburo Standing Committee than Hu's faction to effectively control China. As the result, Zhou Yongkang controlled China's security apparatus and its law enforcement institutions and operated outside Hu's control. His power stretched into the prosecutor and court systems, the police force (including 1 million armed police), the paramilitary forces, and China's intelligence organs. In the military, Jiang managed to push Hu to the sidelines by seeing that two CMC Vice Chairmen Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, both of whom were Jiang's loyalists, maintained control.

For Hu's successor, Jiang and Hu had their own candidates. Jiang's first choice was Chen Liangyu, then Shanghai Party chief and a loyal and trusted follower. However, Hu charged Chen with corruption and put him in jail. Bo Xilai, another possible Jiang's candidate, was also in trouble. Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao moved him to be the Chongqing Party chief from the Commerce Minister position. At that level, moving from a Central post to a local post would be considered as a demotion.

Jiang was thus out of candidates from his faction, because the candidate pool was small and because the person had to be in a high-ranking position and of the proper (younger) age.

To stop Hu's candidate Li Keqiang from getting the post, Jiang nominated Xi Jinping, a relatively neutral candidate as the next leader. Jiang and Hu then decided on Xi as a result of a compromise.

It seemed that Hu was supportive of Xi. He handed over all his titles to Xi during a smooth transition in the 2012/2013 period.

It does not seem that Xi has a faction. Wang Qishan, the head of the CCDI, is Xi's closest ally. They were friends back in 1970s. Wang provided firm support to Xi in the anti-corruption campaign that has taken place in the past two years.

II. The Battle

It has been widely circulated that Zhou and Bo planned a coup to dethrone Xi and had taken action to implement the plan. Counting the time when the plan for a coup was first devised, the battle at Zhongnanhai could have started in 2010, if not earlier.

One version of the plot that was to unfold [5] was as follows:

Bo started and would continue his high-profile “singing the ‘red’ and fighting the ‘black’” campaign in Chongqing to build up his reputation. This would help Bo increase his popularity with the public and in the meantime, he could “appropriate” huge sums of money from certain targeted businessmen.

Then at the 2012/2013 power transition, Bo would become a member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee and take over Zhou’s position as Party Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee. Bo would inherit Zhou’s enormous power.

In his new post, Bo would extend his fighting the “black” campaign nationwide and use it to maintain control over more officials. He would also expand the already-too-big police force, especially the armed police, and would keep buying overseas media so he could use them to release negative information about Xi Jinping.

Finally, in 2014, Bo would carry out a political coup to force Xi to step down and hand power over to him.

It was unfortunate timing for Zhou and Bo that, on February 6, 2012, Wang Lijun, former Chongqing police chief and Bo’s henchman, after being demoted, went, in fear of losing his life, to the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu to seek political asylum. Wang revealed many secrets about Bo and his group, including the coup and Neil Heywood’s murder, to the U.S. [6] [7] This action set in motion the events leading to Bo’s downfall and that of many others. The Chinese government later arrested six people and shut down sixteen websites for allegedly spreading rumors of the coup. [8] [9]

On March 15, 2012, Hu Jintao, with strong support from Wen Jiabao, removed Bo Xilai from his official posts and started an investigation. The information that Bo had wire-tapped China’s top leaders, including Hu, did not help him. After Xi Jinping became China’s "paramount leader," he took over Bo’s case. On August 22, 2013, Bo was tried for corruption, bribery, and abuse of power. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Xi Jinping and Wang Qishan then moved onto Zhou Yongkang. On December 13, 2012, the CCDI started a corruption investigation into Li Chuncheng, an Alternate Member of the CCP Politburo and Vice Party Secretary of Sichuan. Li was loyal to Zhou Yongkang and was the first ministerial-level official in Zhou’s entourage to be taken down.

By July 31, 2014, according to *Sohu.com*, the CCDI had taken down many “tigers,” including one national-level official (Zhou Yongkang), three deputy-national-level officials (*Sohu.com* only listed two, as Bo Xilai was not mentioned), four ministerial-level officials, 38 vice-ministerial-level officials, and over 200 department and deputy-department-level officials. [10]

On June 30, 2014, the CCDI announced the downfall of a “big tiger” in the military: Xu Caihou. Xu was expelled from the Party and the military will prosecute him.

Finally, Zhou Yongkang was taken down on July 29, 2014. This marked the first time in the past 38 years, since the “Gang of Four” was arrested in 1976, that a CCP Politburo Standing Committee member was publically denounced. [11]

When Hu and Xi worked on the cases against Bo, Xu, and Zhou, Jiang’s faction didn’t just stand still and watch. It fought back.

On the night of March 19, 2012, four days after Bo was stripped of his power, people heard gunshots and reported seeing soldiers enter Beijing. One version of the story is that Zhou ordered armed police to surround Zhongnanhai to perpetrate a coup, which Hu defeated by ordering the military to enter Beijing. Another version is that, the CCDI and Zhou’s police force clashed and shots were fired as both tried to take control of a key witness in Bo’s case. [12]

On October 26, 2012, the front page of the *New York Times* reported on corruption involving Wen Jiabao’s family. A wealth of information had been fed to it to substantiate the facts. Though corrupt officials are everywhere in China, this report singled out Wen, a strong ally of Hu. [13]

On January 21, 2014, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) published a document listing the offshore accounts that the relatives of current and retired CCP Politburo Standing Committee members held in their names. The list included Xi Jinping, Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, Li Peng, and Deng Xiaoping. However, no official from Jiang’s faction, including Jiang Zemin, Zeng Qinghong, Zhou Yongkang, and Bo Xilai was mentioned. [14]

It may be that Jiang’s faction supplied the information that became the ICIJ report. ICIJ’s Chinese web page stated that ICIJ had received 2.5 million files about the offshore accounts two years earlier. [15] That would have been in late 2011, suggesting that the political coup and the spread of negative information about Xi had already been placed in action.

In addition to the direct confrontational battles that Jiang's faction fought with Xi and Hu, some people also questioned whether Jiang's faction had perpetrated some indirect conflict using recent social turmoil and incidents that would be international embarrassments to Xi and Hu.

In April, 2012, Cheng Guangcheng, the blind Chinese human rights activist escaped from house arrest and went to the U.S. embassy in Beijing to seek refuge. The U.S. worked out a deal with the Chinese government in which China guaranteed a safe environment for Chen to pursue higher education. On May 2, based on this agreement, Chen left the U.S. embassy on a happy note. Then on May 3, he stated "I want to leave China (immediately) on Hillary Clinton's plane" because of the threats to his family. [16] Though the story ended happily with Cheng coming to New York to study, it left a sour taste in Hu's mouth. Hu's diplomats struck a deal with Hillary Clinton, but then Zhou's people in security slapped Hu's face by threatening Cheng's family, thus resulting in a nullification of the deal.

Chinese used to enjoy a non-violent living environment, but in the past year, there were several violent incidents in China. For example, a car exploded at Tiananmen Square on October 28, 2013, three days after the Shandong High Court rejected Bo Xilai's appeal. [17] There was a report that the exploded car was a military car and that the police might have known about the bomb in advance. [18]

Though Zhou, Xu, and Bo were taken out, Jiang's faction has continued its fight with Xi. Xi, therefore, has had no choice but to continue the battle to take down the resistance. [19]

That battle will continue. After Zhou was taken down, Xi stated that "Zhou Yongkang is not the end" [20]. Xi also expressed that he is willing to risk his life in this political battle. Wang Qishan called this battle a critical political issue in which officials need to decide which side to take. [21]

As many people speculate, the next episode of the battle could be Xi against "old tigers" Zeng Qinghong and Jiang Zemin. "With Zhou Yongkang effectively out of the way, the corruption fight needs to adopt a new target, and Shanghai is apparently the lucky winner." "The new focus on Shanghai may indicate that Xi Jinping has his sights set on an even higher target than Zhou Yongkang: former president Jiang Zemin." [22]

III. Why Would Jiang's Faction Attempt a Coup?

Why did the two groups engage in a battle having such high stakes?

For Xi, the answer is simple. Jiang's faction was planning a coup. Xi was acting in self-defense by taking out the conspirators. If he did not hunt down his enemies, he would lose his political life.

However, the motivation for Jiang's faction is puzzling.

For Bo, the reason was simple. He would become China's top leader, a position he could not attain in any other way.

For other members of Jiang's faction, such as Zhou, Xu, Zeng, and even Jiang himself, their motivation is somewhat of a mystery. At the time that they planned the coup, they were either retired or about to retire. Why risk everything just to augment their power? What could be that important?

Especially, though Xi was not Jiang's top choice to be the fifth generation leader, Xi was appreciative of Jiang's nomination. In October 2009, when Xi, then the Vice President of China, visited Germany, he gave two of Jiang's books on technology to Chancellor Angela Merkel. Obviously Xi was giving Merkel and the world more of a political message than technical information in those two books. [23]

The fact that Jiang's faction wanted to replace Xi so much even at the risk of a perpetrating a political coup showed that Jiang's faction was desperate about something.

Since there was no clear gain for them, it would have been to avoid a dreadful threat. A valid answer would have to satisfy two conditions: one, such a threat would have devastating consequences to them; and two, they perceived that they had a solution to resolve the threat once the coup gave them total control of China.

Let us explore whether political motives meet these conditions.

A. A Collision of Political Views?

Normally resolving irreconcilable gaps in political views is a valid reason for a political coup. However, that is unlikely to have been the case here.

First, when the coup was planned (say in 2010 or so), Xi was the "crowned prince." In the Chinese political system, the "crowned prince" acted cautiously to avoid making any mistakes. It would have been hard to tell what Xi's real political stand was until he attained power.

Second, Jiang's faction had not demonstrated any strong ideological position or political aspirations of their own. On the one hand, Bo's "singing the 'red'" (singing songs from Mao Zedong's era to praise the Party) may have appealed to the leftists, but, on the other, the leftists criticized Jiang's "three represents" theory [24] as "allowing capitalists to join the communist Party."

Third, there was no drastic difference on foreign policy either. From Jiang to Hu to Xi, there have not been any major policy changes. No foreign policy has seemed so crucial that either Xi or the Jiang faction would pursue full control just so they could implement it.

B. Securing Political Power and Preempting Xi?

This is unlikely because, when Jiang's faction decided on the coup, Xi probably didn't have a plan to take them down or strip them of power. It was the attempted coup itself that forced Xi's response.

A safer and less risky option for Jiang's faction would have been to form an alliance with Xi instead of taking him down. This was possible at the time, because Xi was still expressing his appreciation of Jiang.

C. Keeping the CCP in Power?

Yes, given China's social problems, there was a legitimate threat that the CCP might fall, which would lead to the end of Jiang's faction as well.

However, Jiang's group didn't have a solution to prevent the CCP's fall. In fact, those in his faction were the ones largely responsible for the following social problems:

Official corruption: Jiang's faction was much more corrupt than Hu's Youth League faction, because Jiang had chosen to rule by corruption and to reward "loyal" officials by ignoring their corruption.

Wealth parity: The richest group in China is the children of the CCP ranked officials. They, by leveraging their parent's influence and controlling China's business sectors, have been raking in huge amounts of money. Jiang, Zeng, Zhou, and Bo's sons are all billionaires. Zhou's son Zhou Bin once said that he wouldn't talk about any business if his profit was less than 100 million yuan (US\$16 million). Since carving up China and allocating specific sectors to loyal members of the faction had been a major cause of this problem in the first place, Jiang's faction could hardly correct it.

Tension/confrontation between officials and the public: The Jiang faction's solution for "maintaining stability" was to throw in more police to silence people. No one expected them to come up with a better cure.

Thus, although the CCP's fall was a legitimate threat to Jiang's faction, it had no solution to save the Party; nor would a coup have helped.

D. Avoiding Having to Face Corruption Charges?

Since officials in Jiang's adopted corruption as its means of aggrandizement, they might feel the danger of being taken down. However, in China's political game, anti-corruption is a weapon used to go after political enemies. As long as Jiang's faction was not Xi's enemy, they did not have to worry.

Furthermore, following a long CCP tradition, Jiang, Zeng, Zhou, and Xu would be exempt from corruption charges, as such charges had never applied to Politburo Standing Committee members or retired top officials.

E. Maintaining Their Families' Financial Territories?

Jiang, Zeng, and Zhou's children all had enormous wealth. Zeng Qinghong's son Zeng Wei, for example, bought the whole Luneng Group with a total net worth of 110 billion yuan (US\$18 billion) by only spending 70 million yuan (US\$11 million). [25]

If Jiang, Zeng, and Zhou were no longer in power, their children might see a potential loss of privileges in business. However, the CCP tends to keep its tradition of honoring incumbent leaders, so their families would still be able to enjoy privileges. For example, after Li Peng retired in 2002, his family still held onto the electricity industry.

Moreover, their families had already collected huge wealth. Would these veteran politicians risk their political lives for marginal financial gains?

F. Avoiding Redressing the Tiananmen Square Massacre?

Redressing the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 was always a threat to Jiang Zemin. He was promoted as the CCP's new leader due to the hardline approach he had taken in Shanghai.

However, the Tiananmen Square Massacre was not a big political burden for other members of Jiang's faction. They moved up after Jiang attained power, which was after the massacre. Also, it was Deng and the other senior CCP leaders, not Jiang, who made the decision to suppress the student movement. Jiang was only a local executor and the biggest beneficiary.

Would Jiang's faction attempt a coup to prevent the redressing of the Tiananmen Square Massacre? Unlikely.

IV. Fears of Falun Gong Drove Jiang's Faction to Battle

After eliminating all the possible threats that Jiang's faction was afraid of, fear of redressing Falun Gong remains as a sound reason that could be uniting Jiang's faction together in their effort to control China.

A. What Is the Falun Gong Issue?

The official website of Falun Dafa explains Falun Gong as follows:

Falun Dafa (also called Falun Gong) is an advanced self-cultivation practice of the Buddha School. Falun Dafa was founded by Mr. Li Hongzhi, the practice's master. It is a discipline in which "assimilation to the highest qualities of the universe – Zhen, Shan, Ren (Truthfulness, Compassion, Forbearance) – is the foundation of practice. Practice is guided by these supreme qualities, and based on the very laws which underlie the development of the cosmos." [26]

As a practice with both physical exercises and spiritual cultivation, Falun Gong proved very effective in healing and fitness and in providing the spiritual guidance so sorely lacking under Communist dogma.

Falun Gong was introduced to the public in China in 1992. It spread so rapidly that, by 1999, an estimated hundred million people (the U.S. Department of State estimated 70 million [27]) had become practitioners. One third of the 60 million Chinese Communist Party members and a large number of high-ranking officials practiced Falun Gong.

For Chinese, Truthfulness, Compassion, and Forbearance had a deeper attraction in an anti-theist milieu fraught with corruption, violence, and self-aggrandizement above the people's well-being. Could loyalty to Jiang, built up through the doling out of

rewards gained through corruption, mollify the Chinese people and keep them forever docile?

Because of the Party's ant-theism and Jiang Zemin's jealousy, Jiang started the ban of Falun Gong on July 20, 1999.

Jiang formed a security agency called the "610 Office" (named for the date of its creation on June 10, 1999) within the CCP system to conduct the anti-Falun Gong campaign. He also set up the Central Leading Group on Dealing with Heretical Religions (CLGDHR) to oversee the work. The CLGDHR and the "610 Office" could use all resources under the Political and Legal Affairs Committee to accomplish its task: the complete elimination of Falun Gong. It gave itself three months.

That did not quite work out.

The CCP wanted to "transform" Falun Gong practitioners, by making them write and sign statements that they would not practice Falun Gong. The methods to achieve this goal included: creating propaganda to defame Falun Gong, depriving practitioners of health care and pensions, firing them from their jobs, implicating their families, throwing them into brainwashing centers, mental hospitals, forced-labor camps ("re-education through labor" camps), and applying brutal torture that often resulted in disability or death.

A United Nations Special Rapporteur wrote, in her 2004 annual report to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, "Reports describe harrowing scenes in which detainees, many of whom are followers of the Falun Gong movement, die as a result of severe ill-treatment, neglect or lack of medical attention. The cruelty and brutality of these alleged acts of torture defy description." [28]

The Falun Dafa Information Center, an organization focused on gathering persecution information, reported in 2008 that "over 3,000 deaths [of Falun Gong practitioners] have been documented, as well as over 63,000 accounts of torture. An estimate of the real figure puts the actual death toll in the tens of thousands." [29]

B. Organ Harvesting

Among all the atrocities that Falun Gong practitioners have reported to the international community, the most shocking was the harvesting of organs from live, healthy Falun Gong practitioners to sell to those in need of a transplant.

The practice was first revealed in March 2006, when a woman claimed that as many as 4,000 Falun Gong had been killed for their organs at the hospital where she had worked. She also said that her husband, a surgeon at the same hospital, outside the northeastern city of Shenyang, had disclosed to her that he had removed corneas from the living bodies of 2,000 Falun Gong adherents. [30]

Two prominent Canadian human rights lawyers, former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia Pacific David Kilgour and Nazi hunter and award winning international human rights attorney David Matas, launched their own investigation into this allegation. In July 2006, they published a 140-page report and drew “the regrettable conclusion that the allegations are true.” [31] The report stated, “The [organ harvesting] allegations, if true, represent a disgusting form of evil which, despite all the depravities humanity has seen, are new to this planet.” If it is proved to the world that it is true, it will likely lead to the downfall of all officials who participated in it, and perhaps even the collapse of the CCP.

Ethan Gutmann, another human rights investigator published a book “The Slaughter: Mass Killings, Organ Harvesting, and China’s Secret Solution to Its Dissident Problem” on August 12, 2014. Gutmann estimated in his book that about 65,000 Falun Gong practitioners were killed for their organs between 2000 and 2008. [32]

C. Jiang’s Faction Was the Main Force in Persecuting Falun Gong

Determined to eliminate Falun Gong, Jiang kept promoting those officials who persecuted Falun Gong most fiercely. As they kept moving up, they became a major force within Jiang’s faction.

Zhou Yongkang was an example. According to the World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong, “From 1999 to 2002, when Zhou was the Sichuan Provincial Party Secretary, he used all major events to push the persecution of Falun Gong... Jiang Zemin recognized and appreciated his active drive in the persecution. In 2002, with no work experience in the Public Security system at all, Zhou was assigned as Minister and Party Secretary of the Public Security Ministry and the Deputy Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee...” [33]

Bo Xilai was also relentless in his persecution of Falun Gong. Fifteen Falun Gong practitioners were tortured to death when Bo was the mayor of Dalian, Liaoning Province. Then Bo got promoted to the Deputy Party Secretary and Governor of Liaoning. By November 16, 2003, the 92 Falun Gong practitioners who died in Liaoning made it the fourth largest province in death toll numbers. [34]

Jiang Weiping, a news reporter from Hong Kong's *Wen Wei Po*, explained why Bo Xilai wanted to persecute Falun Gong. In 1999, he asked Bo's chauffeur Wang, "[Bo] has a higher education. Why does he persecute Falun Gong so brutally?" Wang replied, "Jiang Zemin likes Bo and wants to install him as the next CCP leader after Hu Jintao. So Jiang told Bo, 'You must show toughness, just as Hu did by suppressing the Tibetan riots in 1989. Then you will be qualified to rise.'" Thus, Bo took brutally suppressing Falun Gong as an opportunity for him to demonstrate his political talent and decisive character. [35]

D. The Falun Gong Issue Is the Jiang Faction's Greatest Fear

The last thing China wants is any religion in China constantly demonstrating that it cannot be destroyed and can still fight back. [36] With so many of Jiang's faction complicit in the persecution, one can only imagine their reaction when, more than 10 years after the start of the persecution, with, potentially, thousands upon thousands of deaths from either torture or organ harvesting, Falun Gong was still standing, still talking, and still reporting evidence.

Bound together in the same fate, what could be their options? To them, the best option would have been to maintain the current persecution policy and keep the international community in the dark on this issue.

This is the dilemma they faced when Deng Xiaoping appointed Hu Jintao as Jiang's successor. Although Hu did not have Falun Gong practitioner's blood on his hands, Jiang could not deny Hu's taking over in 2002. Instead, Jiang managed to hold on to the CMC Chairman title for two more years, until 2004. He also expanded the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee with two more seats, adding the head of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee and the head of propaganda. These two positions, responsible for dealing with Falun Gong, always remained under the control of the Jiang fraction. Therefore, when Hu took power in 2002, Jiang's faction controlled six out of the nine Politburo Standing Committee seats, ensuring its continued control.

When it was time for Xi to take the top titles, they could not trust him since Xi was not involved much in Falun Gong issue. Having no political liability, Xi would be free to continue the current policy or stop it.

They could accept Xi as the new leader, but the safest course would have been to see that a person under their control attained the top position of power.

That person was Bo Xilai. However, after Bo's demotion, the normal approach to get Bo to the top position wouldn't work, so Jiang's faction decided on a coup.

E. Some Clues that the Battle Is Related to Falun Gong

There were reports that Wang Lijun handed information to the U.S. about harvesting the organs of live Falun Gong practitioners. [37] After Wang's incident, both the U.S. and the European governments have expressed increased concern about organ harvesting.

On May 24, 2012, in its "2011 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices Report," the U.S. State Department mentioned "[O]verseas and domestic media and advocacy groups continued to report instances of organ harvesting, particularly from Falun Gong practitioners and Uyghur's" [38]

On October 4, 2012, 106 U.S. Congress members sent a letter to call on the State Department to release information it might have about organ transplant abuses in China. It specifically requested the release of any information that Wang Lijun might have provided about organs harvested from still-living practitioners of Falun Gong. [39]

On December 11, 2013, the European Parliament passed a resolution denouncing organ harvesting in China. It specifically mentioned Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups. [40]

On July 21, 2014, U.S. Congressman Christopher Smith, Cochairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China stated, "The systematic torture and attempted eradication of the Falun Gong will be seen as one of the great shames of Chinese history. ... Chinese officials must understand there are consequences to the arbitrary detention, torture, psychiatric experimentation, and organ harvesting experienced by Falun Gong practitioners." [41]

The U.S. Congress is currently working on House Resolution 281, to denounce organ harvesting in China, especially "against large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners." [42] This resolution passed the Foreign Affairs Committee on July 30, 2014, and moved to the House floor for a vote.

The downfall of Li Dongsheng also showed the battle's linkage to Falun Gong. Li was the head of the 610 Office and Deputy Director of the CLGDHR, which manages the task of suppressing Falun Gong.

On December 20, 2013, *Xinhua* announced Li Dongsheng's downfall. The *Xinhua* announcement stated, "The reporter obtained information from the CCDI that the Deputy Director and Office Manager of the CCP's CLGDHR, Deputy Party Secretary and Vice Minister of the Public Security Li Dongsheng was undergoing the Party organization's investigation for allegations of serious violations of the [Party's] discipline and the law." [43]

Li has two titles. The Vice Minister of the Public Security is more important and well known to the public. The title of Deputy Director of the CLGDHR is much less known. In the past, the CCP did not mention the CLGDHR much because it wanted to hide the persecution.

China's official media is very careful about wording. Therefore, mentioning Li's title as the Deputy Director and Office Manager of the CCP's CLGDHR before his Public Security Ministry position was not an omission but rather a carefully crafted message. This message not only highlighted Li as a primary persecutor of Falun Gong, but also revealed that, in the current CCP practice, dealing with Falun Gong has achieved a high degree of significance.

V. Conclusion

The ongoing anti-corruption campaign is probably the biggest political battle at Zhongnanhai since the arrest of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. It is the alliance of Xi Jinping and Wang Qishan, with possible support from Hu Jintao, against the Jiang Zemin's faction.

The attempted political coup by Jiang's faction to overthrow Xi triggered the battle. So far, Bo Xilai, Xu Caihou, and Zhou Yongkang have been taken down, with more heavy-weights, even possibly Jiang, expected to fall later.

After examining many possible reasons for Jiang's faction to initiate a coup, a sound explanation is that they wanted to ensure that their policy of persecuting Falun Gong would continue, be kept secret, and would not lead to criminal charges.

As the life or death battle continues to unfold in China, what will be the end of the hunters and "tigers" story remains to be seen.

Endnotes:

[1] *New York Times Online*, "After Tigers and Flies, Now a Spider: Jiang Zemin," August 14, 2014.

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