Directorate of
Intelligence

~~Secret~~

[redacted] 25X1

From Out of Deng's Shadow: The Policy Views of China's Hu Yaobang [redacted] 25X1

An Intelligence Assessment

~~Secret~~

EA 85-10146
August 1985

Copy 261

Directorate of Intelligence

Secret

25X1

From Out of Deng's Shadow: The Policy Views of China's Hu Yaobang

25X1

An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by Office of East Asian Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, China Division, OEA.

25X1

25X1

Secret

EA 85-10146
August 1985

25X1

From Out of Deng's Shadow: The Policy Views of China's Hu Yaobang

25X1

Summary

Information available as of 15 July 1985 was used in this report.

Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, is China's most controversial leader, though by no means its most powerful. Outspoken, impulsive, aggressive, he has aroused opposition among the party's elders—civilian and military alike—both for his unconventional personal style and for his policy views. Although regarded since 1980 as Deng Xiaoping's chosen successor for political leadership of the party, a combination of objections to Hu's leadership and dissatisfaction with reforms he has advocated appears to have dampened his prospects of stepping directly into Deng's leading role on the Politburo. Nevertheless, Hu will remain a key figure in Chinese politics for the next several years, and his views on issues confronting the leadership will be of major significance.

25X1

Hu is indeed a complex and contradictory figure:

- He is strongly identified with political reform and the movement to rejuvenate the party with younger, more capable technocrats.
- He is not an orthodox Marxist in the economic sphere and clearly sees radical reform as necessary to solve China's massive economic problems and to win popular support for a party badly tarnished by a residual "leftist" image, corruption, and poor bureaucractic performance. Hu seems particularly concerned that China not follow the Polish example.
- Hu is the leader most identified with promoting "liberal" trends in China, ranging from encouraging peasants to "get rich" to loosening restrictions on literary expression to wearing Western-style clothing.
- He is, nonetheless, a staunch proponent of party controls on many aspects of social and political life and takes strikingly dogmatic positions on questions involving socialist morality and the need for ideological education.
- Although usually portrayed as obsessed with facts and details, Hu sometimes betrays only a rudimentary understanding of important foreign and domestic policies and often makes "misstatements" in interviews with foreign journalists.

25X1

25X1

On questions of foreign policy, Hu's views seem somewhat at odds with those expressed by Deng and other senior reform leaders, and his tendency to state them bluntly sharpens the sense that they are controversial:

- Hu appears less favorably disposed toward closer relations with the United States and frequently disparages US policies, leaders, and social trends.
- He seems to take a consistently hard line on the Taiwan question, and particularly on the role of the United States as Taiwan's protector.
- Since he is a visceral nationalist conditioned by 50 years of Communist activism, Hu's foreign policy framework seems more narrowly ideological than Deng's, and he appears genuinely to favor equidistance in China's relations with the United States and the Soviet Union.
- Hu may have fewer reservations about developing closer relations with Moscow.

25X1

China's leadership picture is clouded by uncertainty as the party moves toward a major Central Committee conclave in September, at which personnel issues, including succession questions, will be addressed. Rumors abound that the 70-year-old Hu may accede to Deng's position as Chairman of the party's Military Commission, but that he will shortly be replaced as General Secretary by his younger (56) protege, Hu Qili. At this point, we do not know how these modified succession arrangements will sort themselves out or what effect they will have on China's foreign and domestic policies. Hu Yaobang continues to talk tough and act confidently, and the reform programs he has pushed hardest are being implemented steadily. He remains a formidable political figure.

25X1

In a post-Deng leadership in which Hu would play an important role, we would expect relative continuity with most of Deng's policies:

- Organizational reform will continue, but perhaps more slowly, because of the lack of Deng's mediating influence.

- Economic reform will proceed, but its pace and scope may be altered by the persistence of practical problems and by the cast of a post-Deng leadership, which probably will be more cautious and conservative. The "open-door" approach to trade with the West and promotion of market-style macroeconomic policies probably will be maintained.

25X1

- Hu might be inclined to take a tougher position regarding the United States in general, and his propensity to speak first and ask questions later might complicate bilateral relations. Hu might, for example, be less skilled than Deng has been at keeping troublesome issues such as textile disagreements from adversely affecting larger interests. Nonetheless, the importance of the US connection for China's economic development will provide a firm foundation for the relationship.

- Hu may be more amenable to overtures from Moscow to improve relations, but China would maintain its "independent and antihegemonist" perspective. Hu is not pro-Soviet, but his tone, style, and what we view as his relatively narrow perspective suggest that he, unlike Deng, may steer China toward a truly independent foreign policy. Cooperation with the Soviet Union against US interests in our view would be unlikely.

25X1

25X1

From Out of Deng's Shadow: The Policy Views of China's Hu Yaobang

25X1

Hu Yaobang is an unconventional Chinese leader. In sharp contrast to his colleagues on the Chinese Communist Party's ruling Politburo, Hu eschews a dour, reserved style in favor of a more animated, outspoken approach. In command of a party filled with aloof, privileged high officials, Hu—rough, bluff, and self-educated—projects a genuine man-of-the-people image. Although most of China's top leaders envelop even routine political matters in obsessive secrecy, Hu impulsively expresses himself to Chinese and foreigners alike with remarkable candor and may then joke about having divulged "top secret" material. When seized with an idea, he may spontaneously run it out to a point beyond either the party's official position or his own previously expressed views. This pattern of Hu's behavior has aroused considerable anger among the party old guard.

Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China

25X1

Any attempt to take Hu's measure as a man and leader is complicated by his cluttered public record. We view him, as do many Chinese, as a bundle of contradictions. Widely seen as a staunch reformer, Hu nevertheless is capable of issuing starkly orthodox ideological injunctions. He is often characterized in the press as a man "on top of things" and obsessed with facts and details, but sometimes Hu betrays only a rudimentary understanding of important foreign and domestic policies. Although he leads a party that prizes its image of unity and collective decisionmaking, Hu impulsively oversteps the boundaries that usually restrict leaders from speaking their minds.

As General Secretary, Hu exercises greater day-to-day influence over the lives of the Chinese people than any other leader. One of the six members of the Politburo Standing Committee, Hu plays a key role in deliberating the broad guidelines for all party and state policy. He operates from a formidable base within the party, having installed a network of relatively youthful supporters in key positions throughout the apparatus. As the political heir of China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, Hu has crisscrossed the country selling Deng's policies, risked the political fire of Deng's opponents by taking advanced positions on reform, and has been a principal mover and shaker on questions such as organizational reform and policy toward intellectuals. After Deng, Hu is the party's chief ideological spokesman.

25X1

25X1

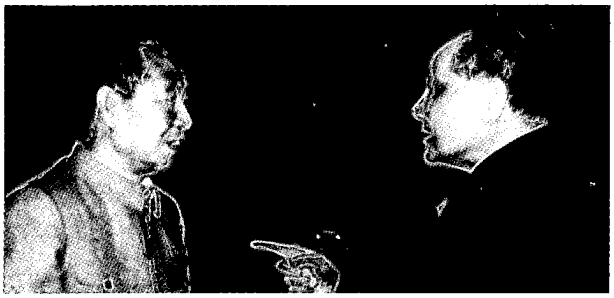
In his public behavior, Hu seems aggressively confident of his place as party leader, but a growing body of recent evidence indicates that the 70-year-old Hu, beset by controversy and opposition during his tenure as General Secretary, will soon surrender the post to his younger protege, Hu Qili. Hu will then succeed Deng as chairman of the party's Military Commission. We have long expected that Hu would eventually head the commission, but losing his post as General Secretary would diminish the significance of the appointment. As a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, however, Hu probably will remain one of China's key decisionmakers in the post-Deng era. Moreover, once Deng departs, Hu may yet become, as Deng now is, the weight that tips the scales in deliberations, a force for policy continuity or policy reversal. Political conditions altered by Deng's death, including the distribution of power in the leadership, may generate pressure for change in domestic and foreign policy, and Hu's views will be crucial in any post-Deng reassessment.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1



Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping

Who—and What—Influences Hu?

Political Superiors

Hu's policy preferences and political strategies are directly shaped by those of Deng Xiaoping and, to a lesser extent, other senior leaders. In a speech following his elevation to party Chairman at the June 1981 Central Committee plenum, Hu deferred to the leading role of party elders Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, Chen Yun, and especially Deng Xiaoping, whom he referred to as China's "primary decisionmaker."

25X1

As Hu has warmed to his role as party leader, however, he has shown more and more impatience with the accumulated wisdom of the elders and greater willingness to strike out on his own. In a recent interview, for example, he disputed Deng's contention that China is capable of imposing a blockade on Taiwan. In late 1984, Hu told foreign journalists that China's gerontocratic leadership had a "senility problem."

Young Confidants

Hu's coterie of former Communist Youth League (CYL) associates is well known.[1] Foremost among these is his apparent successor, Hu Qili, permanent secretary of the Secretariat and the man to whom Hu delegates much of the daily work of running the party. Hu Qili is constantly at his mentor's side at press interviews, on domestic inspection tours, and on visits abroad. Given the lean personal staffs of China's leaders, Hu Qili seems to serve the General Secretary much like a chief of staff—as executor, idea man, and "lightning rod."

25X1

25X1

Over the past two years, Hu has pulled several other young associates up from relative obscurity. Secretariat alternates Qiao Shi and Hao Jianxiu and party department chiefs Wang Zhaoguo and Qian Liren are frequent companions of Hu. Qiao, Wang, and Qian—handling personnel, administrative affairs, and international party-to-party ties, respectively—are key players in Hu's effort to consolidate his authority within the party bureaucracy, as well as sources of advice. Hao, a former textile worker, is the most prominent political woman of the coming generation. By showcasing younger, better educated leaders, Hu personally puts policy on display—promoting "third echelon" leaders is one of his frequent themes—while implicitly suggesting that the advice he receives is not warmed-over, 1950s-style Communist dogma.

25X1

25X1

Family

Like most Chinese leaders, Hu relies on his family to perform political tasks and provide counsel. His wife, Li Zhao, a retired textile ministry official, traveled to Hong Kong in the wake of the Sino-British accord, presumably to gather impressions and report to her husband. According to a diplomatic source, his son Hu Deping moves in intellectual circles and often funnels unconventional advice and theoretical viewpoints to his father. Another son, Hu Liu, is a chemist and vice president of a corporation set up to import Western technology.

25X1

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

Inspection Tours

"Going deep into reality" for firsthand experience is a party rite, and no national figure goes deeper than Hu, China's most peripatetic leader. Hu frequently draws on personal observations from his tours to make a point or draw a conclusion in Beijing. Hu says he wants to visit all of China's provinces, and his widely reported travels implicitly contrast his personal vigor to the sedentary style of the party elders. Hu made 13 trips during 1984, visiting 14 provinces and 102 counties and cities. Reports of Hu on site have him peppering local officials, workers, and peasants with sharp questions that, at the hands of the propagandists, invariably demonstrate his familiarity with the local situation. Since the plenum, Hu has especially sought to meet, and focus national attention on, innovative peasants who have cashed in on the reforms. [redacted]

Hu often acts as his own political troubleshooter, and, as such, is blunt and decisive. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] 25X1

25X1

Books

Although he is basically a pragmatist, Hu appears to be well grounded in Marxist-Leninist classics and frequently cites the works of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao as acceptable guides to action. Hu also claims to have read a wide variety of materials from both Chinese and Western sources—history, political biography, and, among other things, former President Nixon's books (in private translation). Although he has traveled outside China, most of Hu's knowledge of the West appears to be from books. [redacted] 25X1

Experience and Political Culture

Hu's views bear the deep imprint of Chinese party institutions and history. He picked up organizational skills as a young party cadre during the war with Japan and in the subsequent Communist takeover of China and became imbued with the same nationalism that inspired the entire party leadership. Hu's Youth League experience, apart from providing a political base, fostered a reputed sensitivity to the impatience and ambitions of young Chinese and a sympathetic view of intellectuals. [redacted] 25X1

For Hu and other Chinese officials, the Cultural Revolution is a watershed for formulation of current attitudes and policies. Much of what Deng and Hu have sought to accomplish entails reversing and negating the radical politics of that era. Reflecting on the violence and social chaos of that period, Hu has said that the party "should never stir up another internal disorder that causes us to suffer failures and poverty." Hu is concerned that the "ultraleftist" practices that characterized the Cultural Revolution continue to act as an insidious force of habit among Chinese, as he put it, "like reaching for cigarettes after quitting." [redacted] 25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Policy Views

It is difficult to distinguish clearly the policy preferences of individual Chinese leaders. We receive few accounts of deliberations within the inner circle of leadership, and public statements, even in more spontaneous forms such as press interviews, generally reflect collectively determined positions rather than the personal views of the speaker. Other analytic difficulties, such as differentiating between actual policy views and posturing for effect, are hardly unique to China.

The relative importance of a leader within Beijing's political pecking order can often be determined by the bluntness of his speech. The right of relatively unrestricted speech is enjoyed by only a handful of Chinese leaders, and it is the privilege of the most powerful to make policy on their feet and have others accommodate themselves to the pronouncement. Few leaders apart from Mao and Deng have been powerful enough to make a habit of outspokenness.

Hu Yaobang, however, seems to have fewer reservations than other Chinese leaders about speaking out. In our view, Hu's candor is partly the byproduct of a voluble nature and partly an effort to assert his leading role. We believe that Hu, like Deng, frequently uses unvarnished language for tactical purposes to apply political pressure. Moreover, we view Hu's habit of speaking out as itself a policy preference, part of an effort to broaden the party's popular base and "democratize" inner party discussions. Recent practices such as announcing national political conferences in advance, openly disclosing items on the political agenda, and publishing lists of party and state appointees reflect Hu's belief that the party should partially raise the curtain of secrecy that traditionally has distanced the rulers from the ruled in China.

Economic Reform

For the economy, Hu, like Deng, favors policies that get results. He readily admits his general ignorance of economics, a deficiency he shares with most of the top leadership. Although he once seemed content to leave the economy to government administration, he has become more involved and insistent on questions of economic reform. He appears keenly attuned to the political imperatives that drive reform—especially the need for success

25X1

Hu's public remarks on wage reform, an issue where economic and political considerations overlap, are a case in point. In a recent interview, Hu said he was disappointed that the timetable for wage reform had slipped from January to July 1985, and he hoped that the reform could be undertaken in April (it was not). Regarding individual incomes, Hu implicitly has criticized conservatives such as Chen Yun—who has argued that people should eat well, "but not too well"—by asserting that, when production has been developed, it is improper to require people to economize on food and clothing and to restrict consumption.

25X1

25X1

Although the leadership disagrees on the utility of establishing specific long-range goals that ultimately could prove embarrassing, Hu has been among those in the forefront calling for the quadrupling of China's economic output by the year 2000. The recent performance of the Chinese economy has led Hu to proclaim confidently that the quadrupling goal was assured

25X1

Hu has favored doctrinally unorthodox formulations in promoting economic reform. While on an inspection tour in Sichuan, Hu told a gathering that "the party's criterion for assessing right or wrong (in economic reform) is to see whether a thing helps people get rich." Hu also told local leaders that exploration, adventure, and competition, although bourgeois ideas, are progressive and worth emulating. Almost alone among his Politburo colleagues, Hu frequently has allowed that changes in lifestyle can

25X1

promote economic change (he has advocated wearing Western-style clothing and suggested that use of knives and forks is a more sanitary way of dining). "Even if reforms go a bit too far," he said late last year, "they must be protected and remedied."

Organizational Reform

In his own statements, Hu reflects the dilemma of a party in transition, seeking to shift the basis of its legitimacy away from doctrine and coercion toward practical demonstrations of its fitness to rule. Organizational reform is an essential part of this task. Hu, a member of the Communist Party for more than 50 years, clearly shares concerns of veteran revolutionaries about corruption and "slackness" in the party. In speeches from 1979 to the present, Hu has addressed several key themes:

- Leadership: the party's vanguard role is absolute and indispensable.
- Self-sacrifice: Hu is critical of those who put their personal interests ahead of the party's and abuse the trust implicit in party membership.
- Discipline: special vigilance is required against those who resist the party line.
- The socialist system: its superiority must not be doubted.

At the same time, Hu has pressed on issues that are not nearly so dear to the hearts of the party elders, and in fact has irritated many by raising sensitive issues publicly:

- Habitual "leftism": the most serious adverse legacy of the Cultural Revolution.
- The imperative of party reform: the basic lesson of Poland was that the party betrayed the Polish people—it was too dependent on the Soviet Union, it stressed production goals over people, and its leaders were corrupt.
- Rejuvenation: both the party and the state require an infusion of younger leaders as sources of energy and fresh ideas.
- Intellectuals: older party members must overcome their reservations about entrusting educated officials with important duties.

Hu's ideas—on this score nearly indistinguishable from Deng's—have prevailed completely on the question of bureaucratic reforms. In our assessment, the reform leadership, and Hu in particular, recognizes that durable reform ultimately requires filling the upper reaches of the bureaucracy with capable officials who are relatively free of outdated policy biases. Hu has been a driving force behind bureaucratic rejuvenation and efforts to use college-educated officials more efficiently. Moreover, Hu has goaded the process along by placing bureaucratic rejuvenation on the party's public agenda, announcing via press interviews, for example, that 70 percent of the leading party and state officials would be replaced by June 1985.

25X1

25X1

The 12th Party Congress in September 1982 marked a breakthrough—an unprecedented number of technocrats were named to the Central Committee, particularly to the rolls of alternate (nonvoting) members who are being groomed for eventual membership.[3] Hu once predicted that problems inside the party Central Committee would be solved by expelling some members and promoting others from the list of alternates, a tactic that may be implemented in September at an extraordinary party "conference of delegates."

25X1
25X1

Hu chairs the party committee that oversees the conduct of a rectification campaign, now in its second of three years, to reform the party and purge politically unreliable members. As early as 1979, Hu advocated lenience for Cultural Revolution era malefactors, and, to date, the campaign has departed sharply from the party's previous rectification procedures—grueling struggle sessions, public condemnations, and often violent confrontations. The current "mild rain, gentle breeze" approach to rectification is, above all, practical: Hu and his colleagues recognize that, because millions of Chinese were involved in wrongdoing, a

25X1

[3] Of 210 members of the 12th Central Committee, more than half were new or promoted from the list of 11th Central Committee alternates. More than two-thirds of the new members were under 60 years old, and about a fifth of the entire committee were functional specialists.

25X1

25X1

public policy of forgiving and forgetting is politically more suitable and creates fewer anxieties among officials than an open settling of scores.[4]

The Military

Hu's public remarks on the military generally do not reflect an original viewpoint. Most often he confines himself to standard exhortations on military policy and generally echoes Deng's views. We presume that Hu accepts the essentially derivative status of the military in China's modernization scheme—the civilian economy must improve before greater material allocations can be directed toward Army modernization.

Hu has been an active spokesman in the campaign to convince soldiers of the reasonableness of Beijing's military policies. Like Deng, Hu clearly favors the professionalization of the armed forces and a reduced role for senior soldier-politicians at the top level of decisionmaking. He has strongly endorsed Deng's sweeping plans to streamline and rejuvenate the military, such as the 1-million-man reduction in troop strength and the wholesale shakeup of military commands announced in June 1985.

Hu apparently is concerned, however, about whether veteran officers will continue to support the reform program. Publicly, Hu asserts his confidence that the People's Liberation Army is absolutely trustworthy and loyal to the party.

Hu appears to recognize that it may be helpful to court the military. He seems at pains to express his good intentions, such as in an interview last fall when he conceded that, although the Army had a disproportionate number of problems left over from the Cultural Revolution, these difficulties were being handled without rancor. He implied that most Cultural Revolution–era troublemakers in the military would simply be retired at full pay rather than suffer additional punishment because they had merely followed orders and previously had been brave and loyal.

Hu observes military maneuvers in 1981 with Deng Xiaoping (left) and Beijing Military Region Commander Qin Jiwei

At the same time, Hu typically seems either confident or intemperate enough to risk the ire of military leaders by making provocative statements. For example, while in New Zealand in April, Hu, without apparent authorization, announced to a press conference the 1-million-man demobilization, which had not yet been publicly disclosed in China. Shortly thereafter, he suggested in an interview that the chairmanship of the party Military Commission was a fitting post for an old man such as Deng because, "to tell the truth, there are not a lot of things to do in the army." He then added, "We let Deng hold a concurrent post (he is also Chairman of the Central Advisory Commission) . . . enabling us to attend to urgent matters."

Foreign Policy

From the time he joined the Politburo Standing Committee in 1980 until about mid-1982, when he had been party chairman for a year, Hu most often addressed questions involving his areas of greatest

competence—party policy and personnel. On those few occasions that Hu spoke on the relatively unfamiliar topics of economics and foreign policy, he rarely strayed from his talking points. Since approximately mid-1982, however, this no longer seems the case.

Hu's willingness to speak out on China's foreign relations is directly related to his growing involvement in the formulation of foreign policy. Since late 1978, Deng Xiaoping has always had pride of place within the small circle of officials who deliberate China's foreign policy. In 1981 Hu told visitors that foreign affairs was the responsibility of Deng along with Zhao and Li Xiannian. In his recent actions and statements, Hu, in our view, seems fully to expect to inherit Deng's leading role in foreign policy. Indeed, part of that reponsibility may already have shifted: Hu now appears the leader most closely associated with China's relations with Japan, North Korea, and some East European countries.

Our examination of Hu's foreign policy record leads us to conclude that:

- Compared with leaders such as Deng and Zhao, Hu appears much less favorably disposed to closer relations with the United States.
- He has taken a consistently harder line on the Taiwan question and particularly the role of the United States as Taiwan's protector.
- Hu may have fewer reservations about improving relations with the Soviet Union.
- Hu's foreign policy views are more doctrinaire than Deng's—his foreign policy outlook seems the combined product of visceral nationalism and a relatively narrow perspective conditioned by more than 50 years of Communist activism.

United States. Almost a year before China publicly broke with the "united front against (Soviet) hegemonism" line and invoked China's "independent foreign policy" at the 12th Party Congress, a diplomatic source reported a divergence of opinion between Deng and Hu over relations with the United States.[5] According to the source, Hu favored a more passive foreign policy that was less closely identified with the United States and more oriented toward Third World interests. The two leaders agreed, however, that China should seek no closer ties to the Soviet Union. Although these differences appear mainly matters of weight and degree, Hu's reported preferences were fully represented at the 12th Party Congress and given authoritative endorsement by the Central Committee. 25X1 25X1

Other diplomatic sources confirmed the differing foreign policy slants of Deng and Hu. In accounts of a top-level meeting held in March 1983, Deng defended the foreign policy line of 1978-82, while Hu specifically reminded attendees of his personal reservations about the previous attempt to forge a de facto alliance with the United States. 25X1 25X1

Although we do not have a full picture of Hu's foreign policy views, one point that appears incontrovertible is his suspicion of the United States as a reliable foreign policy partner. When providing foreign visitors or journalists with a foreign policy tour d'horizon, Hu is generally moderate and sticks to standard policy formulations. When he departs from the standard brief, however, Hu seldom fails to criticize US policy more harshly than other Chinese leaders. Following are examples from a sizable list of Hu's blasts: 25X1

- In early 1981, when Beijing was still seeking, in Hu's words, "a kind of alliance" with the United States against the Soviets, foreign policy guidance quoted Hu's view of the Reagan administration as "reactionary, anti-Communist, and pro-Taiwan."
- In mid-1983, Hu told foreign visitors that Washington does not honor its treaty commitments (specifically, the Shanghai Communique) and continues to cherish a "one and a half Chinas" policy. There had been no major improvement in Sino-US relations, 25X1

25X1

Hu avowed, since the breakthrough 1972 talks. (Around the same time, Deng was also questioning the reliability of the United States.)

- According to the official Chinese press, Hu heaped abuse on the United States before a Swedish Communist Party delegation in April 1983. "The United States has instituted a Taiwan Relations Act, persisted in its arms sales to Taiwan, connived in the enticement and coercion of Chinese athletes and students in collusion with Taiwan agents, and even granted 'political asylum.'[6] These are all acts interfering in China's internal affairs, injuring China's sovereignty, and hurting the Chinese people's feelings. This is hegemonistic behavior."

- In remarks made last year [redacted] echoed in his recent comments to the Hong Kong journal *Pai Hsing,* Hu charged that the United States keeps Taiwan "artificially alive" through special "blood transfusions," and that, without US interference, the problems of reunification would have been solved "years ago."

- Speaking [redacted] last year, Hu characterized the United States bleakly as a nation in decline that had not had a leader of vision since the 1940s, that was disliked around the world, and that had a stark and growing gap between rich and poor. [redacted]

Taiwan. Although Beijing has consistently maintained that the Taiwan question is solely an internal affair, neither Hu nor many other national leaders discuss it outside the context of relations with the United States. In our view, Hu appears to regard the Taiwan question as more pressing than Deng, who seems to have a better feel for the limits of the practical. Hu's generally more xenophobic view of the West spills over into the Taiwan question. [redacted]

Hu has acted in a contradictory manner on the Taiwan question, at one time acknowledging that Beijing and Washington have an implicit understanding and at another time apparently breaching that understanding in a provocative way:

- In late 1983, [redacted] Hu acknowledged the delicacy of the Taiwan connection in Sino-US relations and admitted that most issues could be finessed if the US Government would simply refrain from openly commenting on Taiwan-related questions. It was the US Government continuing to comment on its commitment, even its "alliance," with Taiwan, Hu argued, that summoned forth harsh responses from Beijing.

- Yet Hu himself focused the spotlight on Taiwan in the *Pai Hsing* interview of May 1985. There Hu, apparently in disregard of Deng's frequent assertions that China could impose a naval blockade around Taiwan, claimed that China was militarily unable to undertake such an operation, but, that in seven to 10 years, China would have the necessary capability, and perhaps the will. "If the broad masses of the Taiwan people wish (for reunification) and a small number of people do not, it will be necessary to use some force," Hu asserted. [redacted]

Soviet Union. Available evidence does not suggest that Hu is pro-Soviet. In our view, however, he is not as vehemently anti-Soviet as Deng. As with his record on other topics, Hu's statements on the Sino-Soviet relationship combine aspects of the official line together with expressions that seem more personal. Consequently, his remarks have little internal consistency—he sometimes takes a position of exaggerated hostility, sometimes of exaggerated magnanimity. We are uncertain whether these inconsistencies reflect Hu's personal views or are mere posturing for effect. [redacted]

The record suggests, however, that Hu sees more openings than other leaders for improved relations with Moscow. For example, recent public references to the Soviet Union as a "socialist" country—the first

[6] The last two remarks refer to the case of tennis star Hu Na. [redacted]

since the 1960s—reflect a view expressed by Hu since at least the late 1970s.

Hu's personal diplomacy in Eastern Europe—namely, his visit to Romania and Yugoslavia in 1983—may in part be an effort to ease gradually and indirectly toward closer Soviet contacts.

Hu, however, sees little prospect of a return to the halcyon days of Sino-Soviet alliance. In mid-1983, he told Japanese reporters that complete normalization of relations with the Soviets might take 20 or 30 years, and even then, there would be no return to the alliance of the 1950s. Early the following year, diplomatic sources in Beijing learned that East European callers on Hu found the Soviet portion of his foreign policy briefing to be "embarrassingly negative and sarcastic." Again in 1984, he noted that Moscow (following the Andropov accession) was seeking to create an impression that relations with Beijing are improving without having to concede a thing. However, Hu noted, their "chauvinism and ideological training" keep them from actually changing their ways.

Even though he may be moderately warmer toward Moscow, we estimate that a Hu-inspired repositioning within the Beijing-Moscow-Washington triangle would not amount to a full-blown rapprochement, but perhaps would incline Beijing toward an attempt to achieve a position of equidistance between the two great powers. Based on our assessment of the record, we believe Hu may favor a less confrontational approach to China's relations with the Soviet Union than Deng Xiaoping, whom Moscow considers the most anti-Soviet of China's leaders. As a corollary to this view, Hu may be willing to sacrifice aspects of the US connection in the interests of improved relations with the Soviets.

We are uncertain whether developments in Sino-Soviet relations since last fall represent a leadership consensus that Hu obeys rather than drives. These recent events are suggestive but not conclusive:

- In his trip to the Mongolian border last fall, Hu called for making the city of Erenhot an inland special economic zone, implying that he favored a major improvement in Sino-Soviet economic relations.
- In March, through Vice Premier Li Peng, Hu conveyed his congratulations to Mikhail Gorbachev upon his accession to Soviet party leadership, terming the Soviet leader "comrade."
- The following month, in a session with Hong Kong journalists, Hu acknowledged that Sino-Soviet relations are abnormal but pointedly refrained from the ritual recitation of the "three obstacles" to Sino-Soviet normalization [7]—even claiming he did not know precisely how many obstacles there were—stating only as a general condition for improving relations that Moscow must eliminate Beijing's feelings of insecurity on its borders.
- In the Hong Kong interview, Hu added that there were no obstacles to upgrading contacts between Beijing and Moscow, even to the possible exchange of visits by premiers.

Strategic Considerations. Deng is commonly credited with the strategic vision to have seen that China's best chance for realizing its domestic economic goals called for continuity with the foreign policy of Mao and Zhou Enlai—that is, an end to Chinese isolationism and cooperation with the West and Japan both for the economic benefits and as a strategic counterweight to the Soviet Union. Hu's vision appears to differ in important respects, especially regarding the relative distance between the two superpowers. Indeed, some Soviet observers tend to view Hu as a man

[7] The three obstacles are that Moscow should end its support for Vietnam in Kampuchea, withdraw from Afghanistan, and reduce the Soviet military presence in the Far East.

A high-stakes bridge game: Hu and an unidentified player against Deng (right) and Secretariat member Hu Qili. Politiburo member Wan Li (standing) looks on

25X1

Moscow might be able to bargain with, and believe that, with Hu in charge, there will be better prospects for improved Sino-Soviet relations.

25X1

Ideology and Intellectual Freedom

Hu As a "Liberal." Hu has taken controversial stands on artistic freedom but has then bowed to party traditionalists when political exigencies so dictated. During the summer of 1981, Hu endorsed, then criticized "Bitter Love," a screenplay by Bai Hua that satirized Mao and the party and drew heavy fire from Army conservatives. He subsequently attacked Bai's critics, however, insisting that their hasty and unreasonable reaction had actually generated support for Bai. At the same time, Chinese writers believed that Hu was forced to yield to conservative pressure but held that he remained their advocate. According to a diplomatic source, Bai Hua himself told a confidant, "No matter what Hu feels compelled to say about me and my writings, I know that in his heart he is a liberal and supports me."

The available evidence suggests that Bai's judgment is apt. Hu's own interview style indicates a firm belief that public discourse in China should be freer, and that writers should have greater latitude. Nevertheless, Hu above all is a political creature, leader of an organization accustomed to exercising control by establishing limits. The current economic and political trend, in which reforms proceed with only thin ideological justification, requires lipservice to some traditional Communist expressions, occasionally followed up by tougher sanctions against those who exceed unspoken ideological boundaries.

25X1

25X1

Hu as a Pragmatic Politician. As party chief, Hu must attempt to bridge the perennial gap between the party regulars' demands for ideological discipline and orthodoxy and the intellectuals' desire for greater expressive freedoms. He has been a leader in the party's effort to woo intellectuals to the party program, but at the same time is responsible -- as the party's chief ideological spokesman -- for defining the borderline between acceptable and unacceptable ideology, tolerable and intolerable expression. Hu's wavering on this question has provided critics on both sides ample opportunity to find fault with his performance.

25X1

Hu's speech of 8 February on party journalism neatly underscores his dilemma.[8] First of all, it is a tough,

25X1

[8] The speech was not published until 14 April, presumably because of its controversial contents, the corresponding need to acquire the endorsement of senior leaders, and, probably, because earlier publication would have appeared to negate the party's endorsement of artistic freedom publicized at the December 1984 -January 1985 Writers Conference. At that session, Hu Yaobang's protege Hu Qili, serving as spokesman for his mentor, pronounced a policy of creative freedom far exceeding existing boundaries.

25X1

ideologically orthodox talk, almost certainly prompted by conservative critics of the trend toward relaxed restrictions in literature. At the outset, Hu noted that the official press must serve as "the mouthpiece of the party" and contrasted journalism to artistic creation, saying that freedom of creation does not require editors to publish any item a writer submits. In his most dogmatic moment, Hu maintained that, in China, it is unnatural for the press to speak in "different voices" because all Chinese have the same opinions, which are represented faithfully by the Central Committee and the State Council. When asked by a Hong Kong journal to reconcile his speech to his relatively "enlightened" public record on artistic freedoms, Hu responded, "Being enlightened should not make me lose principles!"

On economic questions, however, Hu permits few principles to encumber him and has a well-deserved reputation as a pragmatist. Combined with his often ill-concealed contempt for China's "leftist" propaganda apparatus, Hu's approach to finding ideological justifications for economic policy seems almost cynical.

It was Hu Yaobang's speech to theoretical workers in November 1984 that provided the key text for a controversial *People's Daily* commentator of 7 December, which argued that, in light of contemporary developments, "Marxism cannot solve China's problems." (The following day, this was corrected to read "Marxism cannot solve all China's problems.")

Will Hu Stay the Course?

Political Concerns

Several considerations must originally have motivated Deng to choose Hu as his successor. Deng obviously saw him as a pugnacious man who would goad the party bureaucracy into action, work long hours attending to necessary detail, staff important projects, go on provincial tours, and thereby permit Deng to be the sagacious elder statesman. Most importantly, Deng must believe that Hu will continue to support the policies both have worked to set in place. 25X1

The designation of a political heir in China, however, is risky.[9] Named successors automatically become the target of all who wish to try for power. Hu's rise under Deng's tutelage and his willingness to stake out extreme positions have drawn fire from numerous critics. During his five years atop the party bureaucracy, Hu has absorbed much of the criticism and little of the credit for China's policies, and he is personally associated with the most controversial aspects of the reforms. Indeed, it falls to the party chief to balance competing views, and this is a task for which keenly partisan Hu seems particularly unsuited. 25X1 25X1

Partly because of his stylistic quirks, Hu has had problems winning the full approbation of senior party traditionalists. 25X1 leaders such as Standing Committee member Chen Yun, Premier Zhao Ziyang, and even Deng Xiaoping, have at one time or another been critical of Hu's performance. Hu has never quite been able to shake the perception that, because he jumps too easily to conclusions and is too readily tempted to impetuous action, he is not quite up to the job of party General Secretary. 25X1 25X1 25X1

Hu Qili—rumored in line to replace Hu Yaobang as General Secretary

Hu arouses strong emotions in both his supporters and his detractors, and the pressures of high office perhaps are beginning to tell. He is 70 years old and perhaps slowing down—during his recent trip to Australia and New Zealand, Hu canceled a day of activities because of exhaustion. On several occasions recently, Hu suggested to foreign reporters that he will leave his post at the 13th Party Congress in 1987.

Prospects

Whether or not Hu Qili ultimately accedes to Hu Yaobang's position, Hu remains the most prominent party leader of his generation and the one best positioned to try for Deng's authority once Deng dies or becomes incapacitated. The looming question before both Chinese and foreign policymakers must be: will Hu Yaobang continue China's present policy course when Deng is gone?

In our view, the answer is a guarded "yes." Our review of Hu's record suggests that, on most issues, Deng and Hu are like minded. Hu may be willing to go a bit faster on economic reform, may have some reservations on China's foreign policy, and may be more tentative in his relations with senior soldier-politicians. He is certainly willing to go a bit farther toward an ideological reformation and toward granting individual freedoms that would satisfy the demands of Chinese intellectuals for a greater stake in reform. 25X1 25X1

Yet without Deng, Hu will be subject to different political pressures and may be less able to work his own will. Deng presumably has kept the party elders at bay while gradually devolving greater authority to Hu. In most instances, Hu's words gained additional credibility because of his role as Deng's spokesman. When Deng is gone, Hu will have to deal more directly with Deng's generational peers, who are aged and tired but still politically formidable. Even with Deng's protection, Hu has been forced to concede to the old guard on issues such as ideology, simply in the interest of preserving a rough leadership consensus. 25X1 25X1

Both the issues and Hu's policy positions are complex enough for Hu to be turned in a variety of directions, according to political exigency:

- We expect Hu to continue to mind his party concerns first: challenges to party control during the course of reform, as when intellectuals attempt to question the party's primacy, will be met decisively—the important political voices in Beijing are unanimous on this score. 25X1

- Hu will continue to press for organizational changes but may encounter greater resistance without Deng's mediating influence. Exceptions to the retirement rulings have already been allowed, and it may be politic for Hu to allow several more in the post-Deng period.

- If Hu accedes to the Military Commission chairmanship, it will presumably be under institutional arrangements set by Deng. The May-June 1985 meeting of the commission has established a series of military reforms that probably can proceed without Deng's direct attention. 25X1

- Hu's economic views, because they are so imperfectly formed, may be swung about by advisers' urgings, but his record since 1978 indicates that he is basically satisfied with—and proud of—China's performance, and will generally remain an advocate of current policies. Hu may curb his rhetorical excesses to placate party elders, but he seems to have no doubt that economic reform is vitally important for China. The "open-door" approach to trade with the West and promotion of market-style macroeconomic policies probably will continue.

- Foreign policy seems an arena for greater give and take after Deng's death, and Hu's position may be particularly susceptible to political and emotional influence.

- Hu, however, is not pro-Soviet, and his critical views of both the Soviet Union and the United States generally are shared by all of China's leaders, including Deng. Hu's tone and style along with his much narrower perspective, however, suggest that he, unlike Deng, might steer China to pursue a truly independent foreign policy.

- Responding to domestic political pressures, Hu may seek favor among more conservative leaders at the Politburo level who, favor more rapid improvement of relations with the Soviets and, perhaps, greater distance from the United States.

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X6

25X6

25X6

- Although the record is clouded on his views toward the Soviet Union, Hu may genuinely believe that China would improve its position within the triangular relationship if it reaches some kind of accommodation with Moscow. If so, in our view, this would jeopardize Deng's more carefully crafted foreign policy, which appears inextricably entwined with the need to enlist Western participation in China's economic development.