

**THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS
OF XI JINPING'S
“FOUR COMPREHENSIVES”**

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Executive Summary

1. The “four comprehensives” (*sige quanmian*) has recently emerged in the Chinese official discourse as a dominant slogan that may define the Xi Jinping administration.
2. The four comprehensives are *comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society, comprehensively deepen reform, comprehensively implement the rule of law and comprehensively strengthen Party discipline*.
3. Of the four, “comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society” is the pressing objective that must be realised within Xi Jinping’s two terms in office. The other three are the means to achieve this objective.
4. Mao built up the basic system of China that still exists today; Deng tore apart that system to accommodate the market; the mission of the Xi is to re-build that system so as to bring Chinese development into the next stage. Xi is poised to rise to the rank of Mao and Deng in the history of the PRC and the Chinese Communist Party.
5. The Dengist reforms in the 1980s and the 1990s was a situation of “rising tide lifting all boats” when decentralisation and marketisation aligned the interests of all players. In contrast, the Xi’s round of reforms is the most demanding on the cadre corps as the reforms tend to limit the power and privileges of cadres whom he has to rely on for implementation.
6. Xi also runs into difficulties translating the enormous popularity he has gained from the anti-corruption campaign into utilisable support for his reform programmes from the masses. He cannot resort to mass mobilisation as Mao did, after the disastrous Cultural Revolution.
7. His determination to push forward comprehensive reforms contrasts sharply with the general immobility of the cadre corps, whose morale is dampened by the anti-corruption campaign and his recentralisation measures. Xi is also having problems

building up his team. As a result, the Xi round of reforms resembles a one-man crusade.

8. Of all the PRC's top leaders, Xi faces the toughest reforms but his support base is perhaps the weakest. His reform faces a serious problem of energy source. The comprehensiveness of Xi's "four comprehensives" is creating a comprehensive set of problems for his leadership.
9. More than any other top leaders since Deng Xiaoping, Xi needs luck on his side to fulfil his historical mission.