

CHINA STARTS GROOMING ITS SIXTH GENERATION LEADERS

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Executive Summary

1. Although the fifth generation leadership has yet to succeed the current leadership at the forthcoming 18th Party Congress in 2012, China has already begun to groom its sixth generation leadership.
2. On 30 November 2009, Xinhua News Agency announced the first batch of provincial reshuffles, affecting six provinces.
3. Lu Zhangong (卢展工), Party secretary of Fujian, was transferred to Henan as Party secretary, replacing retiring Xu Guangchun (徐光春). Sun Chunlan (孙春兰), Party group secretary of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, was sent to Fujian as Party secretary. She is the only female provincial Party secretary in China.
4. Wang Min (王珉), Party secretary of Jilin, was transferred to Liaoning as Party secretary, replacing retiring Zhang Wenye (张文岳) while Sun Zhengcai (孙政才), minister of Agriculture, was sent to Jilin as Party secretary.
5. Hu Chunhua (胡春华), governor of Hebei, was promoted to Party secretary of Inner Mongolia, replacing retiring Chu Bo (储波). Wang Hongju (王鸿举), mayor of Chongqing, was replaced by Huang Qifan (黄奇帆), executive vice mayor of the same municipality.
6. With these reshuffles, China has put in place a team of political leaders for the next eight to 18 years. In particular, Hu Chunhua and Sun Zhengcai are in good positions as frontrunners of the sixth generation leadership.
7. They are joined by four other politicians who were also born in the 1960s to form the core of the sixth generation leadership. They include Zhou Qiang (周强), governor of Hunan Province; Nur Bekri (努尔·白克力), chairman of

Xinjiang; Zhang Qingwei (张庆伟), board chairman of Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China; and Lu Hao (陆昊), the first secretary of the Chinese Communist Youth League Central Committee.

8. These six politicians are supplemented by a larger group of young political leaders in their 40s. They are currently the youngest members of the 17th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.
9. Prominently among this group, quite a few cadres are of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) background, a factional group usually identified with President Hu Jintao. Out of 26 people, 10 are considered members of this group.
10. Both at the age of 46 in 2009, Hu Chunhua and Sun Zhengcai have been placed on the fast track as frontrunners of the sixth generation leadership. With a significant career overlap with President Hu, 'Little Hu' is likely to follow the footsteps of his predecessor all the way to the top in 2022. Similarly, Sun is being groomed as China's premier after Li Keqiang.
11. They will be tested in their new positions as provincial Party bosses in the years to come and will accumulate provincial management experience for governing a much more powerful, prosperous, and liberal China in future.