

**CHINA'S POLITICS 2009 IN REVIEW:
AN INCREASINGLY
CONFIDENT CHINESE LEADERSHIP**

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Executive Summary

1. China has fared exceptionally well compared to most countries in 2009. While many are still grappling with the shocks of the global economic crisis, China has quickly recovered and is now on the way to robust growth.
2. The 60th anniversary parade awed audiences with its impressive display of military might and precision marching. It showcased a country beaming with unprecedented exuberance and confidence.
3. Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and Tiananmen incident, global power politics is experiencing a shift towards a new structure with China as a key player at the helm. This was evident in the perceived “diplomacy of deference” during President Obama’s first state visit to China.
4. Despite initial worries about China’s grave unemployment situation and social instability at the beginning of the year, Beijing has succeeded in boosting its economy and creating jobs to maintain a stable domestic environment.
5. The Urumqi riots in Xinjiang, however, revealed China’s deep-rooted ethnic tensions intertwined with religious issues in the border areas that called into question the underlying principles of the Party’s “ethnic policies.”
6. To improve its image before the Copenhagen Climate Summit, China for the first time declared that it was targeting a hefty 40-45% cut in carbon intensity, the amount of carbon dioxide emitted per dollar of GDP, by 2020.
7. China has spent lavishly on the media sector this year to make it into one of the key public diplomacy outlets for enhancing China’s “soft power” and improving its international image often marred by human rights and environmental concerns.

8. The global economic crisis has undermined the influence of pro-market liberals in China. The “New Left” has been given a shot in the arm.
9. Contrary to widespread expectations, Xi Jinping was not appointed vice chairman of the Central Military Commission at the Fourth Plenum.
10. The process to groom candidates for the sixth generation leadership has started. As the two youngest provincial party secretaries, Hu Chunhua (胡春华) and Sun Zhengcai (孙政才) are regarded as possible core figures in the sixth generation leadership.
11. Having consolidated their power in their second term, the Hu-Wen leadership is now directing anti-corruption efforts at apprehending more senior political figures. So far, a dozen ministerial-level officials are under investigation or in jail.
12. The Party’s high-profile battle against corruption peaked in southwest Chongqing, the largest megalopolis in the world, with a massive crackdown known as “*dahei*” (fight triads), a crackdown that implicated hundreds of millionaires, gangsters, and even police officers.
13. The year 2010 appears less challenging and should be less eventful for the Chinese government due to the absence of critical events on the domestic political agenda. However, social and ethnic tensions as well as other economic challenges will continue to test the leadership’s crisis management capability.