

MECHANISMS FOR MAINTAINING STABILITY IN CHINA

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Executive Summary

1. Crimes and protests caused often by inequality have given rise to instability for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the past several decades. To ensure stability, the CCP has adopted an approach of “comprehensive management for security” (CMS), which was devised as early as 1980 and relies heavily on the people and the mass line.
2. CMS utilizes all means of control such as economic, political, administrative, legal, cultural, and educational, to maintain social order. It adopts four approaches: striking hard against crimes, building extensive prevention network, constructing a grand mediation system, and closely monitoring targeted groups.
3. To make the CMS work, the CCP has emphasized three crucial mechanisms including strong leadership of the party, collective and individual responsibility of local cadres in local governance, and tremendous investments in policing the country.
4. The CCP has established three commissions to fully dominate the CMS: Central Commission of Politics and Law (CCPL), Central Commission of Comprehensive Management for Security (CCCMS) and Central Leadership Group of Defending Security (CLGDS). The commissions are helmed by Zhou Yongkang, a Politburo Standing Committee member.
5. The structure of the three commissions at the local levels has been copied from province, prefecture, down to county, sometimes even to town. They are also headed by a top leader within the Party and their core members come from the policing system, particularly agencies of public security.
6. To encourage local cadres to maintain social stability, the CCP has set up an internal responsibility system to evaluate the performance of leading cadres in policy implementation in a top-down fashion. The performance evaluation

has a direct bearing on the compensation and promotion (or demotion) of the evaluated cadres.

7. Starting from 1991, the CCCMS introduced “one ballot veto” (一票否决) to put more pressure on local leaders. Those who fail to maintain public order within their jurisdiction will fail the evaluation, regardless of their performance in other areas.
8. Apart from institutional building, the Chinese government is investing heavily to maintain social stability. Much has been used by the policing system to improve equipment, recruit personnel as well as administration, while much is for pacifying social grievors.
9. Throughout the past decades, investment in internal security has continued to grow. Particularly since 1995, its growth has always been ahead of GDP growth. In 2009, the amount reached an unprecedented 514 billion *yuan*, comparable to the defense budget.
10. These CMS measures, however, only have short-term effects. The CCP overemphasizes its leadership role to the point of undermining not only the role of the government in managing social issues, but also the role of law in regulating social relationships.