

**WHAT IS NEXT FOR CHINA'S
POLITICAL REFORMS?
DIFFERENT VIEWS AT THE TOP**

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Executive Summary

1. On the issue of political reforms, there seem to be two major camps among top Chinese leaders. At one end are liberal leaders such as Premier Wen Jiabao (温家宝) who openly support political reforms.
2. In August 2010 when he visited Shenzhen, the first special economic zone set up 30 years earlier, Wen called for political reforms. Without political reforms, he said, the fruits of economic reforms would be lost and the goal of modernization would not be realized.
3. He mentioned political reforms seven more times within the months of August and September 2010, including one with former US President Jimmy Carter and another in his speech at a banquet for celebrating the 61st anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.
4. In particular, during his interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria in New York in September 2010, Wen expressed his determination for political reforms by saying that "I will not fall in spite of a strong wind and heavy rain and I will not yield till the last day of my life."
5. At the other end are leaders who are quite resistant to political reforms. Wen's talks on political reforms were censored in some of China's media. The *People's Daily*, the mouthpiece of the CCP, came out with an editorial clarifying the "correct political direction" for political reforms in China.
6. More recently, Wu Bangguo (吴邦国), National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Chairman and No. 2 ranking party leader, gave an unequivocal answer to the issue of political reforms in China.
7. During the annual NPC session, Wu made an important speech about the work of the NPC Standing Committee on 10 March 2011. He made it clear that the CCP is not interested in substantial reforms in its political system.

8. According to Wu, who seems to represent the official view of the CCP, China would refrain from adopting a rotation of multiple ruling parties, a diversity of ideological guidelines, a system of balances and checks of three separate powers and bicameral legislative structure, a federal system, and making a privatization move.
9. Wu concluded that the only correct way for the CCP is to develop and govern the country, and to continue with the correct political orientation. Otherwise, achievements so far will be lost and the whole country could fall into the abyss of civil strife.
10. The debate among top Chinese leaders is unlikely to be resolved in favor of the liberal wing anytime soon. China would go on without major political transformations but China's political system would not remain static either.