

**CHINA'S FIFTH GENERATION LEADERSHIP:
CHARACTERISTICS AND POLICIES**

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Executive Summary

1. At the Eighteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) scheduled for 2012, there will be another generational power transfer, from the fourth generation leadership to the fifth generation leadership.
2. The selection process for the fifth generation leadership began as soon as candidates for the fourth generation leadership had been selected after Deng Xiaoping's famous "southern tour".
3. Since the abolition of the Central Advisory Commission (CAC) in 1992, the Central Committee of the CCP has become the epicentre of power in China and the entry into this powerful organ has become the hallmark of a politician's political ascendance.
4. Li Keqiang (李克强) was the first to be nominated for a seat on the Fourteenth Central Committee of the CCP as an alternate member. Although he failed to enter the Central Committee of the CCP in 1992, he was promoted to be the first secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) in 1993.
5. The second candidate for the fifth generation leadership was Xi Jinping (习近平), son of Xi Zhongxun (习仲勋) (a veteran revolutionary of the CCP and former vice premier of the State Council). Yet Xi the junior only managed to get into the Fifteenth Central Committee of the CCP in 1997 as an alternate member with the least number of affirmative votes.
6. The cohort of the fifth generation leadership emerged at the Sixteenth National Congress of the CCP in 2002, with some members taking powerful positions at the Seventeenth National Congress of the CCP in 2007.

7. This cohort is generally young, well-educated, and has extensive management experiences at various local levels as well as the national level. In particular, some of them have managed Chinese provinces as top leaders.
8. Led by Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, the fifth generation leadership will take over the helm at the forthcoming Eighteenth Party Congress in 2012. Nevertheless, these new leaders are unlikely to bring fundamental changes to the current political, economic, and social policies.
9. They will not, in all likelihood, carry out major political reforms, at least within the first five years. Nor will they conduct any substantial economic reforms. Their primary job will be to change the mode of growth from quantitative growth to quality growth. They will also have to focus on social reforms including those of health, education, and housing.
10. Externally, they would also try to maintain good relations with the United States and Europe as well as its neighboring countries such as Japan, the two Koreas, and members of the ASEAN.
11. Instead of an “assertive” China, the new Chinese leaders are inclined to try their utmost to restore the image of China as a peaceful, rising major power that is still willing to operate within the confines of the current international order as a “responsible stakeholder”.