

Liu Yazhou

NEW THINKING FOR CHINA'S POLITICAL REFORM

Internal Speech

24 August 2013

*[General Liu Yazhou, the ranking political commissar at the National Defense University, must enjoy getting people riled up. This document is taken from a report by Boxun, a web site run from North Carolina, and the information it carries cannot be guaranteed to be reliable. The Chinese version of the document, however, does have the appearance of a transcript made in the PRC. Liu's pronouncements are often self-indulgent, but always interesting (see, for example, the Document below, dated August 8, 2010). The present document is an astounding liberal call for political reform. Since a few months earlier Liu had also been featured in a documentary movie made by the Defense University, "Silent Contest," a film that argued that Chinese soldiers should have nothing to do with the wicked, crafty Americans, and that the CIA was engaged in subverting China by means of pornography, trashy popular culture, and Christianity: and this could raise questions about Liu's association with the ideas presented here. Nonetheless. . . Liu contends that China's reform is now out in "deep water," and can no longer rely on "crossing the stream by groping for stones" (as Deng Xiaoping put it). Further progress requires political reform, ultimately competitive elections that will test the popularity of the Communist party; and the Party, 60 some years after establishing its "regime," should have the self-confidence to entrust its fate to an electorate. The document also includes a muted defense of Bo Xilai and, by implication, a dig at Xi Jinping. Liu criticizes the show trial and its lack of due process, and also hints that*

*however bad Bo was, he was no worse than others. A foreign reader of this interesting document might be moved to think, however, that Liu's idea of the efficacy of elections in reflecting a popular will is perhaps a bit idealized.]*

Pretty soon it will be the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the state. Or, to be precise, it will be the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Communist Party of China's becoming a ruling party and establishing a new government under CPC leadership. China itself had already been a state for thousands of years. We should no longer use the erroneous term "founding of the state" (建国) but, rather, the more historically correct term, "founding of the regime"<sup>1</sup> by the CPC. Naturally, this proposal of mine is simply a matter of changing a single character and is also very easy to understand. But I expect it will be very difficult to get the comrades to agree to it. This is because our linguistic usage is the same as our manner of thinking. Once something has become a habit, like our erroneous but easily corrected notion of "founding of the state," it sinks very deep roots and becomes very hard to change. We can see from this that it will be a very hard business for China to implement political structural reform. Two general secretaries fell from office because of this, and also two general secretaries dawdled about it for 28 years.<sup>2</sup> As you know, our Party was founded in 1929 and set up a regime in 1949, a matter of only 20-some years. Why is it that although the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress proposed political reform and Comrade Xiaoping said that nothing anyone could say would change that decision, until today we have not seen the slightest movement at all in that direction?

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<sup>1</sup> 建政—the term could also be translated as "founding of the government," but regime probably captures the meaning better—that is, what was founded was a new political system.

<sup>2</sup> Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang fell, and Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao dawdled.

Everybody believes that the topic of political reform leads into deep waters. Comrade Xiaoping's way of "crossing the river by feeling for the stones" is no longer appropriate here. If we remain bound by old ways of thinking and old concepts, there is absolutely no way we can get across that river. That's the reason the past two general secretaries did not cross that river. Therefore, we need a new way of thinking about China's political structural reform.

It's been almost a year since the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress. Comrade Xiping and the new generation of collective leadership have been thinking about this question. The Report of the Congress says, "We definitely do not want to walk the closed and overly narrow road, nor do we want to change our flag and fall into heresy." Comrade Xiping has recently said, "We cannot use the history since reform and opening to negate the history prior to reform and opening; nor can we use the history prior to reform and opening to negate the history since reform and opening." Over here there is the method of holding on to our old thinking; over there we have the manner of thinking that is full of "contradiction" and "struggle." This is the manner of thinking of the Cold War. My understanding of Comrade Xiping's theory is that both the pre-reform and post-reform policies represent internally implemented changes by the CPC in our political system—so why should either negate the other? Similarly, we should not treat concepts such as the "old road" or "heretical road" in absolute terms. Within the old road there is the basis for the government established by the CPC. If the so-called "heretical road" means the road of western constitutionalism, then inside this heretical road there is the target of our future struggles.

Because the style of thinking in China, from the highest levels down to the local and among the common people, is still in the Cold War mode, then the progress of China's reform until today is a little like that of a boat in the middle of a river: the water is deep and the waves are wild; there is no way to stabilize things, no way to harmonize things. When basic level functionaries of the Party and government encounter struggles between officials and people, they can only bring in the army and police to suppress things by force. They regard anyone with a differing opinion as an "antagonistic force." And the common people will neither listen to the local government officials nor carry out what they say, so it is now no rare thing to hear of violent mass incidents. There is no longer any trace of the old propaganda about how "you can see the fish in deep water if the water is clear."

Also because of the persistence of this mode of thought there are fights over interests that cannot be adjusted among the privileged generation, including the "second red generation." Haven't we seen it proclaimed on the net: In this new argument over constitutionalism, there are those among the second red generation who think that constitutionalism is a means to force the CPC off the stage. The second red generation must see to it that the CPC will forever hold power. To have (搞) constitutionalism is to lose faith in the Communist party. Then there is the "universal values" faction among the red second generation, represented by Qin Xiao.<sup>3</sup> They believe that the only kind of good state is one that adheres to constitutionalism, that there is no other choice. Qin Xiao believes that he is sincerely working to improve the CPC; and he also asks those in the

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<sup>3</sup> 秦晓—b. 1947; a onetime banker and a "public intellectual," a proponent of liberal democracy.

second red generation who oppose constitutionalism why they have sent their own wives and children to America. The implication is that those who oppose constitutionalism are hypocrites. They want their families to enjoy the benefits of freedom and democracy while they themselves receive special privileges under the dictatorship. This enrages those in the second red generation opposed to constitutionalism, reducing them to incoherent ranting and cursing.

Right now we are giving Bo Xilai a public trial. As I see it, the accusations against Bo Xilai of corruption, bribery, or abuse of power cannot attain the same degree of consensus as the other trials of high-ranking officials. This time there are lots of people both at home and abroad who support Bo, and lots who oppose him. Their attitude toward Bo divides them into “leftists” and “rightists.” The self-proclaimed “leftists” support Bo and have firm faith in him. They think that Bo Xilai was walking the “old road” of socialism that they support. To those on the “right” he is nothing more than a bribe-taker and an abuser of office.

If we don’t get away from this kind of distorted Cold War thinking, we will forever be on the edge of a volcano that is about to blow. There is no way to predict or to guard against the next even stronger explosion. That explosion could even be deadly. Today we are putting Bo Xilai on trial. There is no way to say for sure that next time it will not be we ourselves in the dock. Therefore, if we are not content to remain in shallow waters groping for stones but want instead to go into the deep waters of political reform, there is no way we can be successful without a new manner of thinking.

This new thinking is along the lines of the proposal I began with of changing “founding the state” to “founding the regime.” It is not something that is too hard to do.

Our new thinking is very easy. All we have to do is first abandon “antagonistic thinking” and “Cold War thinking.”

Our comrades all understand very clearly. Our main enemy, aside from foreign aggressors, has been the Kuomintang after its withdrawal to Taiwan. At the beginning they purged the Party, purging us under the name of Communist bandits. We put up resistance and set up an independent army, finally kicking out the Chiang bandits. But today the smoke has cleared over the Taiwan strait; the CPC and KMT leaders greet each other politely and talk peace. But our manner of ruling and habits of thinking have not changed. We consider any person or organization outside the system to be an antagonist. We deny them Chinese citizenship. Some of those we once considered to be model citizens have become objects of our drive to maintain stability. Those efforts of ours to maintain stability that go beyond national defense have come to be considered a big joke. Following the “wind and waves of 1989” we restored, indeed strengthened, our “antagonistic thinking,” becoming suspicious of everything, finding enemies behind every blade of grass. Any words or behavior that did not accord with the official line became sprouts of weeds that need to be eradicated. Whether they were lawyers defending the rights of the common people, or volunteers concerned about AIDS or the environment, or pastors in house churches—they all became our enemies.

China’s new political thinking might, instead of thinking of these as “antagonistic forces,” treat them instead as the opposition to the governing CPC. In the system as it exists today there cannot be an “opposition party” that can replace us in office, but we who are in power absolutely do need an “opposition faction” that can supervise us. During the war era we ourselves were the opposition. We had the faith and ability not

only to supervise and expose the dictatorship of the KMT, but also the attractiveness and charm to organize a united front and in the end were able to displace the KMT and become the new rulers of China. Could it be that after holding power for 60 years we have lost our faith in ourselves and cannot tolerate the existence of an opposition? I believe, on the contrary, that we should not only tolerate a domestic opposition but should also welcome back home all those so-called “antagonistic” personages who are living abroad! Whether are not they actually are “political ambitionists,” they all want to win the support of the common people and, according to the proclamations they have issued while living overseas, they want to “change China by one man, one vote.” If they have no way of seeking to foster the welfare of the common people on Chinese soil and making contributions to China’s progress and strength, they have no use for our arrests and trials; and we can simply throw away their ballots. If we have faith in ourselves and become good friends with our former KMT enemies, why are we so afraid of that minority of opposition personages who live overseas?

Also, if we change our perspective and see things from the aspect of new thinking, we can regard these religious leaders, public intellectuals and opinion leaders, even the leaders of the so-called opposition parties as “precertified” (?: 前体制) personages. That means they are people who have not yet entered the “system.” Has our system provided them the opportunity to come in or not? Actually, there was such a system on the “old road” that we used when we set up the system—for example, the NPC or the CPPCC. Also, the current constitution and electoral system provides for entry by such pre-system people. So before we even discuss the system, we need to analyze the similarities and differences between the socialist system and western democratic constitutionalism.

Our previous socialist system was a continuation of the “resistance style” of the war years. Therefore, differences of political view were considered to be antagonistic, matters for struggle. We treated different political forces by dictatorial methods. But western democratic constitutionalism is a “competitive” system. Different political forces organize different political parties and gain political power by means of universal elections. The losing party continues to balance and to supervise the government in the parliament, and in a few years there will be another election and another chance to decide who are the winners and losers. This kind of constitutional democracy requires a mature civil society.

It is not necessarily appropriate to set up this kind of universal electoral system in China today. But I think it is even less appropriate to theorize about the “quality” of those in opposition. This notion of quality was used by the Qing dynasty, Yuan Shikai, and the KMT as a reason for opposing constitutionalism. The quality of the Chinese people can be raised only through the practice of democracy; it absolutely cannot mature under non-democratic conditions.

Now let’s take a look at our system. I think that our future system should be one of “competitive consultation.”<sup>4</sup> Competition should be added to consultation, and the consultation should be of a competitive variety. In the past the CPC was a revolutionary party that seized power by means of warfare. But now the CPC is a governing party and other democratic parties participate in the governing. There may someday be a way to

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<sup>4</sup> The CPC is still technically in a “united front” with various minor parties who sided with the communists during the civil war against the KMT. These, along with the CPC, form part of the membership of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, an advisory institution. The CPC “consults” with the minor parties and other members of the CPPCC, and these all accept the “leadership” of the CPC.



bring the KMT back in. In my opinion, even the present “precertified” opposition factions might have their own political parties and participate in the process of Chinese political reform. While at the present time we cannot completely opt for electoral methods, yet there is a necessary electoral system allowing for orderly competition, consultation concerning methods of competition, allowing for consultation on some things and competition on others. I believe that this kind of “consultative competitive system” should be the direction of our reform.

Changing our old manner of thinking means we no longer create enemies for ourselves and become able to specify our future goals. So let’s talk about how to implement political structural reform.

I think that our political structural reform does not mean that we have to begin everything all over again. Our current political structure has basically gone back to the original blueprint set when we first set up the regime. All we have to do is prevent the arrogation of personal privileges and patch up the defects in the system. Our reform means the perfection of the present political system.

There are two aspects to this perfection.

One is revitalization. That is, part of the ability of the present system to function is already moribund. It can no longer perform its intended duties. This because in the past, while the CPC was a governing party, it failed truly to promote socialist democracy. It treated the democratic procedures in the constitution and the charter of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference for consultative competition as formalities only. Therefore our NPC was regarded as a “banana peel charter” and the CPPCC and

democratic parties as “flower vases.”<sup>5</sup> Our representatives and committee members were treated as “hand-raising machines.” Part of political reform is to revitalize these dead functions. Allow the democratic parties to participate in politics, to discuss politics, to act as supervisors. Allow the NPC and the CPPCC to be produced by elections<sup>6</sup> in their own electoral districts, so that their members become the true representatives of the democratic opinion of their constituents.

Our CPC has a political magic wand called the “mass line.” In the new situation, this magic wand of the mass line means the electoral system. To walk the mass line means that the people will elect their own representatives. It means that the hearts and voices of the common people will be represented by representatives elected by the people. I saw in the news that during the Spring Festival season the leaders of the Party and government wanted to go among the masses to bring them comfort. The leaders of the state go down to the localities to carry out inspections and often meet with the most basic-level masses to understand their actual situation. But we all know that this kind of inspection and comforting has been arranged in advanced. Where are you ever going to hear what the masses really think? The only way is by elections. It is not only NPC representatives and CPPCC members who should be produced by election. We should begin at the basic levels, with the counties and municipalities. The masses should be able to choose their local officials by voting in elections. They should also be able to supervise them. I have

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<sup>5</sup> That is, the formal powers of the NPC are mere covers for the real meat of how things are done, and the main function of the minor parties is to look pretty, not really exercise any power or responsibility.

<sup>6</sup> “Produced by election” is a formulation that came into use at the 9<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1969, following the Cultural Revolution. The implication seems to be that there is some kind of electoral process, but also much “consultation,” including, probably, copious suggestions from the higher-ups about who is suitable for what.

just said that a democratic quality can be elevated and brought to maturity only by democratic practice. We should go a step further toward establishing and bringing to actuality a Chinese civil society and constitutional democracy.

Our consultative competition needs elections of this sort: a system of consultative competition means there must be consultation about how to hold elections. For example, the selection of parties or candidates or the electoral system are all matters subject to consultation about. The goal of consultative competition is better to “serve the people.” It is the nature of our CPC that determines the reason why we hold power. A system of competitive competition will allow us to govern even better.

After we revitalize our system, the next thing to do is address the issue of precertified people and overseas dissidents. Once we have a revitalized mechanism, if there are those who have truly prepared themselves to fight for victory and have a long-term sustained spirit of desiring to serve the people—some of those may actually enter into the present system, to serve as NPC deputies or CPPCC members or even executive officials of some sort or other. Our representative of public opinion should not all be of a single position or reputation. Those representatives who have money and enter the NPC and go for decades without casting a single contrary vote are not only not marks of the excellence of our system, but, to the contrary, are poison that stand in the way of our developing a proper democratic system. We should not permit this sort of thing in a reformed system.

The second point involves “strengthening.” We have a whole series of measures and structures to combat corruption. So why is it that corrupt phenomena not only do not fade away but, to the contrary, become ever more rampant? I think that our current

disciplinary commissions inside the Party and supervisory organs of the government need to be strengthened. We can look at two models. One is the model used by the Hong Kong government, setting up a government office directly responsible to the Center. Prior to its being set up, allow for a certain period in which officials can themselves come clean, return what they have received in bribes, and undertake to be honest in the future. Or we can look at the American model. The United States has police, equivalent to our Public Security; and the CIA, equivalent to our State Security. But in addition it also has the FBI. Why shouldn't we set up a "Political Security Bureau" (政安局) with the special task of investigating corruption among Party and government functionaries?<sup>7</sup> These "Polsec" police would be subordinate to the Center and not under any control from local Party and government officials. If we were to strengthen our system in this manner, we would certainly be able to root out corruption and bribery.

The reason we need to strengthen the institutions dealing with corruption is that corrupt officials are the enemies of the whole people. I said previously that we should abandon "antagonistic thinking," but I did not mean that we do not have any enemies. It is these corrupt elements who are our enemies. Some of those who are opposed to reform are so because they fear that reform will expose their own corruption and bribe-taking.

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<sup>7</sup> The November plenum did in fact set up a 国家安全委员会. This can be rendered as National Security Council, similar to the American institution that advises the President on security matters. It is probably better rendered, however, as State Security Commission, as in the Soviet KGB. At this point, however, it does not seem that the Commission will have any operational functions; rather, its job is probably to coordinate domestic security work. Its being set up was interpreted as a move by Xi Jinping to concentrate the police functions in himself. The previous security boss, Zhou Yongkang, was rumored to be in trouble and, at the time this is written, possibly under arrest. The document's "Political Security Bureau" may be a foreshadowing of the institution later actually established.

There are two kinds of people who oppose reform. One kind is afraid that reform will bring about the loss of power by the CPC; the other kind is those corrupt elements. They are afraid of reform because they are afraid of being arrested.

Then we have the crime of subversion (颠覆). I think it would be more appropriate to call this treason (叛国). Treason is listed among American criminal laws, although very few people are ever accused of it. But it is still on the books. It is like America's death penalty—its purpose is deterrence. We also have people like this, but they are definitely not the people who write essays criticizing us; nor should those who organize opposition political parties be considered active enemies. We might say that it is we ourselves who got Liu Xiaobo his Nobel Peace Prize. We should no longer send overseas those internal dissidents we have released from prison. On the contrary, we should welcome them back to participate in political reform. We should keep our laws against subversion, but treat them the way the United States treats the death penalty—have it but not use it; let it serve for deterrence alone.<sup>8</sup>

I previously said we should allow the formation of opposition parties. There already are other political parties in China; what would be so frightful if there were one or two more who were opposition parties? Also, don't we want to unify Taiwan? If Ma Ying-jeou should suddenly agree and there were immediate unification, what would we do? Do you think we can achieve unification by allowing KMT members into the CPPCC so they can raise their hands, or make him [presumably, President Ma] a vice-chairman of the

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<sup>8</sup> The document perhaps underplays the prevalence of capital punishment in the United States, although that country is certainly less extravagant in its use than is China.

CPPCC? Back in the day there were so many of us Communists in Yan'an, in control of so much territory, who resisted the blandishments of Chiang Kai-shek. Is it possible that these people, now that they have a basically mature democratic state system and a certain degree of international acceptance, are prepared to surrender? Unless you send in soldiers to beat them down, as long as we fail to reform there is no way Taiwan will ever come back.

The KMT and CPC are no longer in an antagonistic relationship. Rather, it is we ourselves who have set up organizations that treat our own fellow-citizens as enemies. Actually, apart from the ideological colorings, the reason any political party is set up is to achieve political power. Things in China are a little special, but at least under our present constitution we should permit opposition parties and engage in political discourse along with other democratic parties. It talking this way it sounds as if I am joking. In the past we berated the KMT dictatorship, but all of our current democratic parties were established during the period of KMT rule. There is not a one that was set up under CPC rule. On Taiwan the KMT has changed from a revolutionary party to a democratic governing party. People not only permit opposition parties to exist, but allow them to compete for votes. Although they lost power once, they were able to regain it through later elections. Our current methods of suppressing the formation of opposition parties include, one, they have no legal basis and, two, they go against our rule of leadership by the CPC. We are a political party that serves the people. If the masses were to set up a political party, under current conditions they could not replace us in power. All they could do is participate in political discussions with the CPC and the point of those discussions would be to help us govern even better, even better to serve the people. The

KMT, the CPC, or any other party today are not enemy parties but parties of a similar nature, each representing a portion of the popular masses. In the future they can act together in contributing to the unity and strength of China.

Let me go back. This is very important. Just now I spoke about strengthening the measures against corruption, because these corrupt elements are our real enemies, the enemies of the whole people. But none of the opposition groups, not even the anti-Party groups, are, under the new style of political thinking, our enemies.

Now someone might ask: What about historical questions? For example, the shooting on “June 4.” It has already been 24 years, but still everything is being covered up.

Is that a larger question than the Cultural Revolution? Ten years after the Cultural Revolution we were prepared to rectify things, and even issued a resolution on historical questions that addressed the Cultural Revolution. June 4 is the same—we don’t need to cover up that part of history. In fact, there is no way to cover it up: all we can do is make people block their ears, and by covering up the fault we only make it more glaring. Moreover, how are we going to explain this cover-up to the younger generation? Don’t we accuse the Japanese of rewriting the history of their two wars of aggression against China? How can we explain our covering up of the June 4 incident?

It the same as for the Cultural Revolution. The CPC made a mistake, but the errors were made by those who made the decisions and they must bear the responsibility for compensating the victims. The CPC must have the courage to admit its mistakes. Also, at

the high levels of the Party, didn't the General Secretary at that time vote against?<sup>9</sup> I've previously said that Zhao Ziyang is a name from history. But he and Hu Yaobang merit rehabilitation from the CPC.

Finally I'll talk about my predictions concerning China's future political structural reform.

First, there must be an independent judiciary. Let's look at the Bo Xilai trial that is now going on. To make a comparison, the former Taiwan "President" Chen Shui-bian was indicted by the prosecution, but until he had been tried he was considered innocent. In the United States, unless there is a formal warrant issued by a judge, a person cannot be subject to search. This is in accord with the fourth amendment of the Constitution. Here you first have to be deprived of public office and then subject to "double designation" (双规),<sup>10</sup> and only then brought to trial. The judges have not yet made a decision in the trial that is now going on in Jinan while our media are one-sidedly pronouncing on what kind of punishment Bo Xilai should receive.

Actually, in my opinion, given the evidence we have seen so far, Bo Xilai should be found completely innocent and released. First of all, his wife is a witness testifying to his taking bribes. The defense has no way to question her; and, anyway, should the court treat as evidence a wife's testimony against her husband? Evidence of bribe taking always involves someone's word against another, and sometimes the witness is one who

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<sup>9</sup> Zhao Ziyang opposed the violent crackdown on the student demonstrators, and this is one of the reasons for his dismissal.

<sup>10</sup> An investigation of instances of corruption conducted by the police or by the Party independently of the regular judicial organs, under the rationale that these are likely to be under the influence of the corrupt cadres being investigated. But the process also seems free of the normal due-process-of-law procedures, for what they may be worth.



has been involved in the transaction with the accused. Why should we believe only the witness and not believe Bo Xilai? I don't support Bo Xilai; I just now said that our controls against corruption must be strengthened. But we also need to reform the judiciary. All sorts of cases, including, I'm afraid, cases against state leaders, should go forward if the person bringing the case has the fees necessary to bring suit. In the United States, every year someone will bring suits against the President, and the President has to get a lawyer and answer to the court, like anyone else. Isn't a joke that here the suit cannot go forward just because the government waves its hand? Chen Shui-bian has been tried and sentenced to prison; but he can still write books and even reapply to get back into the Democratic Progressive Party; and his application has been approved. How would this work with us?

Second, there is freedom of speech. I'd like to say today what the ancients said: "Blocking the mouths of the people is like blocking a stream. The stream will overflow, and many will suffer. It's the same with the people. The stream should flow where it will, and the people should say what they want to" [from the *Guoyu*]. We Communists of today are at least a match for the ancients of several thousand years ago. Also, the world today is not that of the traditional newspapers and television stations. With the appearance of the internet and especially the technology for blogs, news forums, chat rooms, and tweets, news is transmitted to the whole wide world within a few minutes. How can we block that?

We not only control the traditional media. I see that within the past couple of days we have begun a movement to stop the spread of rumors on the internet. As I understand it, in American law today regarding the internet, in cases of defamation it is up to the

individual who has actually been harmed to bring suit. Why is that in China we send out the public security organizations to arrest people and institute coordinated “movement” against the media? And if the person defamed is someone famous or a public official, then in American law [the person initiating the attack] still has freedom of speech under the Constitution. This kind of law protects ordinary people exercising their freedom of speech to supervise the famous and officials. Don’t our movements and attacks eliminate any possibility of control of officials by public opinion? I mention American law here because America has an adversarial judicial process. So does Taiwan. This should be our goal in the future.

Third, general elections at the local level. I think this would be a good move. It can be the first pawn sent out in the initiation of political structural reform, the first to cross the river.<sup>11</sup> Take a look at conflicts between officials and the people at the local level. The officials think only of their own political careers with no concern for the interests of the people. If they were selected through popular election, would they act that way? They can still think of their careers, but if they can’t get the votes of the people, that is the last office they would hold. They couldn’t go higher. Also, we should allow opposition figures to participate in elections. They have different opinions. Some are leftists and some are rightists. But maybe some of their ideas are correct. Let the people have their own say by a vote. If you’re elected, then you should be a good public servant, exercise your capacity within the system and satisfy one part of the common people. I think that

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<sup>11</sup> The reference is to “elephant chess” (象棋) a board game rather similar to western or international chess. The two sides are separated by a “river.” A pawn (“soldier”) that has crossed the river is able to move sideways as well as forward, and so has enhanced power; but it cannot retreat.

elections at the county and municipal levels should be allowed to mature. We call ourselves the representatives of the advance forces. But if after holding power for 60 years and more, how is it we do not allow the people themselves to elect a village hear. If we compare ourselves to our big brothers in the KMT on Taiwan, there we see that people can directly elect their president. Our level of governing is way too low! If you're not afraid that the CPC will lose, why is it that you only choose ass-kissers to stand for election? Why can't you take the initiative and bring those energetic people who have a base among the masses into the Party and have them represent the Party in elections? Our local Party organizations of the future should primarily use the method of elections to select those basic-level Party members who should serve as cadres. That way we could get rid at one stroke of all those [character unclear] rules that prevail in official circles. It might be said that many cadres at the basic level pay bribes to get their positions and then use their positions to get more bribes; and they also collect fees for their various activities and so climb to even higher positions. If there were elections at the local levels, such stooges could be thoroughly weeded out. That way, CPC officials would have a genuine mass base. It would also give the administrative capacity and electoral experience to move toward national elections, and the CPC's ruling position would be further legitimized by electoral victory.

Fourth, a new party politics. As long as they accept the premises of the socialist constitution, all political parties should be permitted. They would all be socialist parties and the purpose of their existence would be better to serve the people. There can be elections under the system of consultative competition, with participation in the political process and supervision of the ruling party. I feel that for a political party to exist and to

develop the main duty of its basic levels would be to seek out capable candidates to represent the party in elections. If there are changes in the mechanism for selection of candidates by the basic levels of the CPC and these are added to the already existing resources that come from being the governing party, it is certain that the Party can win elections in the great majority of the counties and municipalities. With this kind of development, China in the future might have two or three political parties; the others would be weeded out or absorbed by other parties. We could have a two-party socialist system and that would work even better than the completely competitive western party systems.

Finally, I want to talk about how a television show I saw made me feel. It was a program about the migration of animals. A big herd of wild cattle and wild sheep had to migrate because of changes in the rainy season. They came to a great river that was in flood. On the other side of the river there were rain and green grass. They would be able to survive and prosper. On the side they were on there were only dried dirt, starvation, and death. Without any hesitancy at all, the needs of life compelled them to rush into the river in mass, pushing and shoving each other, struggling to swim to the opposite shore. A minority met with harm. They were not strong enough and were carried away in the flood. But most of the cattle and sheep made it successfully to the other side, continuing the migration to where there was grass and water.

We, like those wild animals, have stepped into the big river. We have passed beyond the shallow waters and are into the depths. To turn back is very safe, but that means death. To move ahead is dangerous, but on the other shore there are new glories and new fields of endeavor. With the old thinking we can only tread water. With new thinking, we

can throw down our old burdens and bravely move forward. Communists have the courage to challenge heaven and conquer the earth, the courage to metamorphosize into new forms.

(Compiled from a voice recording)

Boxun, 27 August 2013