

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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For decades we have been reading in the China Daily, the unofficial PRC mouthpiece, and the Peoples Daily, the official Chinese Communist Party organ, pronouncements and admonishments of the successful fight against corruption by the leaders of the Chinese Party State. Presidents and Prime Ministers have solemnly warned that the entire government could fall if corruption was not routed out by the various Disciplinary Bureaus at all levels of governance including the State-Owned Enterprises.

The CPC Politburo leaders watched with bemusement the travails of governments in the USA, EU, Australia and other Western countries concerning the revelations of Bradley/Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange, Edward Snowden and others. But now the "freedom of information" virus has impacted the PRC itself. In 2012 the New York Times and Bloomberg ran articles on the alleged family wealth of then Premier Wen Jiabao, probably the most vocal of Chinese anti-corruption fighters, and current President Xi Jinping, the latter since assuming office in early 2013 launching a crackdown on high level corruption in the Communist Party. Just think of former Chongqing boss Bo Xilai.

However leaked confidential financial documents, allegedly obtained from firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, UBS, Credit Suisse and well known Western Banks which assisted the establishment of offshore companies, trusts and bank accounts in various global tax havens, have now been published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists group - <http://www.icij.org/> It is claimed between 1 and 5 trillion Australian dollars "in untraced assets have left the country/China since 2000". Named are "at least 15 of China's richest members of the National People's Congress" and executives from SOE including CNPC, Sinopec and CNOOC.

In today's Sydney Morning Herald it is stated that the ICIJ documents "showed nearly 22,000 clients with addresses in mainland China and Hong Kong" that had assets in these tax havens including:

- * President Xi's brother-in-law Deng Jiahui
- * Former Premier Wen's son Wen Yunsong and so-in-law Liu Chunhang
- * Former President Hu Jintao's cousin Hu Yishi
- * Former Premier Li Peng's daughter Li Xialin

There is of course the caveat "while the ownership of secret offshore accounts does not necessarily imply illegal conduct, the secretive nature of such accounts has the potential to help shroud the true extent of the party elite's wealth". At the very least it is not a good look.

So what is to be done? Very simply a law outlawing such accounts re offshore assets by Party, Government and Corporate officials over a certain level and the immediate repatriation of all wealth to the Peoples Republic and/or their rightful owners. Anything else will be widely known throughout the social media of China with the resulting debilitating impacts on the peoples morale.