

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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An interesting statement in this article claims Chinese President Xi Jinping is planning for 2049, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the PRC Government. Hence surprising for ACCCI as in recent months Chamber quietly independently announced its three benchmarks for future planning as part of the on-going GERG (Global Economic Relations and Governance) narrative - 2022, 2049 and 2101A

Similarly President Xi since 2012 has been relentlessly pursuing an anti-corruption campaign against "tigers and flies" with some astonishing results. Likewise Chamber launched its own campaign against corruption in Australia and especially New South Wales and Sydney several years earlier, following briefings to relevant authorities, and again recent reports from the ICAC have been most illuminating about Labor tigers and Liberal flies.

However it is always dangerous, not only politically, when exposing corruption at the top of government and business, and more so when alleging malpractice in the police force, military and security agencies. The Americans, Chinese, Russians and Israelis do not take prisoners. Many of those fallen tigers in China were linked to former President Jiang Zemin who remains very powerful. Indeed Xi has received more expressions of loyalty from the PLA in the last two years than Jiang and Hu Jintao did in 20 years.

The situation reminds me of another age and life when during the Vietnam War years of the 1960s, we youngsters could never work out the splits/factions in ASIO and the Commonwealth Police - Brits, Yanks, Ruskies. You got better information from overseas security spokesmen than you did from Australian journalists.

So ACCCI wishes Xi well, as we did Hu and Jiang and Deng and even Mao - though Mao was hard to like - "my bowls never worked so well as in battle". Perhaps that saying "donated" to me when in Hainan in February 1989 is appropriate: "as you judge the strength of the horse by the length of the distance, so you judge the character of the man by the difficulty of the task". Or as we used to say, President Xi "best of British luck" in routing out corruption in China.

Of course as I like to tell my colleagues in Chamber, I have absolutely no luck when it comes to "mates" in China. Got close to the Beijing Mayor in the mid 1990s but he was sacked for corruption about 1998 by President Jiang, then developed a working association with the Shanghai Mayor from 2002/03 only to watch his sacking by President Hu. And finally a real head-honcho in the Politburo Standing Committee security chief now under investigation. I have three friends left, no doubt to be sacked by the next three PRC Presidents during the 2020s, 30s and 40s.

That assumes that the PRC will make 2049 irrespective of Xi's planning? President Xi is the first "elected" as Hu and Jiang were anointed by Deng. It is clear there was a very powerful group of high ranking Chinese leaders across all sections Party, Government and Military that either opposed Xi's elevation, or disagree strongly with his policies - or just have come to fear elements of the Mao 'personality cult' returning to Chinese public life.

The jockeying for the 5 Politburo Standing Committee positions to become vacant with retirements in 2017 has already started - can Xi get his favourites up? Has intra-party "democratisation" progressed so far as to make his preferred candidates seek to distance themselves, or espouse supposedly independent views? Is there a 'man on horseback' in the wings? What influence does the 'hidden hand' of the old and new KMT have under the CPC's Three Represents philosophy? Could 'events' in the Hong Kong SAR impact results?

That's just domestic factors. Hillary Clinton might be President of the USA? Or an 'updated' Jeb Bush? Both espouse the exceptionalism of the USA and maintain the American faith to bring freedom and liberty to the world, including China? Space, or China securing it's borders, means confrontation across the China Seas and in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

The global ramifications of Xi's anti-corruption campaign are simply over-awing. At this time some 500 high ranking officials have been returned to China for prosecution. But it is estimated that there are upwards of 22,000 who have fled overseas with billions if not trillions in illegal assets - and so many hundreds at least in Australia, property deals are all the go Down Under! If the death penalty is side-lined, there will be a lot of escort work from Sydney back to Beijing. With the financial ties between the two countries growing expeditiously, there is certain to be a growth industry in corruption busting.

The Australian Productivity Commission is progressing steadily with it's Inquiry into ways of promoting our Services Exports. Legal and Accounting companies are salivating. Tourism and Educational organisations are looking for new niche market opportunities. Yes the farming communities are talking about a 'food bowl' for Asia. However China is busy setting up new global institutions everywhere re AIIB (Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank). Transparency International, or at least the Australian chapter, has just got to do a deal with Xi on Chinese Global Corruption (CGC). It is only 34 years to October 2049.