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# Zhao Ziyang: A Political Profile



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A Research Paper

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# **Zhao Ziyang: A Political Profile**



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**A Research Paper**

This paper was prepared by  Office of East Asian Analysis, with contributions from the Office of Central Reference. It was coordinated with the National Intelligence Council. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, China Domestic Policy Branch, 

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**Zhao Ziyang:  
A Political Profile**

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**Overview**

China's strongman, Vice Chairman Deng Xiaoping, has groomed Premier Zhao Ziyang and Chairman Hu Yaobang to be his political successors. Deng expects the two men to continue his moderate economic and political policies and to provide the leadership stability and policy continuity that China has lacked.

Although some Chinese have speculated that Zhao may challenge Hu for preeminence after Deng is gone, he has done surprisingly little to cultivate the personal following necessary for any aspirant to power. We believe Zhao will be content to remain subordinate to Hu.

In the succession period, we expect Zhao to continue to confine himself to his ministerial role, running the government bureaucracy and directing economic policy. His record suggests he will argue for continuing China's moderate economic and social policies. Zhao's views on foreign policy bear the stamp of his domestic priorities, indicating that he will work to maintain and expand China's foreign economic and commercial ties, including those with the United States.

Because Hu is so much more controversial and because Zhao enjoys good working relations with most elements in the leadership, Zhao could emerge as a compromise leader if Hu encounters major opposition. We believe Zhao's lack of a network of supporters, however, would greatly reduce his chances of maintaining the top position over the long term.

Unlike Hu, Zhao does not have a close personal relationship with Deng. We believe Zhao was tapped by Deng for the premiership because of Zhao's administrative talents and advocacy of Deng's reform program. Zhao also has ties to party conservatives who have reservations about Hu. We speculate Deng may have seen Zhao's ties as an asset in selling the reforms.

Because Zhao is closely identified with the major government and economic policies initiated since 1980, he could be made the scapegoat if these experiments fail. We believe Deng does not have a personal commitment to Zhao and might sacrifice him to save Hu.

*Information available as of 22 July 1982  
has been used in the preparation of this report.*


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Relatively little is known about Zhao Ziyang's nonpublic life and his personal relations with key leaders, particularly party Chairman Hu Yaobang. Much more is known about Zhao's views on major policy questions. We have made extensive use of Zhao's speeches and statements,  in reaching our conclusions. We have also closely examined the pattern of Zhao's promotions, purges, and appearances for insights into his relations with key elements of the leadership.

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**Zhao Ziyang: A Personal Profile**



**Birth** 15 August 1919, Hua Xian, Henan Province.

**Aliases** Zhao Xiusheng; Zhao Ye.

**Family** Second wife is Liang Boqi. According to a Red Guard newspaper in the 1960s, she was once a party official in Guangdong Province. She no longer makes public appearances. According to the same paper, Liang's brother was a General in the Kuomintang army and fought against the Communists in the Civil War.

Zhao has five children. One son is an officer in the People's Liberation Army, and a daughter was a student in 1980. Unconfirmed press reports contend that some of Zhao's children have had brushes with the law.

**Education** Zhao has no formal education beyond the equivalent of high school. He learns quickly, masters technical subjects, and absorbs large amounts of information.

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## Zhao Ziyang: A Political Profile

In a sense, the Chinese leadership has spent the last 20 years locked in a struggle for political succession. Mao Zedong cast about for years for a reliable successor, repeatedly embracing, then destroying many of the men who made China's revolution. In the process he nearly destroyed the Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution (1966-69).

As one of China's veteran revolutionaries and today's strongman, Deng Xiaoping is determined to undo the damage Mao caused. Since returning to power after the Cultural Revolution, Deng has acted to restore the image of the party, repair its internal organization, and replace political enemies. Pragmatic as long as the party's prerogatives remain unchallenged, Deng wants to ensure that his successors continue the reforms he believes will make the country powerful and economically vigorous.

The centerpiece of Deng's plan was the selection of Zhao Ziyang as Premier in 1980 and of Hu Yaobang as party Chairman in 1981. Hu is Deng's heir in managing the party's affairs. Ranked number one in the party today, he is Deng's closest ally and longtime protege.

Ranked number four in the hierarchy, Premier Zhao Ziyang at 63 is a relatively young, results-oriented politician who in our view has been entrusted by Deng with implementing the reform of the government and economy. As measured by the standards set in China's propaganda in the last few years, Zhao comes close to typifying the ideal post-Cultural Revolution leader: an expert administrator who is pragmatic rather than ideological, conveys an image of public service, and assiduously respects the principle of collective leadership. With good health—physical and political—we expect Zhao will be at the center of Chinese politics well into the next decade.

Zhao is also a study in contrasts. He is not "Deng's man," but he has benefited from Deng's patronage. He is one of the reformers and an architect of their

policies, yet he is on good terms with the party conservatives. In a political system that stresses personal ties, Zhao rose to the top largely on his ability. He has shown through his actions to be given to accommodation and orderly procedures—he formally transferred his seals of office to the Red Guards when he was ousted as first secretary in Guangdong Province during the Cultural Revolution—but he is capable of vigorously purging his opponents. And, while he seems content at present to act the good minister for party Chairman Hu Yaobang, many Chinese officials have speculated that if Hu stumbles Zhao is the logical replacement.

Zhao is on record publicly and privately as favoring moderate economic growth and social policies, and we believe he will resist strongly a return to the more doctrinaire—and destabilizing—politics of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Given Zhao's concentration on economic development and his recognition of China's inability to "go it alone," we would expect him to be an advocate in the years ahead for maintaining an "open door" to the outside world and expanding China's commercial and economic ties. To the degree he assumes a role in making foreign policy, we believe he is likely to display the same pragmatic, nonideological orientation that characterizes his approach to domestic policy.

### Relations With Other Leaders

Unlike most Chinese political figures, Zhao does not owe his rise to a powerful patron. Rather, he has had a series of benefactors, all of whom were associated with the moderate wing of the party that opposed the radical policies of Mao Zedong. Zhao's first important patron was Tao Zhu, a Politburo member who died in 1969 after being purged in the Cultural Revolution. This relationship tied him distantly to Liu Shaoqi, who was purged by Mao, and to then-Premier Zhou Enlai. Zhao fell in 1967 along with Liu and Tao.

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Figure 1. Zhao (extreme right) listens as Hu Yaobang talks to Chen Yun (L) and Deng Xiaoping (R) during the Sixth Plenum in June 1981. Li Xiannian is reading a party document in the foreground. [redacted]



Some Chinese have told US academics that Zhao enjoyed the personal friendship of Zhou Enlai. Although a close relationship cannot be documented, Zhao's rehabilitation in 1971 when Zhou was beginning to rebuild the party indicates, at the least, a respect for his abilities. Zhao's transfer from Inner Mongolia to Guangdong in 1973, and his reappointment as first secretary the following year, also indicate high standing with Zhou. [redacted]

#### Deng Xiaoping

Zhao's history of appointments put him within the outer circle of Deng Xiaoping's associates. When Zhao became China's youngest first secretary in 1965, Deng would have approved the choice in his capacity as general secretary. After returning to power in 1973, Deng assumed responsibility for day-to-day management of the State Council and he probably joined in approving Zhao's appointments in Guangdong. [redacted]

Deng does not seem to have been Zhao's patron, however, and Zhao's career indicates other leaders have not identified him as Deng's man. Zhao was not purged with Deng in 1966 or 1976 and was rehabilitated in 1971 before Deng. Nor does Zhao seem to have a deep-rooted personal loyalty to him. In the anti-Deng campaign that followed Deng's 1976 purge,

for instance, Zhao kept a low profile but voiced pro forma criticism. Deng's staunchest supporters avoided criticizing their leader, and Deng's closest ally, Hu Yaobang, disappeared from public view. [redacted]

Whatever their personal relationship, there is mutual respect, and Deng and Zhao have shown through their statements and actions that they agree on reforming China's party, government, and economy. Deng probably was instrumental in transferring Zhao from Guangdong to Sichuan, Deng's home province, in 1975. Under Zhao's guidance, Sichuan quickly became a testing ground for controversial economic policies that stressed market forces and material incentives. Zhao's successes in Sichuan helped Deng define his strategy for economic modernization and refute proposals by Hua Guofeng and other Politburo members who favored a more doctrinaire approach to economic development. [redacted]

Beginning in 1979 Zhao received rapid promotions that we do not believe could have been possible without Deng's support. Zhao moved from alternate membership on the Politburo to full membership in that year. In 1980 he was elevated to the Politburo standing committee and the premiership, and the following year he became a party vice chairman. We

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believe it possible that Zhao may not have been Deng's first choice for these posts in every case, especially the premiership. There were other leaders much closer to Deng with records comparable to Zhao's, such as Vice Premier Wan Li. But Zhao's distance from Deng probably made him more acceptable to the other members of the Politburo standing committee, who were nervous about Deng's campaign to unseat Hua. We believe Zhao ideally suited Deng's needs at the time—a candidate with broad support in the party who would not appear to be solely carrying out a vendetta for Deng and whose ability was superior to the hapless Hua. [redacted]

If Deng does not have the strong personal commitment to Zhao that he has to Hu Yaobang, Deng might be inclined to sacrifice Zhao to save Hu. We believe Zhao's close identification with the reform program makes him the natural scapegoat if the government reorganization and economic policies falter and come under heavy political attack. [redacted]

#### Party Conservatives

We believe Zhao enjoys good relations with party Vice Chairmen Ye Jianying, 85, and Li Xiannian, 77, frequent opponents of Deng. As an official in Guangdong in the 1950s and 1960s, Zhao would have come to the attention of both men, who were ranking officials in the party bureau that supervised the Central-South region. Ye, moreover, is a native of Guangdong and has taken an active interest in its politics over the years. [redacted]

We believe Ye and Li may have been Zhao's principal backers when he was made an alternate member of the Politburo at the 11th Party Congress in 1977. That meeting officially returned Deng to power after his 1976 disgrace, and, because he was just back, Deng probably was not strong enough to appoint Politburo members of his choosing; Hu, for instance, did not gain a Politburo seat for another 16 months. Ye and Li's sponsorship would also help explain how Deng later persuaded the two to accept Zhao as a replacement for Premier Hua Guofeng, whom Ye and Li had sided with on a number of issues. Ye's relaxed attitude toward Zhao's elevation contrasts sharply with his hostility to Hu Yaobang's later replacement of Hua as party chairman. [redacted]

Today, however, areas of disagreement between Ye and Li on the one hand and Zhao Ziyang on the other are easier to discern than agreement. Ye and Li represent the conservative forces in the party who are uncomfortable with new policy paths. [redacted]

Li and Zhao's differences focus on economic policy. Throughout his career, Li has been an advocate of a Soviet-style central bureaucracy and a development strategy that stresses heavy industry; Zhao has pushed for a decentralization of economic decision-making and more investment in light industry. Zhao's reorganization of the government bureaucracy to make it more responsive to market forces and reduce waste and inefficiency reduced the influence of those who share Li's views. [redacted]

#### Chen Yun

Another important relationship for Zhao is with Vice Chairman Chen Yun, 77, who [redacted] is second only to Deng in prestige within the party and is China's leading economic policymaker. Like Deng and Hu, Zhao has taken pains to curry his favor, and [redacted] he has Chen's confidence. [redacted]

Chen and Zhao agree on economic development strategy—reduced emphasis on heavy industry, stress on light industry, and creation of a more consumer-oriented economy—but they have differed over the pace and scope of this "readjustment." [redacted] the Chinese media indicate Zhao is eager to press forward, but Chen fears that too abrupt a departure from central planning will lead to economic chaos and derail the reform program altogether. Since December 1980, when disturbing economic results emerged after a year of reform initiatives, Zhao has publicly brought his views closer to Chen Yun's. [redacted]

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**The Military**

Zhao Ziyang has had few direct dealings with the PLA. His government responsibilities include aspects of the defense budget, but he is not in the chain of command nor is he a member of the party's Military Commission. [redacted]

We believe Zhao's efforts to reform agriculture and to supervise the shift in the economy away from heavy industry may have strained his relations with the PLA, but direct evidence is lacking. According to [redacted] press analysis, there was considerable agitation within army ranks in 1980 over the establishment of new agricultural responsibility systems, because soldiers perceived that their families would be penalized while they were in the service. Special measures were devised subsequently to meet this concern. The shift in the economy toward consumer production also forced some defense plants to suspend production or to manufacture consumer goods instead, and this may have stirred some military resentment toward Zhao. [redacted]

[redacted]

Zhao has made efforts to accommodate military interests. In January, for example, he made a publicly reported visit to a unit of the Beijing Garrison, where he praised the PLA stating, "the party Central Committee and people are very much satisfied." He concluded by noting how many soldiers were from rural areas and reminding them of the overall prosperity the new agricultural responsibility system was bringing to the countryside. [redacted]

**Hu Yaobang**

Zhao seems to have a good working relationship with Hu Yaobang. They have divided their areas of responsibility along party-government lines, and there are no

reports of conflict between the two. They frequently make joint public appearances to project an image of team players who will manage smoothly the important transition from the revolutionary generation to that of the less heroic but more technically competent successors. [redacted]

Our analysis of their speeches and statements shows that Hu and Zhao generally agree on the major issues before the leadership and have similar views on the kind of China they want to build. They share a belief in the need to reduce party interference in everyday life and, correspondingly, to increase the role of a limited form of democracy at basic levels, although we believe Hu is much more closely identified with this view in the public mind. They argue for collective leadership and increased adherence to law rather than the whims of an individual leader. They expect to use foreign economic, scientific, and technical infusions to advance China's modernization, but within a general context of Chinese self-reliance. [redacted]

In our view, differences between the two men's backgrounds and styles, however, could lead to policy frictions especially after Deng leaves. Zhao has had extensive administrative experience in the provinces, while Hu has served primarily in the central party bureaucracy. Hu does not share Zhao's good relations with party conservatives, while Zhao is not as close as Hu to Deng. Hu generally has a more liberal and iconoclastic image, especially in the politically sensitive areas of ideology and culture. Zhao has a reputation for compromise and accommodation, while Hu shares Deng's well-deserved reputation for confrontation. [redacted]

**Proteges**

In a striking anomaly for a senior Chinese leader, evidence suggests that Zhao has not yet cultivated a loyal following within the party and state bureaucracies. A small number of cabinet and subcabinet officials in Beijing have career associations with Zhao, but they are fewer and far less influential than central officials who have ties to Hu. During the central government reorganization that Zhao directed last spring, moreover, he placed only one known, longtime personal associate in the State Council

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Figure 2. Deng's successors:  
Zhao seated beside Hu at a  
party meeting in 1981. [redacted]



Standing Committee, Secretary General Du Xingyuan. Even the secretary responsible for party affairs within the organs of the State Council, a position ordinarily assumed by the premier's man, is filled by an associate of Hu Yaobang. [redacted]

Zhao's history suggests no interest in building a personal empire. Evidence is sketchy, but our review of his career fails to establish a pattern of Zhao promoting individuals and then taking them along when he switched jobs, a common practice in China. When he moved from Guangdong to Sichuan, for instance, he did not transfer any identifiable disciples, although he had the opportunity to do so. The same was true when he moved to Beijing. [redacted]

This characteristic might disadvantage Zhao both in leadership power plays and policy implementation outside the narrow confines of agricultural and industrial policy where Zhao's influence is strong. Even Zhou Enlai, who served as a model faithful minister to Mao for four decades, promoted and protected an identifiable group that could be relied on to do his bidding. There is no hard evidence on this point, but Zhao may calculate that his approach has served him well in the past and that his political success is in part due to his nonthreatening image and an ability to

work with everyone. Zhao may discover, however, that this tactic works better when one is down in the pecking order and has friends above than when one is near the top and responsible for implementing controversial policies. [redacted]

#### Policy Views

#### Economic Issues

Zhao's approach to issues is essentially nonideological. In 1979 he said the key to progress "lies in our efforts to emancipate our thinking in a bold way, to carry out reform with determination, to make new inventions with courage and to break with the economic molds and conventions of all descriptions which fetter the development of the productive force. [redacted]

This open-minded approach has the political utility of permitting him to compromise and adapt. After deficits, inflation, and some social instability caught the party by surprise in late 1980, for example, the implementation of new reforms took a back seat to "readjustment" of sectoral imbalances in the economy. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted] Zhao has a reputation among Chinese as an effective advocate of his reform policies. [redacted] the Premier is respected because he only speaks when he has something substantial to say. Zhao has also acquired a reputation as a bold economic innovator. [redacted]

[redacted] although he never attended college and is not a trained economist, Zhao gained the respect of even veteran economists by his willingness to listen and his capacity for tireless work. It remains difficult for us to assess Zhao's ability to hold his own in high-level party debate, however, because Deng Xiaoping still stands behind Zhao's policies, giving his words weight that might otherwise be lacking. [redacted]

**Agriculture.** Zhao made his first mark as an agricultural expert and the policies he instituted in Sichuan were subsequently used by reformers in Beijing to help promote their program nationwide. These policies included allowing a larger role for private plots, free markets, and sideline occupations, practices once regarded as "capitalistic." In essence this was a return to policies instituted by Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yun in the early 1960s, after the disastrous Great Leap Forward. In any case, Sichuan under Zhao went from a net grain importing province to an exporter. [redacted]

Our analysis of speeches and statements by Zhao shows that he generally favors loosening government controls on agriculture, including disbanding the commune system, which often destroyed incentive and added layers of nonproductive bureaucracy. He is a strong backer of the new agricultural responsibility system, which allows individual households to have more control over the land they farm—including the choice of crops—and ensures a farmer that his income will increase with his productivity. [redacted]

**Industry.** Zhao takes the same nonideological approach to industrial development, and his speeches and statements reflect a belief in the need for major



Figure 3. Agriculture expert Zhao inspecting the crops in Guangdong. [redacted]

reform of the way China does business. [redacted]

[redacted] Zhao created an Industrial Economic Research Institute in late 1980 to guide the reforms. [redacted] the institute had four principles: decentralization, profit, greater reliance on market forces, and enhanced autonomy for enterprises. Zhao also took for himself the post of Minister-in-Charge of the State Commission for Restructuring the Economic System when he reorganized the government in May. [redacted]

In his Sichuan experiments, Zhao initially authorized six enterprises to retain a share of their profits, which they could use for new equipment, workers' bonuses, and welfare projects for the workers. He permitted bank loans to small private businesses and allowed enterprises to sell on the open market output that

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exceeded their quotas. After a trip to Yugoslavia in 1978, where he was much impressed by its economic reforms, Zhao expanded the program. The tax structure was changed, allowing selected state-owned enterprises to retain a larger share of annual production increases. Inefficient enterprises were to be closed or allowed to fail. [redacted]

To the leadership's chagrin, the industrial experiments when applied nationally added to China's problems with deficits, inflation, and unemployment. Budget deficits, worsened by reforms that permitted local officials to devise their own investment plans, were a major concern. In a nationally publicized speech in early 1980 to a Sichuan provincial gathering, Zhao pointed to other problems as well. Zhao specifically cited increased corruption as government controls were relaxed, shortages and wasteful duplication resulting from enterprises concentrating on high-profit goods and avoiding low-profit necessities, and bonus payments to workers that did not discriminate against poor performers. [redacted]

Zhao has now stated publicly that it will not be possible to decentralize the industrial sector as quickly or completely as once thought, and he told former President Ford in early 1981 that it will be necessary to balance the budget before pushing forward with reforms. Zhao has also stated that China must become more adept at using fiscal and monetary levers—taxes, prices, wages, and banking—before decentralization can be effective. He has singled out China's illogical price structure, with its subsidies that distort costs and production, as a special bottleneck, but has admitted it will have to be adjusted very gradually, primarily to stem inflation of consumer staples and prevent excess production of high-priced goods. [redacted]

Zhao's change of heart also reflects changes in the political situation during 1980-81, in particular the increased influence of Chen Yun in economic affairs. While Chen and Zhao agree on the need for reform, including a larger role for market forces, Chen places a heavier stress on the role of central planning in his writings and speeches than Zhao. Chen also seems

more concerned than Zhao about the social costs of major reforms and the economic dislocations that might arise from a larger role for market forces. [redacted]

In achieving his *modus vivendi* with Chen, Zhao has demonstrated tact and skill. In speeches, such as the one he gave this spring at a national economic conference, he echoes Chen, admitting that "it is necessary. . . to strengthen the guidance of state planning and administrative intervention," but he is also careful to keep alive his longer term plans for reform. Thus, we believe the Premier is confident that time is on his side, and that when Chen dies and after the readjustment period, the leadership will be more prepared to accept the costs of the reforms. [redacted]

#### Government Reorganization

Zhao also has built a reputation as an effective bureaucratic reformer. He has overseen the massive reorganization of the central state bureaucracy that began in early 1982, and is closely identified with its goals: a streamlined bureaucracy; clear lines of authority; accountability of officials; younger, more competent, and better educated men in responsible positions. [redacted]

Despite his public image, however, we do not believe Zhao was the force behind the reorganization. Before his speech on the subject in December 1981, he displayed no special interest in the subject. His failure to place a significant number of followers in high positions and the strength of the showing by Hu Yaobang's followers in the reorganization cast further doubt on the possibility that Zhao initiated the shakeup. We believe it more likely that the reorganization was done at Deng's bidding, in part to remove his political opponents. [redacted]

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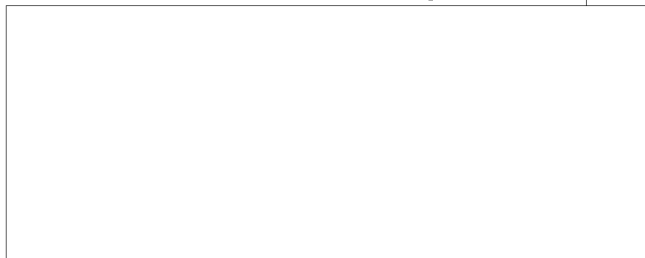
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**Social Issues**

Since the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, the latitude granted Chinese dissidents and intellectuals in discussing Mao and the regime has been a sensitive issue. In general, the reform group around Deng has taken a more relaxed attitude toward intellectuals than do party conservatives and the military. Partly in response to pressure from the latter groups and partly out of genuine distaste for some of the activities of the dissidents and intellectuals, Deng has overseen a gradual narrowing of the scope for dissent since 1979.



Zhao has tended to follow the consensus within the reform leadership and has not taken a leading role on this issue. In our view, he may believe that the regime needs to be more tolerant in dealing with dissent.



In his public statements Zhao has dwelt on the need to promote intellectuals in the narrow sense of trained bureaucrats and technicians. He is in the forefront of those calling for high professional standards for party membership and government advancement. He comes down firmly on the "expert" side of the old "red versus expert" debate.

In an interview with a Japanese journalist in 1981, Zhao expressed views on youth disaffection that are in keeping with his overall approach to problem solving. He said, "What is more important than education is to show them that if the modernization policy is implemented correctly things will inevitably turn better. We have to persuade the youth by the results of modernization."

**Foreign Policy**

Zhao is not known to have traveled outside China until he was 59. His first meetings with visiting dignitaries were often dry recitations of detailed economic policy. Nonetheless he impressed some visitors as a refreshing break from more dogmatic leaders, conveying a "touch of class" lacking in former Premier Hua Guofeng. Zhao's dignified bearing and trim appearance are said by some Chinese to be more appealing than Hu Yaobang's fidgety, excessively self-effacing style.

We believe Zhao has only a limited role in formulating foreign policy.

Primary responsibility in this area still belongs to Deng, and Li Xiannian played an important role until illness sidetracked him last spring. Other evidence of an important role for Zhao is lacking, however, and close associates of Hu Yaobang rather than Zhao have recently assumed major responsibilities in the Foreign Ministry and the party's International Liaison Department, suggesting that Deng intends to turn his portfolio over to Hu in time.

In general, Zhao seems to us to understand China's limited influence in world affairs and prefers to concentrate on economic development. He is publicly associated with those party reformers who want China to keep an "open door" to foreign trade and technology, and he has invested considerable personal prestige in the newly established Special Economic Zones, where foreign involvement is encouraged. This distinguishes him from the strong forces within the party pressing to minimize China's links to the outside world.

Zhao has not taken a personal position on relations with the United States or on Taiwan. He has stuck closely to the official line in discussing both subjects with US officials.



In April 1982, Zhao in his capacity as Premier

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publicly articulated a new formulation of the principles of Chinese foreign policy that drew China back somewhat from its close public association with the United States and identified it more closely with Third World concerns. Presumably if he strongly disapproved of this adjustment, Zhao would have arranged for someone else to outline the new principles. [REDACTED]

### In the Succession to Deng

Deng has spoken of Zhao and Hu as a team that will surmount China's recurrent and debilitating succession crises. Like the traditional emperor and his faithful minister, they are expected to complement each other, providing stability at the top that will foster China's progress. China's history, however, contains more tales of conflict than of concord between an emperor and his minister, and once Deng is gone his plans could go awry. We fully expect conservative interests within the party will attempt to divide Hu and Zhao. [REDACTED]

It is our view, however, that Zhao would be unlikely to make a naked grab for power from Hu. Thus far Zhao has demonstrated extraordinary deference to Deng and Hu. If Hu were to stumble badly then Zhao might be persuaded to step into the breach in the interest of leadership stability and policy continuity. But Zhao's limited power base within the Party would require the support of other major figures in a collective leadership just to survive. In the transition period, Zhao would have to subordinate himself to a new strongman or be pushed aside. Indeed, his record suggests he would be inclined to return to the role of the good minister. [REDACTED]

### Strengths . . .

Zhao would enter a succession battle with strengths that are more apparent than real. He has a dynamic style and personality, attributes commonly cited by Chinese observers including both officials and ordi-

nary people who frequently praise Zhao's polished appearance and no-nonsense workstyle. Since becoming premier he has traveled throughout China in an unprepossessing fashion, which suits the popular mood for less ostentation and more hard work from the leadership. [REDACTED]

Zhao also has a record as a capable administrator with a talent for organization. His ability to work with all elements of the present leadership may make him an ideal compromise candidate if someone challenges Hu. Compromise candidates, however, historically have not fared well in the long run; Hua Guofeng was the last one. [REDACTED]

Historical links to party Vice Chairman Ye Jianying and Li Xiannian and corresponding distance from Deng Xiaoping may be of special value. Both Ye and Li suffer serious illnesses and are essentially inactive today, but their networks of supporters may share the perception that Zhao is an acceptable leader in his own right and may prefer him over the more controversial Hu Yaobang. [REDACTED]

### . . . and Weaknesses.

Zhao is a relative newcomer to national-level politics. He lacks what is crucial in party struggles—a long-standing personal following in the capital—and he has done surprisingly little to cultivate one. We believe that unless he works hard to establish a personal power base among the recently promoted officials, he could find himself without backing. [REDACTED]

Zhao is also accountable for the economy. The continuing need to adjust economic policies has already increased the use of political and legal strictures as a substitute for material incentives. If economic circumstances force cuts in popular programs or a decline in living standards, we believe some of Zhao's personal popularity and his reputation as an especially capable official will suffer. [REDACTED]

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**Appendix****Zhao Ziyang: Career Chronology**

- 1932                   Joined the Communist Youth League.
- 1938                   Joined the Chinese Communist Party. County and Prefectural Party Secretary in Hebei-Shandong-Henan area.
- 1945                   Deputy Secretary, Tongbo, Henan Party Committee.
- 1948                   Secretary, Party Affairs Committee, Henan-Hebei-Anhui border area; may have served under Li Xiannian.
- 1950                   Secretary, Nanyang, Henan Party Committee; Headmaster, South China Sub-bureau Party School; Standing Committee member, South China Party Sub-bureau; served under Ye Jianying who was the ranking Secretary as well as head of the Guangzhou (Canton) Party Committee and Mayor of Guangzhou.
- 1951                   Secretary-General, South China Party Sub-bureau; Vice Chairman, Land Reform Committee, Guangdong Provincial People's Government.
- 1952                   Director, Rural Work Department, South China Party Sub-bureau.
- 1954                   Third Secretary, South China Party Sub-bureau.
- 1955                   Member, Guangdong Provincial People's Council; Deputy Secretary and later Third Deputy Secretary, Guangdong Provincial Party Committee.
- 1956                   Secretary, Guangdong Provincial Party Committee; First Political Commissar, Guangdong Military District.
- 1962                   Second Secretary, Guangdong Provincial Party Committee.
- 1965                   First Secretary, Guangdong Provincial Party Committee; member and later Secretary of the Secretariat, Central South Party Bureau; Zhao was the youngest First Secretary at the time.
- 1967                   Arrested by Red Guards.
- 1971                   Reappears as Secretary of the Nei Monggol (Inner Mongolia) Party Committee and Vice Chairman of the Nei Monggol Revolutionary Committee.
- 1972                   Transferred to Guangdong and identified as a Vice Chairman of the Guangdong Provincial Revolutionary Committee.
- 1973                   Identified as a Secretary of the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee; elected to the Central Committee at the 10th Party Congress in August.

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- 1974 First Secretary, Guangdong Party Committee; Chairman, Guangdong Provincial Revolutionary Committee; First Political Commissar, Guangdong Military District; Political Commissar, Guangzhou Military District; Political Commissar, Guangzhou Military Region.
- 1975 Transferred to Sichuan and identified as First Secretary, Sichuan Provincial Party Committee.
- 1976 Identified as Chairman of the Sichuan Provincial Revolutionary Committee; First Political Commissar, Chengdu Military Region.
- 1977 Made an Alternate Member of the Politburo at the 11th Party Congress in August.
- 1978 Elected Vice Chairman, Fifth Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in March; accompanied then Premier Hua Guofeng to Romania, Yugoslavia, and Iran in August; first known foreign travel.
- 1979 Leads Sichuan delegation to Great Britain, Switzerland, and France; elevated to full member of the Politburo at the Fourth Plenum in September.
- 1980 Made a member of the Politburo Standing Committee at the Fifth Plenum in February; named Vice Premier in April; ranked 17th initially, becomes fifth-ranked Vice Premier by June; replaces Hua Guofeng as Premier at the National People's Congress Session in September.
- 1981 Named Vice Chairman of the Party at the Sixth Plenum in June, ranked fourth in the Party hierarchy.
- 1982 Takes portfolio of Minister-in-Charge, State Commission for Restructuring the Economy when he reorganizes the State Council in May; remains Premier and becomes Chairman of the new State Council Standing Committee.



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