

May 1998

INSIDE CHINA MAINLAND



Vol 20 No 5 Issue No. 233

ISSN 0250-961X

**The New CCP Bureaucratic Streamlining:
Any More Chance of Success Than Its Precursors?**

The Nature of the "Two Assemblies" and the Challenges
Confronting the CCP

Mainland Chinese Military Steps Up the Pace of Reforms
Where is Mainland China's Financial Crisis?

Institute of Current China Studies
Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Inside China Mainland

Volume XX, May 1998

Inside China Mainland, a monthly review of mainland Chinese affairs, has been published by the *Institute of Current China Studies* since 1979, during which time it has earned a reputation among subscribers in 47 countries around the world for excellence in the field of China studies. The articles published herein are all primary source materials on behind-the-scenes developments in the situation on the Chinese mainland. These materials have made their way through various channels to Taipei, Hong Kong, Tokyo or other locations in the vicinity of mainland China and are published by our Institute in English translation for the benefit of interested persons in academia, government, and the general public. Readers are welcome to quote from these articles. Please cite *Inside China Mainland* as the source of your quotations. Let us know you have used our material and, if convenient, send us a clipping.

UNESCO has placed *Inside China Mainland* on the World List of Social Science Periodicals. 002333

Publisher	Jui-ling Lu
Editorial Adviser	Tom T. Wang
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Distribution Office
Institute of Current China Studies,
P. O. Box 14 - 19, Taipei
Taiwan, R. O. C.

行政院新聞局出版事業登記證局版北市字第 1087 號
中華郵政臺字第 4220 號執照登記為第一類新聞紙類

Editor's Note

One of the most attention-grabbing events in mainland China in recent days was surely the passage of the State Council Organizational Reform Plan by the Ninth National People's Congress. Under the strong guidance of the new premier, Zhu Rongji, a new wave of bureaucratic streamlining has gotten underway.

As is widely known, bloated government agencies and massively swollen ranks of cadres have not only placed an unbearable fiscal burden on the CCP regime but have also led to waning administrative efficiency and produced a hotbed of cadre corruption. The CCP has monitored this problem closely all along, recognizing how it aggravates the already strained relations between cadres and the masses. In fact, a number of similar streamlining campaigns have been launched since the founding of the CCP regime. Setting aside those in the more distant past, the organizational reform plans launched by Zhao Ziyang at the Seventh NPC a decade ago and by Li Peng at the Eighth NPC five years ago were very similar in both form and content to the current one.

Zhao Ziyang's plan, however, included something that no longer gets mentioned today: the separation of Party and government. It incorporated to some extent the spirit of political system reform. Viewed from a macroscopic perspective, the reform scheme of a decade ago was actually more liberal and comprehensive than the one

today. Regrettably, close on the heels of its launching came the world-shaking Tiananmen incident, which threw the wheels of political reform into reverse so that even today the mainland remains mired up in the "leftist government, rightist economics" path. Consequently, the current organizational reform is closer in nature to Li Peng's plan resolved upon six years ago at the 14th National Congress of the CCP and passed five years ago at the Eighth NPC.

Comparing today's environment with that five years ago, no obvious amelioration of cadre corruption is in evidence, state enterprise has deteriorated to such a degree that across-the-board reform is unavoidable, and unemployment is at its most severe level since the founding of the CCP regime. Bluntly put, the past failure to achieve the goal of "streamlining by one-fourth" has contributed to the difficulty of the current wave of streamlining. This may prove to be one of the sternest challenges confronting the CCP in the future.

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