



PRIMARY RESEARCH

Directions of the Chinese communist party's political reform

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Abstract

China's political reform has been delayed and suspended for more than 40 years. While there is a consensus that the economic reform must be supported and sustained by a fundamental political reform, the feasible priorities, specific procedures, and reasonable time line are still very contentious. The article briefly discusses five leading schools on the study of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reform, including the schools of resilience, democratic centralism, the top-down reform, the separation of decision-making, executive and supervision powers, and the multi-candidate election. Using empirical study through interviews and surveys with Chinese scholars and government officials, the article argues that successful political reform relies on the substantial intra-party reform and competitive elections. Furthermore, this article addresses some critical issues related to the checks and balances system, proposing the three key steps designed to implement CCP's political reform, including multi-candidate elections, the permanent system of the party congress representative, and a system of separation of triple powers with the CCP's characteristics.

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INTRODUCTION

China's economic reform "has led to the most dramatic economic development, social transformation, and cultural metamorphosis in its five-thousand-year history" (Hong, 2015). However, its political reform has been delayed and suspended for more than 40 years (Hong, 2019b; Muhammad, 2018). While there is a consensus that the sustainable economic reform must be supported by a fundamental political reform (Hong, 2019a), the feasible priorities, specific procedures, and reasonable time line are still very contentious.

In an effort to address the urgency of China's political reform, this article will argue that the CCP is missing its critical moment of establishing its checks and balance system. China's successful political democracy relies on the substantial CCP's reform, initiating its intra-party elections as the first priority prior to designing and implementing in-depth and comprehensive reforms. Based on empirical studies, this article will address some critical and practi-

cal procedures of institutionalizing the separation of triple powers among the decision making, executive, and supervision powers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The author has published a special article discussing the literature review on the subject of the CCP's political reform (Hong, 2019b; Rerkklang, 2017). To provide context of the CCP's reform proposals, it is necessary to highlight the main points of the current scholarship.

My previous article has summarized the five leading schools, debating the reasons, mechanisms and procedures of the CCP's intra-party reform. The first school is the resilience school led by Andrew Nathan who argues that China's political developments have proved that its Communist system is adaptable and resilient through various quiet and internal reforms (Nathan, 2013). As a result, Chinese government has the capability to identify priorities and make its sophisticated decisions in dealing with crises

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since 1989 (Lin, 2002; Lawyer, 2017; Nathan, 2013).

The second school is the democratic centralism school which argues that the survive of the CCP has benefited from the combination and balance between the power centralization and limited intraparty democracy which was initiated and practiced by the former Soviet Union. The CCP implements the iron party discipline while allowing for different factions within the party (Huang, 2002).

The school of the top-down reform, as the third interpretation, argues that the CCP has performed the strategy of top-down democratic elections and political reforms with “top-level design” as the first priority (Wu, 2012). This school believes that given the sensitivity and risks of political reform which is an irreversible process, it cannot take a trial-and-error from bottom up strategy (Xia, 2013).

The fourth leading interpretation is the triple powers with the CCP characteristics which is key mechanisms and procedures of sustaining Party dynamics. Its key effort is to establish the separation of decision-making power, executive power and supervision power. However, this triple-power system aims at creating an operational mechanism of restricting power by power, that is obviously different from the western triple powers of executive, legislative and judicial branches (Lin, 2002).

The last one is the multi-candidate election school designed to seek a breakthrough in CCP’s political reform with low cost, low risk and quick effect. It focuses on intra-party election reform in order to make the election competitive with a multi-candidate system (Hu, 2010).

These five leading schools have inspired scholars to consider a possibility of imposing effective checks and balances and keeping power in the cage of the legal system without changing the one-party system (Hong, 2019b). However, the critical issue is how to design and implement the proposed CCP political reform. This article will use empirical evidences to address this practical issue.

METHODOOGY

Focusing on the methods of empirical study, this research project mainly applies a mixed method of “sandwiches” (Frechtling & Sharp, 2007). As the first qualitative study, the project conducts preliminary interviews designed to select and solicit fifteen CCP officials and scholars’ opinions in order to design effective and appropriate questionnaires. The methods include telephone, email, and interview taking place from June to December 2011. The second step is quantitative study through a questionnaire survey of 30 Chinese officials and scholars, conducting in the United States, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Zhejiang from January to March 2012. It is designed to quantitatively understand their opinions about the current status, obstacles, and directions of CCP’s internal reform. Finally, as the second qualitative study, the project implemented an in-depth interview with 22 officials and scholars aimed at understanding the reasons for their selections on their questionnaires. The interview took place in Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Hong Kong, Macau, and the United States from March to December 2012 before and after the CCP’s 18th National Congress. The interviewees received the questions in advance so that they could prepare well for the one-on-one interviews.

The project identified and invited current government officials, retired officials, and well-known scholars for the survey and interview. To protect the 22 interviewees’ privacy at the second qualitative study, the project used Arabic numerals identifying 22 participants and capital letters indicating the number of the seven questions. It used a number again for those who selected the specific answer number with their additional comments. For instance, the first participant selected the second answer of the first question which is indicated by 1-A-2 (see Table 1). Meanwhile, the time of the interview is indicated, but the specific location is omitted after each respondent.

TABLE 1. Seven main survey questions

A. Do you think China’s political reform should be bottom-up or top-down?
1. Bottom-Up; 2. Top-Down; 3. Don’t know; 4. Others
B. Do you think China’s political reform should start from inside of the party or from outside of the party?
1. Inside of the Party first; 2. Outside of the Party first; 3. Don’t know; 4. Others
C. Do you think that the top priority of China’s political reform should start with the party’s internal checks or external supervision?
1. Internal checks; 2. External supervision; 3. Don’t know; 4. Others
D. Can the village elections effectively promote the democratic elections of the upper levels in China?
1. Yes; 2. No; 3. Don’t know; 4. Others
E. What are the goals of the party reform in the next three years?
1. Establish a party reform team to design a roadmap for reform;
2. Choose Shenzhen and other regions to conduct experimental elections;
3. Issue the regulation for the election of national party member representatives;
4. All of the above are okay; E. Others

TABLE 1. Continue....

F. What are the goals of the party's reform in the next six years?	
1. Separation between the CCP and government;	
2. Reduce party members by 50%;	
3. Allow capitalists to take CCP's leadership positions;	
4. Expand the election methods and procedures of the village committees to the election of CCP's congress representatives at the level of township and county;	
5. Others	
G. What are the goals of the party's reform in the next nine years?	
1. Full implementation of intra-party democratic elections, including party congresses representatives having their right to question and recall party leaders;	
2. The Central Standing Committee implements a multi-candidate election;	
3. Party candidates need to publish a campaign statement for voters' supervision;	
4. All is okay;	
5. None can be;	
6. Others	

RESULTS

In an effort to make the proposed CCP's political reform successful, it is necessary to exam the relative consensus of the CCP's officials and scholars about the subjects, timing, and directions of intraparty elections in the near future. The promise of political reform without a time line and substantial objectives can only be once again a wishful thinking. An interviewed CCP bureau official (6-C-3) said on April 13, 2012: "We must amend the party's internal regulations and issue the Party Procedural Law."

In general, according to the author's empirical investigation and literature analysis, it is found that there are some consensuses within the CCP on the following three major

reform steps. The first step of the reform is to comprehensively promote multi-candidate elections. It must be pointed out that the CCP's legitimacy is based on elections instead of authoritarians. Otherwise, it would happen frequently for some authoritative leaders to challenge the central leadership. Ironically, accelerating the implementation of the CCP's multi-candidate election system is a major contribution by some corrupted leaders (Zhang, 2012). Multi-candidate election has become the most important means of establishing the legitimacy and authority of the CCP's leadership. Of course, the term of the official positions must be limited (Hu, 2010).

TABLE 2. The statistical table of interviews on the CCP reform (Questions 1-4)

Q1: Do you think China's political reform should be bottom-up or top-down?	Bottom-up	Top-down	Don't know	Others
	18.75%	81.25%	0%	0%
Q2: Do you think China's political reform should start from inside of the party or from outside of the party?	Inside of the Party first	Outside of the Party first	Don't know	Others
	93.75%	0%	6.25%	0%
Q3: Do you think that the top priority of China's political reform should start with the party's internal checks or external supervision?	Internal checks	External supervision	Don't know	Others
	56.25%	25%	6.25%	6.25%
Q4: Can the village elections effectively promote the democratic elections of the upper levels in China?	Yes	No	Don't know	Others
	25%	62.5%	12.5%	0%

Empirical studies have shown that the most effective path for implementing competitive election is from top to bottom. As the first step, it is vital to implement a multi-candidate election for the CCP's Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and members of the Politburo. The proportion of the candidates can be gradually increased. Once the

central government implements competitive elections, the provinces, cities, counties, and townships will definitely and quickly follow. Undeniably, political reform is more complicated than the economic reform which can be done from bottom up. So far, more than one million villages and 800 million farmers have conducted their direct elections for

their village committee, but this model never was able to move from bottom up, pushing county, province, and central governments to excise competitive elections for the past 30 years (Hong, 1998). Thus, competitive elections have to be initiated from top bottom.

In reference to the questionnaire survey conducted by the author, 81.25% of the participants believed that China's political reform should be initiated from top-down, with only 18.75% supporting from bottom-up. Also, 93.75% of participants believed that the political reform should be initiated from inside to outside of the party, but 6.25% were the opposite. At the same time, 56.25% of the participants believed that the intra-party checks were more important than the external party supervision, and 25% were the opposite. In particular, 62.5% of the respondents did not agree that the local elections, such as the village elections, can effectively promote democratic elections of the upper tier (county, province, and central government), and only 25% think it can be promoted (see Table 2).

It is worth noting that some interviewees expressed a loss of confidence on political reform in China during the interview. For example, a scholar (7-F-4) pointed out on April 18, 2012 that the current election of the village committee is experiencing some terrible crises. "In southern China, more money means more votes in the village. In contract, more power means more control. In other words, democracy is meaningless." More officials (12-F-4) thought on May 26, 2012 that "the corruption of the village committee elections has become a popular and serious issue and there is no way to improve this disastrous event." One middle level officer pointed out: "In fact, the elections implemented by the village committee are very chaotic. I have a personal experience because I am a rural instructor. This kind of election is too idealistic."

Meanwhile, some people are losing their patience. A scholar who studied the history of the CCP at the departmental level (19-G-1) argued on June 20, 2012 that "political reform has been proposed since the 1980s. Until now, more than 30 years have passed, but the reform has remained at the village level and is still staying in the stage of piloting at the township level. The permanent system of the party congress has also been proposed for many years, and it has not been expanded. Obviously, it is very difficult to push the political reform from the local level to the upper level. China doesn't have any institutional mechanism of checks and balances." A retired high level cadre (13-C-1) said on May 28, 2012: "The multi-candidate elections are mainly based on the determination of the central government. Everything is ready, only owing to leaders' determination."

However, some people still have confidence in the political reform with optimistic attitudes. An officer (9-G-1) said on April 26, 2012, "It is not necessary to initiate the competitive elections from the grassroots level. Instead, the elections should start from the top." A high ranking officer (10-C-6) said on April 26, 2012, "The election must start from the top level. If the central government does not want to engage in it, at least it may start from the intermediate level, such as the provincial and municipal levels. All public elections and competitive elections can be practiced as long as the elections are under Party's control." A departmental officer engaged in policy research (20-C-6) believed on June 20th, 2012 that "we have developed a new integrated democracy designed to integrate inner-party democracy and people's democracy. Intra-party democracy, such as democratic election, decision making, executive, and supervision, to a certain extent, will allow people's participation. Although the decision making power is still controlled by the party, people will have their rights to participate, to know, and to supervise. The advantage of this integrated democracy is that people can recognize the authority of the party committee, which ensures certain legitimacy. Secondly, it can enhance the public opinion in support of major decisions."

In short, it is necessary to initiate the multi-candidate election of the CCP Central Committee members first, connecting the election to the officers' performance and requiring all CCP officials at all levels to be elected. Meanwhile, the regulations for competitive elections must be specific and feasible. For example, the minimum ratio of the multi-candidate election must not be less than 20%. Also, it should set up an incentive mechanism encouraging more candidates to fight for one position. Similarly, setting a timetable is vital for the ratio of multi-candidate elections, requiring a ratio of difference of more than 50% within 10 years. According to the common rule of democratic countries, a 100% difference between the number of candidates and number of elected positions is the most basic and popular requirement, that is, to choose one of the two candidates during the election. Especially in the election of the top leader, it is more urgent and critical to adhere to the bottom line of this 100% difference. Moreover, the proportion of the different number of candidates can't be determined by leaders, but by the majority of voters. At the same time, according to the author's interview, a considerable number of officials and scholars who participated in the interview agreed that the "CCP's Standing Committee should implement competitive elections" and "the CCP's county-level standing committee should conduct direct elections by all party members." (see Table 3).

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TABLE 3. The statistical table of interviews on the CCP reform (Questions 5-7)

Questions	Percentage
Q5. What are the goals of the party reform in the next three years?	
1) Establish a party reform team to design a roadmap for reform.	23.7%
2) Choose Shenzhen and other regions to conduct experimental elections.	31.6%
3) Issue the regulation for the election of national party member representatives.	7.9%
4) All of the above are okay.	36.8%
5) Others	0%
Q6. What are the goals of the party's reform in the next six years?	
1) Separation between the CCP and government.	30%
2) Reduce party members by 50%.	13%
3) Allow capitalists to take CCP's leadership positions.	13%
4) Expand the election methods and procedures of the village committees to the election of CCP's congress representatives at the level of township and county.	44%
5) Others	0%
7. What are the goals of the party's reform in the next nine years?	
1) Full implementation of intra-party democratic elections, including party congresses representatives having their right to question and recall party leaders.	25%
2) The Central Standing Committee implements a multi-candidate election.	30%
3) Party candidates need to publish a campaign statement for voters' supervision.	8%
4) All is okay.	32%
5) None can be.	5%
6) Others	0%

Therefore, multi-candidate election will naturally promote open elections within the CCP, encouraging elites to be selected through bottom-up elections. "This will not only ensure the successful selection of talent and competent leaders, but also develop the formation of an open, standardized, competitive, and orderly democratic election system" (Hao, 2018).

According to the result of empirical studies, the second step of the political reform should implement the permanent system of the party congress representatives. Once the principle of multi-candidate elections becomes evident, it is critical to set up the permanent system of the party congress representatives. As Hu Wei pointed out, "the fundamental institutional basis for democratization within the party is to improve the party congress system based on the multi-representative mechanism within the party" (Xia, 2013). The main function of the party congress is to supervise elections instead of conducting daily operation and delivering decision making (Hu, 2010). Therefore, the permanent system of CCP's congress representatives must have the following five principles.

The first one is to determine the number and distribution ratio of party representatives. In reference to the proportion of the US House of Representatives, the number of CCP representatives needs to be determined according to the number of party members in China, which should be distributed at a ratio of 1 to 100,000. If the CCP has 90 million party members, for instance, the number of the National Party Congress representatives should be 900. All

provinces, cities, and counties should follow this proportion to elect their party representatives. Representatives of the Party Congress, furthermore, should be elected by all party members from the bottom up. Moreover, it is necessary to follow the principle of equality for distributing the number of representatives to all regions and groups, including urban and rural equality, officers and ordinary people, and more importantly, the equal ratio between urban residents and rural farmers.

The second principle is to institutionalize the permanent representatives. In order to improve administrative efficiency, the CCP's Congress should form a permanent institution which functions as the executive committee. Party congresses at all levels should elect the Standing Committee, similar to the US senate, which is the permanent body of the Party Congress, responsible for the preparation and convening of the Party Congress. Its number of members should be 25% of the CCP's congress representatives which has 200 members.

The third principle is to call annual meetings regularly. The CCP's Congress at all levels will hold an annual meeting, similar to the annual meeting of the People's Congresses. Drawing on the operation of the US Senators, it is essential to set up a permanent representative office where each Party representative lives in the same city in an effort to collect the public opinion and deal with all urgent issues in a timely and accurate manner. The party representatives should be subsidized by the Party membership fee and should be allowed to raise funds independently. To recruit non-party mem-

bers effectively, it is vital to encourage party members to excise democratic power and enjoy democratic rights in the party, which will become the democratic “privilege” within the Party. The function of the annual regular meetings is to review the performance of the CCP’s executive committee at the same level and supervise the decision making of the party congress.

Additionally, the party congress should control several substantial powers. The party representatives will be responsible for making their decisions on various major issues within the party, including the deployment of major tasks, and the appointment, removal, transfer, and handling of important personnel issues. It will significantly reduce the dominated power controlled by the CCP’s Standing Committee at all levels. The practice of leading everything by the Standing Committee actually is “just contrary to the power structure stipulated in the party Constitution” (Huang, 2002). The annual meeting of the party members’ congress must periodically review the implementation of congressional rational resolutions by committees at all levels, including the disciplinary inspection committee. The party congress also has its power to vote for confidence on all leading party officers (Zen & Deng, 2010). At the same time, representatives of the party congress have the right to vote, impeach, and recall party committee members and disciplinary inspection committee members. However, the power of the party congress representatives must be restricted by all party voters and must not be involved in the specific administrative affairs of the party committee.

Finally, the Party congressmen should have the rights to promote the integrated reform within the CCP. The permanent system of the party congress is helpful to promote the institutional construction and integrated reforms within the CCP, including “the systems of election, tenure, annual meeting, supervision, decision making, party representatives, and party members’ rights protection.” It is designed to empower party members to supervise the party’s representatives, support the party congresses to supervise the Standing Committee, and encourage the Standing Committee to check the executive committee of CCP” (Wang, 2007). Specifically, the permanent system of the CCP’s Congress needs to reform the following ten integrated systems, including 1) party congress annual meeting system; 2) party representative tenure and rotation system; 3) system of protecting party representative and party member’s rights; 4) limited power for party representatives; 5) highest power system for the party congress; 6) democratic and competitive elections of the party representatives; 7) party committee and standing committee reporting their work to

party congress; 8) party congress’ decision making power for major issues; 9) party committee and standing committee accepting the supervision of party congress; and 10) regular communication between party representatives and party members (Wang, 2007).

In the interviews, many CCP officials and scholars believed that the party representative permanent system required more sophisticated pilot programs and more effective top-level design. For example, a high-level official (19-D-5) thought on June 20, 2012 that “it is needed to set up a party reform team to have an overall top-level design. At the local level, although there are various innovative experiences, they have problems maintaining and protecting their productive results due to legal and leadership issues.” At the same time, this interviewee pointed out that “some areas have been developing the permanent representative system in Jiaojiang county of Zhejiang for 10 or even 20 years, but it is always in a pilot stage. In this regard, there must be an integrated effort to improve and promote the experience of local innovation in a timely manner and transform it from the local level to national level.”

DISCUSSION

Based on the empirical evidences, the critical issue is how to implement the institutional decentralization within the CCP and to construct a system of separation of triple powers with the CCP’s characteristics. As a logic step after implementing the multi-candidate elections and the permanent system of the party congress representative, CCP needs to establish its institutional decentralization.

In his working report of the CCP’s 17th National Congress, Hu Jintao stated: “We must persist in using the institution to manage power, business, and personnel, and establish a power structure and operational mechanism in which decision making, execution, and supervision can be mutually checked, balanced, and coordinated” (Hu, 2010). It was the first time for the CCP to promise to separate its power within the party. The Fourth Plenary Session of the CCP’s 17th Central Committee issued “the Decision of the CCP’s Central Committee on Strengthening and Improving Some Major Issues Concerning Party Construction in the New Situation” in 2010. It also reaffirmed that the establishment of a triple power structure within the Party, including decision making, executive, and supervision powers, must follow the principle of process, openness, and transparency (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 2009). At the CCP’s 18th National Congress in 2012, Hu Jintao’s working report once again mentioned “to ensure that decision making, executive, and supervision powers are mu-

tually constrained and coordinated” (Hu, 2010).

According to Qian Gang’s research, the CCP’s “triple powers” were first proposed in the reform of state-owned enterprises. On November 27, 1995, the People’s Daily reported that a person in charge of a state-owned enterprise proposed that the enterprise should “form a scientific management system in which decision making, executive, and supervision powers should be mutually independent and constrained” (Qian, 2012). The current reality is that the Party Congress, which is supposed to control the CCP’s decision making power, is virtually empty because the Party Congress will only be called once every five years. But, the CCP’s executive power is extremely powerful because the CCP’s Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and top leaders control and integrate both the decision making and the executive powers. Meanwhile, the CCP’s supervision power is quite fake, because the CCP’s Central Commission for Discipline Inspection must accept the leadership of the Central Committee, which means, “the doctor himself is a patient” (Qian, 2012).

Obviously, the CCP has not yet put forward any specific or feasible plans on how to establish the balance of CCP’s triple powers. In fact, the “separation of triple powers” proposed by the report of the 17th Party Congress is based on the premise that three key leaders within the triple powers must be elected by the competitive elections. However, the fact is that a small number of top leaders still totally control decision making power, voting rights, and supervision power (Liu, 2011). Xu Yaotang proposed: “The top-level design of the political reform must reasonably divide the power structure into an institutional mechanism that separates the ‘decision making, execution, and supervision’ functions, so that the ‘triple powers’ can operate and restrict each other.” The idea of “mutual separation and independent operation” is moving in the right direction towards the democratic party (Xu, 2012).

Needless to say, competitive elections are the core of establishing the separation of powers. Democratic elections can first promote the openness of governance within the party because voters must correctly and clearly understand the abilities of candidates and follow up with what the elected officers are doing. Moreover, the basic qualifications of the supervisor must be independence, honesty and fairness, and responsible for the voters. However, the CCP Commission for Discipline Inspection, which is currently the supervisor of party leaders, is subordinate or affiliated to the supervised person (the CCP). The principal officials of the Commission for Discipline Inspection are not elected, instead, the members of the CCP’s Discipline Inspection are

recommended by the party committee at the same level. The personnel and budget of the Disciplinary Committee are also controlled and distributed by the party committee at the same level. As a result, the main leaders of the CCP’s party committees are subject to false, weak, fake, or no supervision (Hua, 2006). On the surface, the advantage of the CCP’s centralized system is to do something big, but it can also do bad, wrong, and stupid things.

In this regard, from the perspective of policy design, the CCP needs to establish three institutions at the county, provincial, and central levels, including the Standing Committee of the Party Congress, the Party’s Executive Committee, and the Party’s Disciplinary Inspection Committee. Following this concept, the decision making power belongs to the party congresses at all levels, similar to the US House of Representatives, and should be administrated by the permanent system of party representatives. Each term of the Party Congress representatives is five years with full-time status. Their salaries should be covered by the CCP’s membership fee. The party congresses representatives at all levels will elect the Standing Committee of the Party Congress, similar to the function of the US Senate.

The executive power belongs to the CCP’s standing committees, similar to the presidential cabinet and governor’s team. This committee will have its secretary, deputy secretary, and standing committee members. The CCP’s Standing Committee is responsible for the Party Congress, regularly reporting its work, accepting periodical review, and publicizing its minutes and records. The standing committee’s budget requires the deliberation, approval, and supervision of the party congress. The implementation of budget, in addition to national defense, diplomatic, and security matters, must be transparent and open to the public on a regular basis. In terms of personnel issues, the CCP’s Standing Committee may appoint CCP officials at all levels, but the appointment of the heads of personnel, propaganda, and the chief of staff must go through the hearing organized by the Standing Committee and approved by a simple majority of the representatives. The Standing Committee also has the power to veto the resolutions of the Party Congress. After the Party Congress receives the resolution rejected by the Standing Committee, it can re-examine and vote again. If two-thirds of the representatives of all Party Congresses continue to maintain the original resolution, the veto of the Standing Committee is invalid, and the original resolution of the party congress must be implemented.

In addition, the supervision power belongs to the CCP Disciplinary Inspection Committee, similar to the US Supreme Court. The Discipline Inspection Committee has a direc-

tor, deputy directors, and members. The members of the Disciplinary Committee are jointly nominated by the CCP's Standing Committee at the same level and the higher level of Disciplinary Committee, but must go through the process of review, hearing, and approval by the representatives of the Party Congress. Nominations will be effective only after a majority of the representatives of the Party Congress have passed. If the majority party representatives reject the nomination, the Standing Committee of the Party Committee at the same level and the higher level of Disciplinary Committee must re-nominate. Moreover, the Commission for Discipline Inspection is financially independent from the CCP's Standing Committee at the same level. Its annual budget must be reviewed and approved by the Party Congress. The CCP membership fee should be the main source of its budget.

Furthermore, the main duties of the Discipline Inspection Commission should conduct disciplinary inspections and supervision of CCP officials at the same level and below, including representatives of party congresses and standing committee members. The Discipline Inspection Commission should implement vertical structure of leadership in which the superior discipline inspection commission leads the lower discipline inspection commission, and the lower discipline inspection commission reports to the superior discipline inspection commission. At the same time, the Discipline Inspection Commission also reports to the Party Congress at the same level, but it must be equal and parallel with the power of the CCP's Standing Committee at the same level. The Discipline Inspection Commission should have its power to conduct legal investigations, arbitrations, and disciplinary actions against any party member, including the party committee's top leader, and has the right to transfer the illegal cases to the judicial departments. However, all party members under investigation must be allowed to have their due rights of proper and open defenses following institutionalized appeal procedures. Moreover, it is indispensable to establish a system for supervising supervisors, including the system for the Disciplinary Committee to report to the Party Congress, the system for the chief officials of the Commission for Discipline Inspection to report to the party congress, the system of debriefing, and the system for the removal of officials of the Disciplinary Committee by party representatives (Wang, 2007).

At present, it is essential to strengthen the power of supervising and balancing the CCP's Standing Committee, enhance Party representatives' power, and promote the independent position for the Discipline Inspection Commission in order to establish the effective separation of the

three powers within the CCP. In particular, members of the three institutions can't have joint appointments in more than one institutions. And party representatives may not concurrently serve as members of the CCP's Standing Committee and members of the Disciplinary Committee (Yu, 2011). Thus, the separated and independent triple powers within the Party will cooperate with the triple powers outside of the Party, including the administrative power of the State Council, the legislative power of the National People's Congress, and the judicial power of the Supreme Court. Consequently, the three-dimensional system of checks and balances between the triple powers within the Party and the triple powers outside of the Party will work together to promote China's political and institutional transformation to legalization and democratization (Zheng, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The CCP's intra-party democracy must be promoted by means of two major systems: one is democratic elections and the other is power checks and balances. Only by implementing true democratic elections can China promote the pluralistic power checks and balances of one party; and only the institutional checks and balances of internal power can truly demonstrate competitive, fair, and open elections. Elections and checks and balances are the two wings of the CCP's political reform which can function as the two institutionalized cages to hold power accountable. The two wings are causal and interactive.

Obviously, in the face of the sharply divided economic and social interests of all sectors of China, the CCP, which hopes to represent the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people, has gradually become a spokesperson for different interest groups. These interest groups based on the different interests of social economics are more conducive to dilute the ideological confrontations. In light of the different social and economic interest groups, it is easier to seek compromise and tolerance through rational game, promote effective internal governance, enhance strong resilience, and improve social stability. Moreover, the competition based on social and economic interests will encourage their spokespersons to be more rational and more predictable, which will make it easier to exchange interests between the conflicted parties. Meanwhile, the social and economic orientated interests can soften the coercion of political power, weaken the power arrogance and decision making arbitrariness, and urge them to respect the social and economic rights of all classes and groups (Shi, 2010).

The universal experience has shown that the implementa-

tion of intra-party competitive elections and the permission of different opinions and interest groups existing are necessary conditions for a democratic political party. Therefore, the prohibition of democratic elections and the illegitimacy of different opinions within the CCP are natural enemies of democracy. Currently, advocated by the CCP, the Confucius principle of “harmony with difference” needs to be implemented within the CCP. This is the essence of building the party for the people and public interests.

Finally, the author would like to quote a retired 81-year-old cadre (12-G-1) as the conclusion: “The CCP’s political re-

form can no longer wait, 10,000 years is too long, just fight for the day.” Obviously, the loyalty of party members is disappearing, the patience of the Chinese people is being lost, and the trend of global democracy is in full swing!

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Author tried to alleviate all the methodological concerns and respondents' biases by using mixed method design. However, it is believed that this study could be improved with more in-depth investigation. Thus, future research is encouraged to further these findings.

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