

## **Eight: Craving For Grandiose**

### **1: Winning Politically At All Costs To The Nation**



In the early years, as the Party's head, Jiang Zemin's position inside the CCP was not very secure. Not only did he have to confront pressures from the senior leaders in the Party, but also he had to face the general public's dissatisfaction, over the Tiananmen Massacre. Meanwhile, China's foreign relations were on the rocks. Many countries called back their ambassadors. Trade and arms embargos hit China's economy hard.



Premier Li Peng was originally Jiang's immediate superior, but when Jiang was made General Secretary, Li became Jiang's subordinate. It was somewhat awkward for both. At politburo meetings, Jiang always sat next to Li, and they hosted the meetings together. Jiang often made decisions based on Li's facial expressions, so, outsiders called it the Jiang-Li system.



To solidify his position inside the Party, Jiang thought he needed to get on Li's good side. Since Li used to serve as Minister of Water Resources, Jiang, on his first national tour, visited the Three Gorges Project, something Li had enthusiastically promoted. Next, Jiang actively lobbied for the project and forced the National People's Congress to approve its preliminary plans.





Jiang ignored the potential problems that the Three Gorges Project might cause, to navigation, generation of electricity, relocation of residents, the eco-system, the environment, and war-preparedness. Jiang left the decision-making of this massive project to people like actors, actresses, model workers, and token minority representatives. The sole purpose was to please Li Peng.



Jiang Ze-min had always taken China's WTO accession as his achievement. In April 1999, after NATO air raids had begun, Jiang Ze-min urged Zhu Rong-ji to leave as scheduled for the WTO negotiations in the US. If the negotiation was to succeed, Jiang as the General Secretary would naturally get the credit, and it would be written into history as his achievements.

Were the negotiation to fail, it would stand to deflate Zhu Rong-ji's arrogance, a prospect Jiang welcomed, as Zhu's substantial contributions

at the time jeopardized Jiang's standing. However, considering the circumstances it seemed impossible for the negotiation to achieve anything. Were Zhu not to go through, a golden opportunity might be missed.



Both Li Peng and Qian Qi-Shen were against Zhu Rong-gee's visit to the US. They thought his appeasement diplomacy amounted to begging for favors and showing weakness.

Zhu's attitude was evident. He knew that the agriculture, telecommunication and finance industry of China would be hurt by China's joining the WTO. Besides, given the low efficiencies of the state-enterprises, many enterprises would go bankrupt if fair competition were to be allowed. Zhu thus didn't want to make too many concessions in his negotiations with the United States.





But Jiang instructed him otherwise and told him to focus on winning the political battle. Zhu was prudent having every concession approved by Jiang.



However, the CCP senior statesmen were unhappy even outraged with these concessions. Upon seeing their reactions, Jiang made Zhu Rong-ji a scapegoat, seamlessly shifted all the blames to him.



In October 1999, Jiang urgently needed a way to improve China's relations with the West and to quell popular discontent over the suppression of Falun Gong. It was for this reason, his thinking turned to the WTO. Jiang called a meeting of the Politburo demanding everybody's support for greater degrees of concessions. When Zhu Rong-ji negotiated with the US delegation at the table, it was Jiang who called the shots in each move behind the scenes.



The concessions made to gain WTO accession were far more than those proposed with appeasement diplomacy. On October 15, when both sides signed the agreement, Zhu Rong-ji drew upon the lesson he had learned, that great achievements make one's boss feel insecure, and didn't attend the signing ceremony. Nor did he attend the celebration party held at Zhongnanhai that night. Newsweek Magazine



commented, that the WTO agreement made Zhu Rong-gee an invisible man.



It was Jiang who was the most eager in regard to the celebration of the 50th-anniversary of the CCP's reign. He wanted to have a huge portrait of himself, placed next to that of Mao Ze-dong and Deng Xiao-ping, on the anniversary day. He wanted the Army, Navy and Air Force march before him, and enjoy the feel of being the Chairman of the Military Commission, to show off the power to the world.



When Zhu Rong-gee learned that the total cost of the celebration would be 180 billion yuan, that's 22 billion US dollars, and that this included the plans for elaborating ceremonial tributes, giving raises to public servants and retired staff, and creating new infrastructures for the celebration. He was furious and bit his lips not uttering a word.



Jiang, by contrast, said: “I think the celebration needs to have a look of great power. When it comes to activities celebrating the 50th anniversary, we need to think about its political impact, rather than be limited by finances.” The money that Jiang lavishly spent on the extravaganza could have paid for the educations of 200 million students, or the daily needs of 30 million unemployed for a year.



When Jiang Zemin imitated Deng Xiao-ping shouting: ” Hello, Comrades!” He was not as confident as Deng, for Jiang knew that when Deng did the same, his reform brought people a couple of years of a better life. This time around, when Jiang had his celebration, some one hundred million citizens, the Falun Gong practitioners had just been made enemies, with their friends and family included, it’s a huge part of the population!