

**The Honorable Xi Jinping
Vice President
The People's Republic of China**

Visit to the United States of America

Media Report

Prepared by

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn and Mr. Adam Zhu

February 18, 2012

The following media – published articles and television and radio interviews (transcriptions here) -- was developed in relationship to Vice President Xi Jinping's visit to the United States of America in February 2012.

Note that the two main wire services – Associated Press and Reuters – distributed their articles to literally hundreds of news organizations, publications and websites. The following is a sampling.

For each of the following published articles, Dr. Kuhn was interviewed at length. As such, in addition to Dr. Kuhn's direct quotes, other elements of the articles were taken from his comments (and from his book, *How China's Leaders Think*, which has several large sections on Vice President Xi.)

In addition, Dr. Kuhn did television interviews or commentary for Associated Press, Bloomberg, and Euronews.

WORLD RADIO AND TV

BBC World News / BBC TV International

February 15, 2012

Announcer: Now the senior Chinese political figure expected to become China's next leader, Xi Jinping, has been meeting U.S. Congressmen and is due to travel to the Midwest farming state of Iowa. It is his first official visit to America. He met President Obama on Tuesday. The U.S. president called on China for more balanced trade, underlying the need for greater cooperation. Well, on The Hub, let's go live to Los Angeles, to Robert Lawrence Kuhn, who is an advisor to the Chinese government, the author of *How China's Leaders Think*. Welcome to The Hub. Let me ask you, first of all, because you know Mr. Xi, what is he like? You have been working alongside him and have had a unique position in that sense.

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: When I first met Vice President Xi Jinping in 2005, and then again in 2006, I was very impressed with an individual who was very confident in his own skin. His father was a great leader in the original reforms under Deng Xiaoping; earlier, his father had gone through tremendous hardships. And Xi himself as a young teenager had suffered tremendously during the Cultural Revolution, but when I met him, at that point after more than 20 years of administrative work, he was very confident. He talked about political theory but then smiled and winked and said, 'But, you know, I don't sit around all day talking about political theory, I have a lot of real work to do.'

The Chinese officials around Xi Jinping today talk about four characteristics in describing him to the world. First, Competence in administration. Second, he has a strong Knowledge Base. Third, Charisma – which is a quiet kind of charisma, a confident one. And fourth, a style of Leadership. That's the image that China would like to project and most people who know Xi Jinping would subscribe to those characteristics.

When I met Xi Jinping in 2005, I gave him a copy of my book, which was the biography of former President Jiang Zemin, and Xi immediately turned to the page of a photo of Jiang Zemin singing with a group of military women, and Xi said to me, 'Do you know who this woman is?' while pointing to one of the women. I said, 'No,' and he said, 'Well, that's my wife.' Of course, I later learned that his wife, Peng Liyuan, is a famous folk singer in China – and until five or so years ago, she was more famous than he was."

Announcer: Robert Lawrence Kuhn, thank you very much for joining us on the BBC from Los Angeles.

WORLD RADIO AND TV

BBC World Service / BBC Radio International

February 14, 2012

Announcer: Washington is about to get its first good look at the man who is soon going to become the leader of what is going to be America's biggest global competitor. Xi Jinping, vice president of China and soon to become president of China, is in town as part of a four-day official visit to the U.S. The 58-year old is due to replace Hu Jintao as Communist Party leader later this year and as president in 2013. And this is an opportunity to press the flesh before he takes over the reigns in Beijing.

Joining us now is Robert Lawrence Kuhn, a long-term adviser to the Chinese government and the author of *How China's Leaders Think*. He is in Beijing.

Welcome to the program. Will this new leader think any different than other previous Chinese leaders? What do you think?

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: Each of the Chinese leaders has been different in their own way. But what we are now witnessing is really a 'sea change' in China. Xi Jinping will be the first leader who was not chosen by one of the founders of China – Deng Xiaoping chose Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. But Xi Jinping's background stands out. He suffered terribly – his father did, Xi himself did – during the Cultural Revolution, spending six or seven years in a mountain cave because of Mao Zedong's ideological madness. More importantly, as a result of his roughly twenty-five (25) years spent in the administrative grassroots of China – working his way up from literally county level to running two major provinces, Fujian and Zhejiang, which are the equivalent of major European nations in size -- he is really very experienced and has a quiet confidence about him. The Obama administration will sense a difference with Xi Jinping. He will not express any differences in policy, certainly not now, because this trip is characterized formally as an 'implementation trip' for what President Hu Jintao and President Barack Obama initiated about a year ago. And so, appropriately in the Chinese system, Xi is supporting Hu Jintao. But in reality, this trip is Xi's 'coming out party' onto the world stage. And he will signal a difference by his style, if not by his substance.

Announcer: You talk about his differences in style. By all accounts, he seems a personable chap. He's very easy with people.

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: That is exactly right. Everyone who knows him compliments his manner of dealing with people. I've met him personally and worked with him several times. I know many of his closest direct reports and they tell me that he is extremely easy to work with; he is compassionate about people.

In fact the Iowa part of the trip makes that statement. The entire trip is designed with a 'Tripartite Structure', which is a kind of announcement of Xi's way of thinking: Diplomacy in Washington; People-Oriented in Iowa; and Trade and Business in Los Angeles. In this way, Vice President Xi is signaling that these are the primary things on his mind.

Last night at dinner, one of Xi's direct reports told me that here's what Xi said to a group of his staff: "Don't tell me what you think I want to hear. Tell me what you really think and then I'll decide what I conclude about your ideas. It is not up to you to decide what you think I think is good. You tell me the truth."

Announcer: For the uninitiated, Xi is going to have tea in a small town in Iowa. That's right, isn't it?

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: Exactly. In fact, Xi is going to bring back two spoons that he was given during his first visit to Iowa in 1985. And he has really treasured that initial experience in the U.S. He was running at the time an agricultural county, which had concerns about agri-business, such as hogs; and they needed corn technology. That first trip to the U.S. was very meaningful to Xi. He had stayed a few days then and he is now very much looking forward to seeing those same people.

Some of Xi's staff made a bit of a joke by pointing out the fact that the governor of Iowa at the time of Xi's first visit twenty-seven (27) years ago, in 1985, is coincidentally the same governor today – which is obviously rare in U.S. politics – so they twinkle and say "Anyone who deals with Xi Jinping is going to be a lucky man."

Announcer: Thanks for joining us on The World Today. That's Robert Lawrence Kuhn.

WORLD RADIO AND TV**BBC World Service / International BBC Radio****February 15, 2012**

Announcer: The man who is expected to become the next president of China uses his primary formal address in the United States to call for greater strategic understanding between the two Pacific powers. China's Vice President Xi Jinping says his country welcomes a constructive role by the U.S. – after President Obama announced that he will be strengthening the U.S. military presence in Asia. But Xi says the U.S. has to respect China's concerns in the area.

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn is an expert on China. He has worked with Mr. Xi. He is an advisor to the Chinese government and has written a book called *How China's Leaders Think*. You met with some of Mr. Xi's delegation earlier. What do they hope to get out of this Knowing-Me-Knowing-You world tour?

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: This trip is an essential part of Vice President's Xi's program for ascension to top leadership in China. Officially, the trip is organized as an "Implementation Trip," to fulfill the assignments given during President Hu Jintao's trip to Washington for a summit meeting with President Obama about one year ago. But, in fact, this is Vice President Xi's "coming out party" on the international scene, which is intended to play out in the arena of international affairs and in the leadership transition process in domestic politics back in China. Domestic politics in China is obvious very important. It's played differently in China than it is played in the West, as we all know, and this is a critical year, a sensitive year, because of the nine leaders of China – members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo – seven will be changing.

It is very important to recognize that these nine leaders are all important, not just one man. Vice President Xi, when he ascends to General Secretary of the Party, President of the State, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, will indeed be 'First Among Equals', but it will indeed be 'Equals' among these nine. So as this transition plays out this year, Xi's trip is vital so that he establishes his position as an international statesman. The trip is being played with very high visibility in China. Xi recognizes that his critical mission is to set the proper trajectory for U.S.-China relations, which will be so central for international stability. This is essential for China, so that the country can maintain its focus on its domestic economic development.

There are serious problems in China, with economic imbalances among regions and classes, pollution, sustainable development, crises in local areas where peasants become very upset by being displaced by land grabs by local officials.

So there are many complex things going on in China, and China needs a stable international environment to be able to solve its problems.

However, China cannot afford to look weak in relationship to the U.S. or to any other powers. So it's a fine 'dance' that Vice President Xi has to do – and so far he is doing very well!

Announcer: Indeed. No doubt. Even as we speak, experts at the White House and perhaps at the Pentagon are analyzing his speech and reading between the lines, as it were, as we sometimes lose a lot in the translation. A little cultural inflection here and there can mean all the difference. What will they be reading into Xi's statement, particularly when he says that there ought to be greater strategic understanding between the two nations but at the same time warning that the U.S. has to respect China's concerns.

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: Vice President Xi's speech is a typical speech of a Chinese senior leader in that it provides an elegant balance of cooperation and appreciation of China's core interests. I've heard former President Jiang Zemin give a similar foreign policy address. I have heard President Hu Jintao make very similar kinds of statements. There is continuity with Xi.

China is all for continuity and stability in policy. It must have this fine balance between not being pushed around by any other country and being harmonious with the international community.

That said, I think we will be able to distinguish – and I think that people in the room with Vice President Xi will be able to distinguish – Xi from previous leaders. They will notice Xi's distinct personality, marked by a confidence borne of competence. It is not so much Xi's substance – which is properly supportive and consistent with current leaders – but it is Xi's style. When Xi says some of the same things, listeners will sense a quiet confidence that's founded on his long career – twenty-five (25) years running three major geographic areas, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces and the Shanghai municipality, the equivalent of three major or mid-sized European nations.

In addition, Xi's father was a vice premier; he served as a reformer under Deng Xiaoping. And because of the ideological madness of the time, especially during the Cultural Revolution, fomented by Mao Zedong, Xi's father suffered – he was in prison or under house arrest of one kind or another for sixteen (16) years. And Xi Jinping himself, as a young teenager, had to live in the mountains – literally – literally in a mountain cave for six or seven years because of the ideological madness.

So Xi Jinping has a diverse and unique background. He has great pride in China. He has promoted economic growth. He has taken leadership of major provinces. He has dealt with Western CEOs of major multinational corporations. He has promoted large investments in China. So he knows this broad picture of contemporary China, and thus you will see, and people in the room with him will see, this quiet confidence – a man who is confident in his own skin.

Xi Jinping will be able to go above the written word and communicate a sense of confidence and trust. That's what people will feel when they are in the room with him.

I certainly felt that way and many of the people who work directly for him – who are my personal friends – tell me quite confidentially the same. Xi Jinping is a very compassionate, a very thoughtful man. He is not one to jump to radical changes in direction. He will establish a stable, strong rule – and that’s what China needs.

Announcer: Yes. I suppose you hit the nail on the head there. I suppose the question everyone wants to know is whether he is a reforming leader. It doesn’t sound like it. He is not going to be China’s Mikhail Gorbachev, is he? He is not going to be the guy to bring democracy to his country.

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: A famous statement of former Premier Zhu Rongji when he was asked if he was going to be ‘the Gorbachev of China’ -- he famously responded by saying that he was going to be “the Zhu Rongji of China’. I think to put any label on what Xi Jinping will become is both inappropriate and an oversimplification. First of all, certainly for this year and the early part of his two five-year terms, we will see very mild differences from current policies, more style than substance – because China values stability. It will not be until the end of his first five-year term, or more likely during the middle of his second five-year term, that we will really see any unique policies that will characterize Xi Jinping.

I do not expect to see a radical change to what the West would term as ‘democracy’, but I do expect to see a serious and protracted movement toward what the Chinese leaders themselves call democracy, which is quite different but actually quite interesting. Their vision is to bring what they call ‘intra-Party democracy’ to the governance of the Party, such that Party members will come to have real oversight over Party leaders through a whole series of ways, such as how officials in China are chosen and monitored. Broad masses of Party members will come to have an oversight function, as will, increasingly, the Chinese media.

It is an experiment in national democracy that has never been tried before in human history, where a Party that insists on absolute control is genuinely trying to bring a form of democracy to benefit all the people. It is an experiment whose conclusion is yet to be known.

Announcer: You’ve worked with Mr. Xi as an advisor to the Chinese government and I wonder whether you’re expecting a call from him when he gets the number one job?

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: Well, certainly in the current situation where a new generation of senior leaders will be coming, it is inappropriate for them to have too much direct dealings with foreigners. It is part of the culture that they need to focus domestically. But when I was with Vice President Xi when he was Party secretary of Zhejiang Province, I can tell one incident that may be indicative of his approach. He gave me, as he should according to custom, a very nice presentation of the official Party political line, stating with Mao Zedong Thought, then Deng Xiaoping Theory, then Jiang Zemin’s important thought of the ‘Three Represents” and finally Hu Jintao’s Scientific Perspective on Development – all the political theories rolled into one extended thought, very elegantly done by the way. But then Xi stopped and looked at me, kind of winked and smiled and said, ‘You know, I don’t sit around here all day talking about this theoretical philosophy. I have work to do. We have a province of 55 million people and there’s real work to be done. I have to focus on real

issues and problems – and how we actually do our work, economically, socially, politically (reform), is not necessarily prescribed by all these theoretical political aphorisms.

Announcer: So if you're not getting a call from Beijing, you'll probably get one from Washington, because they are going to need to understand this man, aren't they?

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn: I wish Washington would take a more sophisticated approach to understanding China. It is not just understanding the man, although they need to do that as well. They really need to understand the Chinese system. And the way Washington and most of the West seems to understand China is very black-and-white. The common assumption is that if there is no one-person-one-vote for the country's top leader, then the country is a dictatorship. If a country does have a one-person-one-vote for the country's top leader, then the country is a democracy. Well, we have seen many instances in the world where you do have one-person-one-vote for the country's top leader – in the Arab world or in Africa – where it is hardly a democracy.

China is moving toward Transparency and Tolerance as guiding principles of its kind of democracy, as opposed to the one-person-one-vote for high leaders – and we have to see what the results are going to be. The Chinese people, largely, are very supportive right now, because they recognize that the domestic issues in economics, society, fairness issues are absolutely overwhelming. Furthermore, for China's own internal benefit, China needs to have a good public profile before the world.

The Chinese people are also nationalistic, and leaders have to be careful how they interact with the West because there is danger of looking so-called 'soft.' If you accuse American presidential candidates of being 'soft on China', that hurts them. Similarly, if you accuse Chinese political leaders of being 'soft on America', that hurts them too.

So it is a fine balance that we all have to find in the world. And I hope to play perhaps a small role in helping each side understand the subtleties and sophistications of the other.

Announcer: Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn. We appreciate your speaking with us. Thank you very much!



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VISUALS

AP Television – AP clients only

Dujiangyan, Chengdu, Sichuan Province – 21 August, 2011

1. Mid of Chinese Vice President, Xi Jinping and US Vice President, Joe Biden walking towards irrigation project
2. Wide of pair talking
3. Mid of Chinese-style designed roof at ancient Dujiangyan irrigation project, tilt down to mid of pair walking towards camera

July 1, 2009 – Beijing

4. Wide of Xi taking podium at the Chinese Communist Party 90th Anniversary, UPSOUND: clapping
5. SOUNDBITE: (Mandarin) Xi Jinping, Chinese Vice President:
“In order to strive for modern, nationwide, party structure with outstanding cadres and outstanding party workers, we need to strengthen our principles, and uphold Chinese characteristics.”
6. Zoom out of audience listening to speech, soundbites continues

Beijing, Feb 2 2012

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7. Close of book "How China's Leaders Think" by Robert Lawrence Kuhn, author and business consultant

8. Wide of Robert Lawrence Kuhn, author and business consultant

9. Close of Robert Lawrence Kuhn, author and business consultant

10. Close of book photo of Robert Lawrence Kuhn with China's Vice President, Xi Jinping

11. SOUNDBITE (English) Robert Lawrence Kuhn, author and business consultant:

“ He is very outgoing, very confident, but not in an arrogant way. Kind of a quiet confidence bred in his background and his success.”

FILE

2007 – Hangzhou, China

12. Wide of workers clapping as Xi arrives
13. Mid of Xi shaking hands with workers
14. Close of Xi listening
15. Mid of foreman explaining work

Beijing – 21 January, 2012

16. Wide of Peng Liyuan surrounded by dancers at gala

17. Close of Peng Liyuan singing

18. Mid of Chinese President Hu Jintao, and other leaders coming to shake hands with Peng Liyuan

Beijing – January 30 2012

AP Television - AP clients only

19. Close to scholar Li Fan

20. Close to book held by scholar

21. SOUND BITE (Mandarin) Li Fan, scholar and director of the Chinese Think Tank "The World and China Institute":

" Xi's family background and his father are important factors, but they are not the only ones, because many people have that same background. He has the proper background, but also has shown achievements and cautiousness when making decisions."

Location unknown – 2007

22. Mid of Xi wearing straw hat and short sleeves listening to villages chiefs

Shanghai – 2007

23. Exterior of neighbourhood community centre 24. Mid of Xi talking to elderly and shaking hands with residents 25. Mid of Xi shaking hands with elderly in old people's home

Lhasa – 20 July, 2011

26. Wide of monks clapping

27. Wide of monks presenting banner to Xi, banner reads: "60th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet." Clapping

Beijing – 1 October

28. Wide of 60th anniversary of the founding of a nation 29. Wide of Xi and other leaders coming down to dance on Tiananmen Square with performers 30. Mid of Xi and other leaders and performers swinging arms 31. Wide of fireworks and celebrations to mark 1949-2009

Beijing, Feb 2 2012

AP Television - AP Clients only

SOUND BITE (ENGLISH) Robert Lawrence Kuhn, author and business consultant:

32. "I think the fact that Xi is going to Iowa is a very strong statement about who he is, and the image he wants to project. It is a powerful one. Iowa is not just the center of the political primaries, but is the real heartland."

AP Television – AP clients only

Dujiangyan, Chengdu, Sichuan Province – 21 August, 2011 33. Wide of Biden and Xi shooting a basket, UPSOUND clapping 34. Mid of Biden signing basketball while Xi looks on 35. Close of autographed basketball with Xi and Biden's name on it 36. Mid of Xi and Biden walking off court ENDS

STORYLINE:

As China's touted next leader heads to the United States on Monday, little is known about the next President of the world's second largest economy.

Chinese Vice President, Xi Jinping will meet with US President, Barack Obama on Tuesday, and also his counterpart, Vice President Joe Biden.

China's vice president, who will take over the presidency from Hu Jintao next year, will be in the U.S. to meet President Barack Obama and other leaders and introduce himself to a U.S. audience.

Xi met with Vice President Joe Biden last year in what was regarded by US officials as an opportunity to get to know the man behind the dark suit.

Xi is expected to replace China's current President, Hu Jintao as leader in October.

But little is known about China's heir apparent, and the direction that he will lead the country.

He has proven adept at suppressing his own views and avoiding antagonisms among the party's various branches and factions.

Xi's ability to make personal connections and his unassuming confidence will be in much demand as he takes over the leadership of the ruling Communist Party this year, a step toward assuming the presidency.

Speaking at the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Party in July last year, Xi called on Communist Party members to modernize, but uphold Chinese values.

"In order to strive for modern, nationwide, party structure with outstanding cadres and outstanding party workers, we need to strengthen our principles, and uphold Chinese characteristics," Xi said.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an author and a longtime adviser to the Chinese government who has met with Xi for private talks.

He said Xi has a quiet confidence, and will be open to new ways of doing things.

Kuhn says, " He is very outgoing, very confident, but not in an arrogant way. and of a quiet confidence bred in his background and his success."

Such visits by other Chinese leaders have been revealing. The risk-taking Deng Xiaoping left his mark in 1979 by attending a rodeo and donning a ten-gallon hat.

Visiting just prior to taking power in 2002, Hu showed himself as bland, hyper-cautious and inscrutable.

Xi, who has a glamorous wife and a daughter at Harvard, was a consensus choice when tapped as successor in 2007.

His wife, Peng Liyuan is a famous singer in China, and staple on the annual CCTV Spring Festival Gala.

In Chinese political parlance, Xi is a "princeling," as the sons and daughters of communist China's founding fathers are termed.

His father, Xi Zhongxun, was a key figure in the revolution that swept the communists to power in 1949, but was later imprisoned for nearly 30 years. Released in 1978, he helped establish China's groundbreaking Shenzhen Special Economic Zone.

Chinese scholar, Li Fan says that Xi's princeling connections are not the key reason he has risen to be the next leader. Xi has demonstrated cautiousness when dealing within the Party, and this has been respected by many Party members.

He explained, "Xi's family background, and his father are important factors, but they are not the only ones, because many people have that same background. He has the proper background, but also has shown achievements, and cautiousness when making decisions."

The 58-year-old faces the tricky task of advancing China's development against the tides of global financial insecurity, and simmering social unrest, particularly in the western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet.

In his appearances, including a Valentine's day – February 14 White House meeting with Obama, Xi will offer reassurance that China and the U.S. remain committed to healthy relations, despite occasional turbulence.

Much has changed in the 62 years since the Chinese Communist Party came to power.

China's status has risen on the global stage, and its leaders are presenting greater confidence in dealing with the world, and particularly the US.

This is not Xi's first visit to the US. In 1985, Xi Jinping led a delegation to Muscatine, Iowa, to study advanced hog-raising techniques.

This week he returns preparing to lead the world's most populous nation.

Kuhn says the visit to Iowa is a shrewd move to reach out to the American heartlands.

He explained, "I think the fact that Xi is going to Iowa is a very strong statement about who he is, and the image he wants to project. It is a powerful one. Iowa is not just the center of the political primaries, but is the

real heartland, it is not New York, or Washington, or Los Angeles, it is the real heartland of America."

His decision to also visit the families who hosted him years ago is a rare personal touch for a Chinese leader, one that feeds his reputation as a new type of official who dares to step away from the traditional aloofness of Chinese high office.

Xi demonstrated this in 1985 as the Zhengding Communist Party secretary he went to Iowa on a mission to study hog raising and experience a slice of Americana. Xi stayed with local families for two nights, visited farms and watched baseball.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad invited Xi back to his state during a trade mission to China in September. He said Xi recalled the names of Iowans he had met and even produced the original itinerary from the visit.

For observers of Chinese politics, Xi's game is hard to read: Will he continue to follow or tighten the model of rigid one-party rule married to a market economy, or embark on a relatively more liberal path that could weaken communist authority?

During Xi's five years as Party Chief in Zhejiang Province, private businesses and business associations thrived, along with some civic society groups.

Xi has left largely positive impressions on foreign guests, including Biden, with whom he visited earthquake-stricken areas of Sichuan province last year.

Biden aides said Xi came across as genuine and noted that he spoke at meetings without notes.

It may be years before Xi's true attitudes are known. Hu, after relinquishing his posts as head of party and state, is expected to retain the key position of military chief through 2014 or beyond.

Xi won't truly be his own man until his predecessor exits the stage, but this visit is definitely regarded as a way for Americans to get to know China's new star player.

Feb. 7, 2012 1:23 AM ET

US trip of China's next leader: from Obama to Iowa

CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — In 1985, Xi Jinping led a delegation to Muscatine, Iowa, to study advanced hog-raising techniques. He comes back next week, preparing to lead the world's most populous nation.

China's vice president, who will take over the presidency from Hu Jintao next year, will be in the U.S. to meet President Barack Obama and other leaders and introduce himself to a U.S. audience. His decision to also visit the families who hosted him years ago is a rare personal touch for a Chinese leader, one that feeds his reputation as a new type of official who dares to step away from the traditional aloofness of Chinese high office.

"He appreciated learning about America on that level, and he is signaling by going there that he is going to be a different kind of leader," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an author and a longtime adviser to the Chinese government who has met with Xi for private talks. "He is going to be open. He is going to be appreciative."

Xi's ability to make personal connections and his unassuming confidence will be in much demand as he takes over the leadership of the ruling Communist Party this year, a step toward assuming the presidency.

The 58-year-old faces the tricky task of advancing China's development against the tides of global financial insecurity, resource scarcity, environmental crises and simmering social unrest, particularly in the western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet.

In his appearances, including a Feb. 14 White House meeting with Obama, Xi will offer reassurance that China and the U.S. remain committed to healthy relations, despite occasional turbulence.

"China wants a sign of respect to establish its up-and-coming leader on the world stage," said Joseph Cheng, head of the Contemporary China Research Center at the City University of Hong Kong.

Such visits by other Chinese leaders have been revealing. The risk-taking Deng Xiaoping left his mark in 1979 by attending a rodeo and donning a ten-gallon hat. Visiting just prior to taking power in 2002, Hu showed himself as bland, hyper-cautious and inscrutable.

Xi, who has a glamorous wife and a daughter at Harvard, was a consensus choice when

tapped as successor in 2007. He has proven adept at suppressing his own views and avoiding antagonisms among the party's various branches and factions.

Henry Kissinger described him last year as "a more assertive type than we've seen," while Vice President Joe Biden told Xi he was impressed with his "openness and candor."

In Chinese political parlance, Xi is a "princeling," as the sons and daughters of communist China's founding fathers are termed.

His father, Xi Zhongxun, was a key figure in the revolution that swept the communists to power in 1949, but was later imprisoned for nearly 30 years. Released in 1978, he helped establish China's groundbreaking Shenzhen Special Economic Zone.

Xi Jinping spent seven years toiling in the rugged loess hills of northern China before earning a chemistry degree at Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University. He spent three years as a top general's aide — imparting him with an important link to the powerful military — before opting for a decidedly unglamorous administrative posting in heavily agricultural Zhengding county southwest of Beijing.

It was as Zhengding Communist Party secretary that Xi went to Iowa on a mission to study hog raising and experience a slice of Americana. Xi stayed with local families for two nights, visited farms and watched baseball.

Sarah Lande, a Muscatine native who hosted Xi, remembers him as outgoing, organized and self-possessed, dressed in a Western-style suit rather than the drab Mao jackets of previous visitors.

"It was all through interpretation so we couldn't talk one-to-one, but they were very interested in how to produce more food for their country," Lande said in a telephone interview. "It seemed special to us that he would want to know so much about us and how we worked."

Xi's next few postings were in the coastal province of Fujian, where he built up a reputation for breaking bureaucratic logjams.

He eventually became governor, then jumped to one of China's most economically dynamic provinces, Zhejiang. Following a brief spell leading the financial hub of Shanghai, he moved to Beijing as one of nine members of the party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee in 2007.

For observers of Chinese politics, Xi poses a riddle: Will he continue to follow or tighten the model of rigid one-party rule married to a market economy, or embark on a relatively more liberal path that could weaken communist authority?

During Xi's five years in Zhejiang, private businesses and business associations thrived, along with some civic society groups. In one provincial city, citizens were given a say in how the local government spends its budget, something that remains extremely rare elsewhere in the country.

While Xi was not necessarily behind such moves, he gets credit for not standing in their way, said Beijing political analyst Li Fan. "Xi is a person who is able to listen to other opinions and accept other views, although he isn't an initiator," he said.

Zhejiang-based pro-democracy activist Yin Weihong is more skeptical, saying Xi was quick to move against pro-democracy activists and did nothing to halt the demolition of a Protestant church that had refused to register with the government.

"I can't recall any instance when he came across as particularly tolerant," Yin said. Xi has left largely positive impressions on foreign guests, including Biden, with whom he visited earthquake-stricken areas of Sichuan province last year. Biden aides said Xi came across as genuine and noted that he spoke at meetings without notes.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad invited Xi back to his state during a trade mission to China in September. He said Xi recalled the names of Iowans he had met and even produced the original itinerary from the visit.

It may be years before Xi's true attitudes are known. Hu, after relinquishing his posts as head of party and state, is expected to retain the key position of military chief through 2014 or beyond. Xi won't truly be his own man until his predecessor exits the stage.

http://hosted2.ap.org/APDEFAULT/terms/Article_2012-02-07-AS-China-Future-Leader/id-03429dca6f834fc5aee93fc9fb3c545e



Reuters Newswire

Analysis: U.S.-China discord remains after Xi's mood music

Thu, Feb 16 2012
By Chris Buckley

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - China's leader-in-waiting Xi Jinping won the kind of reception in the United States that suggests Washington sees his rise as a chance to narrow economic and political rifts.

Converting the warm mood music brought by Xi into substantively improved Sino-U.S. ties, however, will demand concessions that both sides are likely to resist.

Vice President Xi is virtually sure to succeed Hu Jintao as China's president in just over a year, and the mix of flattering attention and impatient demands that greeted Xi in the United States showed the Obama administration wants to make sure he enters the top job with a firm grasp of what Washington wants.

"China is no different from other countries in the sense that when you have the same leader hanging on, it's more difficult to change established policy, but China now has a situation where you can make adjustments in policy because of a pattern of regular turn-over," said J. Stapleton Roy, who was the U.S. ambassador in Beijing from 1991 to 1995.

"It does not necessarily make a big difference, but every time you change a leader, you have greater potential for change of policies," said Roy, who directs the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States.

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden appear to nurse some hopes that Xi's ascendance could bring greater Chinese accommodation. They spent plenty of time getting to know him, and he received a high-level reception at the Pentagon.

In turn, Xi (pronounced like "shee") put a folksy smile on China's usually grim-faced officialdom by returning to Muscatine, a town in Iowa he visited as a young cadre in 1985.

Xi also played on U.S. hopes for more trade and investment, a message he will also take to his final U.S. stop, Los Angeles, on Friday.

"From the U.S. point of view, a change in (Chinese) leaders is a natural opportunity to reset ties," said Robert Kuhn, an American biographer of Chinese leaders who has also advised them and has met Xi.

"Xi appears comfortable in his own skin and less worried about deviating from some script," said Kuhn.

But despite the shows of bonhomie and China's effusive media coverage, Xi's visit was punctuated by flashes of the tensions that weighed on ties during President Hu's time, and are likely to persist whoever succeeds Hu or wins the November U.S. presidential election.

Obama, Biden and senior members of the U.S. Congress plied Xi with demands that Beijing do

more to balance trade, help the United States deal with global troublespots, and relax its heavy grip on dissidents and restive Tibet.

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney publicly blasted Obama's China policy and called the Democratic president's meetings with Xi "empty pomp and ceremony." It was a reminder that domestic crosscurrents on both sides of the Pacific can complicate attempts to stabilize Sino-American ties.

For his part, Xi mixed his vows of goodwill with reminders that China is impatient with U.S. arms sales to Taiwan - the self-ruled island that Beijing deems an illegitimate breakaway - and with Western sympathy for Tibetan resistance to Chinese control.

"History demonstrates that whenever each side deals relatively well with the issues bearing on the other side's core and major interests, then Sino-U.S. relations are quite smooth and stable. But when it is the contrary, there are incessant troubles," he said in his main speech in Washington.

Xi's more personable ways and familiarity with the United States - he has visited five times and his daughter is studying at Harvard - could make dealing with troubles easier than under Hu, but the problems will persist, said Kuhn.

"I don't look for any big change. It will be more style than substance," he said. "Across the whole range of issues, you can't expect any big changes. But in today's world, style can become substance, and that could make a difference."

HOPING FOR A COWBOY HAT MOMENT

For now, the outlook for Sino-American relations under Xi is masked by China's desire to avoid becoming even more of an electoral target during the U.S. presidential race and to smooth the way for a trouble-free Chinese political succession.

In his public comments, Xi has avoided hitting back at the Obama administration's complaints about the U.S. trade deficit and Beijing's strictures on political dissent. China's state-run media have cast his visit as a triumph of goodwill, and largely avoided reporting the barbs from Washington.

Instead, Chinese officials have drawn parallels between Xi's effort to woo the American public and the 1979 visit to the United States by the then de facto leader Deng Xiaoping, who oversaw the opening of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Deng diluted wariness about China then by sporting a cowboy hat during a visit to Texas. Xi sought to reach out to the American heartland in a similar way in small-town Muscatine.

"My impression of the country came from you. For me, you are America," he told the people who had hosted him in 1985.

He recalled telling the daughter of his hosts, the Dvorchaks, about the Hollywood films he enjoyed, including "The Godfather", reported the China News Service.

"She was astonished and wondered how we could have seen so many American movies," recalled Xi.

"Although I stayed with the Dvorchaks for only two nights, they were two nights when I directly connected with the American people," he said. "That's something I'll never forget as long as I live."

That personal touch can help, said Carla Hills, a former U.S. trade representative, who met Xi in Washington.

"I think it's very tough to develop trust and willingness to cooperate unless you know the people on the other side and have confidence in them," said Hills.

"I sat next him at the luncheon," she added. "I think anyone who had tagged along behind him invisibly would have to say he did what he came to do. And that was to introduce himself."

CHANGES TIMES

Nowadays Chinese-U.S. relations are both far deeper and in many ways far more contentious than they were during Deng's 1979 visit or Xi's 1985 sleepover.

When Xi takes over from President Hu, he will inherit a list of disputes that will continue to irritate, if not inflame, relations. He will also confront a United States that appears less sure of its economic prospects and global pre-eminence.

In 2010, those disputes heated up into rancor between Beijing and Washington. China was angered with the Obama administration's decision to move ahead with arms sales to Taiwan, and also aggrieved by U.S. pressure about Internet censorship, human rights and Beijing's support for North Korea.

Both sides sought to cool the tensions, and since Hu's state visit to Washington in early 2010, Beijing has sought to mute disputes with the United States and its allies while it focuses on securing a trouble-free leadership succession.

Many in China, however, believe that their government should not bend to U.S. pressure and that Washington is to blame for U.S. economic woes and for many of the world's tensions.

Xi will inherit the Chinese Communist Party's collective, consensus-driven leadership, and it will be difficult for him to break with entrenched policies, even if he wants to. Hu could also try to keep some influence over foreign policy, like his predecessor Jiang Zemin.

"Successors normally can't establish or show what their views are, because they are still subordinate in a system run by others," said Roy, the former ambassador. "They can only show what their worldview is after they have taken the top position."

(Additional reporting by [Paul Eckert](#) and [Doug Palmer](#); editing by [Mohammad Zargham](#))

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/16/us-usa-china-xi-future-idUSTRE81F23U20120216>

Los Angeles Times

China political star Xi Jinping a study in contrasts

Vice President Xi Jinping arrives in the U.S. this week for a visit. On track to take China's top post this year, he was sent as a teen to a dirt-poor village.



Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping waves to Thai students during a visit to Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok late last year. He is expected in the United States this week. (Pairoj, AFP/Getty Images / February 11, 2012)

By Barbara Demick and David Pearson, Los Angeles Times

9:53 PM PST, February 11, 2012

Reporting from Liangjiahe, China, and Beijing

In 1969, a barely 15-year-old walked down a dirt road flanked by desiccated yellow cliffs from which generations of Chinese farmers had leached out subsistence living.

The path led to Liangjiahe village in central China where the Communist Party was sending city youths to do hard labor during the Cultural Revolution. For nearly seven years, Xi Jinping lived here, making a cave his home. A thin quilt spread on bricks was his bed; a bucket was his toilet. Dinners were a porridge of millet and aw grain. "

He ate bitterness like the rest of us" said one of the Liangjiahe farmers, Shi Yujong, who was 25 years old when the team arrived.

Xi was one of millions of Chinese youths driven into the countryside by Mao Tse-tung in those years. But his life has turned out to be anything but ordinary. From his years in Liangjiahe Xi worked his way into the grasp of the Communist Party, his rise fueled by a workaholic drive and apparent indifference to privilege. He left few mistakes or enemies in his trail.

That journey has brought him to the pinnacle of power. If all goes according to the script, Xi, since 2008 China's vice president, will replace Hu Jintao as general secretary of the Communist Party this year, and as president of the People's Republic the next, a post he could hold for a decade.

This week he arrives in the United States for what is being billed as his American coming out. The trip will be scrutinized for signs of how Xi and a new generation of Chinese leaders plan to govern, and how they might deal with a war-weary and economically wounded America still struggling to adapt to Beijing's rise.

"This is an imprinting opportunity to set an impression of the man who will run China for a decade," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an American investment banker who is advising the Chinese government on the trip.

The 58-year-old president-in-waiting is often depicted as and the in a line of colorless cadres, but his life story is rich with contrasts.

A passionate scholar of Marxist theory who preaches the need for young Chinese to study more Communist ideology, he nonetheless champions private enterprise. His daughter is a sophomore at Harvard. Personally unassuming, Xi is married to one of China's most glamorous figures, folk singer Peng Liyuan. "

Xi has an advantage," said Zhang Musheng, a former government official and prominent intellectual who has met the vice president several times. "He lived at the bottom for a long period. It makes him understand the current conditions in China very well."

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Xi Jinping (the family name is pronounced Shee) was born June 1, 1958, to a son of a revolutionary war hero Xi Zhongxun. He was the third of four children born to the elder Xi's second wife. When he was a young child, his father was named vice premier, and the family moved into Zhongnanhai, the vermilion-walled Communist Party compound next to the Forbidden City, home of the late emperors.

At a time when China was abjectly poor, Xi's family had their own cook and maids, a driver and a Russian-made car, a telephone, a special supply of food earmarked for the leadership. Fearful of spoiling the children, the elder Xi made his son wear his sisters' hand

medown clothing and shoes which the family dyed so they wouldn't be in girlish colors, according to a biography published last year.

But in 1962, Xi's father had falling out with Mao and went to prison. The family was booted from their compound, forced to move around Beijing. Four years later, Xi's mother was sent to a work camp in the countryside, and Xi's school was closed down. "

You grow up in an environment where everything is provided, and suddenly you're stripped naked and left in the cold," said a friend from Xi's younger days.

The friend, who did not want to be quoted by name when discussing the leadership, described a world in which suddenly a drift of teenagers would collect books left unguarded in libraries or discarded by people who feared persecution as intellectuals. "We had nothing to do but comfort ourselves but read," said the friend.

Xi has described Mao's orders that intellectual youths be sent to the countryside as a welcome relief. He was sent to Liangjiahe, hundreds of miles southwest of Beijing and in Shaanxi province, his father's base in revolutionary days.

Xi's service in the village is key to the narrative the Communist Party is spinning of a tireless, selfless volunteer, trying to counter Xi's image as a princeling," the derogatory term for the many offspring of leaders in power now. But in a 1998 essay titled "Son of the Yellow Earth," Xi acknowledged early difficulties. "I was rather casual at first. The villagers had an impression of me as a guy who doesn't like to work hard."

He wrote that he couldn't stand the heat, the poor food, the farm work, and after a few months, an away to Beijing. He was arrested during a crackdown on deserters from the countryside and sent to a work camp to dig ditches.

Xi later returned to the village, and his time threw himself into his work. His pale complexion and white hair darkened; he earned to farm and carried heavy buckets of water from the well. He devised a biogas pit that converted waste into energy.

Chai Chuyi, a 63-year-old villager with tobacco-stained teeth, described Xi as a typical city boy who arrived lugging a heavy suitcase full of books. "

At first, we couldn't understand his accent and he couldn't understand us," Chai said. "But he worked really hard. He didn't complain like some of the others from the city."

Despite the years of persecution, Xi still sought out the Communist Party's approval. He applied eight times to join its youth league, but nobody would accept his paperwork until he invited a young man who served as the local party secretary for a field egg and learned bread in the cave and pleaded his case. He finally became a party member in 1974.

With the party's recommendation he was able to secure a place at Tsinghua University in

Beijing. The party selected his major, chemical engineering, but he never worked in the field.

Xi's father was politically rehabilitated in 1978 and reappointed by Deng Xiaoping as party secretary for Guangdong province implementing economic reforms in an area that was to become the engine of the new China. No longer a liability, his father used his connections to get Xi a plum job as an assistant to Geng Biao, a fellow revolutionary who headed the powerful Central Military Commission.

The young man married an elegant, well-connected woman, Ke Lingling, whose father was Chinese ambassador to Britain. The young couple moved into a palatial apartment in a gated compound across from the state guest house, again living a life of privilege. But they split up after just three years.

Xi then began an odyssey through China, accepting two- to five-year stints from the party in different provinces as he worked his way up the ladder. Unlike other party members of his age group, he didn't drink much or womanize, said the friend from his younger days. He dressed plainly and rode a bicycle even after he ranked high enough for an official car. "

There was nothing flashy about him," said the friend. "It was as though he always had a sense of mission about him."

The woman who became his second wife had a similar impression when he was introduced to the 33-year-old Xi on a blind date. "

What kind of songs do you sing? I'm sorry, I don't watch much television," he said to Peng already one of China's most famous singers, according to an interview she gave the Chinese press.

His workaholic habits didn't change and when his daughter, an only child, was born in 1992, he missed her birth because of a typhoon in Fujian province where he was posted.

As governor of Fujian, where he courted investment from across the Taiwan Strait, and in other posts, Xi built his business credentials. "

He's a cool, rational guy who realizes and knows China needs foreign investment and technology" said Sidney Rittenberg Sr., an American consultant who successfully appealed to Xi to resolve a business dispute for a consortium of U.S. companies building a power project in Fujian in 2002.

Xi's support for the private sector intensified after he was named the top official of Zhejiang, a coastal province known for its concentration of free-wheeling entrepreneurs. Xi famously became an investor for Geely, a local automaker that would eventually purchase Volvo.

And in a party renowned for its chronic corruption, he has a reputation for staying clean. In 2007 he was chosen to replace Shanghai's disgraced party chief, Chen Liangyu. He attained a spot on the powerful Politburo Standing Committee later that year. "

I'd be surprised if you were able to dig up any dirt on him other than some stolen library books," said the fiend.

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In Liangjiahe village, the older people who knew Xi are proud and hopeful about his ascension. The village remains poor but with many new comforts: electricity, running water and roads that residents say was paved because of Xi's intercession.

He had remained in touch with some of the villagers, helping the disabled son of one of his hosts get an operation on his leg. In 1993, he came back to visit, bringing with him a gift of watches. "

He had enough watches for each household to get one," said villager Chai. "But the party secretary in the village took some of them, so many households didn't get them."

People who know Xi believe that his top priorities will be fighting corruption and closing the income gap between urbanites and parts like those heived with in Liangjiahe along with confronting China's mammoth environmental challenges. Although a U.S. Embassy memo, released in 2010 through WikiLeaks, described X as "redder than the red," many hope he will prove a reformer like his father, who condemned the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators at Tiananmen Square. "

He carries with him a very grand confidence," said Jon Huntsman Jr., former Utah governor and Republican candidate for president who was U.S. ambassador to China until last year and met with Xi on many occasions. "He exudes a sense of warmth, even charm, that I think will serve him well in power."

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Newsweek

NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE

THE DAILY
BEAST

Xi Jinping, China's Next President

China's communist party is about to undergo its biggest shakeup ever. Meet Xi Jinping, the go-getter who will lead Beijing's new political generation.

by [Melinda Liu](#) | February 6, 2012 12:00 AM EST

When U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden visited [China](#) last August, he spent many hours bonding over tea with his Beijing counterpart, Vice President Xi Jinping. At one point in their talks, Xi told Biden that his father—a former vice premier—and relatives had suffered during China's chaotic Cultural Revolution, a candid acknowledgment that things had gone horribly wrong during the country's bad old days. The official Chinese interpreter apparently was so flummoxed by Xi's comment that he never translated it into English, according to an informed source. Such eyebrow-raising candor is rare among Chinese apparatchiks. But "Xi communicates quite easily with foreign leaders," said one European diplomat who met him last year, "He's quite critical about the Cultural Revolution, saying there were mistakes made. I found that striking."

Xi, the heir apparent for China's top party post and the presidency, is the first among equals in a younger generation of Chinese leaders poised to take center stage during the Communist Party's massive transfer of power this year. The fresh crop of mandarins is more outspoken, individualistic, and self-promoting than the old crew. They are the nation's first "modern"

politicians and pose a startling contrast to the elder generation of gray, straitlaced bureaucrats. But the fact that Xi and his colleagues are more personality-driven means they are less predictable—and more likely to make waves at home and abroad.

Right now Sinologists are scrutinizing who's up and who's down in China because the coming succession will signal a profound generational shift. The so-called Fifth Generation of officials, led by Xi, will move up in what's slated to be the biggest political turnover in the history of the People's Republic of China. During this autumn's 18th Party Congress, more than 60 percent of personnel will change within the 370-member Central Committee. This leadership game of musical chairs also means key players in the nation's economic and financial administration, foreign policy, public security, and military operations "will be mostly newcomers after 2012," says Brookings analyst Cheng Li, who specializes in Chinese politics.

Such a massive transition is rare in China—it's happened only three times since 1949. The first, during the 1960s, ended in purges, widespread persecution of intellectuals, and the anarchy of the Cultural Revolution. The second in the late 1980s unraveled when top leaders disagreed over whether to use force to disperse youthful protesters in Tiananmen Square; bloodshed followed. The most recent shift, when current party head Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang Zemin in 2002, was an impressively stable transfer of power. But that was the Communist Party's only succession plan that went according to script.

Now, in the run-up to the 2012 transition, the party is composed of two increasingly competitive coalitions, referred to as "populists" and "elitists." The populists, led by President Hu, rely on a powerful nationwide network of cadres in the Communist Youth League; their policies aim to ameliorate the growing gap between China's have and have-nots, which is most pronounced in China's impoverished western regions. Elitists are known for their free-market economic views and favoring coastal export industries; they include many "princelings" like Xi who are offspring of former high-level cadres.



Xi escorts U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden on his China tour., Peter Parks / AFP-Getty Images

The unusual nature of this rivalry was evident in the way Xi became heir apparent during the 17th Party Congress in 2007. To ensure continued political dominance by the populists, Hu had handpicked a different heir, Li Keqiang. But the elitist camp objected to Li, hoping to find a compromise candidate with greater neutrality. The choice was determined by a secret intraparty poll among grassroots and senior cadres, says political commentator Li Datong, and it turned out that Xi “got the highest vote.” (Li Keqiang wound up being tipped to become premier in the reshuffle.) It was a face-saving solution, and a unique one: Xi essentially won a popularity contest.

In some ways, Xi has been on a leadership trajectory his entire life. He was born in 1953 as a classic “princeling,” growing up as a child among the serene pavilions and heavily guarded crimson gates of Zhongnanhai, the compound where senior Chinese leaders reside. His father, former vice premier Xi Zhongxun, is best known as the architect of China’s wildly successful and quasi-capitalist “special economic zones,” launched more than three decades ago in the era of Deng Xiaoping’s market-based economic reforms. But life wasn’t without its perils for the Xi family. Xi senior was purged three times under Mao Zedong and spent 16 years in detention, much of it in solitary confinement, during the 1966–76 Cultural Revolution. (According to unconfirmed Chinese media accounts, Xi’s half-sister died during the Cultural Revolution, prompting one of the few episodes when he publicly shed tears.) **Xi “recognizes the injustice and the travesty of leftist totalitarian ideology during the Cultural Revolution,” says author Robert Kuhn, who has written about China’s top leaders and has met Xi. “But you don’t see bitterness.”**

Xi was 9 years old when his father was first detained. Several years later, he joined millions of other urban youth “sent down” to rural communes for a stint of manual labor. “He was one of the first youth sent to the countryside,” says Kuhn, “Ironically, it was good for him. It gives him some distance from the princeling label. In general, princelings don’t fare well in the public perception.”

Far from the comforts of Beijing, Xi arrived in hardscrabble Liangjiahe village, in Shaanxi province in January 1969, lugging “a whole box of books” with him, remembers current Party Secretary Shi Chunyang. Within five years, Xi had joined the Communist Party and embraced life on the farm. Learning that peasants in a neighboring province were using biogas to fuel their stoves, he traveled there to buy up the requisite hardware and transported it back to Liangjiahe. The sight of a princeling working with pig manure so impressed his rural comrades—or so the story goes—that they made Xi their village party head and recommended that he be allowed to attend university, “which was unheard of at the time,” recalls one retired official who knew Xi in the ’80s. Farmers gathered to bid farewell to Xi, and he set off to study chemical engineering at Tsinghua University, China’s MIT. After his departure, Xi kept in touch with some of his peasant comrades, sending money to one who’d broken his leg. Later, when asked about his rural experience, Xi responded, “It was emotional.”

Mao’s death in 1976 ushered in an era of reforms, and Xi’s family was back in favor. In a move that supported his own political ambitions, Xi served as personal secretary to Defense Minister Geng Biao, a former subordinate of his father. He then worked his way up through provincial postings, where he was known as the guy who got things done. During a 17-year stint in Fujian—right across the narrow strait from Taiwan—he coined the slogan *mashang jiu ban* (“do it now”), boosted cross-strait trade, and bonded with Taiwanese executives. He even reportedly became golfing buddies with a retired Taiwanese official. As a vice mayor of Xiamen in 1987, he impressed visiting politicians by wearing a casual windbreaker instead of a Western-style suit, and riding in a minibus instead of a chauffeur-driven car. “He was unusually easygoing, warm, and down to earth,” recalled one of the visitors.

Xi’s reputation continued to grow when, in 2002, he moved to Zhejiang, a province known for entrepreneurial wheeling and dealing. The thriving nature of Zhejiang’s private enterprises—comprising nearly three quarters of the province’s GDP—impressed then-U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson during a 2006 visit. Paulson met Xi and declared him “the kind of guy who gets things over the goal line.” **American author Kuhn recalls that when he met Xi, “he had a real spark.”**



Xi Jinping's wife, the superstar singer Peng Liyuan (above), is possibly even more famous than her husband., Feng Li / Getty Images

Xi also struck Biden and other Americans as a leader with whom the U.S. can work—a standing that's bound to serve him well this month when he embarks on his first official trip to the U.S. For his part, Xi recently remarked that “our commitment to the development of the Sino-U.S. cooperative partnership should never waver in the face of passing developments.”

“By no means can we let relations again suffer major interference,” he said.

The biggest trick of Xi's presidency could be balancing a friendly relationship with Washington against China's complex domestic politics, in which nationalistic voices play a burgeoning role. Already, analysts believe he's had to counter the perception that he's too pro-Western; they point to a 2009 visit to Mexico in which Xi went off-script to slam countries trying to pressure Beijing, at the very moment when Washington was prodding China to revalue its currency. Complicating matters, Xi will need the support of China's generals “to consolidate his power,” says China analyst Willy Wo-Lap Lam. “This means the generals will have an even bigger say in foreign policy. [And] we've already seen many examples showing the generals aren't too happy with a closer relationship with the U.S.”

Will Xi be able to bridge the rifts within his own party? His princeling roots and free-market prowess make him appealing to the elitists, while his years on the farm make him more acceptable to the populists, many of whom spent their careers in the hinterland. Xi's also perceived to be clean; at least twice he's cleaned up after provincial corruption scandals that ensnared his predecessors. He's seen as a leader whose Cultural Revolution experiences

taught him the importance of humility and adaptability. “These are his strong points,” says Brookings analyst Li. “He’s also more spontaneous and less calculating than many of his peers.” And his image is “helped tremendously” among ordinary Chinese by his wife, superstar People’s Liberation Army singer Peng Liyuan, who is possibly more famous than her husband.

But Xi is hardly invincible. China faces alarming levels of inflation, a risky property bubble and massive local-government debt. Xi and his new team will face a steep learning curve—and his status as a compromise character means he lacks the institutionalized political backing that some of his rivals can mobilize. “Xi lacks his own people in senior positions in the party,” says Li. “In some ways, he’s very much on his own.”

With Isaac Stone Fish.

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The Washington Post

China's vice president highlights farm trade in Iowa visit

By [William Wan](#), Published: February 16, 2012

DES MOINES — The only soybean became the unlikely star of U.S.-China diplomacy Thursday during a visit here by Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping.

Xi, who is expected to take over as China's president next year, talked at length of China's need for the beans visited a soybean farm and had officials accompanying him sign agreements for massive shipments this year. He even took a seat on a John Deere tractor.

The visit, part of a [highly scripted weeklong U.S. tour](#), was meant to highlight how U.S. food exports such as soybeans represent a bright spot in a relationship that is otherwise riddled in turmoil.

By spending two days in Iowa — during which he also [reminisced with old acquaintances](#) and laid out plans with various farming officials — Xi's message was clear: Despite disagreements between the United States and China over human rights, the appropriate response to bloodshed in Syria, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and the status of Taiwan, at least the two countries can agree on soybeans.

China is believed to be the ancestral home of the soybean — which is used here in a variety of ways, including in the production of tofu, a major part of the Chinese diet.

Officials traveling with Xi signed agreements to buy more than 8 million tons of soybeans valued at \$4.3 billion from the United States; they were working on additional deals Thursday that could result in the purchase of an additional 12 million tons.

U.S. food exports to China have been booming of late, and Iowa was in many ways the perfect venue to highlight the growth. It is the largest U.S. produce not only of soybeans, but also corn and pork.

Last year, China became the biggest customer for U.S. agricultural exports as a whole, with purchases totaling roughly \$20 billion.

U.S.-Chinese trade relations outside agriculture have been more contentious. American officials and business leaders have assailed China over intellectual property theft and have been highly critical of its currency valuation and fair-trade practices. Meanwhile, the U.S. trade deficit with China reached \$29 billion last year.

On Thursday Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney sailed to Iowa administration for its China policy, saying in a Wall Street Journal op-ed that the policy is headed in "precisely the wrong direction" and citing this week's meetings with Xi "empty pomp and ceremony."

The Obama campaign responded, pointing out that Romney had invested in China in the past and implying that his sale of those investments had been driven by political motivations. Romney is trying to "have it both ways," the campaign said.

For Xi, the trip to Iowa — which he visited 27 years ago as a provincial official — was less about politics and more about bunting his image.

At a symposium Thursday in Des Moines, he recalled his own days toiling in fields during the tumultuous years of China's Cultural Revolution.

"I was a farmer in China and even worked as a village head," he said. "Agriculture, rural areas and farmers have a special place in my heart."

Later, while visiting soybean fields, Xi quizzed a farmer with rapid-fire questions about grain bin capacity, crop financing and the intricacies of crop pricing.

As he and the farmer walked around holding pieces of farming machinery, Xi glanced at the scrum of cameras and depots surrounding them and quietly discussed with his host the possibility of climbing into the tractor before them.

He did, sending photographers and camera crews into a frenzy, with some even tampering on the tractor itself for a teen shot.

"Xi represents a new generation very savvy of world opinion," said Robert Kuhn, an author and confidante of senior Chinese leaders. "Even though he's not picked in elections, he knows people are looking for reasons to trust and like him."

Xi departed Iowa on Thursday afternoon and spent the rest of the day touring the Port of Los Angeles, where he continued highlighting U.S.-Chinese trade relations.

On Friday, while still in L.A., he is expected to announce a major entertainment deal, which the Financial Times reported would team up DreamWorks Animation with two state-owned Chinese companies to build a new studio in Shanghai.

Xi also might attend a Lakers basketball game.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/chinas-vice-president-highlights-farm-trade-in-iowa-visit/2012/02/16/gIQA1MRhIR_story.html



US trip of China's next leader:

From Obama to Iowa

February 7, 2012

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — In 1985, Xi Jinping led a delegation to Muscatine, Iowa, to study advanced hog-raising techniques. He returns next week, preparing to lead the world's most populous nation.

China's vice president, who will take over the presidency from Hu Jintao next year, will be in the U.S. to meet President Barack Obama and other leaders and introduce himself to a U.S. audience. His decision to also visit the families who hosted him years ago is a rare personal touch for a Chinese leader, one that feeds his reputation as a new type of official who dares to step away from the traditional aloofness of Chinese high office.

"He appreciated learning about America on that level, and he is signaling by going there that he is going to be a different kind of leader," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an author and a longtime adviser to the Chinese government who has met with Xi for private talks. "He is going to be open. He is going to be appreciative."

Xi's ability to make personal connections and his unassuming confidence will be in much demand as he takes over the leadership of the ruling Communist Party this year, a step toward assuming the presidency.

The 58-year-old faces the tricky task of advancing China's development against the tides of global financial insecurity, resource scarcity, environmental crises and simmering social unrest, particularly in the western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet.

In his appearances, including a Feb. 14 White House meeting with Obama, Xi will offer reassurance that China and the U.S. remain committed to healthy relations, despite occasional turbulence.

"China wants a sign of respect to establish its up-and-coming leader on the world stage," said Joseph Cheng, head of the Contemporary China Research Center at the City University of Hong Kong.

Such visits by other Chinese leaders have been revealing. The risk-taking Deng Xiaoping left his mark in 1979 by attending a rodeo and donning a ten-gallon hat. Visiting just prior to taking power in 2002, Hu showed himself as bland, hyper-cautious and inscrutable.

Xi, who has a glamorous wife and a daughter at Harvard, was a consensus choice when tapped as successor in 2007. He has proven adept at suppressing his own views and avoiding antagonisms among the party's various branches and factions.

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Xi Jinping spent seven years toiling in the rugged loess hills of northern China before earning a chemistry degree at Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University. He spent three years as a top general's aide — imparting him with an important link to the powerful military — before opting for a decidedly unglamorous administrative posting in heavily agricultural Zhengding county southwest of Beijing.

It was as Zhengding Communist Party secretary that Xi went to Iowa on a mission to study hog raising and experience a slice of Americana. Xi stayed with local families for two nights, visited farms and watched baseball.

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<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2012/02/07/us-trip-of-chinas-next-leader-from-obama-to-iowa>

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AS_CHINA_FUTURE_LEADER?SITE=DCUSN&SECTION=HOME&TEMP_LATE=DEFAULT

China discord remains despite Xi's mood music

REUTERS FEBRUARY 16, 2012

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Converting the warm mood music brought by Xi into substantively improved Sino-U.S. ties, however, will demand concessions that both sides are likely to resist.

Vice President Xi is virtually sure to succeed Hu Jintao as China's president in just over a year, and the mix of flattering attention and impatient demands that greeted Xi in the United States showed the Obama administration wants to make sure he enters the top job with a firm grasp of what Washington wants.

"China is no different from other countries in the sense that when you have the same leader hanging on, it's more difficult to change established policy, but China now has a situation where you can make adjustments in policy because of a pattern of regular turn-over," said J. Stapleton Roy, who was the U.S. ambassador in Beijing from 1991 to 1995.

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President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden appear to nurse some hopes that Xi's ascendance could bring greater Chinese accommodation. They spent plenty of time getting to know him, and he received a high-level reception at the Pentagon.

In turn, Xi (pronounced like "shee") put a folksy smile on China's usually grim-faced officialdom by returning to Muscatine, a town in Iowa he visited as a young cadre in 1985.

Xi also played on U.S. hopes for more trade and investment, a message he will also take to his final U.S. stop, Los Angeles, on Friday.

"From the U.S. point of view, a change in (Chinese) leaders is a natural opportunity to reset ties," said Robert Kuhn, an American biographer of Chinese leaders who has also advised them and has met Xi.

"Xi appears comfortable in his own skin and less worried about deviating from some script," said Kuhn.

But despite the shows of bonhomie and China's effusive media coverage, Xi's visit was punctuated by flashes of the tensions that weighed on ties during President Hu's time, and are likely to persist whoever succeeds Hu or wins the November U.S. presidential election.

Obama, Biden and senior members of the U.S. Congress plied Xi with demands that Beijing do more to balance trade, help the United States deal with global troublespots, and relax its heavy grip on dissidents and restive Tibet.

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney publicly blasted Obama's China policy and called

the Democratic president's meetings with Xi "empty pomp and ceremony." It was a reminder that domestic crosscurrents on both sides of the Pacific can complicate attempts to stabilize Sino-American ties.

For his part, Xi mixed his vows of goodwill with reminders that China is impatient with U.S. arms sales to Taiwan - the self-ruled island that Beijing deems an illegitimate breakaway - and with Western sympathy for Tibetan resistance to Chinese control.

"History demonstrates that whenever each side deals relatively well with the issues bearing on the other side's core and major interests, then Sino-U.S. relations are quite smooth and stable. But when it is the contrary, there are incessant troubles," he said in his main speech in Washington.

Xi's more personable ways and familiarity with the United States - he has visited five times and his daughter is studying at Harvard - could make dealing with troubles easier than under Hu, but the problems will persist, said Kuhn.

"I don't look for any big change. It will be more style than substance," he said. "Across the whole range of issues, you can't expect any big changes. But in today's world, style can become substance, and that could make a difference."

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For now, the outlook for Sino-American relations under Xi is masked by China's desire to avoid becoming even more of an electoral target during the U.S. presidential race and to smooth the way for a trouble-free Chinese political succession.

In his public comments, Xi has avoided hitting back at the Obama administration's complaints about the U.S. trade deficit and Beijing's strictures on political dissent. China's state-run media have cast his visit as a triumph of goodwill, and largely avoided reporting the barbs from Washington.

Instead, Chinese officials have drawn parallels between Xi's effort to woo the American public and the 1979 visit to the United States by the then de facto leader Deng Xiaoping, who oversaw the opening of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Deng diluted wariness about China then by sporting a cowboy hat during a visit to Texas. Xi sought to reach out to the American heartland in a similar way in small-town Muscatine.

"My impression of the country came from you. For me, you are America," he told the people who had hosted him in 1985.

He recalled telling the daughter of his hosts, the Dvorchaks, about the Hollywood films he enjoyed, including "The Godfather", reported the China News Service.

"She was astonished and wondered how we could have seen so many American movies," recalled Xi.

"Although I stayed with the Dvorchaks for only two nights, they were two nights when I directly connected with the American people," he said. "That's something I'll never forget as long as I live."

That personal touch can help, said Carla Hills, a former U.S. trade representative, who met Xi in Washington.

"I think it's very tough to develop trust and willingness to cooperate unless you know the people on the other side and have confidence in them," said Hills.

"I sat next him at the luncheon," she added. "I think anyone who had tagged along behind him invisibly would have to say he did what he came to do. And that was to introduce himself."

CHANGES TIMES

Nowadays Chinese-U.S. relations are both far deeper and in many ways far more contentious than they were during Deng's 1979 visit or Xi's 1985 sleepover.

When Xi takes over from President Hu, he will inherit a list of disputes that will continue to irritate, if not inflame, relations. He will also confront a United States that appears less sure of its economic prospects and global pre-eminence.

In 2010, those disputes heated up into rancor between Beijing and Washington. China was angered with the Obama administration's decision to move ahead with arms sales to Taiwan, and also aggrieved by U.S. pressure about Internet censorship, human rights and Beijing's support for North Korea.

Both sides sought to cool the tensions, and since Hu's state visit to Washington in early 2010, Beijing has sought to mute disputes with the United States and its allies while it focuses on securing a trouble-free leadership succession.

Many in China, however, believe that their government should not bend to U.S. pressure and that Washington is to blame for U.S. economic woes and for many of the world's tensions.

Xi will inherit the Chinese Communist Party's collective, consensus-driven leadership, and it will be difficult for him to break with entrenched policies, even if he wants to. Hu could also try to keep some influence over foreign policy, like his predecessor Jiang Zemin.

"Successors normally can't establish or show what their views are, because they are still subordinate in a system run by others," said Roy, the former ambassador. "They can only show what their worldview is after they have taken the top position."

Chas Freeman, a retired career diplomat who served as former U.S. President Richard Nixon's principal interpreter on his ground-breaking visit to China nearly 40 years ago, concurred.

"Nobody who runs for office in any system, including in ours, ever tells you what they are really going to do when they get into office," Freeman said. "He's no fool and he's not told us what he's going to do."

(Additional reporting by Paul Eckert, Doug Palmer and Arshad Mohammed; editing by Mohammad Zargham and Todd Eastham)

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-usa-china-xi-futuretre81f23u-20120216,0,6278797.story>

China's political star Xi Jinping is a study in contrasts

February 14, 2012

Barbara Demick and David Pierson



China's Vice-President Xi Jinping attends a meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, Feb. 14, 2012. Obama on Tuesday pressed China's leader-in-waiting Xi on the importance of balanced trade flows between the two nations, as he met with the Chinese vice president in the Oval Office.

JASON REED/REUTERS

LIANGJIAHE, CHINA—In 1969, a pale, gangly 15-year-old walked down a dirt road flanked by desiccated yellow cliffs from which generations of Chinese farmers had eked out a subsistence living.

The path led to Liangjahe, a village in central China where the Communist Party was sending city youths to do hard labour during the Cultural Revolution. For nearly seven years, Xi Jinping lived there, making a cave his home. A thin quilt spread on bricks was his bed, a bucket was his toilet. Dinners were a porridge of millet and raw grain.

"He ate bitterness like the rest of us," said one of the Liangjiahe farmers, Shi Yujong, who was 25 years old when the teenager arrived.

Xi was one of millions of Chinese youths driven into the countryside by Mao Zedong in those years. But his life has turned out to be anything but ordinary. From his years in Liangjiahe, Xi worked his way into the graces of the Communist Party, his rise aided by a workaholic drive and apparent indifference to privilege. He left few mistakes or enemies in his trail.

That journey has brought him to the pinnacle of power. If all goes according to script, Xi, since 2008 China's vice president, will replace Hu Jintao as general secretary of the Communist Party this year, and as president of the People's Republic the next, a post he could hold for a decade.

This week he arrives in the United States for what is being billed as his American coming out. The trip will be scrutinized for signs of how Xi and a new generation of Chinese leaders plan to govern, and how they might deal with a war-weary and economically wounded America, still struggling to adapt to Beijing's rise.

"This is an imprinting opportunity to set an impression of the man who will run China for a decade," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an American investment banker who is advising the Chinese government on the trip.

The 58-year-old president-in-waiting is often depicted as another in a line of colourless cadres, but his life story is rich with contrasts.

A passionate scholar of Marxist theory who preaches the need for young Chinese to study more Communist ideology, he nonetheless champions private enterprise. His daughter is a sophomore at Harvard. Personally unassuming, Xi is married to one of China's most glamorous figures, folk singer Peng Liyuan.

"Xi has an advantage," said Zhang Musheng, a former government official and prominent intellectual who has met the vice president several times. "He lived at the bottom for a long period. It makes him understand the current conditions in China very well."

Xi Jinping was born June 1, 1953, the son of revolutionary war hero Xi Zhongxun. He was the sixth of seven children born to the elder Xi's second wife. When he was a young child, his father was named vice premier, and the family moved into Zhongnanhai, the vermilion-walled Communist Party compound next to the Forbidden City, home of the late emperors.

At a time when China was abjectly poor, Xi's family had their own cook and nannies, a driver and a Russian-made car, a telephone, a special supply of food earmarked

for the leadership. Fearful of spoiling the children, the elder Xi made his son wear his sisters' hand-me-down clothing and shoes, which the family dyed so they wouldn't be in girlish colors, according to a biography published last year.

But in 1962, Xi's father had a falling out with Mao and went to prison. The family was booted from their compound, forced to move around Beijing. Four years later, Xi's mother was sent to a work camp in the countryside, and Xi's school was closed down.

"You grow up in an environment where everything is provided, and suddenly you're stripped naked and left in the cold," said a friend from Xi's younger days.

The friend, who did not want to be quoted by name when discussing the leadership, described a world in which suddenly adrift teenagers would collect books left unguarded in libraries or discarded by people who feared persecution as intellectuals. "We had nothing to do to comfort ourselves but read," said the friend.

Xi has described Mao's orders for intellectual youths to be sent to the countryside as a welcome relief. He was sent to Liangjiahe, hundreds of kilometres southwest of Beijing and in Shaanxi province, his father's base in revolutionary days.

Xi's service in the village is key to the narrative that Communist Party propagandists spin about the future leader, depicting him as a selfless, tireless volunteer. But in a 1998 essay titled "Son of the Yellow Earth," Xi acknowledged early difficulties: "I was rather casual at first. The villagers had an impression of me as a guy who doesn't like to work hard."

He wrote that he couldn't stand the fleas, the poor food, the farm work, and after a few months, ran away to Beijing. He was arrested during a crackdown on deserters from the countryside and sent to a work camp to dig ditches.

Xi later returned to the village, and this time threw himself into his work. His pale complexion and white hands darkened; he learned to farm and carried heavy buckets of water from the well. He devised a biogas pit that converted waste into energy.

Chai Chunyi, a 63-year-old villager with tobacco-stained teeth, described Xi as a clueless city boy who arrived lugging a heavy suitcase full of books.

"At first, we couldn't understand his accent and he couldn't understand us," Chai said. "But he worked really hard. He didn't complain like some of the others from the city."

Despite the years of persecution, Xi still sought out the Communist Party's approval.

He applied eight times to join its youth league, but nobody would accept his paperwork until he invited a young man who served as the local party secretary for a fried egg and steamed bread in the cave and pleaded his case. He finally became a party member in 1974.

With the party's recommendation he was able to secure a place at Tsinghua University in Beijing. The party selected his major, chemical engineering, but he never worked in the field.

Xi's father was politically rehabilitated in 1978 and later appointed by Deng Xiaoping as party secretary for Guangdong province, implementing economic reforms in an area that was to become the engine of the new China. No longer a liability, his father used his connections to get Xi a plum job as an assistant to Geng Biao, a fellow revolutionary who headed the powerful Central Military Commission.

The young man married an elegant, well-connected woman, Ke Lingling, whose father was China's ambassador to Britain. The young couple moved into a spacious apartment in a gated compound across from the state guesthouse, again living a life of privilege. But they split up after just three years.

Xi then began an odyssey through China, accepting two- and three-year stints from the party in different provinces as he worked his way up the ladder. Unlike other party members of his age group, he didn't drink much or womanize, said the friend from his younger days. He dressed plainly and rode a bicycle even after he ranked high enough for an official car.

"There was nothing flashy about him," said the friend. "It was as though he always had a sense of mission about him."

The woman who became his second wife had a similar impression when she was introduced to the 33-year-old Xi on a blind date.

"What kind of songs do you sing? I'm sorry, I don't watch much television," he said to Peng, already one of China's most famous singers, according to an interview she gave the Chinese press.

His workaholic habits didn't change and when their daughter, an only child, was born in 1992, he missed her birth because of a typhoon in Fujian province, where he was posted.

As governor of Fujian, where he courted investment from across the Taiwan Strait, and in other posts, Xi built his business credentials.

"He's a cool, rational guy who realizes and knows China needs foreign investment

and technology,” said Sidney Rittenberg Sr., an American consultant who successfully appealed to Xi to resolve a business dispute for a consortium of U.S. companies building a power project in Fujian in 2002.

Xi’s support for the private sector intensified after being named the top official of Zhejiang, a coastal province known for its concentration of freewheeling entrepreneurs. Xi famously became a booster for Geely, a local automaker that would eventually purchase Volvo.

And in a party renowned for its chronic corruption, he had a reputation for staying clean. In 2007 he was chosen to replace Shanghai’s disgraced party chief Chen Liangyu. He attained a spot on the powerful Politburo Standing Committee later that year.

“I’d be surprised if you were able to dig up any dirt on him other than some stolen library books,” said the friend.

In Liangjiahe village, the older people who knew Xi are proud and hopeful about his ascension. The village remains poor, but with many new comforts: electricity, running water and a road residents say was paved because of Xi’s intercession.

He had remained in touch with some of the villagers, helping the disabled son of one of his hosts get an operation on his leg. In 1993, he came back to visit, bringing with him a gift of watches.

“He had enough watches for each household to get one,” said villager Chai. “But the party secretary in the village took some of them, so many houses didn’t get them.”

People who know Xi believe that his priorities in office will be addressing the country’s widening income gap, fighting corruption and confronting China’s mammoth environmental challenges. Although a U.S. Embassy memo, released in 2010 through WikiLeaks, described Xi as “redder than the red,” many hope he will prove a reformer like his father, who condemned the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators at Tiananmen Square.

“He carries with him a very grand confidence,” said Jon Huntsman Jr., the former Utah governor and Republican candidate for president, who was U.S. ambassador to China until last year and met with Xi on many occasions. “He exudes a sense of warmth, even charm, that I think will serve him well in power.”

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/1131266--china-s-political-star-xi-jinping-is-a-study-in-contrasts>



US Trip of China's Next Leader From Obama to Iowa

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN
BEIJING February 7, 2012 (AP)

In 1985, Xi Jinping led a delegation to Muscatine, Iowa, to study advanced hog-raising techniques. He returns next week, preparing to lead the world's most populous nation.

China's vice president, who will take over the presidency from Hu Jintao next year, will begin the U.S. trip to meet President Barack Obama and other leaders and introduce himself to a U.S. audience. His decision to also visit the families who hosted him years ago is a rare personal touch for a Chinese leader, one that feeds his reputation as a new type of official who does not step away from the traditional aloofness of Chinese high office.

"He appreciated learning about America on that level, and he is signaling by going there that he is going to be a different kind of leader," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an author and a longtime adviser to the Chinese government who has met with Xi for private talks. "He is going to be open. He is going to be appreciative."

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http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-trip-chinas-leader-obama-iowa-15527060#9UDIE_6ap

China discord remains despite Xi's mood music

Incoming president signals better ties with the U.S. but significant disputes remain between superpowers

BY CHRIS BUCKLEY, REUTERS FEBRUARY 17, 2012



Chinese Vice-president Xi Jinping (left), United States Vice President Joe Biden (centre) and Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (right) applaud a dance performance during a visit at the International Studies Learning Center in Los Angeles.

Photograph by: POOL, REUTERS

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He recalled telling the daughter of his hosts, the Dvorchaks, about the Hollywood films he enjoyed, including "The Godfather", reported the China News Service.

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CHANGES TIMES

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In 2010, those disputes heated up into rancor between Beijing and Washington. China was angered with the Obama administration's decision to move ahead with arms sales to Taiwan, and also aggrieved by U.S. pressure about Internet censorship, human rights and Beijing's support for North Korea.

Both sides sought to cool the tensions, and since Hu's state visit to Washington in early 2010, Beijing has sought to mute disputes with the United States and its allies while it focuses on securing a trouble-free leadership succession.

Many in China, however, believe that their government should not bend to U.S. pressure and that Washington is to blame for U.S. economic woes and for many of the world's tensions.

Xi will inherit the Chinese Communist Party's collective, consensus-driven leadership, and it will be difficult for him to break with entrenched policies, even if he wants to. Hu could also try to keep some influence over foreign policy, like his predecessor Jiang Zemin.

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http://www.vancouversun.com/story_print.html?id=6172466&sponsor=

Newsday

February 7, 2012

On US trip, next China leader will introduce self to Americans, reunite with former Iowa hosts

BEIJING (AP) -- In 1985, Xi Jinping led a delegation to Muscatine, Iowa, to study advanced hog-raising techniques. He returns next week, preparing to lead the world's most populous nation.

China's vice president, who will take over the presidency from Hu Jintao next year, will be in the U.S. to meet President Barack Obama and other leaders and introduce himself to a U.S. audience. His decision to also visit the families who hosted him years ago is a rare personal touch for a Chinese leader, one that feeds his reputation as a new type of official who dares to step away from the traditional aloofness of Chinese high office.

"He appreciated learning about America on that level, and he is signaling by going there that he is going to be a different kind of leader," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an author and a longtime adviser to the Chinese government who has met with Xi for private talks. "He is going to be open. He is going to be appreciative."

Xi's ability to make personal connections and his unassuming confidence will be in much demand as he takes over the leadership of the ruling Communist Party this year, a step toward assuming the presidency.

The 58-year-old faces the tricky task of advancing China's development against the tides of global financial insecurity, resource scarcity, environmental crises and simmering social unrest, particularly in the western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet.

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/ap-news-in-brief-at-5-58-a-m-est-1.3509447>

US-China row stays after Xi's visit

BY CHRIS BUCKLEY, REUTERS FEBRUARY 17, 2012

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - China's leader-in-waiting Xi Jinping won the kind of reception in the United States that suggests Washington sees his rise as a chance to narrow economic and political rifts.

Converting the warm mood music brought by Xi into substantively improved Sino-U.S. ties, however, will demand concessions that both sides are likely to resist.

Vice President Xi is virtually sure to succeed Hu Jintao as China's president in just over a year, and the mix of flattering attention and impatient demands that greeted Xi in the United States showed the Obama administration wants to make sure he enters the top job with a firm grasp of what Washington wants.

"China is no different from other countries in the sense that when you have the same leader hanging on, it's more difficult to change established policy, but China now has a situation where you can make adjustments in policy because of a pattern of regular turn-over," said J. Stapleton Roy, who was the U.S. ambassador in Beijing from 1991 to 1995.

"It does not necessarily make a big difference, but every time you change a leader, you have greater potential for change of policies," said Roy, who directs the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States.

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden appear to nurse some hopes that Xi's ascendance could bring greater Chinese accommodation. They spent plenty of time getting to know him, and he received a high-level reception at the Pentagon.

In turn, Xi (pronounced like "shee") put a folksy smile on China's usually grim-faced officialdom by returning to Muscatine, a town in Iowa he visited as a young cadre in 1985.

Xi also played on U.S. hopes for more trade and investment, a message he will also take to his final U.S. stop, Los Angeles, on Friday.

"From the U.S. point of view, a change in (Chinese) leaders is a natural opportunity to reset ties," said Robert Kuhn, an American biographer of Chinese leaders who has also advised them and has met Xi.

"Xi appears comfortable in his own skin and less worried about deviating from some script," said Kuhn.

But despite the shows of bonhomie and China's effusive media coverage, Xi's visit was punctuated by flashes of the tensions that weighed on ties during President Hu's time, and are likely to persist whoever succeeds Hu or wins the November U.S. presidential election.

Obama, Biden and senior members of the U.S. Congress plied Xi with demands that Beijing do more to balance trade, help the United States deal with global troublespots, and relax its heavy grip on dissidents and restive Tibet.

<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentID=20120218117816>

Xi's openness will bring different leadership style

Xi is ... able to listen to other opinions and accept other views'

**by christopher bodeen
| associated press**

February 12, 2012



Associated Press file photo

Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping delivers a speech during the 12th friendship youths meeting at the international convention center in Hanoi, Vietnam, Dec. 22. Xi is China's expected future state leader.

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The 58-year-old faces the tricky task of advancing China's development against the tides of global financial insecurity, resource scarcity, environmental crises and simmering social unrest, particularly in the western regions of Xinjiang and Tibet.

In his appearances, including a Tuesday White House meeting with Obama, Xi will offer reassurance that China and the U.S. remain committed to healthy relations, despite occasional turbulence.

"China wants a sign of respect to establish its up-and-coming leader on the world stage," said Joseph Cheng, head of the Contemporary China Research Center at the City University of Hong Kong.

A visit can hint at personal style

Such visits by other Chinese leaders have been revealing. The risk-taking Deng Xiaoping left his mark in 1979 by attending a rodeo and donning a 10-gallon hat. Visiting just before taking power in 2002, Hu showed himself as bland, hyper-cautious and inscrutable.

Xi, who has a glamorous wife and a daughter at Harvard, was a consensus choice when tapped as successor in 2007. He has proven adept at suppressing his own views and avoiding antagonisms among the party's various branches and factions.

Henry Kissinger described him last year as "a more assertive type than we've seen," while Vice President Joe Biden told Xi he was impressed with his "openness and candor."

In Chinese political parlance, Xi is a "princeling," the term for sons and daughters of communist China's founding fathers.

His father, Xi Zhongxun, was a key figure in the revolution that swept the communists to power in 1949, but was later imprisoned for nearly 30 years. Released in 1978, he helped establish China's groundbreaking Shenzhen Special Economic Zone.

Xi Jinping spent seven years toiling in the rugged loess hills of northern China before earning a chemistry degree at Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University. He spent three years as a top general's aide — imparting him with an important link to the powerful military — before opting for an unglamorous administrative posting in heavily agricultural Zhengding county southwest of Beijing.

It was as Zhengding Communist Party secretary that Xi went to Iowa on a mission to study hog raising and experience a slice of Americana. Xi stayed with local families two nights, visited farms and watched baseball.

Sarah Lande, a Muscatine native who hosted Xi, remembers him as outgoing, organized and self-possessed, dressed in a Western-style suit rather than the drab Mao jackets of previous visitors.

Xi's next few postings were in the coastal province of Fujian, where he built a reputation for breaking bureaucratic logjams.

He eventually became governor, then jumped to one of the most economically dynamic provinces, Zhejiang. After a brief spell leading the financial hub of Shanghai, he moved to Beijing as one of nine members of the party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee in 2007.

Observers uncertain how Xi will lead

For observers of Chinese politics, Xi poses a riddle: Will he continue to follow or tighten the model of rigid one-party rule married to a market economy, or embark on a relatively more liberal path that could weaken communist authority?

During Xi's five years in Zhejiang, private businesses and business associations thrived, along with some civic society groups. In one provincial city, citizens were given a say in how the local government spends its budget, something that remains extremely rare elsewhere in the country.

While Xi was not necessarily behind such moves, he gets credit for not standing in their way, said Beijing political analyst Li Fan. "Xi is a person who is able to listen to other opinions and accept other views, although he isn't an initiator," he said.

Zhejiang-based pro-democracy activist Yin Weihong is more skeptical, saying Xi was quick to move against pro-democracy activists and did nothing to halt the demolition of a Protestant church that had refused to register with the government.

"I can't recall any instance when he came across as particularly tolerant," Yin said.

Xi has left largely positive impressions on foreign guests, including Biden, with whom he visited earthquake-stricken areas of Sichuan province last year. Biden aides said Xi came across as genuine and noted that he spoke at meetings without notes.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad invited Xi back to his state during a trade mission to China in September. He said Xi recalled the names of Iowans he had met and even produced the original itinerary from the visit.

It may be years before Xi's true attitudes are known. Hu, after relinquishing his posts as head of party and state, is expected to retain the key position of military chief through 2014 or beyond. Xi won't truly be his own man until his predecessor exits the stage.

<http://dmjuice.desmoinesregister.com/article/20120212/NEWS/302120081/1001>

China discord remains despite Xi's mood music

REUTERS FEBRUARY 16, 2012

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Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney publicly blasted Obama's China policy and called the Democratic president's meetings with Xi "empty pomp and ceremony." It was a reminder that

domestic crosscurrents on both sides of the Pacific can complicate attempts to stabilize Sino-American ties.

For his part, Xi mixed his vows of goodwill with reminders that China is impatient with U.S. arms sales to Taiwan - the self-ruled island that Beijing deems an illegitimate breakaway - and with Western sympathy for Tibetan resistance to Chinese control.

"History demonstrates that whenever each side deals relatively well with the issues bearing on the other side's core and major interests, then Sino-U.S. relations are quite smooth and stable. But when it is the contrary, there are incessant troubles," he said in his main speech in Washington.

Xi's more personable ways and familiarity with the United States - he has visited five times and his daughter is studying at Harvard - could make dealing with troubles easier than under Hu, but the problems will persist, said Kuhn.

"I don't look for any big change. It will be more style than substance," he said. "Across the whole range of issues, you can't expect any big changes. But in today's world, style can become substance, and that could make a difference."

HOPING FOR A COWBOY HAT MOMENT

For now, the outlook for Sino-American relations under Xi is masked by China's desire to avoid becoming even more of an electoral target during the U.S. presidential race and to smooth the way for a trouble-free Chinese political succession.

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Chas Freeman, a retired career diplomat who served as former U.S. President Richard Nixon's principal interpreter on his ground-breaking visit to China nearly 40 years ago, concurred.

"Nobody who runs for office in any system, including in ours, ever tells you what they are really going to do when they get into office," Freeman said. "He's no fool and he's not told us what he's going to do."

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46419632/ns/world_news-asia_pacific/t/us-china-discord-remains-after-xis-mood-music/#.Tz-ueVE_6ao

Xi Jinping, sympathetic figure Leader

February 8, 2012

[TRANSLATION OF BELOW]

When you first set foot in America, nearly three decades ago, Xi Jinping along with a delegation led arrive in Muscatine, Iowa. When they do not come to politics, let alone a serious diplomatic mission. They come just to learn how to raise pigs is good and right. The incident was long gone. Next week, Jinping again set foot in the United States, but this time with status and other missions are far more serious. As vice president of a country's superpower new arrival Jinping is very strategic, especially for the continuation of the relationship between the two countries, the U.S. and China. Jinping scheduled meet with President Barack Obama and other top U.S. figures. In addition to introducing ourselves, is expected Jinping's visit would ease tensions between the two countries. In the next leader of the next year, Jinping will replace the President of China Hu Jintao. Perhaps, Jinping's visit to China before the turn of the sort of leadership assessment. During the visit, Jinping was also impressed by trying to make new inroads with more sympathetic. One way to visit the family of the former "accommodate" him in the middle of "learning". The attitude of sympathetic as it could say something new, especially considering that this figure of the official government of China impressed "outs", do not care about other people, and stiff. **"He would appreciate the opportunity to learn American. Such conditions indicate that he would be his prime (China) are different. He will be a (leader) is open and appreciative," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, writer who is also adviser to the Government of China for a long time.** Compliments also asked senior U.S. diplomat, Henry Kissinger, years ago, who called Jinping as a figure of " more assertive than we've ever seen before ". Meanwhile, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden admitted impressed with the "openness and frankness". However, the 58-year-old man was also going to deal with various issues in the future is quite risky, especially for China. Issues range from the broke down global financial conditions, resource scarcity, environmental crisis, until the issue of unrest in its own territory, as in the provinces of Xinjiang and Tibet, the western part of China is far from the capital Beijing. In a visit to the House White, 14 February, Jinping will offer some sort of guarantee birthday if the relationship between the two countries will remain bound in a commitment to a healthy relationship despite various shocks continue to occur. According to Chief Researcher Research Center of China Contemporary at City University in Hong Kong Joseph Cheng, a visit as did Jinping China is actually a way of asking candidates to respect the world's future leaders. A similar visit made in the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, when in 1979 he came to the U.S. and attend a rodeo cowboy wearing a distinctive hat. The same is done ahead of Hu Jintao served as president in 2002. But the difference, when it Jintao actually appear "flat", seems too cautious, and even seems difficult to predict. (REUTERS / AP / DWA)

Xi Jinping, Sosok Pemimpin Simpatik

February 8, 2012

Saat pertama kali menginjakkan kaki di negeri Paman Sam, nyaris tiga dekade lalu, Xi Jinping beserta satu delegasi yang dipimpinnya tiba di Muscatine, Iowa. Ketika itu mereka tidak datang untuk urusan politik, apalagi misi diplomatik serius. Mereka datang hanya untuk belajar bagaimana cara beternak babi yang baik dan benar. Kejadian itu memang sudah lama berlalu. Pekan depan, Jinping kembali menginjakkan kakinya di Amerika Serikat, namun kali ini dengan status dan misi lain yang jauh lebih serius. Sebagai wakil presiden sebuah negeri adidaya baru, kedatangan Jinping sangat strategis, terutama bagi kelanjutan hubungan kedua negara, AS dan China. Jinping diagendakan menemui Presiden Barack Obama dan sejumlah tokoh penting AS lain. Selain untuk memperkenalkan diri, kunjungan Jinping diharapkan bakal meredakan ketegangan yang terjadi antarkedua negara.

Pemimpin mendatang Dalam satu tahun ke depan, Jinping bakal menggantikan Presiden China Hu Jintao. Boleh jadi, kunjungan Jinping menjadi semacam penjajakan China menjelang pergantian kepemimpinan. Dalam kunjungan itu, Jinping juga terkesan mencoba membuat terobosan baru dengan lebih bersikap simpatik. Salah satu caranya dengan mengunjungi pihak keluarga yang dahulu "menampung" dirinya saat tengah "belajar". Sikap simpatik seperti itu bisa dibilang sesuatu yang baru, apalagi mengingat selama ini sosok pejabat Pemerintah China terkesan "menyendiri", tidak peduli orang lain, dan kaku. **"Dia sangat menghargai kesempatan mempelajari Amerika. Kondisi seperti itu menunjukkan kalau dia bakal menjadi sosok pemimpin (China) yang berbeda. Dia akan menjadi seorang (pemimpin) yang terbuka dan apresiatif," ujar Robert Lawrence Kuhn, penulis yang juga penasihat Pemerintah China dalam waktu lama.** Pujian juga dilontarkan diplomat senior AS, Henry Kissinger, tahun lalu, yang menyebut Jinping sebagai seorang tokoh yang "lebih tegas dari yang pernah kami lihat sebelumnya". Sementara itu, Wakil Presiden AS Joe Biden mengaku terkesan dengan "keterbukaan dan keterusterangannya". Namun begitu, pria berusia 58 tahun tersebut juga bakal menghadapi berbagai isu di masa mendatang yang cukup riskan, terutama bagi China. Persoalan itu mulai dari gonjang-ganjing kondisi keuangan global, kelangkaan sumber daya, krisis lingkungan hidup, hingga isu kekacauan yang terjadi di wilayahnya sendiri, seperti di Provinsi Xinjiang dan Tibet, wilayah bagian barat China yang jauh dari ibu kota Beijing. Dalam kunjungannya ke Gedung Putih, 14 Februari mendatang, Jinping akan menawarkan semacam jaminan ulang kalau hubungan antarkedua negara akan tetap terikat dalam sebuah komitmen hubungan yang sehat walau berbagai gejolak terus terjadi. Menurut Kepala Peneliti Pusat Penelitian China Kontemporer di City University Hongkong Joseph Cheng, kunjungan seperti yang dilakukan Jinping sebenarnya merupakan cara China meminta dunia menghormati calon pemimpin masa depannya. Kunjungan serupa pernah dilakukan di masa kepemimpinan Deng Xiaoping, ketika tahun 1979 dia datang ke AS dan menghadiri rodeo dengan mengenakan topi khas koboi. Hal serupa juga dilakukan menjelang Hu Jintao menjabat sebagai presiden pada tahun 2002. Namun bedanya, ketika itu Jintao

justru tampil "hambar", terkesan terlalu waspada, dan bahkan tampak sulit ditebak. (REUTERS/AP/DWA)

<http://internasional.kompas.com/read/2012/02/08/07363551/Xi.Jinping.Sosok.Pemimpin.Simpatik>

Orange County Register

Feb. 7, 2012 1:23 AM ET

US trip of China's next leader: from Obama to Iowa

CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — In 1985, Xi Jinping led a delegation to Muscatine, Iowa, to study advanced hog-raising techniques. He comes back next week, preparing to lead the world's most populous nation.

China's vice president, who will take over the presidency from Hu Jintao next year, will be in the U.S. to meet President Barack Obama and other leaders and introduce himself to a U.S. audience. His decision to also visit the families who hosted him years ago is a rare personal touch for a Chinese leader, one that feeds his reputation as a new type of official who dares to step away from the traditional aloofness of Chinese high office.

"He appreciated learning about America on that level, and he is signaling by going there that he is going to be a different kind of leader," said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an author and a longtime adviser to the Chinese government who has met with Xi for private talks. "He is going to be open. He is going to be appreciative."

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Such visits by other Chinese leaders have been revealing. The risk-taking Deng Xiaoping left his mark in 1979 by attending a rodeo and donning a ten-gallon hat. Visiting just prior to taking power in 2002, Hu showed himself as bland, hyper-cautious and inscrutable.

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Sarah Lande, a Muscatine native who hosted Xi, remembers him as outgoing, organized and self-possessed, dressed in a Western-style suit rather than the drab Mao jackets of previous visitors.

"It was all through interpretation so we couldn't talk one-to-one, but they were very interested in how to produce more food for their country," Lande said in a telephone interview. "It seemed special to us that he would want to know so much about us and how we worked."

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He eventually became governor, then jumped to one of China's most economically dynamic provinces, Zhejiang. Following a brief spell leading the financial hub of Shanghai, he moved to Beijing as one of nine members of the party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee in 2007.

For observers of Chinese politics, Xi poses a riddle: Will he continue to follow or tighten the model of rigid one-party rule married to a market economy, or embark on a relatively more liberal path that could weaken communist authority?

During Xi's five years in Zhejiang, private businesses and business associations thrived, along with some civic society groups. In one provincial city, citizens were given a say in how the local government spends its budget, something that remains extremely rare elsewhere in the country.

While Xi was not necessarily behind such moves, he gets credit for not standing in their way, said Beijing political analyst Li Fan. "Xi is a person who is able to listen to other opinions and accept other views, although he isn't an initiator," he said.

Zhejiang-based pro-democracy activist Yin Weihong is more skeptical, saying Xi was quick to move against pro-democracy activists and did nothing to halt the demolition of a Protestant church that had refused to register with the government.

"I can't recall any instance when he came across as particularly tolerant," Yin said. Xi has left largely positive impressions on foreign guests, including Biden, with whom he visited earthquake-stricken areas of Sichuan province last year. Biden aides said Xi came across as genuine and noted that he spoke at meetings without notes.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad invited Xi back to his state during a trade mission to China in September. He said Xi recalled the names of Iowans he had met and even produced the original itinerary from the visit.

It may be years before Xi's true attitudes are known. Hu, after relinquishing his posts as head of party and state, is expected to retain the key position of military chief through 2014 or beyond. Xi won't truly be his own man until his predecessor exits the stage.

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