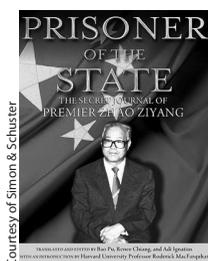


1979 Soviet invasion, as well as the subsequent rise of al Qaeda as fueled by Saudi funding and religious inspiration and as further exacerbated by America's intrusive military presence in the region. Wawro delves into the details of the political-military strategies associated with American military interventions into Iraq and Afghanistan. While these recent events have been thoroughly investigated elsewhere, Wawro provides a useful overview for those unfamiliar with these alternative contemporary accounts. One glaring shortcoming for a book bearing a 2010 copyright is the absence of even a cursory assessment of the 2007 American "surge" strategy in Iraq.

The most disappointing aspect of *Quicksand* is Wawro's failure to suggest practical solutions to the strategic dilemmas that history has bequeathed to contemporary American policymakers. Given the strategic imperatives of fighting the Cold War and the constraints imposed by existing realities of regional and US domestic politics, Wawro in his concluding chapter asks, "what were Washington's options?" Unfortunately, this is one question not adequately explored in Wawro's otherwise superb history of America's evolving strategy in the Middle East.



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### ***Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang***

translated and edited by Bao Pu, Renee Chiang, and Adi Ignatius

**Reviewed by Dr. Larry M. Wortzel, COL (USA Retired),**  
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Zhao Ziyang was the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Premier of China from 1987 to 1989. The Tiananmen Massacre, which the Communist Party prefers to call the "Tiananmen Incident," took place during his tenure. Zhao Ziyang's narrative presents his views on how and why senior CCP leaders decided to use force to suppress protests on 4 June 1989, during the demonstrations in Beijing. His censure by the CCP resulted in house arrest until his death on 17 January 2005, at the age of 85. He also provides important insight into factional struggles inside the Communist Party and how these struggles manifest themselves at the top of Chinese politics.

In telling Zhao Ziyang's story, the editors and translators provide fascinating insight into the secret inner workings of the CCP. In addition, *Prisoner of the State* confirms much of what Zhang Liang, Andrew Nathan, and Perry Link said about the machinations inside the CCP related to the Tiananmen in their edited work *The Tiananmen Papers: The Chinese Leadership's Decision to Use Force Against Their Own People-In their Own Words*.

Zhao Ziyang took over as General Secretary of the CCP in 1987, at the age of 68. His role, circumscribed and supervised by senior Party elders like Deng Xiaoping and the Politburo Standing Committee of the Party, was

to oversee economic transformation in China. Zhao also was expected to help shepherd limited political reforms without weakening the Communist Party or its control of the country.

Within two years of his accession as General Secretary, however, China was near chaos. Rampant inflation, internal discord, and corruption fueled popular unrest. Between April 1989 and 4 June, millions of students, workers, and retirees were in the streets protesting against the CCP and conditions in the nation. Beijing was brought to a standstill and other cities throughout China were in turmoil. Once the People's Liberation Army (PLA) acted, the death toll in Beijing was reported by one defector to be as high as 3,200 people.

Ultimately removed from office by his peers and elders, Zhao Ziyang spent the remainder of his life in forced seclusion. Despite continuous surveillance under house arrest, the translators tell us he managed to "record his thoughts and recollections regarding some of China's most critical moments." Zhao produced thirty hour-long audio tapes, concealing them by recording over cassettes of Chinese opera and children's songs his jailors permitted him to keep around the house. Then he distributed the tapes to trusted friends, a few to each, in case the CCP discovered them and tried to confiscate the memoirs. Eventually the tapes were smuggled to Hong Kong.

This is an amazing look into the political maneuvers and squabbles at the highest levels of the Chinese Communist Party. Zhao lays bare the factional disputes, personal rivalries, and petty backstabbing that takes place in the inner sanctums of power in China. And the narrative rings true. Andrew Nathan and Bruce Gilley tell a similar story of events at the top of the CCP in *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files*. To confirm that things haven't changed much a decade into the 21st century, one needs only to read Richard McGregor's *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*.

Zhao Ziyang's memoir details the manner in which political factions fight internally for policy supremacy and ultimate power. *Prisoner of the State* is an amazing look at the formation of civilian and military networks, factional wrangling, competition for power, and high-level corruption in the world's largest Communist state.

Why is the memoir relevant today? It is because politics in China have not changed. China's current CCP Chairman, Hu Jintao, visited the United States for several days beginning 18 January 2011. At the joint press conference between Presidents Obama and Hu, while President Obama was calling his counterpart "President Hu," the Chinese translator was saying "Party Chairman Hu." Moreover, the drama described by Zhao Ziyang concerning his own accession to power is about to play itself out again in China. Hu Jintao is expected to turn over the reins to Xi Jinping in 2021 while attempting to pull the strings of power from behind the curtain of retirement, as Deng Xiaoping did to Zhao Ziyang.

This is an excellent book for China specialists and nonspecialists alike. *Prisoner of the State* lays bare the secret political struggles at the top of the Chinese Communist Party.