

South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > My Take on Xi Rumours

My Take on Xi Rumours

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Mon, 10/01/2012 - 09:57

Paper No. 5208

11-Sept-2012

By B. Raman

Xi Jinping, 59, Chinese Vice-President, who is expected to take over from Hu Jintao as the head of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the 18th Party Congress next month, has not been attending to his protocol duties for a week now.

2. During the last one week, the Chinese Foreign Office is reported to have cancelled his pre-scheduled meetings with Mrs. Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, (scheduled for September 5), Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, a Russian official and Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt of Denmark (scheduled for September 10).

3. While Chinese officials have not given any reason for the cancellation of these appointments, a U.S. official was quoted by the media as saying that Mr. Xi cancelled his meeting with Mrs. Clinton because of a back problem.

4. These cancellations have given rise to considerable rumours in Chinese microblogs and in web sites of overseas Chinese organisations. Despite the attempts of the Chinese authorities to block these microblogs and web sites, rumours and speculation regarding Mr. Xi continue to circulate.

5. These rumours and speculation fall under two categories. The first is that he is undergoing treatment for a back problem either due to natural causes or as a result of an accident. The second is that he escaped with minor injuries in an assassination attempt.

6. Radio Free Asia (RFA), which is funded by the US Congress, reported, inter alia, as follows on September 10 while discussing the various rumours under circulation:

“China's Internet censors on Monday blocked searches about vice-president and presumed leader-in-waiting Xi Jinping and the ruling Chinese Communist Party's discipline czar He Guoqiang following rumors that they had been injured in separate car accidents.

“The U.S.-based Chinese news website Boxun reported over the weekend that Xi and He were being treated at Beijing's 301 Military Hospital after being injured in two separate road accidents on the evening of Sept. 4, sparking media speculation and rumours that the two were the targets of assassination attempts by allies of ousted Chongqing Party boss Bo Xilai and national security chief Zhou Yongkang.

“In an article that was removed within hours of being posted, Boxun reported that Xi's car was sandwiched by off-road vehicles, leaving him in hospital with a spinal injury.

“It said He Guoqiang, the secretary of the Commission for Discipline Inspection, was also involved in a separate road accident on the same night, when a truck traveling at high speed hit his car from behind, causing it to turn over.

“The website, whose reports are not always validated, said He was in critical condition, while Xi sustained minor injuries.

“However, the report sparked a wave of rumours that military officers and supporters of Bo and Zhou may have carried out attacks on the two officials.

“Such reports about the whereabouts and plans of China's heavily-guarded top officials are notoriously hard to confirm, and RFA was unable to do so.

“Boxun reported that two military officers have since been detained for questioning.”

7. I am disinclined for the present to accept the credibility of the rumours regarding a possible assassination attempt. In view of the forthcoming 18th Party Congress, physical security had been considerably stepped up in Beijing and Chongqing for the last one month. It would have been difficult for any group of conspirators to plot an assassination undetected and attempt to carry it out.

8. If an attempt had been made on September 4 as alleged by the rumours, there would have been a further upgradation of security after the alleged attempt. My impression is that the security alert in Beijing and Chongqing continues to be at the same level as it was before September 4. One does not notice any sign of security nervousness or panic in Beijing.

(The writer is Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, New Delhi, and, presently, Director, Institute For Topical Studies, Chennai, and Associate of the Chennai Centre For China Studies. E-mail: seventyone2@gmail.com^[1] Twitter @SORBONNE75)

Category:

Papers ^[2]

Countries:

China ^[3]

Topics:

Political ^[4]

Copyright ©2012. All Rights are Reserved.

Source URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/967>

Links

[1] <mailto:seventyone2@gmail.com>

[2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>

[3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/china>

[4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/political>