Politics in East Asia

II China
D. Political and Economic Reform

The End of the Mao Years

• Death of Zhou Enlai (January 1976)
• Death of Mao Zedong (September 1976)
• Leadership Succession
  – Hua Guofeng (a beneficiary): Maoism
  – Gang of Four’s coup attempt (October 1976)
• Deng Xiaoping’s seizure of power (1978)

Post-Cultural Revolution Transition

Post-Mao Transformation

• Legacy of the Mao Years
  – Government deteriorated
  – Economy stagnated
• Reforms
  – Pragmatic changes
    • Party/government (retirement)
    • Legal system (laws established)
    • Economic system (capitalism)
    • Foreign policy (opening)
  – Continued party dominance
Political Dynamics

- Reformers
  - Deng Xiaoping
    - Pragmatist emphasizing national interest
    - Power broker
  - Second Echelon
    - Hu Yaobang
    - Zhao Ziyang
    - Promoting economic and political reform

- Conservatives
  - Long-march generation
  - Chen Yun, etc.
  - Emphasizing Communist Party dominance
    (Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought)
  - Resisted rapid change

Deng’s Pursuit of Reform

- Deng’s fiscal decentralization (revenue sharing) as the means to form a pro-reform bloc ==> more provincial leaders were included in the CC

- More managerial autonomy in the local level (==> more patronage opportunities), locality-based investment

- Economic development as career- incentives
- Development of vested interests

Problems with Reforms

Economic Reform => Income Gap, Inflation and Unemployment => Citizens’ Frustration => Student Protest
Relative deprivation
Upsurge in consumer demand
Privatization and decontrol => expected price increase
Urban unemployment (2-3.5%, four million people)
Economic Reform => Western Influence
=> Student Protest
Human Rights
Freedom of Speech
Political Pluralism

Economic Reform => Western Influence
=> Conservative Backlash
Anti-establishment
Bourgeois Decadence

Economic Reform => Corruption and Economic Crimes => Conservative Backlash
Diminished popular prestige of the party

Problems with Reforms

Transition to Autocratic Rule

• Tiananmen Square Movement in 1989
  – Student protest demanding democracy
  – Citizens’ participation
  – Crack down by the Conservatives
• Deng’s continued effort to pursue pragmatic reform, deemphasizing ideology
• Jiang Zemin (Centrist technocrat): 1989-2002
• Hu Jintao (2002-