
Personal loyalties may decide Mr Hu case - The Age

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Mr Stern Hu was accustomed to dealing with Chinese officials whose power far exceeded the titles on their business cards, as he worked his way through the fat bureaucracies competing for control of China's USD 350 billion steel industry. But he probably never came across anyone quite like Mr Wu Zhiming, who is due to decide his fate within 10 days.

Mr Wu derives much of his power from the little known fact that he is a relative of, and local enforcer for, the former president Mr Jiang Zemin, who still holds enormous political sway.

His agencies are soon due to commit Mr Hu and his Rio Tinto iron ore sales team to trial, renew the investigation or perhaps even set them free as a demonstration of the thaw in Sino Australian relations.

Mr Wu's official power comes from his deceptively modest title as secretary of Shanghai's Politics and Law Committee. The committee controls the city's State Security Bureau, which tapped Mr Hu's phones and arrested him, and also controls the prosecutor who downgraded Hu's charges from giving bribes and stealing state secrets to stealing trade secrets and receiving bribes.

The committee also controls the Public Security Bureau (police), which now has Mr Hu's file, and the court that may soon hear his case, as well as the Justice Bureau (which administers Hu's Shanghai Detention Centre, in Pudong) and licenses the lead lawyers representing Hu and his three colleagues.

Mr Hu, who is an Australian citizen, and Chinese iron ore salesmen Mr Liu Caikui, Mr Wang Yong and Mr Minqiang, have not seen any family, friends or colleagues since they were led away by Shanghai's secret intelligence agency on July 5th 2009.

(Sourced from The Age)

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