

**CHINA'S PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP
RESHUFFLE UNDER XI JINPING**

CHEN Gang

EAI Background Brief No. 1157

Date of Publication: 28 July 2016

Executive Summary

1. With recent reshuffles at the provincial level, Xi Jinping, China's paramount leader, has been consolidating his power over local affairs and preparing for the next round of power transfer at the 19th Party Congress in 2017.
2. Since the beginning of year 2016, more than 40 political stars have been promoted or transferred to new provincial posts. Some incumbent officials had to give up their positions because they reached retirement age or were investigated for corruption charges.
3. Among all these personnel changes, Li Qiang, Lu Xinshe, Wang Guosheng, Che Jun, Luo Huining, Lin Duo, Chen Run'er, Xie Fuzhan, Bu Xiaolin, Liu Guozhong, Sun Jinlong, Hu Heping, Liu Qi and Lou Qinjian, have been either promoted or transferred to posts of provincial governors or party chiefs.
4. Since the 18th Party Congress in November 2012, Xi has successfully placed many of his protégés in key provincial positions.
5. Among the 31 provincial regions, only the party chiefs and governors of Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangdong and Tibet have retained their positions since 2013. Substantial changes to the provincial/municipal leadership in these regions are expected to come before the 19th Party Congress.
6. Xi's cohorts that have become provincial leaders include Chen Min'er (party secretary of Guizhou province), Xia Baolong (party secretary of Zhejiang province), Li Qiang (party secretary of Jiangsu province), Bayin Chaolu (party secretary of Jilin province), Liu Qi (governor of Jiangxi province), Lou Yangsheng (deputy party secretary of Shanxi province), Ying Yong (deputy party secretary of Shanghai) and Shi Taifeng (governor of Jiangsu province).

7. Xi is a game-changer in the rule-making for provincial leaders' political mobility as he has been advocating a new principle of "*neng shang neng xia*" where local cadres could move up or down the political ladder according to their performance.
8. Previously, though the prospects for further promotion for most provincial leaders were rather slim, it was rare for them to face demotions if they had not made serious political mistakes or been involved in graft activities.
9. Xi has effectively utilised demotions and sweeping anti-corruption campaigns to remove officials who do not toe the line from important provincial positions and to speed up power transition at the provincial level.
10. Officials parachuted directly from the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) not only enhanced the CCDI's control of local anti-corruption investigations, but also become formidable competitors for important posts such as provincial party secretaries or governors.