

**LI ZHANSHU: A KEY PLAYER IN
XI JINPING'S SECOND TERM**

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Executive Summary

1. Two individuals have played a pivotal role in Xi Jinping's administration so far. Wang Qishan, the anti-corruption tsar, and Li Zhanshu. Wang demolishes while Li rebuilds. They are the left and right arms of Xi that have kept Xi's reform programmes going.
2. Li Zhanshu's career trajectory closely resembles that of Xi Jinping before the latter moved to Beijing. Like Xi, Li spent his pre-Beijing career on various positions in four provinces, gaining deep understanding of Chinese society and public administration. The vast experiences accumulated prepared him well for his job in Beijing.
3. Like Xi, Li Zhanshu's formal education was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution. Besides being self-taught on a wide range of subjects, both attempted to remedy their defected formal education by attending part-time programmes at universities. Li earned an MBA from Ha'erbin Industrial Engineering University.
4. The two share many similarities, from family background, growing up and work experience to political views and personality. Xi could see his own shadow on Li. Both are from a revolutionary family background, share the same red gene, and proud and loyal to the cause of their fathers' generation.
5. Xi brought Li from Guizhou, where Li was the provincial party secretary, in September 2012 and placed him in a key position as the director of the Central General Office (CGO). Li in turn succeeded in purging that office of the influence of Ling Jihua, his predecessor, and made it secure for Xi.
6. Li also played a key role in drumming up support for Xi to gain the "core" status of the communist party leadership in 2016. He is a firm supporter of Xi's political line and political vision, and is entrusted with the task of intra-party institution building and rule making.

7. Xi has assigned Li tasks that go far beyond the traditional role of the CGO director, such as special envoy to Russia and poverty relief. Li is also high profile in his activities, publishing articles in key party publications in advocacy of Xi and his ideas.
8. Li is widely expected to join the next Politburo Standing Committee later this year to play a more prominent role in Xi's second term as Xi's trusted aide and political ally.