

**CHINA'S COMING CENTRAL MILITARY
COMMISSION: LEADERSHIP CHANGE
AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS**

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EAI Background Brief No. 678

Date of Publication: 1 December 2011

Executive Summary

1. China's Central Military Commission (CMC) will witness another round of generational change at the forthcoming Eighteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2012.
2. In the new CMC, Chairman Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) and Vice Chairman Xi Jinping (习近平), both civilian politicians, are likely to remain top leaders, while the rest of the professional military men will be reshuffled.
3. Based on the age limit of 68, the two vice chairmen from the military, General Guo Boxiong (郭伯雄) and General Xu Caihou (徐才厚), will have to retire. So will several others including General Liang Guanglie (梁光烈), General Chen Bingde (陈炳德), General Li Jinai (李继耐), General Liao Xilong (廖锡龙), and General Jing Zhiyuan (靖志远).
4. Admiral Wu Shengli (吴胜利), commander of the PLA Navy, will be the oldest of the remaining three members of the CMC. At the age of 67 in 2012, he is likely to remain in the CMC as defense minister replacing General Liang Guanglie.
5. General Chang Wanquan (常万全), director of the General Equipment Department, and General Xu Qiliang (许其亮), commander of the PLA Air Force, are both strong candidates for the positions of CMC vice chairman and membership in the Politburo.
6. General Zhang Haiyang (张海阳), son of General Zhang Zhen (张震), former vice chairman of the CMC, is a strong candidate for the position of vice chairman of the CMC, if one of the positions is to be reserved for those with political background.

7. General Liu Yuan (刘源), son of Liu Shaoqi (刘少奇), former president of China, is also poised to enter the CMC either as director of the General Logistics Department or as director of the General Political Department.
8. Although the new military leadership is unlikely to change the fundamental structure of civilian control over the military, the emergence of a group of politically oriented princeling generals would tip the balance in favor of the gun.
9. The new CMC is likely to project bigger influence in domestic politics and foreign and security policy decision-making. The CMC members and their subordinates in the PLA may become major drivers for reforms and more assertive policies.
10. Since Chairman Hu Jintao is likely to stay on in the CMC after the Eighteenth Party Congress, Vice Chairman Xi Jinping will have to keep a low profile over military affairs at least for the first term of his taking over as president.