

**GENERAL XU QILIANG:
CENTRAL MILITARY COMMISSION
VICE CHAIRMAN FROM THE AIR FORCE**

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Executive Summary

1. General Xu Qiliang (许其亮), former commander of the People's Liberation Army Air Force, along with General Fan Changlong (范长龙), former commander of the Jinan Military Region, became a vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at the Seventh Plenum of the 17th Central Committee from 1 to 4 November 2012.
2. He was subsequently elected as a full member of the 18th Central Committee of the CCP at the 18th Party Congress from 8 to 14 November 2012 and entered the Politburo as a full member at the First Plenum of the 18th Central Committee on 15 November 2012.
3. Contrary to conventional belief, he is not the son of Lieutenant General Xu Lefu (许乐夫), former deputy political commissar of the PLA Air Force, and is thus not a princeling general.
4. A professional soldier who has devoted his entire career in the air force, Xu owed his rapid promotion to his own efforts and merits. He was appointed as division commander at the age of 33 and was promoted to deputy army commander at the age of 34.
5. He became chief of staff of the PLA Air Force at the age of 44 and was promoted to deputy chief of the General Staff Department at the age of 54. He was appointed commander of the PLA Air Force in September 2007 and entered the CMC as a member the following month.
6. His promotion in military ranks has also been very rapid. He was awarded the rank of major general in June 1991, the rank of lieutenant general in July 1996, and the rank of general in July 2007.

7. His central committee credentials are unparalleled among his contemporaries. He entered the 14th Central Committee of the CCP as an alternate member in 1992. Xu was an alternate member of the 15th Central Committee and a full member of the 16th and 17th Central Committees.
8. Xu's rise from an air force officer to the pinnacle of the PLA leadership and CCP leadership is unprecedented in the history of the People's Republic of China. It represents his personal professionalism and political loyalty as well as the upgrading of the PLA air force as a whole.
9. As a professional soldier, General Xu is free from political factions. Therefore, he should work well with both Hu Jintao (胡锦涛), current chairman of the CMC and Xi Jinping (习近平), future chairman of the CMC.
10. However, as an air force officer, he will have to be well versed with the operation of the army and navy and their integration with the air force in a hypothetical as well as a real war scenario.