

XI JINPING'S GENERALS

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Executive Summary

1. On 11 July 2014, Chairman Xi Jinping (习近平) of the Central Military Commission (CMC) awarded four military officers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) the rank of full general.
2. They are Qi Jianguo (戚建国), deputy chief of the General Staff Department; Wang Jiaocheng (王教成), commander of the Shenyang Military Region; Zhu Yimin (褚益民), political commissar of the Shenyang Military Region; and Wei Liang (魏亮), political commissar of the Guangzhou Military Region.
3. This is the third batch of generals promoted by Xi Jinping since he took over as CMC chairman in November 2012. The first general Xi awarded was Wei Fenghe (魏凤和), commander of the Second Artillery Corps. Wei was awarded the rank of full general because of his promotion to the CMC.
4. Xi promoted a batch of six generals in June 2013. These include Wu Changde (吴昌德), Wang Hongyao (王洪尧), Sun Sijing (孙思敬), Liu Fulian (刘福连), Cai Yingting (蔡英挺), and Xu Fenlin (徐粉林).
5. Among them, three are from the military regions: Liu Fulian is political commissar of the Beijing Military Region; Cai Yingting is commander of the Nanjing Military Region; and Xu Fenlin is commander of the Guangzhou Military Region.
6. Three are from the central military apparatuses: Wu Changde is deputy director of the General Political Department; Wang Hongyao is political commissar of the General Armament Department; and Sun Sijing is political commissar of the Academy of Military Sciences.
7. Altogether, Xi Jinping has promoted 11 generals so far. These generals constitute the core of his command in the military, though other generals have all made pledges to obey his command as chairman of the CMC.

8. It seems that Xi attempts to consolidate his power in the military with this promotion. He expelled Xu Caihou (徐才厚), former Politburo member and vice chairman of the CMC, from the Party and issued an order to promote these generals, on the same day, 30 June 2014.
9. However, it is not easy to strike a balance between the anti-corruption campaign in the military and the establishment of a core support group in the PLA.
10. A half-measure campaign against corruption could be seen as a compromise with corrupt officers, but a wide-ranging purge in the military could also easily backfire, destabilizing the military and threatening even the safety of the top leaders.