

**19TH PARTY CONGRESS AND
PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY'S
LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLE**

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EAI Background Brief No. 1327

Date of Publication: 13 February 2018

Executive Summary

1. For appointing new Central Military Commission (CMC) members and chiefs of People's Liberation Army (PLA) services and theatres immediately before and during the 19th Party Congress, the first consideration is that appointees are people Xi Jinping knows well and trusts personally to ensure political loyalty.
2. These appointees include Zhang Youxia, CMC vice chair, Xu Qiliang, the other CMC vice chair, Miao Hua, director of CMC Political Work Department (CMCPWD) and CMC member, Han Weiguo, commander of PLA Army, Ding Laihang, commander of PLA Air Force and Qin Shengxiang, political commissar of PLA Navy.
3. The second is to promote functional and technical expertise-based military professionalism. Xu Qiliang and Yi Xiaoguang, commander of the Central Theatre, for instance, are combat pilots by profession. Yuan Yubai, commander of the Southern Theatre, is a nuclear submariner by training.
4. Zhang Youxia, Li Zuocheng, chief of CMC Joint Staff Department (CMCJSD) and CMC member, and Zhao Zhongqi, commander of the Western Theatre, are decorated veterans of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War. Wei Fenghe, CMC member and defence minister-designate, worked through the ranks of the PLA Rocket Force and has had extensive experiences with China's strategic missile forces.
5. The third is to enhance political control of the PLA by the CMC chair. Chiefs of CMC Logistics Support Department and CMC Armament Development Department as well as service chiefs no longer serve as CMC members. Uniformed CMC members thus went from ten to six, centralising chair's power by reducing voices from within the PLA that attempt to influence CMC decisions.
6. There was only one political officer among ten uniformed members in the previous CMC. In contrast, two out of six, or one third of the uniformed members in the new

CMC, are political officers, including director of CMCPWD and secretary of CMC Discipline Inspection Commission (CMCDIC).

7. Xi made this change likely because he wants to control the PLA through personnel appointment, the prerogative of CMCPWD, and discipline inspection, the central function of CMCDIC.
8. The final consideration is age limits. The informal rule of “staying if 67 and retiring if 68” is largely enforced. Those who reached the age of 68 and beyond were all retired. However, not all who are 67 or younger stay or have been promoted. Those who stay or have been promoted include Xu Qiliang (67), Zhang Youxia (67) and Wei Fenghe (63).
9. However, Fang Fenghui (66), chief of CMCJSD, and Zhang Yang (66), director of CMCPWD, who were investigated for corruption, were ousted.