

**THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY
AS A PARTY ARMY**

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Executive Summary

1. China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a party army that pledges its allegiance to the Communist Party of China (CPC), a Leninist party that monopolises political power. Armies of liberal democracies are nominally apolitical and non-partisan, and their allegiance is to the state constitution.
2. Like the ruling civilian elite in China, most PLA officers are party members, which allows them to have representations in the CPC central committee and its politburo.
3. The PLA also has a military political work system for CPC control of the gun. This system includes a dual-command system where a commander and a political commissar co-command a unit, a supporting political staff in major unit headquarters, and a party standing committee for making decisions for each major unit.
4. As an internal constituency of the PLA, however, the military political work system cannot be expected to behave as an effective supervisory agency; this function has been compromised because the system is highly internalised.
5. Xi Jinping's post-2015 military reform introduced measures to enhance his control of the PLA, including dismantling the four PLA general departments, reiterating the CMC chair responsibility system, separating supervisory agencies from the traditional political work system, and separating powers between the service chiefs and the theatre chiefs.
6. Since the PLA is a party army, it historically was heavily involved in party and domestic politics, particularly in the eras of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.
7. Compared to Mao and Deng, however, post-Deng top leaders are more insecure for lack of revolutionary and military credentials and the associated political capital and personal networks in the PLA, which they could count on for political support in political and social crises.

8. This insecurity has motivated them to adopt a policy that stresses effective civilian governance in promoting economic development along with political and social stability.
9. Effective governance enhances the party's legitimacy to rule, but more importantly prevents major political and social upheavals that may incentivise the military's intervention in domestic politics, which these leaders may find difficult to control and manage.
10. Meanwhile, they promote what Samuel Huntington calls "objective control" by confining the PLA to perfecting its functional and technical expertise and fulfilling its external missions.

THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AS A PARTY ARMY

LI Nan*

Party and Non-Party Armies

- 1.1 Unlike liberal democracies where the military is nominally apolitical and non-partisan and pledges its allegiance to the state constitution, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in China is a party army that pledges its allegiance and loyalty to the Communist Party of China (CPC), a Leninist party that monopolises political power. Several distinctive features help distinguish the PLA from the non-party armies.
- 1.2 Most PLA officers, like the ruling civilian elite in China, are party members, which allows them to have representations in the CPC central committee and its politburo. Such representations have remained quite regular in the post-Deng era.
- 1.3 Of 193 central committee members elected by the 15th CPC Congress in 1997, for instance, 39 or 20.2% wore uniform. Of the 204 members elected by the 17th CPC Congress of 2007, 39 or 19.1% were military men. The 19th CPC Congress of 2017 elected 204 central committee members, 39 or 19.1% of whom were military men. Similarly, two uniformed Central Military Commission (CMC) vice-chairs have held two CPC politburo membership positions since the 15th CPC Congress of 1997, enabling the military proportion of the politburo membership to remain at about eight per cent (two out of 25).¹
- 1.4 Besides party membership, what distinguishes the PLA is the institutionalised mechanism for the CPC to control the PLA such as a military party and political work system (PPWS).

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¹ See Li Nan, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China: From Symbiosis to Quasi-Institutionalization* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 171-205.

- 1.5 This system has three major components. First, known as the dual-command system (双首长制), each major PLA unit at and above the regimental command levels is headed by both a commander and a political commissar. The political commissar shares the same bureaucratic grade as the commander and thus has the power to co-sign orders with the commander. A PLA unit at the battalion and company levels, however, is co-commanded by a political instructor (政治教导员) and a political director (政治指导员) respectively, but not by a political commissar.²
- 1.6 Second, to provide functional and staff support to the political commissar in his or her areas of responsibilities, each major PLA unit headquarters includes a political work department. This department has divisions that specialise in party organisation, cadre work and human resources, political education, public relations, political intelligence and warfare, and discipline inspection and supervision. At the battalion and company levels, however, political commanding officers do not have the support of a dedicated political staff.³
- 1.7 Third, each major PLA unit is presided over by a party standing committee on decision-making. A company level unit, however, is presided over by a party branch (党支部) and not a committee. The political commissar usually serves as the party committee secretary and the commander as the deputy secretary. In some instances, the commander may serve as the secretary because of seniority.
- 1.8 Functioning as a collective decision council, the party standing committee is not confined to making decisions on party and political work. It meets regularly to “make decisions on all important issues regarding unit construction through collective discussions” (“对部队建设中的一切重大问题集体讨论决定”). The central working principle for the party committee is a “system of division of responsibilities between the commanding officers under the unified and collective

² See “On Innovation of Ways to Realize the Party’s Absolute Leadership of the Military” (“Lun chuangxin dui dang dui jundui juedui lingdao de shixian fangshi”), *China Military Science* (Zhongguo junshi kexue), No. 2 (March 2016).

³ Ibid.

leadership of the party committee” (“党委统一的集体领导下的首长分工负责制”).⁴

- 1.9 Based on the Leninist notion of “democratic centralism”, such a principle has three connotations. First, deliberation on major issues should involve consultations and discussions among the nominally equal committee members, and decisions should be made by voting.
- 1.10 Second, both commander and political commissar are held accountable for implementing the decisions made and authorised by the committee. When the commander is responsible for the decisions on military and operational issues, political commissar is responsible for the decisions regarding party and political work.
- 1.11 Finally, in times of crisis and war, the commander has the “authority to command according to circumstances” (“临机指挥权”) without consultations and discussions at party committee meetings. He or she, however, has the responsibility to report to the party committee at another meeting on how he or she has exercised this authority and what has been accomplished.⁵
- 1.12 The PPWS or the political commissar system can trace its origin to the Soviet Red Army period, particularly during the Russian Civil War (1917-1922). It was first introduced to China by Communist International representatives advising the first United Front (1924-27) between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the CPC in their military expeditions against the warlords. It clearly had a substantial impact on the KMT Army since it had a long tradition of institutionalised political officers.
- 1.13 The first United Front collapsed in 1927 and the Chinese Red Army, the predecessor of the PLA, was subsequently established. Like the Bolsheviks’ attitude towards the Soviet Red Army in its early days, the CPC leadership was worried about its political

⁴ Qi Chunyuan, et al. (eds.), *Working Rules and Norms for Military Party Committee* (Jundui dangwei gongzuo guifan) (Beijing: Blue Sky Press, 2015), Chapter 1. Blue Sky Press is a publisher of the PLA Air Force (PLAAF).

⁵ Ibid.

loyalty and discipline because many of its officers and men were from Chiang Kai-shek's KMT Army and the warlord armies. To supervise and monitor the Red Army for political loyalty and discipline, party representatives (党代表) were despatched to the Red Army units. The integration of the civilian party authorities with the high command of the Red Army, particularly after the 1932 transfer of the CPC central authorities from Shanghai to the Jiangxi Red Army Base, led to the integration of the PPWS with the Red Army.⁶

Limits of PPWS for Party Control of the Gun

- 2.1 Conventional wisdom postulates that the PPWS is externally imposed on the PLA by civilian CPC authorities to supervise the PLA for political loyalty and discipline and report to the civilian party authorities. This conventional wisdom, however, is seriously flawed.
- 2.2 The PPWS of each level of the PLA hierarchy, for instance, reports to the commanding officers of the unit at that level and receives “functional guidance” from the PPWS at the next higher level in the PLA. It has no authority relationship with any external civilian party authorities and does not report to any such authorities.
- 2.3 Commanding officers of the provincial military districts, prefectural military sub-districts and county-level people's arms departments, including political commissars, do serve as members of the provincial and local civilian party standing committees. However, such membership represents inter-agency coordination relationship for handling national defence mobilisation issues; it does not reflect the authority relationship between superiors and subordinates.
- 2.4 Commanding officers of the PLA provincial and local authorities, including political commissars, reported previously to the military regions and now to the CMC National Defence Mobilisation Department, which makes critical decisions about the career advancement of these officers and the financial needs of these

⁶ See Li, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China*, pp. 27-28.

provincial and local military authorities. Civilian party secretaries at the provincial and local levels thus have no authority over these decisions.⁷ For this reason, the interactions between civilian party secretaries and PLA officers at the provincial and local levels are limited and nominal.

2.5 Similarly, political officers are selected and recruited from within the PLA organisations and not from civilian party organisations. As a result, political officers are subject to the incentive structure of the PLA, including its bureaucratic grades, military ranks and pay scales. To enhance their promotion prospects in the PLA, political officers are more likely to cooperate with the commanders of the units that they co-command by reporting good performance to their superiors and covering up deviations and failures.⁸

2.6 Political officers have been fully integrated with the PLA. They wear service-based uniforms and accompany troops to wherever the missions require. The 2003 edition of the *PLA Political Work Regulations* for the first time emphasised the “operational functions of political work” (“政治工作的作战功能”), to bring the PPWS into line with the operational functions of the PLA. This emphasis has led to the intensive development of “three war-fare” capabilities, including “opinion, psychological, and legal war-fare” (“舆论战, 心理战, 法律战”) capabilities by the PPWS. Similarly, this emphasis has reinforced the role of the PPWS in “cultivating the spirits of bravery, sacrifice, and dedication; iron discipline; and tenacious combat style” among the ranks and file of the PLA through ideological education.⁹

2.7 As an internal constituency of the PLA, the PPWS cannot be expected to behave as an effective supervisory agency. For a supervisory agency to be effective, according to organisational theory, it must be external to and independent from the performing agency it is tasked to supervise.

⁷ Author’s conversations with senior party and military officials in Beijing in January 1998.

⁸ See Li Nan, “Changing Functions of the Party and Political Work System in the PLA and Civil-Military Relations in China”, *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1993).

⁹ See Li, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China*, pp. 43-44.

- 2.8 The supervisory agency, for instance, should offer a career path with an incentive structure that is separate from that of the performing agency. It should promote officials for their dedication to detecting and reporting deviations and failures of the performing agency they supervise. “Officials who are extremely aggressive about detecting and reporting deviations can expect to win promotion in a monitoring (supervisory) agency. But in a bureau also responsible for producing outputs, excellent performance must take promotional precedence over zeal in reporting deviations ... Thus, surveillance bureaus that are not staffed by personnel with separate career paths are usually half-hearted about detecting and reporting behaviour considered undesirable by top officials”.¹⁰
- 2.9 As an internal constituency of the PLA, the PPWS cannot be expected to function as an effective supervisory agency; its supervisory role has largely been compromised by its “internalisation”. Xi Jinping’s counter-corruption drive in the PLA, for instance, reveals that political officers are not more loyal to the party and less corruptible. There are as many political officers investigated and prosecuted for corruption as military, logistics and armament officers.¹¹

Reform to Enhance Party Control of the Gun

- 3.1 In the post-2015 military reform, Xi made several institutional changes to enhance the power of the CMC chair, the civilian commander-in-chief position that he holds as the top leader, to control the PLA.
- 3.2 First, he dismantled the PLA General Staff, Political, Logistics and Armament Departments, which he believes constituted an independent and powerful layer that undermined the authority of the CMC leadership and served as major venues of military corruption. He then incorporated the smaller, functional agencies of the former PLA general departments into the CMC to provide functional and staff support to the CMC leadership. These agencies can no longer issue operational orders to the PLA like the old general departments as they were stripped of the

¹⁰ See Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1967), p. 149.

¹¹ See Li, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China*, pp. 119-121.

power to do so. The elimination of the “independent leadership layer” of the general departments between the CMC and the PLA services and regional theatres has particularly enhanced the power of the CMC chair to control the PLA directly.¹²

3.3 Second, he reiterates the importance of the CMC chair responsibility system (军委主席责任制), which was endorsed by the 1982 state constitution but largely neglected in the Hu Jintao era. All major PLA organisations thus are now required to “report to the CMC chair on all important matters, and decisions on all important issues must be made by the CMC chair” (“一切重要事项向军委主席报告, 一切重大问题由军委主席决策”).¹³

3.4 Third, Xi separated the supervisory agencies from the traditional PPWS, including those that specialise in discipline inspection, criminal investigation and prosecution, and the courts. These agencies form two separate chains of command that report directly to the CMC chair without interference from the organisations they supervise. One is the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission, and the other is the CMC Commission for Political and Legal Affairs which oversees criminal investigation and prosecution and the courts.¹⁴ This change serves to enhance the independence (独立性) and authority (权威性) of these agencies to improve their effectiveness in supervising the PLA operational organisations.

3.5 Finally, Xi attempts to enhance his control of the PLA by dividing the powers between PLA service chiefs and its regional theatre chiefs. PLA service chiefs, for instance, were divested of the power for operational command and control of their forces in times of crisis and war. Their power thus is limited to peacetime force construction and administration. PLA regional theatre chiefs, on the other hand, were divested of the power for peacetime force construction and administration. Their power is confined to operational command and control of all service forces that are deployed in their theatres in times of crisis and war.¹⁵ Before this change,

¹² See Li Nan, “Xi Jinping and PLA Restructuring”, *East Asian Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (December 2016).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

these powers were fused in the commanding officers of major PLA organisations, which enabled these officers to become the “lords of their own estates” (“一方诸侯”) particularly in engaging in corruption.

Shifting Away from Domestic Politics

- 4.1 Since the PLA is a party army, it historically was heavily involved in party and domestic politics, particularly in the eras of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. In 1959, for instance, then defence minister Marshal Peng Dehuai openly criticised Mao’s great leap forward policy at an expanded CPC politburo conference in 1959. Mao adamantly rebuked Peng, leading to extensive purges of both military and civilian officials supporting Peng. Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and mobilised the masses to bring down the party-state bureaucracy which he believed “took the capitalist road”. The subsequent collapse of the party-state led to chaos and rise of violence, triggering intervention of 2.8 million PLA men to impose military control. Similarly, the 1989 Tiananmen Incident witnessed the massive intervention of the PLA to quell a popular rebellion and restore order in China’s capital. These incidents have serious implications for the PLA, including extensive purges of military officers who followed the “wrong line”, the expanded role of the PLA in the CPC leadership succession politics and the severe fracturing of the PLA leadership.¹⁶
- 4.2 Two institutional conditions incentivised the involvement of the military in domestic politics in these incidents. The first is civilian governance failures that caused severe political divisions among the ruling civilian elite. The ensuing political crises thus may incentivise military leaders to intervene. The second is the strong revolutionary and military credentials and associated political capital and personal networks that top leaders such as Mao and Deng, who founded of the PLA, had cultivated in the PLA, which they could count on for political support in political and social crises.

¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of these incidents, see Li, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China*, particularly Chapter Three.

- 4.3 Compared to Mao and Deng, however, post-Deng top leaders do not possess similar political capital and personal networks in the PLA since they have not served or served only briefly in the PLA. This may explain why the informal networks that post-Deng leaders have assembled to support themselves, such as Jiang Zemin's Shanghai network, Hu Jintao's Communist Youth League network and Xi's Zhejiang network, are made up of civilian officials.¹⁷
- 4.4 The stronger sense of insecurity stemming from their lack of revolutionary and military credentials and the associated personal networks in the PLA has motivated post-Deng leaders to adopt a policy that stresses effective civilian governance in promoting economic development along with political and social stability. Effective governance enhances the party's legitimacy to rule, but more importantly prevents major political and social upheavals that may incentivise the military's intervention in domestic politics, which these leaders may find difficult to control and manage. Meanwhile, they promote what Samuel Huntington calls "objective control" by confining the PLA to perfecting its functional and technical expertise and fulfilling its external missions.¹⁸
- 4.5 An important institutional change that Jiang Zemin has introduced is the exclusion of senior military officers from the membership of the CPC politburo standing committee (PBSC), the most powerful decision-making council in China. The last military officer who served as a PBSC member was Admiral Liu Huaqing, a CMC vice-chair who retired in 1997.¹⁹
- 4.6 This institutional change has major implications for party-army relations in China. This exclusion, for instance, prevents senior military officers from intervening in PBSC deliberation on civilian governance issues that are not the concerns of the PLA. While this change allows the top leader, in his role as the CMC chair, to control the institutional interactions with senior military officers in the CMC, it

¹⁷ See Cheng Li, "The 'Shanghai Gang': Force for Stability or Cause for Conflict?" September 2002, <http://www.ceri-po.org> and Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "The Eclipse of the Communist Youth League and the Rise of the Zhejiang Clique", *China Brief*, 11 May 2006.

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion, see Li, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China*.

¹⁹ See *ibid*, p. 275.

denies other PBSC members a critical institutional arena for their interactions with senior military officers. This change reduces the likelihood that other PBSC members may develop close allies among senior military officers and mobilise their support in the event of a major power struggle among PBSC members. Finally, rather than party politics, this change helps to channel the attention and energy of PLA leaders to addressing the functional, technological, organisational and operational issues of military modernisation.

- 4.7 Some analysts suggest that post-Deng top leaders, in their role as the CMC chair, may attempt to buy off the military with higher ranks and more money to cultivate their personal networks in the PLA, which they can leverage in power struggle against their political opponents. While this argument is not totally untrue, it may be empirically flawed.
- 4.8 First, all top leaders after Deng have regularly promoted PLA senior officers and increased the defence budget to fulfil their responsibility as the CMC chair. However, candidates for promotion are mostly recommended by military professionals in the CMC and not picked by top leaders.²⁰ Top leaders would interview the most senior candidates, but their knowledge of these officers is limited since they have not worked with them before. There is also sketchy evidence to show that military officers are mobilised for intra-party leadership power struggle in the post-Deng era,²¹ but military modernisation has accelerated during this period. Officer promotion and budget increases thus can be better explained by functional and professional reasons than by personal and factional ones.
- 4.9 Second, top leaders are careful not to develop dependence on the military for political support and survival. Such dependence would suggest a failure of civilian governance and incompetence on the part of these leaders in resolving major political and social crises. This kind of vulnerability could be exploited by the military for political advantages. Furthermore, any expansion of the military's political role makes it difficult to re-establish effective civilian control of the

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 108-109.

²¹ See *ibid*, Chapter Four.

military. In the end, a new threat may emerge against these leaders: a military that is itself politically ambitious. Post-Deng top leaders have inevitably learned the lessons from the Lin Biao incident under Mao and the Yang brothers incident under Deng.²²

- 4.10 There are other limits on the power of the CMC chair position that top leaders hold. The fact the CMC chair is a part-time position serves as a limit on its power. The substantial institutional autonomy that the PLA enjoys based on its “monopoly of expertise” constitutes another limit on the power of the CMC chair.

“Objective Control”

- 5.1 Xi Jinping’s military reform has largely been promoted along the line of “objective control”. Xi downsized the PLA by 300,000 billets and replaced the seven ground force-dominated military regions with five joint-services theatres. Eighteen ground force-based group armies thus were reduced to 13 and technology-based naval, air, conventional rocket, and strategic support service forces were expanded and integrated into the new joint theatres.²³
- 5.2 To cope with the growing security challenges from the outer and cyber space and the electromagnetic spectrum, Xi established the PLA Strategic Support Force to develop and manage the capabilities in these three domains.²⁴ He also renamed China’s strategic missile force as the PLA Rocket Force, and expanded China’s nuclear deterrence capabilities.²⁵
- 5.3 By downsizing the ground force and expanding the technology-intensive services that are more appropriate for forward deployment and power projection, Xi’s

²² For details of the two incidents, see Li, *Civil-Military Relations in Post-Deng China*, Chapter Three.

²³ See Li, “Xi Jinping and PLA Restructuring”.

²⁴ See Li Nan and Ryan Clarke, “The New Strategic Support Force of the Chinese Military and Implications for Regional Security”, *EAI Background Brief*, No. 1606, August 2021.

²⁵ See Li Nan, “The New PLA Rocket Force and China’s Evolving Nuclear Strategy”, *EAI Background Brief*, No. 1620, December 2021.

military policy clearly aims to reduce the domestic role of the PLA and enhance its capabilities for external missions.

- 5.4 Besides safeguarding what it perceives to be China's sovereignty and security interests regarding Taiwan and the "near seas" including the Yellow, East and South China Seas, China's 2019 Defence White Paper highlights the role of the PLA in providing security for China's expanding development interests overseas, including energy and resources supplies, vital sea lanes, and overseas Chinese personnel, property and investment.²⁶
- 5.5 The White Paper also underscores the role of the PLA in carrying out non-traditional security missions such as counter-piracy, United Nations peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.²⁷ Safeguarding the stability of the Korean Peninsula has been a traditional mission of the PLA, while providing security to Sino-Indian border has become more important following the 2020 border clash.
- 5.6 These missions, however, are primarily decided by the civilian leadership and assigned to the PLA. Rather than being heavily involved in the policy processes, the PLA is largely confined to improving its doctrinal, technological, organisational and operational efficacies for fulfilling these missions.
- 5.7 The Chinese government's *Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Vision 2035* issued in 2021, for instance, requires the PLA to "accelerate the integrated development of mechanisation, informatisation and intelligentization" ("加快机械化信息化智能化融合发展"), the three concrete goals of military modernisation.²⁸
- 5.8 These goals have been consistent with those of military modernisation since the era of Jiang Zemin. In 1993, Jiang endorsed a new military strategic guideline (军事战

²⁶ "China's National Defense in the New Era", *Xinhua*, 24 July 2019.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See *Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Vision 2035* (Guomin jingji he shehui fazhan di shisi ge wunian guihua he 2035 nian yuanjing mubiao gangyao).

略方针) requiring the PLA to prepare for fighting and winning “local war under modern-technology and particularly high-technology conditions”. He further proposed to transform the PLA from a manpower-intensive force to a technology-based military in 1995. In 1997, he adopted the concept of “leapfrogging development” (“跨越式发展”), shifting the emphasis of military modernisation from mechanisation to informatisation, or from adding new hardware platforms to developing information technology-based software and networks. This concept led to a decision to downsize the PLA by 500,000 billets. In late 2002, Jiang endorsed the concept of “dual construction” (“双化建设”) of the PLA through mechanisation and informatisation, leading to a decision to downsize the PLA by another 200,000 billets.²⁹

- 5.9 Hu Jintao also pursued a military policy that confined the PLA to perfecting its functional and technical expertise. Hu, for instance, endorsed a new military strategic guideline requiring the PLA to prepare for fighting and winning “local war under informatised conditions”. Hu particularly operationalised the concept of “informatisation”, endorsing the notion of “information system-based system of systems operations” (“基于信息系统的体系作战”) to guide PLA modernisation. This concept emphasises the integration of the highly heterogeneous service forces into a PLA system of systems that is capable of multi-spatial and variable distance deployment and presence.
- 5.10 Laterally networked by a shared information system or a C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) architecture, this operations system enables battlefield transparency-based “information superiority”. This superiority in turn allows for synchronised, parallel operations by multiservice forces, enabling the “battlefield initiative” against the opponent.³⁰

²⁹ For the evolution of Jiang’s concepts regarding China’s military modernisation, see National Defence University Army Construction Studies Institute, *A Reader for Studying Jiang Zemin’s Thought on National Defence and Army Construction* (Jiang Zemin guofang he jundui jianshe sixiang xuexi duben) (Beijing: CPC History Press, 2002), pp. 56, 232–244.

³⁰ See Li Nan, “China’s Evolving Naval Strategy and Capabilities in the Hu Jintao Era”, in Roy Kamphausen et al. (eds.), *Assessing the People’s Liberation Army in the Hu Jintao Era* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College Press, 2014).

5.11 Under Xi Jinping, the PLA has made substantial progress in realising all the three goals. For “mechanisation”, the PLA has continued to acquire a substantial number of new and advanced weapons platforms in all operational domains. For “informatisation”, Xi’s military reform, particularly in introducing the new joint theatres, has laid the organisational foundation for assembling and integrating the PLA’s information system-based system of systems. Meanwhile, he has incorporated the new concept of “inteligentisation” in modernising the PLA, leading to substantial PLA investment in emerging technologies such as quantum computing, big data analysis, artificial intelligence, military drones and hypersonic weapons.³¹

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Best regards,
East Asian Institute,
National University of Singapore

³¹ See Tate Nurkin, et al., *China’s Advanced Weapons Systems* (London, UK: Jane’s by IHS Markit, 2018).