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CHINA'S NEW CENTRAL MILITARY COMMISSION

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China's New Central Military Commission

China unveiled its new military leadership the day after the 20th Party Congress concluded on October 23. The composition of the new Central Military Commission (CMC), each of whose members is a hand-picked loyalist of Chinese President Xi Jinping, signals Xi Jinping's firm and absolute grip on the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It also reveals the Chinese leadership's continuing emphasis on technology and enhanced attention to China's south-western borders with India. The latter is in addition to the focus on Taiwan. The Government Work Report presented by Xi Jinping and approved by the 20th Party Congress mandated the PLA to complete its modernisation and become a world class fighting force by 2027 – the PLA's centenary year.

The new reconstituted 7-member CMC brings in three new PLA officers and retains four members of the previous CMC. Those

continuing in the new CMC are: Chinese President and CMC Chairman Xi Jinping, General Zhang Youxia who now becomes the senior of the two CMC Vice Chairmen, Admiral Miao Hua and General Zhang Shengmin. The new appointments to the CMC are General He Weidong, General Li Shangfu and General Liu Zhenli. General He Weidong, former Commander of the Eastern Theatre Command (ETC) who has just been elevated to the CMC, is the second Vice Chairman of the CMC.

The seven members of the new CMC are:-

- i) Xi Jinping(习近平): Chairman of the Central Military Commission, CCP CC General Secretary and Chinese President
- ii) Zhang Youxia(张又侠): Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission
- iii) He Weidong (何卫东): CMC Vice-Chairman
- iv) Li Shangfu (李尚福): CMC Member and PRC Minister of National Defense
- v) Liu Zhenli (刘振立): CMC Member and Director of the CMC Joint Staff Department
- vi) Miao Hua (苗华): CMC Member and Director of CMC Political Work Department
- vii) Zhang Shengmin (张升民): Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection Committee of the Central Military Commission

The three CMC members who have been retained, namely Zhang Youxia (72), Miao Hua (67) and Zhang Shengmin (64), will play an important role in carrying forward the targets and goals set by Xi Jinping for the PLA at the previous two Party Congresses in 2012 and 2017. They will have the advantage of proximity to Xi Jinping and continuity in decision making.

A noticeable change is that unlike the previous CMC, this one comprises only officers of the PLAA (Ground Forces). Though Miao Hua acquired the rank of Admiral after being transferred to the PLA Navy in 2014, he has spent most of his service in the Ground Forces. The average age of the new CMC is 65 years and is lower than the last CMC.

General Zhang Youxia (72 Years), like Xi Jinping, is a 'princeling'. He is the most senior Commander in the PLA and the only member of the CMC with battle experience. He fought in the Sino-Vietnam War of 1979. His father Zhang Zongxun was one of the founding Generals of the People's Army and also a close associate of Xi Jinping's father, Xi Zhongxun. Zhang Youxia shares two generations of friendship with Xi Jinping and is a trusted ally. He is loyal and reliable and the two enjoy a high level of trust. In addition to his battlefield experience, Zhang Youxia is also one of the most experienced PLA Commanders with more than 40 years (1968-2012) of service. He is, additionally, familiar with military technology having served as Director of the PLA General Equipment Department from 2012-2017. Consequent to Xi Jinping's appointment as CCP CC General Secretary and CMC Chairman in October 2012, Zhang Youxia has been part of all major decision-making in the PLA. Zhang Youxia's retention and continuance in the CMC despite his being 72 years of age indicates the extent of trust and confidence that Xi Jinping reposes in him, certainly in military matters and, importantly, that the thrust on technological upgrading of the PLA will continue.

Miao Hua (67 Years) is a Political Commissar who probably aided Xi Jinping in identifying and bringing down officers of suspect loyalty. Miao Hua has 4 years (2010-2014) of working experience in the former Lanzhou Military Region, which was merged into the Western Theatre Command in 2016 after the reform, restructuring

and reorganisation of the PLA. As Political Commissar of Lanzhou MR, he would be familiar with the Indian Army. Miao Hua is a close ally of Xi Jinping as evidenced by his promotions getting fast-tracked after Xi Jinping came to power in 2012. After the 19th Party Congress, Miao Hua was appointed to the important post of Director of the CMC Political Work Department. Furthermore, he was inducted into the CMC though he was only a Lt. General at the time whereas there were many Generals senior to him in the PLA. Importantly, Miao Hua continues in his position as Director of the CMC Political Work Department after the 20th Party Congress and will assist Xi Jinping in reinforcing and strengthening the CCP's absolute control and supervision over the PLA.

Zhang Shengmin (64 Years) continues as Secretary of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) in the newly constituted CMC. This is a crucial position as it targets, identifies and prosecutes officers suspected of corruption, disloyalty etc. Zhang Shengmin has worked in the former Lanzhou MR for nearly 15 years during the early part of his career from 1978 to 1993 and is familiar with the working of the WTC and has a good understanding about issues related to the Sino-Indian dispute. Zhang Shengmin was handpicked for appointment as a member of the CMC by Xi Jinping in October 2017, though he was yet only a Lt General and there were other Generals senior to him. Xi Jinping also fast tracked Zhang Shengmin's promotions after coming to power in 2012. Zhang Shengmin was appointed Director of the PLA Second Artillery Corps in 2014 and in October 2017, he was appointed Member of the CMC, while still a PLA Lt. General. Since then, he has been Secretary of the CDIC.

Liu Zhenli (57 years), CMC Member and Director of the CMC Joint Staff Department, was formerly the Commander of the

PLA Army (PLAA). Earlier in his career he participated in Sino-Vietnam Border Operations. Liu Zhenli's tenure as Chief of Staff of the Beijing Military Region (December 2009-February 2012) overlapped with Xi Jinping's tenures as President of the Central Party School (2007-2012) in Beijing and later as Vice President of the PRC (2008-2013). Liu Zhenli would have interacted closely with Xi Jinping during this period especially as Commanders of the Beijing Military Region are PLA officers handpicked for their loyalty and trusted by the CCP CC General Secretary. Liu Zhenli served as Chief of Staff at various levels before he was appointed Commander of the PLA Army in June 2021. His promotions got fast-tracked after 2013. Liu Zhenli is one of the youngest Generals in the PLA.

Li Shangfu (64 years), CMC Member, is China's new Minister of National Defense. Prior to this assignment he was Director of the CMC Equipment Development Department. He has a background in aerospace engineering and served many years in the PLA Second Artillery and PLA Rocket Force. He has experience of dealing with new weaponry and equipment and as Defence Minister will give impetus to Defence R&D and manufacture of new weaponry. Li Shangfu received quicker promotions after the PLA reforms in 2016. Before being promoted as CMC Member on October 23, 2022 at the 20th Party Congress, he was appointed to senior positions such as Director of the Equipment Development Department. Li Shangfu is closely associated with Xi Jinping and Zhang Youxia.

Li Shangfu, Zhang Youxia and Xi Jinping are all 'Princelings' and of military families. Li Shaozhu, father of Li Shangfu, was among the first and senior most Commanders of the People's Army along with Xi Zhongxun, father of Xi Jinping, and Zhang Zongsun, father of Zhang Youxia. The fathers of Li Shangfu, Zhang Youxia and Xi

Jinping all served in the same Field Army, namely the 1st Field Army.

Pertinent for India is the inclusion in the Central Military Commission of two PLA Generals i.e. General He Weidong, Vice Chairman of the CMC and General Xu Qiling, Director of the CMC Joint Staff Department. General He Weidong has served as Deputy Commander of the Western Theatre Command and WTC Army Commander from 2016 to September 2019. He was the WTC Army Commander responsible for handling the 73-day stand-off against India at Doklamin 2017. He Weidong is known for his aggressive military ideas and assertive moves against adversaries. The other officer, General Xu Qiling, has served as Commander of the WTC from 2020 to 2021. He was Commander of the WTC Army at the time of the Galwan clash against the Indian Army on June 15, 2020. The presence of both these senior officers in effective positions in the CMC will be an important factor influencing China's decision making in military affairs and against India. Generals Zhang Shengmin and Miao Hua have also served in the Western Theatre Command and are familiar with the Sino-Indian border situation.

The appointments strongly suggest that China's military posture against India is very unlikely to change in the near future. The screening of the film on the clashes at Galwan on the opening day of the 20th Party Congress, statements by Xi Jinping at the 20th Party Congress in October, and the appointment of these officers suggests that Xi Jinping has made a deliberate choice and could well be planning further military operations against India in the coming years.

Annexure

Brief Bio-Profiles of the CMC Members

1. Xi Jinping: Chairman of the Central Military Commission

Xi Jinping was born in June 1953, in Fuping, Shaanxi Province. After his father, Xi Zhongxun, was purged by Mao Zedong and the family was labelled as “anti-party clique” during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76), Xi Jinping was sent to the rural Yanchuan County. He escaped from there in 1968 and wandered the streets of Beijing for a while till he was caught and sent to a juvenile detention center in Beijing. He was released after six months and started working as labourer in a farm in Liangjiahe, Anyi Commune, Yanchuan County in January 1969 and joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in January 1974. Later in 1979, he graduated from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tsinghua University, majoring in Marxist theory and ideological and political education, with an on-the-job postgraduate degree, and a Doctoral Degree.

He was first appointed Chairman of the Central Military Commission in November 2012 and is currently the General Secretary of the

Central Committee (CC) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and President of the People's Republic of China. There is an overlap in the membership of the Party and State Central Military Commissions.

Xi Jinping has continued with the policies of his predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, and tightened Party control over the PLA. He has enlarged the authority of the Political Commissars. Significant is that Xi Jinping was able to implement the most extensive ever reorganisation, restructuring and reform of the PLA in 2016. He also brought the PLA under the purview of the CCP's watch-dog anti-corruption body, the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC), in 2013. In April 2016, Xi Jinping assumed the rank of Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Operations Center in Beijing. He invariably visits nearby PLA units and formations during his tours outside Beijing. Being the son of a General of the People's Army, Xi Jinping had close ties to the PLA, which he maintained. Xi Jinping has held the position of First Political Commissar in the PLA formations within his jurisdiction when he was posted in the counties and provinces.

From 1979 to 1982, he was Secretary of the General Office of the State Council and the General Office of the Central Military Commission (active duty) and functioned as Political Secretary (*mishu*) to Chinese Defence Minister Geng Biao.

2. General Zhang Youxia (张又侠): Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission

General Zhang Youxia (born in July 1950) was born in Beijing but the family is from Weinan, Shaanxi. Zhang Youxia attended the Beijing Jingshan School and joined the People's Liberation Army

(PLA) in December 1968 and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in May 1969. He graduated from the Basic Department of the PLA Military Academy with a junior college education.

His father Zhang Zongxun (1908-1998), was one of the founding generals of the People's Army. He took part in the Autumn Harvest Uprising, an insurrection that took place in the Honan (Hunan) and Kiangsi (Jiangxi) provinces of China on September 7, 1927, and was led by Mao Zedong. Mao established a short-lived Hunan Soviet or Honan Soviet.

Zhang Youxia is a former Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the PLA and Director of the PLA General Logistics Department.

He has earned steady promotions through his more than 40 year military career. He has deep connections in the Chengdu Military Region, the Beijing Military Region and the Shenyang Military Region. He also has high-level experience in the two core departments of the PLA i.e. the General Logistics Department and the General Armament Department.

He holds the rank of General in the PLAA (Ground Force). He was appointed Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission and elected a member of the Politburo first at the 19th Party Congress in 2017 and later again at the 20th Party Congress in October 2022. He was a member of the 18th and 19th Central Committees of the Chinese Communist Party, member of the Central Military Commission, former Director of the General Armament Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, and former Director of the Equipment Development Department of the Central Military Commission.

Zhang Youxia joined the army in December 1968 at the age of 18, and became a soldier of the 6th Company of the 119th Regiment of the 40th Division of the 14th Army of the PLA. After being promoted in 1976, he returned to the grass-roots unit and served as the Company Commander of the 8th Company of the 119th Regiment of the 40th Division of the 14th Army of the Army. Because of his outstanding performance in the Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979, he was promoted as Chief of the 18th Regiment's training unit and later as Chief of Staff of the 118th Regiment. In 1981, he was promoted as Deputy Commander of the 118th Regiment. In 1983, he was transferred as Commander of the 119th Regiment.

In December 2005, Zhang Youxia was appointed Deputy Commander of the Beijing Military Region. In September 2007, he was appointed Commander of the Shenyang Military Region and became a senior General. During his tenure, he attached great importance to solving the housing problems of military personnel regarding it as essential for troops to improve their combat effectiveness. He solved the situation of unsatisfactory housing for nearly half the officers of the army, navy and air force stationed in the Northeast at that time. Zhang Youxia is credited with having promoted "organization and coordination between the military and local governments in the theatre, regulation and control by government departments, relying on local land resources, providing housing needs for the troops, bidding for development and construction by enterprises, joint examination of qualifications by the military and local governments for participation in construction, and purchase of soldiers in accordance with policies", a policy called the "Northeast China mode".

In 2012, Zhang Youxia, Commander of the Shenyang Military Region, accompanied Defense Minister Liang Guanglie on a visit to

the United States. In October 2012, he succeeded Chang Wanquan as Director of the PLA General Armament Department, and on November 15, he was appointed a member of the Central Military Commission. In November 2015, Zhang Youxia was appointed Director of the newly established Equipment Development Department of the Central Military Commission. On February 24, 2018, he was elected a representative of the 13th National People's Congress.

In 1997, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Major General. In July 2007, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Lieutenant General. In July 2011, he was promoted to the rank of PLA General.

On October 25, 2017, Zhang Youxia and Xu Qiliang were elected members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and appointed Vice Chairmen of the Central Military Commission at the First Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

War Experience

Zhang Youxia participated in the Sino-Vietnamese border war on two occasions in the 1970s and 1980s, and is one of the few senior generals with actual combat command experience. He was promoted after his outstanding performance in the Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979. In 1984, he led his troops in the Battle of Two Mountains (Battle of Laoshan) during the Sino-Vietnam conflict (1979-1991).

During the Battle of Laoshan on April 28, 1984, Zhang Youxia ordered the 19th Regiment to attack the 662.6 high ground of the main peak of Songmao Ridge. It achieved multiple breakthroughs, cut off the enemy's retreat, and took only seven minutes to occupy

the 662.6 high ground. He ordered the 19th Regiment to take advantage of the victory and push forward and within 2 hours consecutively conquered 18 highlands in the Songmaoling area, clearing the obstacles for the main attacking force to seize the main peak of Laoshan. On April 29-30, Zhang Youxia again ordered the 19th Regiment to continue to develop the offensive, and after the battle, all the key points in the Nara area were captured.

Close associate of Xi Jinping

Commenting on Xi Jinping's relationship with Zhang Youxia, the book "Who Controls the Chinese Army" published by the Leader Publishing House, said: "Zhang Youxia is one of the most trusted people in the army by Xi Jinping, the new chairman of the Central Military Commission".

This kind of trust comes from the interaction of the princelings over the years, and from the affection of the parents. "People in Beijing who are familiar with the communist army pointed out that not only are Xi and Zhang from the same hometown, but the Xi family and Zhang family are friends of two generations. The book pointed out: "During the War of Liberation, Zhang Youxia's father Zhang Zongxun and Xi Jinping's Xi Zhongxun were partners in the newly formed Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Field Army.

Zhang Zongxun served as the commander of the Group Army; Xi Zhongxun served as the political commissar, and had jurisdiction over six brigades. Although the military partners lost the battle, in the subsequent political struggle, there were no reports that Xi Zhongxun and Zhang Zongxun had fought with each other, but Peng Dehuai, Ye Jianying, Xiao Ke and Zhang Zongxun all had unpleasant experiences.

The book also claimed that in the military, Xi Jinping only delegated power to Zhang Youxia and said that while Xu Qiliang was the first Vice Chairman, Zhang Youxia was the one with real power. (Note: incidentally, Xu Qiliang is also a princeling with close ties to Xi Jinping. Consequent to his appointment as CMC Vice Chairman he spearheaded the technological development in the PLA and especially the PLAAF.)

Zhang Youxia's five recommendations for 'Building a strong PLA under the leadership of the party's banner'

- Persist in taking the party's absolute leadership over the People's Army as the lifeblood of the Chinese military
- Persist in firmly establishing the guiding position of Marxist military theory
- Persist in focusing on fulfilling the original mission and improving the ability to win
- Persist in the spirit of reform and innovation throughout the whole process of construction and development
- Persist in passing on the red blood of our party and our army from generation to generation

3. General He Weidong (何卫东): CMC Vice Chairman

He Weidong was born in the town of Xuhe, in Dongtai, Jiangsu in May 1957. He is 65 years old and has served in the PLA from 1972 to 2022. He served as Commander of the Eastern Theatre Command from 2019 to 2022.

He graduated from the PLA Nanjing Army Command College in 1981 and in 2001 entered the National University of Defense Technology.

He joined the PLA in December 1972 after middle school. He has served as a soldier of a reconnaissance detachment, a student of the Army Command College, a reconnaissance staff officer, a reconnaissance battalion instructor, Deputy Director and Director of the Reconnaissance Division; the Division Chief of Staff, Commander of the Motorised Brigade, Commander of the Motorised Division, Chief of Staff of a Group Army, and the Deputy Commander of a Group Army and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Nanjing Military Region.

He was Commander of Jiangsu Military District in July 2013 and the Shanghai Garrison in March 2014. In July 2016 he was transferred as Deputy Commander of the Western Theatre Command and Commander of the Western Theatre Command Army (Ground Force). In September 2019 he was promoted as Commander of the Eastern Theatre Command, replacing Liu Yuejun, and in January 2022, he was replaced by Lin Xiangyang and moved to an unpublicised higher post. Reports said he was transferred to the Central Military Commission.

He was promoted to the rank of Major General in July 2008, Lieutenant General on 31 July 2017 and General on 12 December 2019.

Miscellaneous

He Weidong is one of Xi Jinping's trusted Generals. After Xi Jinping became General Secretary of the CCP CC in 2012, the PLA Officers from the former 31st Group Army of Nanjing MR (73rd Group Army) have been promoted many times. Reports suggest that Xi Jinping regards the 31st Group Army as Xi Jinping's "family army". He Weidong was a PLA Officer from Nanjing MR. He Weidong

served as the Deputy Commander of the PLA 31st Group Army in Xiamen, Fujian, and served as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Nanjing Military Region in January 2013.

4. Li Shangfu (李尚福): CMC Member & Minister of National Defense, PRC

Li Shangfu (64) is an expert in China's aerospace field, and a PLA General. He has been head of the CMC's Equipment Development Department since September 2017. He previously served as Deputy Commander of the PLA Strategic Support Force and Deputy Commander of the PLA General Armaments Department. He spent 31 years working at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center, including 10 years as its Director.

Li Shangfu was born in February 1958 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. His ancestral home is Xingguo County, Jiangxi Province.

As China's new Defence Minister he will give impetus to the 'informationisation' and 'intelligentisation' efforts of the PLA.

On September 20, 2018, Li Shangfu, as well as the CMC Equipment Development Department, were sanctioned under CAATSA by the U.S. government for "engaging in significant transactions with persons", namely for transactions that involved "Russia's transfer to China of Su-35 combat aircraft and S-400 surface-to-air missile system-related equipment".

Li Shangfu joined the PLA when he entered the National University of Defense Technology in 1978. After graduating in 1982, he began working at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center as a technician.

In December 2003, he was promoted as Director (Commander) of the center at the age of 45. In 2006, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Major General. In his ten years as Director of the Xichang Center, Li Shangfu oversaw several rocket launches, including the launch of the Chang'e 2 lunar probe in October 2010. In 2013, he was appointed Chief of Staff of the PLA General Armament Department. At the end of 2014, he was appointed Deputy Director of the PLA General Armament Department, and became a Deputy Military Region-level officer. In 2016, he was appointed Deputy Commander of the newly established PLA Strategic Support Force, which is responsible for cyberspace, space, and other high-tech warfare. In 2016, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Lt. General. In September 2017, Li Shangfu was appointed Director of the CMC Equipment Development Department, the successor to the GAD, replacing General Zhang Youxia. In October 2017, he was elected a member of the 19th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

PLA Princeling

Li Shangfu's father Li Shaozhu (李绍珠 1911-1995) was a Red Army soldier and participated in the Long March under Mao Zedong in 1934. He was also a Division Commander in the anti-Japanese War in December 1934. After establishment of the PRC, in the early 1950s he led his troops to participate in the 'Great Southwest Campaign to Suppress Bandits and Counter-Rebels', and also commanded the PLA troops during the Korean War against the US. Li Shaozhu was in charge of the construction of the Southwest Border Defense Highway, and supervised the construction of the China-Laos highway and China-Nepal highway which were completed in 1962. In order to meet combat readiness requirements in 1962 - 1963, the 24th Regiment of the Fifth Division of the Railway Corps

selected two battalions of elite troops to carry out emergency repairs on the Sino-Indian border on the Tibetan plateau. Leaders of the Tibet Military Region while summarizing the victory of the second “counterattack” against India acknowledged the contribution of the Fifth Division of the Railway Corps and observed: “The victory of this self-defence counterattack is inseparable from the timely repair of the roads in the theatre by the comrades of the Railway Corps.” The Fifth Division of the Railway Corps commanded by Li Shaozhu made an important contribution to the consolidation of national defence of the PRC.

Close Associate of Xi Jinping

Li Shangfu is also a PLA Princeling. His father Li Shaozhu’s role in the CCP’s battles and wars is significant because he led PLA troops before and after establishment of the PRC. Li Shaozhu was a contemporary of Xi Zhongxun. He was a PLA General and Commander. Unlike Xi Zhongxun, Li Shaozhu remained one of Mao Zedong’s reliable men and was not purged during the Cultural Revolution. After Mao Zedong’s death in 1976, unlike Xi Zhongxun, he was not given any important position either in the PLA or in the State. But Li Shaozhu was awarded the PLA Second-Class Red Star Meritorious Medal of Merit in August 1988, when Xi Zhongxun was Vice-Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee and Deng Xiaoping was the Chairman of the CMC.

Since both Li Shaozhu and Xi Zhongxun were of the same age group and became prominent figures in China after the establishment of the PRC, it is very probable that Li Shangfu and Xi Jinping knew each other since their childhood. Later, when Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, there was an abrupt elevation in Li Shangfu’s career from an aerospace engineer to a deputy-theatre level officer. Li Shangfu

joined the Xicheng Satellite Launch Centre in 1982 and served at the Xicheng Centre for 30 years before joining the PLA General Armament Department in 2013. This unusual career move could be because Xi Jinping wanted loyal officers around him in Beijing. Li Shangfu was also Chief of Staff and subsequently Deputy Director of the PLA GAD when Zhang Youxia was the Director of the PLA GAD. Li Shangfu was later promoted as Director of the Equipment Development Department in August 2017 replacing Zhang Youxia, who was posted as CMC Vice Chairman. Zhang Youxia and Li Shangfu would have forged a close relationship during this period and also because their fathers served as Generals and Commanders in the PLA at the same time and both were recognised and awarded by the PRC for their outstanding service to the country. It is possible that Li Shangfu was selected by Xi Jinping on the recommendation of Zhang Youxia.

5. General Liu Zhenli (刘振立): CMC Member and Secretary of CMC Joint Staff Department and former Commander of the PLA Army (PLAA)

The new Commander of the PLA Army (PLAA), Liu Zhenli was 57 years old in 2022. He has participated in Sino-Vietnamese border operations and made “first-class” contributions. He is a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

Liu Zhenli was born in August 1964, in Luancheng, Hebei Province. He joined the PLA in September 1983, and joined the CCP in April 1984. He has a graduate degree from the training course for young and middle-aged leading cadres at the National Defense University, and a Masters Degree in Military Science.

He is currently Commander of the PLA Army (PLAA) and Director of the CMC Joint Staff Department.

He has served as a cadet, platoon commander, deputy company commander, company commander, deputy battalion staff officer, battalion commander, deputy director, director, chief of staff of the brigade, director of military artillery command, and commander of a mechanized infantry division of the Beijing Military Region.

From December 2009 to January 2012, he was Chief of Staff of the PLA 65th Group Army of the Beijing Military Region.

From February 2012 to February 2014, he was Commander of the PLA 65th Group Army of the Beijing Military Region.

From February 2014 to July 2015, he was Commander of the PLA 38th Group Army of the Beijing Military Region.

From July 2015 to December 2015, he was Chief of Staff of the People's Armed Police Force.

From December 2015, he was Chief of Staff of the PLA Army. In June 2021, he was appointed Commander of the PLA Army. In October 2022, he was appointed CMC member and Secretary of the Joint Staff Department of the CMC.

He is a Member of the 20th CCP CC and representative of the 12th National People's Congress.

He was in Beijing MR from 2009 and his tenure overlapped with that of Xi Jinping's as Vice President of the PRC from 2008. Soon

after Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, Liu Zhenli's promotion was fast-tracked and he was finally appointed a Member of the CMC.

Promotions

In December 2010, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Major General.

In July 2016, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Lieutenant General.

In July 2021, he was promoted to the rank of PLA General.

War Experiences & Awards

From 1986 to 1987, Liu Zhenli participated in the “self-defence counterattack” against Vietnam. He led the company and stayed at the enemy's frontlines for more than a year, repelling the enemy's offensive 36 times in all, obtaining the final victory at the least cost, and was awarded “first-class merits” after the war. He subsequently again won a “second-class merit” and the “third-class merit” on three occasions.

Military philosophy

Liu Zhenli believes it is essential to: accelerate building of a joint combat command system; optimize the structure of the service and arms; focus on solving the structural contradictions in the PLA's military operations and building; accelerate the transformation of the military; and adapt to the evolving patterns of war under the conditions of informatization combat requirements. He has emphasised that it is necessary to advance preparations for military struggle, focus on strengthening actual combat readiness, focus on strengthening actual combat training, vigorously cultivate combat

spirit, and improve the actual combat level of the troops.

6. Miao Hua (苗华): CMC Member & Director of CMC Political Work Department

Miao Hua was born in November 1955 in Fuzhou, Fujian. The major part of his service has been in the PLA Army (Ground Forces) but on promotion in 2015 he was conferred the rank of Admiral. He is currently Director of the CMC Political Work Department and a member of the CMC.

He joined the PLA in December 1969, and joined the Chinese Communist Party in September 1973. He graduated from the National Defense Science and Technology University, majoring in Management Engineering, with a Bachelor's degree. He has been engaged in political work in the PLA 31st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region for a long time.

He served as a soldier and squad leader of the 2nd Battalion, 274th Regiment, 92nd Division of the 31st Group Army. In 1983, he was appointed Director of the Political Department of the 276th Regiment of the 92nd Division. In 1985, he was appointed the Political Commissar of the 271st Regiment of the 91st Division. In 1987, he was appointed Political Commissar of the 274th Regiment of the 92nd Division. In June 1991, he was appointed Director of the Political Department of the 93rd Division. In July 1995, he was appointed Political Commissar of the 91st Division.

In August 1999, he was appointed Director of the Political Department of the 31st Army Group. Miao Hua spent 36 years in the PLA 31st Group Army, including a stint of six years as Director of its Political Department.

In July 2005, he was appointed Political Commissar of the PLA 12th Group Army.

In December 2010, he was appointed Director of the Political Department of Lanzhou Military Region. In July 2012, he was appointed Deputy Political Commissar and Secretary of the Disciplinary Committee of the Lanzhou Military Region. In June 2014, he was appointed Political Commissar of Lanzhou Military Region, succeeding General Li Changcai, the former Political Commissar who had retired. In December 2014, he was appointed Political Commissar of the PLA Navy. Miao Hua had never worked in the PLA Navy until December 2014 when he was appointed its Political Commissar.

In August 2017, he was Director of the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission. In October of the same year, he attended the First Plenary Session of the 19th CCP CC. On February 24, 2018, he was elected a representative of the 13th National People's Congress.

In March 2018, he was elected a member of the Central Military Commission.

In July 2001, he was promoted to the rank of Major General.

In July 2012, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General.

On July 31, 2015, he was promoted to the rank of Admiral (equivalent to a PLA General).

He is a member of the 18th CCP Central Commission for Discipline

Inspection, and a member of the 19th& 20th CCP CC, representative to the 11th National People's Congress and the 13th National People's Congress.

Close Associate of Xi Jinping

Miao Hua is the first among an elite group of officers who earned their spurs in the PLA 31st Group Army in the Nanjing MR near Xiamen. He and others like Wang Ning and new PLA Army Commander Han Weiguo came into contact with Xi Jinping who was Deputy Party Secretary of Fujian. All their careers have been fast-tracked.

In late 2010, Miao Hua was transferred to the Lanzhou MR to serve as Director of the Political Department. He worked alongside Xi Jinping in the PLA 31st Group Army in Fujian when Xi was Governor of Fujian Province (1999-2002). Soon after Xi Jinping became CCP CC General Secretary in 2012, Miao Hua was promoted as Deputy Political Commissar of the Lanzhou MR and Secretary of its Discipline Inspection Commission the same year. In July 2012, he was appointed the Political Commissar of Lanzhou Military Region.

Considering that the Lanzhou Military Region was long regarded as the power base of General Guo Boxiong of the Jiang Zemin faction, Miao Hua probably had a role in supporting the investigation against Guo Boxiong and removing the remnants of his influence in the region. Miao Hua was among the senior PLA officers who published articles in April 2014 pledging loyalty to Xi Jinping.

General Miao Hua was given a double promotion by Xi Jinping to become one of the PLA's youngest officers promoted to the rank of PLA General.

Miao Hua, as member of the Central Military Commission and Director of the CMC Political Work Department, attended the opening ceremony and delivered a speech on the opening day in Beijing on December 24, 2017, of the education and training course for cadres transferred from divisional occupations in the military. Miao Hua pointed out that President Xi Jinping has always been concerned about transfer and resettlement in the army, and has issued a series of instructions, which have provided an important political guarantee for the arrangement and use of cadres.

Experience of Foreign Affairs

On October 14, 2019, Miao Hua, Director of the CMC Political Work Department, met Kim Su Gil, Director of the North Korean army's General Political Department, in Pyongyang.

On May 17, 2019, the Cuban Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, received Admiral Miao Hua, member of the Central Military Commission and Director of the CMC Political Work, while they were on an official visit to Cuba.

On May 5, 2017, Chairman of the General Department of Politics of the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) Luong Cuong met Miao Hua, Political Commissar of the PLA Navy, in Hanoi.

7. General Zhang Shengmin (张升民): Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection Committee of the Central Military Commission

Zhang Shengmin was born in August 1958 in Shaanxi Province. He is a PLA General and, a member of the 19th and 20th CCP CC,

and Deputy Secretary of the 19th Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC). He is currently a member of the Central Military Commission, Deputy Secretary of the CMC CDIC.

He has a postgraduate degree from the Central Party School. He also studied at the PLA Lanzhou Military Region Artillery Teaching Brigade, Northwest University, and the PLA National Defense University

He joined the army in February 1978 and joined the Chinese Communist Party in July 1979. After joining the army, he served as soldier, officer, Deputy Director of the Political Research Office of the Political Department of Lanzhou Military Region, and Research Office of the PLA General Political Department.

From February 1978 to August 1981, he was a soldier in the Headquarters Company of the Artillery Regiment of the 141st Division of the PLA 47th Group Army;

During the period February 1981 to July 1981, he attended the Lanzhou Military Region Artillery Teaching Brigade Ground Artillery Command Professional Study.

From August 1981 to September 1981, he was Platoon Leader, Rocket Artillery Battalion, 3rd Company, Artillery Regiment, 141st Division of the PLA 47th Group Army;

From September 1981 to May 1983, he was Officer, Publicity Unit, Political Department, Artillery Regiment, 141st Division of the PLA 47th Group Army;

From May 1983 to July 1984, he was an Officer at the Organization Section, Political Department, 141 Division of the PLA 47th Group Army;

From July 1984 to February 1985, he was Chief of the Organization Division, Political Division, 141 Division, 422 Regiment of the PLA 47th Group Army.

From February 1985 to February 1987, he was an Officer at the Organization Section, Political Department, 141 Division of the PLA 47th Group Army;

From February 1987 to April 1993, he was Researcher at the Political Research Office, Political Department Office of the Lanzhou Military Region;

(From September 1984 to June 1987, he “self-taught” junior college class for the basic subject of party and government cadres at Northwestern University)

From April 1993 to November 1993, he was Deputy Director of the Political Research Office of the Political Department Office of Lanzhou Military Region;

From November 1993 June 1996, he was Researcher at the Political Research Office of the General Office of the General Political Department of the PLA;

From June 1996 to December 1999, he was Deputy Teacher Researcher, Political Research Office, General Office of the General Political Department of the PLA;

From August 1995 to December 1997, he did a Correspondence undergraduate course study in the Central Party School of Political Science and Law.

From December 1999 to June 2000, he was Deputy Director of the Political Research Office of the General Political Department of the PLA;

From June 2000 to September 2002, he was Researcher at the Political Research Office of the PLA General Political Department;

From September 2002 to June 2004, he was Director of the Political Research Office of the General Office of the General Political Department of the PLA;

From June 2004 to October 2008, he was Director of the Political Department of a Base of the Second Artillery Corps (during the period: March 2006 to January 2007, he attended a National Defense University Joint Campaign Command Training Course; from September 2004 to July 2007, he completed on-the-job postgraduate course in Political Science at the Central Party School);

From October 2008 to July 2009, he was Political Commissar of a base of the Second Artillery Corps;

From July 2009 to June 2012, he was Political Commissar of a base of the Second Artillery Corps (during the period: September 2011 to November 2011, he studied at the National Defense University National Defense Research Class)

From June 2012 to September 2013, he was Political Commissar of

the Second Artillery Command College;

From September 2013 to December 2014, he was Political Commissar of a base of the Second Artillery Corps;

From December 2014 to November 2015, he was Director of the Political Department of the Second Artillery Force (From September 2014 to January 2015, he studied at the National Defense University Strategic Command Training Course);

From November 2015 to July 2016, he was Political Commissar of the Training Management Department of the Central Military Commission;

From July 2016 to September 2016, he was Political Commissar of the Logistics Support Department of the Central Military Commission;

From September 2016 to January 2017, he was Political Commissar of the Logistics Support Department of the Central Military Commission (Upgraded Level);

From January 2017 to October 2017, he was Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection Committee and Secretary of the Party Committee of the Central Military Commission

In October 2017, he was appointed Member of the Central Military Commission, Deputy Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection Committee of the Central Military Commission, Secretary of the Party Committee.

He was a Member of the 19th CCP CC and is a member of the 20th CCP CC.

He is a Member, Standing Committee and Deputy Secretary of the 19th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

In October 23, 2022, he was retained as Member of the CMC and Secretary of the CMC CCDI.

Promotions

In July 2006, Zhang Shengmin was promoted to the rank of PLA Major General.

In July 2016, he was promoted to the rank of PLA Lieutenant General.

In November 2017, he was promoted to the rank of the PLA General.

Close Associate of Xi Jinping

After Xi Jinping took over China's top positions, Zhang Shengmin's rise has been rapid. During the 19th Party Congress in 2017, Zhang Shengmin said that 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is the most fundamental guide for overcoming risks and challenges, and that the leadership of the Party and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics are the most powerful support for creating China's miracle. As the core of the party, the leader of the people and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, President Xi Jinping is the most reliable political guarantee for coping with the challenges of the crisis and winning the struggle'.

Despite his diverse career spanning multiple bases and MRs, in recent years no other officer has benefited more from the top-level changes consequent to the reforms than Zhang Shengmin. His rise benefitted from major reshuffles in top positions in the Second Artillery in 2014 and 2015, the concerns about corruption and the need to remove the lingering influence of Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong.

Zhang Shengmin has served in several newly created posts since the PLA was reorganized in late 2015. In just 2 years, he was appointed first Political Commissar of the new CMC Training and Administration Department in early 2016, and only a few months later in October was reassigned to replace Xi Jinping's ally and anti-corruption champion Liu Yuan as the new Political Commissar of the CMC Logistics Support Department.

In March 2017, Zhang Shengmin was elevated to become the Secretary of the PLA Discipline Inspection Commission.

Miscellaneous Information

During his work in Northwest China, Zhang Shengmin made great efforts to promote the building of grassroots companies and strengthen the daily education of officers and soldiers.

The Political Department of the base independently developed a network virtual education system using 3D engine technology, which comprises 14 sets of teaching games and 7 sets of interesting answering systems and is very popular among officers and soldiers. In an interview Zhang Shengmin said: "This is a brand-new attempt by the base to use the Internet to carry out political work!"

The April 2010 Yushu disaster relief was an important moment in Zhang Shengmin's military career. After the earthquake, he led more than 1,000 officers and soldiers to the disaster area to carry out post-disaster reconstruction work. They helped the largest Tibetan Buddhist Baijiao monastery in Yushu, Changu Temple, build a 310-square-meter prefab house, and donated a batch of tents and quilts. The urgent needs of more than 260 monks, such as accommodation, study and storage of religious relics, were resolved. It enabled them to recommence normal religious activities 13 days after the earthquake.

Zhang Shengmin is the youngest member of the CMC and, alongside Miao Hua, is well-positioned to serve two terms through at least 2027.

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