

## **Chapter 2**

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### **China**

# **Xi Jinping Confronts Problems as He Seeks to Consolidate His Power**

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**A**t the Communist Party of China (CPC) Nineteenth National Congress held in October 2017, the CPC Constitution was modified to include new guidelines for action entitled “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era,” and a considerable number of important posts were filled by General Secretary Xi Jinping’s followers. In these and other ways, the congress represented a major enhancement of Xi’s political authority. In his report to the Party Congress, Xi emphasized that “socialism with Chinese characteristics” had entered a new era, and he set forth a new goal for the nation, that of achieving a great modern socialist state by around 2049, the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, which would be “rich and powerful, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.” His goal, it would seem, was to ensure his continued authority even after the Twentieth Party Congress five years later and to steadily accumulate visible achievements in subsequent domestic and foreign policies.

China’s diplomacy during 2017 emphasized Beijing’s leadership in the international community, with the primary goal seeming to be consolidation of President Xi Jinping’s political authority. China also sponsored the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation as well as a summit meeting of five emerging countries, advocating “major power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics” aimed toward achieving “a community with a shared future for mankind” and “a new form of international relations.” Despite such calls for commonality, however, China maintained some policy positions at odds with other leading powers, such as its differences with the United States over the Korean Peninsula and its confrontation with India in the Doklam highlands.

China’s military also moved forward during 2017 with its reforms, such as reduction in the number of military units and reorganization of educational institutions. At the Nineteenth CPC National Congress, it was set as the goal to accelerate informationization of the military and establish the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) as a world-class military force by the middle of the twenty-first century. In addition, the PLA continued moving forward with development of new equipment such as domestically built aircraft carriers and 10,000-ton class destroyers and repeatedly engaged in exercises under real combat conditions. In 2017, an aircraft carrier group sailed around Taiwan and bombers flew nearly to the Kii Peninsula in Japan.

## 1. President Xi Jinping Moves Forward with Concentrating Authority

### (1) An Ever-Stronger Power Base

The Communist Party of China (CPC) held its Nineteenth National Congress in October 2017. This party convention is held every five years to summarize the results of the current leadership's five years in office and at the same time to set the leadership's personnel affairs and basic policy for the coming five years. Additional responsibilities of the party convention include adopting changes to the Party Constitution, making this gathering every five years extremely important. Observers of the Nineteenth National Congress paid closest attention to how the political authority of General Secretary Xi Jinping, who had been pushing forward with consolidating political clout since his assumption of the position in November 2012, had been able to officially place itself in the CPC structure. It was notable that at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eighteenth CPC Central Committee in October 2016, the political power of General Secretary Xi Jinping (who was concurrently president of the People's Republic and chairman of the Central Military Commission) was cited as being at the "core" of the Central Committee and the CPC as a whole; in this, it appeared that Xi had surpassed his predecessor Hu Jintao, who had never been called the "core" of the Party. Considerable attention was directed at how General Secretary Xi's political authority was formally positioned at the party convention, in other words, at how it would be recorded in the Party Constitution.

In the general program at the beginning of the Party Constitution, the guiding principles of the generations of leaders listed as "action guidelines" consisted of Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents (Jiang Zemin), and the Scientific Outlook on Development (Hu Jintao). Of these, only one, Mao Zedong Thought, was categorized as an action guideline during the active political life of its originator; Deng Xiaoping Theory was given shape as a guiding principle only after his death, while the Theory of Three Represents (Jiang Zemin), and the Scientific Outlook on Development (Hu Jintao) were formulated only when Jiang and Hu retired. In addition, of these four action guidelines, only two—Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory—carry the names of their generators, and the Chinese view of "thought" as having precedence over "theory." Against such a background, one focus of attention was

just how Xi Jinping's guiding principles would be recorded in the Party Constitution.

At the Nineteenth Party Congress, "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" was added to the revised Party Constitution as a guide to action. One point worthy of note is that use of the name Xi Jinping placed him higher than Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. A second point is that as principles applied during Xi's active political career and having been accorded the status of "thoughts," Xi's guiding principles give him status superior to that of Deng Xiaoping. This revision of the Party Constitution and the structural incorporation of General Secretary Xi's unsurpassed political power into the Party Constitution are indications that Xi Jinping has further consolidated his authority.

The handling of personnel affairs at the Nineteenth Party Congress also testifies to a stronger power base for General Secretary Xi. The First Plenary Session of the new Central Committee was held the day following the congress. The meeting elected twenty-five members of the Central Committee Politburo and out of these named seven members for the Politburo Standing Committee. The Standing Committee members, led by Xi Jinping, consisted of Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council, Li Zhanshu, Wang Yang, Wang Huning, Zhao Leji, and Han Zheng. Of these, Li Zhanshu served as Director of the CPC Central Committee General Office which directs the everyday work of the Party's central leadership, including the General Secretary; considering that Li Zhanshu was also office director for the Central National Security Commission overseeing such affairs as developing and executing policies on national security, he must have been particularly trusted by Xi Jinping. Wang Huning is a policy specialist who had served as director of the Policy Research Office of the CPC Central Committee from Hu Jintao days and had also worked as director of the Office of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform as part of his strong ties to General Secretary Xi. Zhao Leji had been entrusted with directing the Central Committee Organization Department which concentrated on managing CPC upper level personnel under General Secretary Xi and led the personnel office in the period leading up to the Nineteenth Party Congress. General Secretary Xi also appointed Zhao Leji as secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection which was the cornerstone of the anti-corruption movement. By ensuring that three such people who were very close to him were named to the Standing Committee, Xi Jinping was able to ensure that he held sway over a majority of the Standing

**Table 2.1. New Standing Committee of CPC Central Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Born (Age)</b>	<b>Former Position</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
Xi Jinping	June 1953 (64)	General Secretary, President, Chairman of Central Military Commission	Same
Li Keqiang	July 1955 (62)	Premier of State Council	Same
Li Zhanshu	August 1950 (67)	Director of General Office of CPC Central Committee	Chairman of National People's Congress*
Wang Yang	March 1955 (62)	Vice Premier of State Council	Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*
Wang Huning	October 1955 (62)	Director of Policy Research Office of CPC Central Committee	Secretary of CPC Secretariat
Zhao Leji	March 1957 (60)	Head of CPC Central Committee Organization Department	Secretary of Central Commission for Discipline Inspection
Han Zheng	April 1954 (63)	Director of Shanghai CPC Committee	Vice Premier of State Council*

Sources: Compiled by the author from various media sources.

Note: Ages and titles are as of October 25, 2017. \*Scheduled to take office March 2018.

### Committee members.

General Secretary Xi was also successful in appointing a large number of people close to himself to serve in the Politburo. For example, Chen Miner was serving as Secretary of the Chongqing Municipal Party Committee replacing Sun Zhengcai, who had been viewed as the hope of the next generation of CPC leaders until he was ousted before the Nineteenth Party Congress. When Xi Jinping had served as CPC Secretary in Zhejiang, Chen had served under him as head of the propaganda department of Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee. Cai Qi, who took over as secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee in May 2017, had served as a subordinate to Xi Jinping in Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces and was able to leapfrog over intermediate positions to move to the Politburo. Zhao Leji's replacement as Central Committee Organization Department head was Chen Xi, who like Xi Jinping was an alumnus of Tsinghua University, and who had risen via such positions as secretary of the Tsinghua University Party Committee to become deputy director of the Party Organization Department. Li Qiang was appointed secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee as successor to Han Zheng, and Li Qiang in turn had served under Xi Jinping when

Xi was secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee. Many other examples could be cited of Politburo members who were earlier close to Xi Jinping before rising to join the Politburo, and they seem likely to boost Xi's authority there.

## **(2) Xi Jinping Puts Stress on the “New Era”**

On the opening day of the Nineteenth Party Congress, General Secretary Xi reported on behalf of the Central Committee regarding the achievements of the five preceding years and on policies for the next five years.<sup>1)</sup> During this long report, which took up about three and a half hours, General Secretary Xi stressed that “socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era.” Why did China's distinctive socialism enter a new era? According to Xi, it is because the CPC's socialist modernization route achieved significant results. In his report, he cited such examples from the preceding five years as steady development of the economy and overall deepening of the reform, reduction of the portion of the population in poverty, improving environmental conditions, strengthening the military, raising China's international status, and strengthening the crackdown on corruption, and claimed these as historic achievements in opening-up and reform of China and building a modernized socialism. Through these achievements, China had not only established its international position as a major power but had also opened a bright path toward realizing the “great dream” of “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”

While entering this “new era,” challenges facing Chinese society have changed significantly. The challenge up to that point had been to solve the contradiction between the need for meeting the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and social productivity that was lagging behind the needs of the times. In other words, the aim had been to resolve the quantitative shortage of supply in the face of increasing demand. However General Secretary Xi handed down the conclusion that the new challenge was now between the people's ever-growing need for a better life and Chinese society's unbalanced and inadequate development. In other words, the needs of the people in the new era are for an improved quality of life in areas such as politics, economics, culture, society, and the environment. Given the gap in development between urban and rural areas, regional disparities, and the imbalances of income distribution, the current state of unbalanced and insufficient economic development is a constraint to achieving a better life, and

thus improvement and elevation of civilian life became a major topic for attention in the new era.

General Secretary Xi also reported that along with the arrival of a new era, the CPC had changed its medium- and long-term goals. Until then, the Communist Party aimed to achieve the “building of a moderately prosperous society” by 2021, the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the CPC. Then by the year 2049, the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the PRC, the goal would be to achieve a modern socialist state which was prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious. This process had come to be called the “two centenary goals.”

In speaking on the first of these two centenary targets, General Secretary Xi said that having achieved the first, i.e., the full construction of a moderately prosperous society, the period from 2020 until the middle of the century would be divided into two phases with new goals. The first stage is from 2020 to 2035 and aims to fundamentally achieve a modern socialist society. The second stage is from 2035 until the middle of the twenty-first century with the goal of developing China into “a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.” In other words, by citing the new goal of achieving a great modern socialist country, Xi moved the second goal of establishing modernized socialism ahead by fifteen years. Xi thus highlighted both domestically and internationally the CPC’s policy of achieving a great modern socialist country which would be a global leader through its comprehensive national strength and international influence. In keeping with this new goal, the time schedule and contents of China’s national defense construction goals were also changed (see section 3).

### **(3) Issues Still Requiring Xi Jinping's Attention**

At the Nineteenth Party Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping was able to ensure that the guiding principles bearing his name were advanced as action guidelines in the Party Constitution and that the Standing Committee and general members of the Politburo consisted largely of persons with close ties to Xi. In

these and other ways, Xi succeeded in greatly enhancing his political authority within the CPC. At the same time, the absence from the Standing Committee of members who would be in their fifties at the Twentieth Party Congress in five years and therefore eligible for election as general secretary and Xi's instatement of the new goal of achieving the modernization of socialism in 2035 would indicate that he intends to maintain his "core" role in the CPC even after the Twentieth Party Congress and promote China to great power status. At the Nineteenth Party Congress, however, some parts of Xi's power base appeared perhaps less than rock solid.

First, the phrase recorded in Party Constitution action guidelines is "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era." Without doubt it is highly significant that the "thought" of "Xi Jinping" is specified in the action guidelines, but the core of that phrase is still "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics." The concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics was established in the Deng Xiaoping era and was emphasized as a CPC action guideline even under Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. On the other hand, Jiang Zemin's Theory of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development of Hu Jintao were new phrases that had not been used earlier and which symbolized their own individual political authority. General Secretary Xi also had prepared a new phrase that represented his own leadership philosophy: "new ideas, new thinking, and new strategies for governance." The term "governance" (i.e., administration of the nation) was also used in the title of a book written by Xi that symbolizes his ruling philosophy. Before the Party Congress it was expected that this phrase would be incorporated into the Party Constitution, but what actually appeared was "socialism with Chinese characteristics" with "Xi Jinping thought" and "a new era" attached. This would suggest that there was not full consensus within the party on making General Secretary Xi Jinping's individual governing philosophy one of the CPC's guiding principles.

Second, it appeared impossible to overcome the practice of setting sixty-eight as the retirement age for Politburo Standing Committee members. It has been customary to apply the "seven up, eight down" principle of continuing to serve on the Standing Committee at age sixty-seven but standing down at sixty-eight. Xi Jinping was then sixty-four, and if the custom were applied, he would have to resign from the Standing Committee at the next Party Congress. In this respect, attention was turned to the treatment of Standing Committee member Wang

Qishan, secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, who had turned sixty-nine. Wang Qishan had close ties to General Secretary Xi, and some observers thought Xi would keep Wang Qishan as a Standing Committee member. If this happened, it would represent breaking away from the practice of retirement at sixty-eight. But Wang Qishan did retire and the practice survived. In order for General Secretary Xi to retain his position for a third term, however, the shackles of this custom will have to be discarded at some point.

A third point is that the “party chairman system” was not restored as had been discussed. Mao Zedong held the party chairmanship until his death; there was no specified term, and this mechanism made it possible to have a firm grasp on power in the CPC. Concern over the one-man rule exercised by Mao brought abolition of the position and installation of a leadership structure centered on the general secretary. If the position of chairman could be reinstated and if Xi Jinping were himself able to occupy the post, then he would no longer be bound by the age limits for Standing Committee members and could exercise even more powerful leadership of the CPC. This, however, was something else that Xi was unable to achieve at the Nineteenth Party Congress.

In other words, at the Nineteenth Party Congress General Secretary Xi was able to concentrate more authority in his hands, but it is reasonable to say that he was unable to build a foundation to permit him to exercise such authority beyond the next Congress. There still seems to be some deep-rooted resistance within the Party to General Secretary Xi’s concentration of power. In order for Xi to maintain such a high level of concentrated authority beyond the Twentieth Party Congress in 2022, it probably will be necessary for him to show tangible achievements over the coming five years in applying the policies he himself has set. Domestically, it will be important to raise the standard of living to give the people a better life. There are many concerns to be addressed such as correcting income disparities, improving the environment, reducing poverty, enhancing education and medical care, and introducing policies to respond to the aging population. If Xi can address such concerns and achieve results that satisfy the people, this will contribute to the strengthening of his authority.

What is noteworthy in terms of foreign policy is the response to the issues of territorial sovereignty and maritime interests, with General Secretary Xi saying in his report to the Party Congress that China would never give up its legitimate rights and interests. In the report Xi points out that “Construction on islands and

reefs in the South China Sea has seen steady progress” and emphasizes the construction of military bases in the Spratly (Nansha) Islands as one result. Efforts to promote defense and military reform, he said, had resulted in the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) making “major progress in enhancing military preparedness.” Against such a background of expanding military power, General Secretary Xi’s decisions over the next five years on seeking results in expanding China’s “legitimate interests” at sea will likely greatly influence the security of East Asia.

## **2. Dreams and Reality of a “Community of Shared Future for Mankind”**

### **(1) Promoting Great Power Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics**

China’s diplomacy during 2017 under the guidance of President Xi Jinping leading up to the Nineteenth Party Congress aimed at enhancing Xi’s political authority through exercising strong leadership in the international community as a major power, with Xi’s report emphasizing the resultant strengthening of China’s international position. Such diplomacy was conducted with a maximum of emphasis on strengthening President Xi’s political authority. Xi Jinping proposed a new diplomatic philosophy for China taking advantage of a variety of opportunities and pointing out the limitations and problems of the existing international order, and he stressed the readiness to continue to work towards realization of that new diplomatic philosophy.

In January 2017, President Xi Jinping visited Davos, Switzerland, and took part in the World Economic Forum held there. Xi, the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony, strongly emphasized the need to further advance the globalization of the economy.<sup>2)</sup> In Europe, Britain had decided to withdraw from the European Union (EU), and in the United States Donald Trump, who advocates protectionism, had been elected as the next president; such developments reflected that largely in the United States and Europe there was a broadening skepticism toward globalization of the economy, but President Xi pointed out that in large part, many of the problems perplexing the world had not been brought about by economic globalization. Globalization of the economy is a natural result of the development of social productive capacities and advances in science and technology, providing

a strong driving force for global economic growth and promoting the flow of goods and capital, progress in science, technology, and civilization, and more active interchange among the peoples of all nations. Xi also stressed that in order to develop globalization of the economy in better directions, it was necessary to promote the liberalization of global trade and investment, oppose protectionism, and increase the right of developing countries to speak out on the governance of the global economy. In addition, President Xi noted that China's economic development benefited the world economy and emphasized that China would contribute to the globalization of the economy in ways such as further opening of its own economy and promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Subsequent to the Davos meeting, President Xi Jinping attended a meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva, where he delivered a speech entitled "Let Us Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind."<sup>3</sup> In this speech he maintained that building a fair and rational international order is a long-standing goal of mankind, and that the democratization of international relations where sovereign states can participate equally in global governance should be promoted. He indicated that China's policy was to cooperate with other countries in seeking to build such a shared destiny for mankind, noting that all countries should jointly write international rules, jointly manage global affairs, and ensure that development outcomes are shared by all.

This construction of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind stood alongside the construction of a new type of international relations with cooperation and a win-win philosophy at its core as the central concepts of the "great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" promoted under President Xi's leadership. At the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs held in November 2014, President Xi stressed China's need for a foreign policy that has its own Chinese characteristics and asserted that China must give its foreign affairs Chinese characteristics, Chinese dignity, and Chinese style. As specific examples of such foreign policy, Xi cited building a new type of international relations with cooperation and win-win outcomes at their core and building a "peripheral community of shared destiny" that deepens reciprocal cooperation and mutual linkage with neighboring countries.<sup>4</sup> Foreign Minister Wang Yi has identified great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics as General Secretary Xi Jinping's philosophy of diplomacy, with the two main supports of this concept being construction of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind

and construction of a new type of international relations with cooperation and win-win at their core.<sup>5)</sup> The international spread of this concept of a common human destiny advocated by China is a sign of China's heightened position and influence in international politics, which would be recognized within China as a great achievement in Xi's diplomacy. In his report to the Nineteenth Party Congress, Xi emphasized that China's international influence, its prestige, and its ability to effect change had been further heightened.

In the same report, Xi stated that through its promotion of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, China had contributed to the maintenance of international order. Indeed, this statement is fully in keeping with, for example, China's support for the free trade order that brings it great profits and its promotion of the flow toward globalization. At the same time, Xi has claimed that there is a growing urgency for change regarding global economic governance, and that by giving a greater voice to developing countries, a model for fair and reasonable governance should be set up.<sup>6)</sup> Regarding the security order in the Asia-Pacific region, China holds that the old security philosophy of Cold War ideas, a zero-sum game, and the supremacy of armed force is not suitable for our age, and that military alliances are detrimental to the common security of the region. This, China claims, is why it is promoting the establishment of a new regional security framework.<sup>7)</sup> Judged in this respect, it should be noted that the substance of the Community of Shared Future for Mankind would include challenges to the existing order regarding security in particular.

In May 2017, China hosted the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. The BRI, consisting of the Silk Road Economic Belt and a twenty-first century Maritime Silk Road, is a land transportation route extending from China to Europe and maritime routes from China to Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea. This concept seeks to strengthen economic partnerships between China and Eurasian countries, Africa, and Latin America and aims for mutual development through the improvement of land and maritime transportation routes. President Xi Jinping himself proposed the BRI in 2013 and since then has strongly promoted it, making it a representative element of Xi Jinping diplomacy. China brought together more than 1,600 participants for the Belt and Road Forum from more than 140 countries and more than eighty international organizations, including the heads of twenty-nine countries, as it both boasted of the international spread of the BRI and touted at home and abroad

the purpose and leadership of Xi Jinping to promote the BRI further.

In his opening speech to the Belt and Road Forum, President Xi stressed that the existing international order is experiencing a lot of problems. Citing examples such as lack of promotion of economic growth and imbalanced development, a growing gap between rich and poor, frequent occurrence of conflicts, and the spread of terrorism, Xi pointed out the myriad challenges the world faces. He went on to say that efforts needed to be devoted to supporting and developing an open world economy, cooperation in creating conditions useful to open development, promotion of a system of world economic, trade, and investment rules which is fair, rational, and transparent. Regarding the international political order, he called on each country to respect one other's sovereignty, dignity, territorial integrity, path to development, and social system, thereby respecting one other's core interests and major concerns. "We must build a new international relationship centered on cooperation and win-win outcomes," Xi declared. He indicated it was China's policy to seek to achieve such goals by promoting the BRI.<sup>8)</sup> At a press conference following the forum, President Xi showed pride in what his own foreign policy had accomplished there as the various countries cooperated in building the Belt and Road.<sup>9)</sup>

The emerging BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—held a summit conference in Xiamen in September 2017. This was the last opportunity for President Xi Jinping to display the results of his foreign policy before the Party Congress. In his speech at the summit, Xi said, "If we five countries do not get involved, many serious and urgent global issues cannot be effectively resolved," and he stressed the need to promote the construction of a

new form of international relations to promote development of the international order in fairer and more rational directions. In economics as well, he argued that countries should support multilateral trade regimes, oppose protectionism, promote global economic governance reforms and increase emerging markets and developing countries' representative

nature and right to speak out.<sup>10)</sup> China also invited leaders from Egypt, Guinea, Mexico, Tajikistan, and Thailand to the summit and held dialogues between emerging markets and developing countries. According to President Xi, the purpose of this framework, named “BRICS Plus,” was to build a network of partners and to construct a community of development and a community of common destiny.<sup>11)</sup> Through this summit, President Xi Jinping made the case that China had risen to the rank of a great power, leading the developing countries of the world and guiding the construction of a new international order, one which followed the ideal of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind.

## **(2) Problems in Real-World Diplomacy**

Despite the strong appeal by President Xi Jinping above, real Chinese diplomacy faces a variety of problems and challenges, and there is little prospect for realization of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind such as China has been seeking. One of the key issues in China’s diplomacy is to establish a stable relationship with United States, but the US-China relationship in 2017 continued to be unstable. In November 2016, the United States elected Donald Trump as president, and Trump had severely criticized China for its unfair trade practices and expansion of military power. On December 2, president-elect Trump talked by telephone with Taiwan’s leader, President Tsai Ing Wen. Since the United States had normalized relations with the People’s Republic of China in 1979 and had cut relations with Taiwan, the United States had applied a “one China” policy, maintaining no official relations with Taiwan and holding no meetings with leaders from Taiwan. Even with the inauguration approaching, it was extremely unusual for the president-elect and Taiwan’s leadership to hold a telephone discussion. The Chinese government strongly protested to Trump, saying the talks violated the “one China” principle. In response, Trump asked, “Why should we be bound by a one China policy?” and dismissed the criticism by China.<sup>12)</sup>

China considers Taiwan issues as one of its core interests, thus it has been forced to be cautious about dialogue with the Trump administration because of its differences from past administrations. Before taking office, Trump had met with the leaders of a number of major countries, including Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, but talks between President Xi Jinping and Trump never seemed to materialize. On February 10, Xi Jinping and Trump had their first telephone conversation. Having congratulated Trump on becoming president, Xi Jinping

expressed his intention to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in various areas and to strengthen coordination dealing with international problems. For his part, Trump said that he was aware of the importance of the one China policy, and that the United States would stick firmly to that policy.<sup>13)</sup> With this, Xi Jinping's government was at long last able to start building relations with the Trump administration.

Since then, Chinese diplomacy toward the United States has been heavily influenced by the situation on the Korean Peninsula. In the face of North Korea's repeated nuclear tests and missile launches, the Trump administration strengthened US vigilance and made more active efforts to turn North Korea toward denuclearization. The Trump administration strengthened military and diplomatic pressure on North Korea through combined military exercises with the South, and at the same time it sought Chinese cooperation in strengthening economic pressure on North Korea. On April 6 and 7, a US-China Summit was held at Trump's vacation home in Florida. During this meeting, in lieu of the strategic and economic dialogue held with the Obama administration, the United States and China set up four high-level dialogues on: diplomacy and security; economy; law enforcement and cyber security; and social and people-to-people exchanges. Agreement was also reached that President Trump would visit China within the year. Before the Florida talks, President Trump had expressed an expectation that China would tighten its economic sanctions against North Korea, and a response to North Korea was a major agenda item. In parallel with the talks with Xi Jinping, Trump conducted a missile attack against Syria in retaliation for the use of chemical weapons. Xi was informed of the Syria attack during dinner with the President, who had decided on a military attack and ordered the operation, right there in front of him. In his recounting of the summit results, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the two leaders had agreed to press North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and resolve issues peacefully.<sup>14)</sup>

China has felt compelled to strengthen its economic sanctions against North Korea in response to strong demands from the United States and the growing criticism of North Korea in the international community. On the other hand, China is also concerned that an economically cornered North Korea could react with further backlash against United States and cause political turmoil, destabilizing the situation on the peninsula.<sup>15)</sup> For China, the urgent challenge on the Korean Peninsula is to ease tensions, and to this end Beijing proposed a "double freeze"

in which North Korea would pause its nuclear and missile development while the United States and South Korea would temporarily suspend large-scale military exercises.<sup>16)</sup> However, Washington and Pyongyang have shown no readiness to accept this. North Korea has strongly stated its policy of continuing nuclear and missile development and its relationship with China has begun to deteriorate, as seen in its criticism of China for starting to gradually strengthen economic sanctions. North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear test on September 3, the date that the opening ceremony of the BRICS summit was held in China. At the same time, China has strongly urged South Korea to withdraw the US Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system which had been deployed to respond to North Korea's missile threat. This situation is inviting deterioration of China-South Korea relations.

In addition, China's relations with India also worsened. In June 2017, a confrontation arose in the Doklam highlands, an area in dispute between China and Bhutan, when the Indian military blocked road construction work by Chinese troops. Beijing proclaimed that the action of the Indian military violated international law against China's sovereignty and demanded their withdrawal from the Doklam plateau, but India maintained that their military had taken legitimate action. In early August, a spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of Defense, Ren Guoqiang, said that China had shown utmost goodwill toward India and was exercising self-restraint. Ren pointed out, however, that "goodwill has its principles and restraint has its bottom line." He strongly cautioned the Indian side as he noted that no country should underestimate the confidence and ability of the Chinese military to fulfill its responsibility or the determination and will of the Chinese military to protect the interests of national sovereignty, safety, and development.<sup>17)</sup> The confrontation between the two forces continued but finally came to an end in late August, when Indian prime minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to attend a BRICS summit meeting.<sup>18)</sup>

In this way, China has sparked considerable friction with its neighboring countries. Confrontations continue with countries involved in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and far from creating a Community of Shared Future for Mankind, at present China does not even seem inclined to build a peripheral community of shared destiny.

### 3. PLA Aims to Become a World-Class Force

#### **(1) Steady Progress in National Defense and Military Reform**

On August 1, 2017, Xi Jinping spoke as chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) at a ceremony in Beijing to celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of the PLA.<sup>19)</sup> Chairman Xi noted that since the Eighteenth Party Congress (November 2012), China had promoted the full application of its national defense and military reforms, based on the principle that the CMC provides “general management,” the theater commands focus on combat operations, and the services pursue force building, and thus, the Chinese military had been given a new structure, organization, system, and overall outlook. Through five years of effort, Xi said, the military had prepared itself for any journey ahead of it and was moving steadily toward strengthening itself as a military with Chinese characteristics. Xi made it plain that since 2012, the PLA had been moving steadily forward on its own initiative and had entered a new stage in its structural and organizational reforms.

From late 2015 into 2016, the general commands of the PLA Army, Rocket Force, and Strategic Support Force were founded (as of the end of December 2015), and the former four-general-department structure was replaced by a military C&C system centered on the CMC itself consisting of fifteen functional departments (as of January 2016). The previous seven military region commands were regrouped into five theater commands in February 2016. All these reforms were of the so-called “neck up” variety, while the second phase of reforms in 2017 were “neck down” reforms.

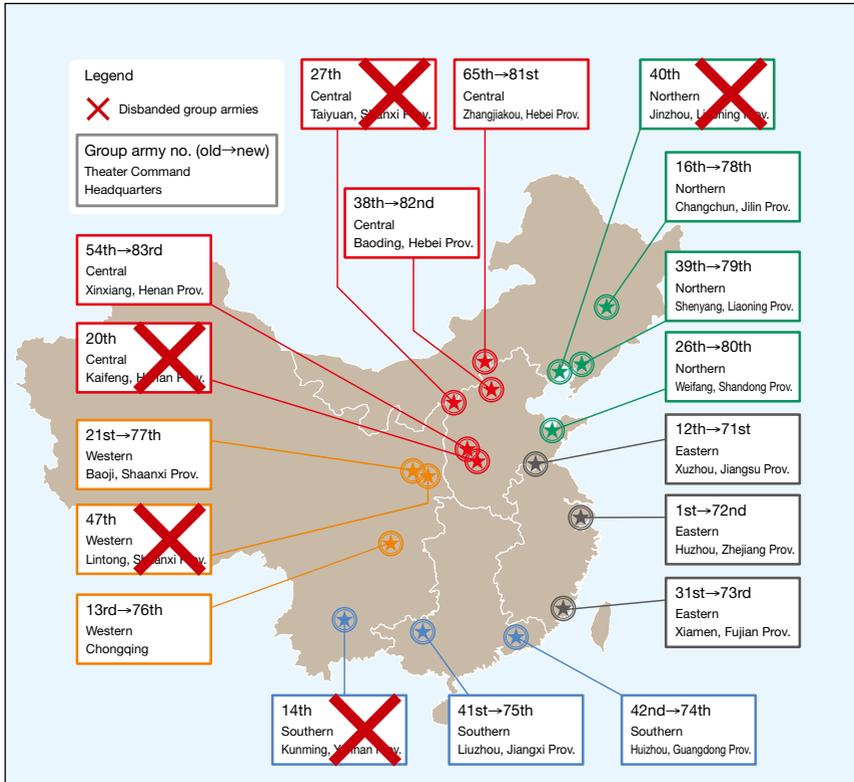
In December 2016, the CMC held a conference on reforms of the military’s size, structure, and formation.<sup>20)</sup> The details were not clear at the time of the meeting, but a later report explained that the conference had six achievements: (1) optimizing the relative size of different types of forces, (2) reducing the number of group armies from eighteen to thirteen, (3) maintaining Air Force strength at current levels while augmenting the Navy and the Rocket Forces, (4) slashing non-combat personnel, (5) reducing troops by 300,000 while expanding tactical forces, and (6) pursuing reform of military educational institutions (universities, academies, military schools), scientific research organizations, and training organizations.<sup>21)</sup> Then, in April 2017, CMC Chairman Xi Jinping is reported to have met with and instructed the military leadership of the corps-level units

(group armies or air, sea, and rocket bases headed by major generals or rear admirals) of the CMC's eighty-four newly created or reformed land, sea, air, rocket, and strategic support units; such meetings were a confirmation that "neck down" reforms had been achieved.<sup>22)</sup>

Details of the process were not disclosed, except for mention at a regular Ministry of National Defense press conference that eighteen group armies had been reorganized into thirteen, and that at that time, the existing unit numbering system was abolished and numbers seventy-one through eighty-three were newly assigned.<sup>23)</sup> According to reports in the Hong Kong media, the five PLA group armies abolished were: the Fourteenth (in the region covered by the new Southern Theater Command), the Forty-seventh (Western), the Fortieth (Northern), and the Twentieth and the Twenty-seventh (Central). In addition, other new unit designations appear to include Navy bases, Naval Air Force commands, Air Force bases, airborne bases, and missile bases, among others.<sup>24)</sup>

Another theme of the December 2016 reform conference was the military academy, scientific research institutions, and training organizations. In July 2017, a flag presentation ceremony was held for the post-reform PLA Academy of Military Science, the National Defense University of the PLA, and the National University of Defense Technology. Media reports indicate that CMC Chairman Xi Jinping presented unit colors to the heads of those three institutions, and lectured persons present from military academies, scientific research institutions, and training organizations, confirming that the reforms had been carried out.<sup>25)</sup> Of these, it is thought that the PLA Academy of Military Science became a structure of eight research bodies, as the current systems for research on military strategy and law as well as on political work were joined by new bodies such as groups to research military medicine, defense engineering, and antichemical protection. The National Defense University was given responsibility for military schools in such locations as Shijiazhuang, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Xi'an, encompassing eight schools whose subjects included military culture, joint operation, and military management.<sup>26)</sup> It was also announced that in addition to the two schools that were already directly under the CMC (the National Defense University and the National University of Defense Technology), thirty-five schools specialized in specific armed services and six schools under People's Armed Police jurisdiction were attached to form a system of forty-three schools.<sup>27)</sup> The system which formerly consisted of a total of seventy-seven schools was reformed into less than

**Figure 2.1. Reorganization of PLA group armies**



two-thirds of the previous number.<sup>28)</sup>

One Chinese military news site explains these reforms of the military school system, pointing out that there had been a number of problems which had to be addressed because the size and structure of the schools remained unchanged from the era when the PLA numbered 3 million personnel. Problems cited included one academy that habitually failed to fill its student quota, and another whose staff organization was needlessly complex, burdened with imbalances and redundancies, as well as job ranks set higher than necessary. As a result, the site notes, the number of schools was trimmed, the rank of the superintendents was downgraded across the board, and reductions were made in the number of battalion-level and higher units and the number of senior leadership positions at or above division

rank, all with the goal of streamlining the educational structure in the same manner as the combat units.<sup>29)</sup>

Looking at the reform of units below the corps level, efforts had already been directed at, for example, reorganizing army division level units to the brigade level (“division to brigade”), but it would appear that in the current round of reforms, progress has been made in converting the basic alignment of strategic forces to “group army-brigade-battalion,” in other words, making the brigade the basic strategic unit in an alignment that takes the battalion as its basic fighting unit.<sup>30)</sup> In this process of reform down to the brigade level, particular attention is being given to reform of what has been called “combined arms brigades” consisting of an amalgam of military specialties. The mainstay of the combined arms brigade is the “combined arms battalion,” which is structured from dozens of specialties from ten elements, including infantry, armor, and other combat arms, as well as combat support and logistical support. Hence, these battalions are believed to have a high level of independent combat capability.<sup>31)</sup> In addition, although there has been no official announcement from China regarding such troops as the PLA Navy (PLAN) marines or the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) airborne units, PLA media noted that the PLAN marines participating in the PLA ninetieth Anniversary parade in late July 2017 were being presented in public for the first time since the reform, expansion, and reorganization of military units.<sup>32)</sup> From this announcement and the fact that airborne units had conventionally been listed in media reports under divisions but are now reported as belonging to brigades, it appears evident that these units have been reformed as part of the overall restructuring and reform.

Turning to military personnel affairs, new assignment patterns could be observed. For example, when Gen. Wang Jiaocheng, commanding officer of the Southern Theater Command, reached retirement age early in 2017, North Sea Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Yuan Yubai was brought in as Wang’s replacement.<sup>33)</sup> This reassignment accompanied a shift in assignments for admirals accompanying the voluntary retirement of Adm. Wu Shengli after ten years as a PLAN commander, but even though one feature of the Southern Theater Command is that it faces on the South China Sea, the appointment of someone with a naval background to head the Southern Theater Command was a landmark event. It has also been confirmed from PLA media reports that in August of that year, Gen. Li Zuocheng, PLA Army commander, replaced Gen. Fang Fenghui as chief of staff

of the Joint Staff Department.<sup>34)</sup> Immediately thereafter, media in Hong Kong reported that Fang Fenghui, just released from the Joint Chiefs, and Political Work Department Director Gen. Zhang Yang were being investigated by the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission for serious breaches of discipline (corruption),<sup>35)</sup> lending credence to these officers having been dismissed.

The new CMC was elected October 2017 at the first Central Committee plenum after the Nineteenth Party Congress. In addition to Xi Jinping being named chairman, Xu Qiliang remained one of the vice chairmen while Zhang Youxia, director of the Equipment Development Department, was named as the other vice chairman. Wei Fenghe (former Rocket Force commander) remained a member, and Li Zuocheng (chief of staff of the Joint Staff Department), Miao Hua (Political Commissar, PLAN), and Zhang Shengmin (CMC Discipline Inspection Commission director) were named CMC members.<sup>36)</sup> Although the number of members has been reduced from eight to four, this may be aimed at reducing the number of members and concentrating power in the chairman in order to strongly promote military reforms in the next administration as well. While Discipline Inspection Commission Director Zhang Shengmin was only a lieutenant general (although he was promoted to full general on November 2, 2017), his inclusion as a member of the CMC can be interpreted as a strong sign of Chairman Xi's determination to combat corruption. It is also very interesting that the limited membership of the CMC includes two, Wei Fenghe and Zhang Shengmin, who were closely involved with the Rocket Force (formerly the Second Artillery).

In his report to the Nineteenth Party Congress, CMC Chairman Xi addressed future national defense and military construction. He noted that by 2020, national defense and military construction would have basically achieved mechanization, greatly advanced informationization, and made major improvements in strategic capacity. In addition to reviewing the policies set at the Eighteenth Party Congress five years earlier, Chairman Xi also set out a new goal of fully promoting the modernization of military theory, military organization, military personnel, and weaponry, saying, "We will make it our mission to see that by 2035, the modernization of our national defense and our forces is basically completed; and that by the mid-21st century our people's armed forces will have been fully transformed into world-class forces."<sup>37)</sup> This would represent a major achievement not only in reform of mechanisms and structures but in national defense and military reforms as well. This ensures that under its "three steps forward"

strategy for military and national defense modernization, China will meet its second-phase goals of achieving mechanization and moving forward toward informationization by 2020. As CMC deputy chairman Xu Qiliang said in a November 2017 article contributed to the *People's Daily*,<sup>38)</sup> the third and final phase of achieving basic military and national defense modernization had been planned for the mid-2000s but was moved forward fifteen years to 2035, and new goals seem to have been set for mid-century. Chairman Xi will likely continue to implement various measures based on the results of military reform achieved to date, promoting new defense and military reforms to create a world-class armed force, and Xi is likely to use such achievements to maintain his government's authority.

**Table 2.2. New CMC membership**

Position	Name	Rank	DOB	Birthplace	Preceding Position
Chairman	Xi Jinping		June 1953	Shaanxi Prov.	CMC Chairman
Vice Chairman	Xu Qiliang	PLAAF General	March 1952	Shandong Prov.	CMC Vice Chairman
Vice Chairman	Zhang Youxia	PLA Army (PLAA) General	July 1950	Shaanxi Prov.	Director, CMC Equipment Development Dept.
Member	Wei Fenghe	Rocket Force General	February 1954	Shandong Prov.	Commander, PLA Rocket Force
Member, Chief of Joint Staff	Li Zuocheng	PLAA General	October 1953	Hunan Prov.	Commander, PLAA
Member, Director of the General Political Department	Miao Hua	PLAN Admiral	November 1955	Jiangsu Prov.	Political Commissar, PLAN
Member, Chief of Discipline Inspection Commission	Zhang Shengmin	Rocket Force Lt. General	February 1958	Shaanxi Prov.	Political Commissar, CMC Logistic Support Dept.

*Source:* Compiled by the author from media reports.

*Note:* The positions and ranks are as of the time of installation in office. In November 2017, Zhang Shengmin was promoted to full general in the Rocket Force, and Wei Fenghe was expected to become head of the Ministry of National Defense in 2018.

## **(2) Enhancing Fighting Potential through Combat Training and Equipment Modernization**

In November 2016, the CMC issued a revised provisional military training regulation to strengthen live combat training. In addition to directing the provision of live combat training to all military forces, the following month saw issuance of a new “Military Training Inspection Check List” as well as a new summary of provisions for reporting, online and otherwise, violations of the regulations on training throughout the military, the aim of these new measures being to set down regulations to ensure practical combat training and to make clear that violation of those regulations would be dealt with harshly.<sup>39)</sup> These steps are thought to have been the result of inspections conducted from April through November 2016 by the CMC Training and Administration Department, conducting three inspections of twelve large-scale exercises and training, thirty-one troop units, and nineteen military schools and uncovering twenty-eight violations of the relevant regulations.<sup>40)</sup> It would seem that these results exposed a kind of empty ritualization of military training which had been pointed out in the past, but although Chairman Xi had repeatedly stressed the need to strengthen training and make it more practical ever since he took office, the continuing violations make it seem that Xi’s intentions had not been sufficiently absorbed. The results of these twenty-eight violations were announced in March 2017; of the fifty-seven troop units and ninety-nine officers involved in the discipline violations, twenty-three units and eight officers had their “outstanding” rankings cancelled, and sixteen officers were disciplined by their Party committees.<sup>41)</sup>

In addition, at the beginning of each year until 2015, China issued its “military training instructions” for the year, showing the annual training focus. Since 2016, however, there has been no mention of this practice in the press, and it appears that such plans were not issued for 2016 and 2017. Since the end of 2015, the PLA has been promoting structural and organizational reforms while also compiling a new military training outline aimed for publication in 2018,<sup>42)</sup> so 2016 and 2017 appear to be a transitional period for the relevant structures and regulations with the annual training instructions not issued. A new military training outline was expected at the end of 2017, applying the concept of training requiring actual combat, turning training into actual combat, and integrating training and live combat, and study seems to be underway of topics such as increasing the intensity and difficulty of training, increasing the time devoted to training, and standardizing

training cycles and stages.<sup>43)</sup>

Next, turning to the various types of training and exercises during 2017, from late 2016 into early 2017, the PLAN undertook training in the South China Sea using the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*. The carrier fleet was moved into the western Pacific Ocean for the first time by sailing between Okinawa and Miyako Island, returning to its port after the training by sailing north through the Taiwan Strait, meaning that the fleet's course took it once around Taiwan.<sup>44)</sup> During early August, naval and air forces undertook joint live-fire exercises in the Yellow and Bohai seas in the first large-scale exercise since the corps-level reforms.<sup>45)</sup> It is thought that this exercise was much the same as the live-fire training conducted each summer in the East China Sea, and the *South China Morning Post* looked at why the exercise was conducted in the Yellow and Bohai seas for 2017. The view of China researchers in Australia and Singapore was that this may have represented a message to North Korea or the United States.<sup>46)</sup> It cannot be denied that China could have been seeking to restrain those two countries since early 2017, when North Korea had conducted a series of missile tests and the United States had responded to the North Korea situation by conducting carrier task force operations near the Korean Peninsula.

In addition, the Chinese and Russian combined military exercise Maritime Cooperation has been conducted regularly since 2012. In 2017, it was implemented in two parts for the second time since 2015, the first time in July 2017 in the Baltic Sea, the second time in September in the Sea of Japan and Sea of Okhotsk.<sup>47)</sup> Although Maritime Cooperation 2017 was not very different from the previous exercises, staging the exercises in the Baltic Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk represented for China the farthest training sites it had ever visited in both Europe and Northeast Asia. In June 2017, Minister of National Defense Chang Wanquan met with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu in the Kazakh capital Astana during the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and signed a roadmap on military cooperation for 2017-2020.<sup>48)</sup> Sites for future exercises will likely be based on this roadmap, and starting with the next year's drills, attention should also be paid to improving the content of the exercises and diversifying their locations.

Since July 2017, the PLAAF has seen a surge in navigation training or missions by bombers or special operations planes in waters near Japan.<sup>49)</sup> In particular, on August 24 six Chinese H-6 bombers flew over the Pacific Ocean between

Okinawa's main island and Miyako Island. In addition, the aircraft flew over the open seas around Japan's Nansei Islands and south of Kyushu and Shikoku and on toward the seas just south of the Kii Peninsula on Honshu, a very unusual route. On December 18, PLAAF bombers, intelligence-gathering aircraft, electronic warfare craft, and fighters conducted training involving flying above the Tsushima Strait and into the Sea of Japan.

With regard to equipment development, the first domestically developed aircraft carrier in China, constructed in Dalian, was launched at the end of April 2017.<sup>50)</sup> China confirmed its construction in December 2015 and announced among other information that it would be 50,000 tons and conventionally powered and would use a ski jump system. At present work is underway on outfitting the craft, for example with propulsion and electrical systems and weapon systems, and it should be put into use in a year or two. In addition, at the end of June the Shanghai shipyards saw the launch of a 10,000-ton class destroyer, the world's largest.<sup>51)</sup> Some reports identified the new vessel as China's first cruiser, but China itself called the ship a destroyer, possibly in the attempt to avoid an image of greater military expansionism. Given its large scale, this 10,000-ton class destroyer seems likely to have great antiaircraft and antiship capabilities, and in the future, when the Chinese version of an aircraft carrier combat group is organized, this will undoubtedly be a prominent element of the group.<sup>52)</sup> It is also said that China is in the process of building other ships, including a second domestic aircraft carrier and the country's first large-scale dock landing ship with a full-length deck. Details such as the launch schedule are unknown.<sup>53)</sup>

Turning to aircraft, although not a military aircraft, the C919 airliner which China developed independently succeeded in its first flight in Shanghai in May 2017.<sup>54)</sup> The aircraft is a medium-sized passenger airliner with a standard seating capacity of 160 seats and a flight range of about 4,000 to 5,000 kilometers, making it comparable to the Airbus A320 and the Boeing B737 among the existing civil aircraft. The C919 is currently mounted with a foreign-made engine (from a US-French

joint venture). But there are reports that it is aiming to mount a Chinese manufactured engine in the future. When the C919 is completed, it is anticipated that the PLA will introduce it as an alternative to the B737 now used for VIP transport, and since there have also been examples where the B737 body has been used to build early warning and control craft, the C919 also holds undeniable potential to provide a body for special operations aircraft. In addition, the AG600 large amphibious aircraft has conducted test roll-outs while the Yilong II UAV and the Z-19E armed helicopter for export have conducted successful flight tests, examples of how China is actively continuing the development of various aircraft.<sup>55)</sup>

In other special equipment-related matters, a variety of new equipment including the J-20 stealth fighter and the J-16 fighter (production under license of the SU-30), the Y-20 transport aircraft, HQ-22 and HQ-9B antiaircraft missiles, ASN-301 unmanned aircraft, and DF-31AG intercontinental ballistic missiles appeared in public for the first time in the PLA ninetieth anniversary parade held at the Zhurihe training base in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at the end of July 2017.<sup>56)</sup> Also participating in the parade were intelligence support forces and electronic warfare units equipped with electronic targeting vehicles and electronic jamming vehicles, and special operations troops in buggy vehicles and special armored vehicles, but these were not seen in the 2009 and 2015 military parades, so this was the first time they had been publicly showcased. In addition, the troops from the various intelligence support, electronic warfare, and special operations support units came very early in the parade, right after the tanks, infantry combat vehicles, and other armored vehicles (in terms of the land-based echelons, twenty-seven in total, these passed in echelons five through ten). This order could well mean that the PLA wanted to demonstrate the emphasis it was placing on electronic warfare and special operations. Addressing the more than six hundred land vehicles and over one hundred aircraft taking part in the parade, a Ministry of National Defense spokesman pointed out that nearly half of them were participating in such a parade for the first time.<sup>57)</sup> It would seem that participation by units for intelligence support, electronic warfare, and special operations played a large role in the size of initial public presentation.

In the future, it will be well worth while to pay attention to training, exercises and equipment development. Despite holding a large joint general training exercise since 2014 China has not held one of these since 2016, perhaps due to the influence of the ongoing series of mechanism and structural reforms. It will be

important to note, starting in 2017 and thereafter, what kind of joint training or joint exercises will be conducted under the new “theater command” system.

In addition, turning to trends in equipment development, even though China has set in place a series of modernized equipment systems for naval vessels and aircraft, it seems to still have a lack of capacity to develop and manufacture the necessary core technology such as jet fighter engines. China will very likely try to further raise its level of abilities by promoting technology import from partners such as Russia and civil-military integration.

### **Central Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development**

As used in China, “civil-military integration” is a comprehensive promotion of the integration of the military and civilian society in a variety of areas such as economics, science and technology, education, and human resource development, and these efforts link the modernization of national defense and the military with socio-economic development that is wide ranging, reaching as high and digging as deep as possible. Military and civilian integration can be defined as providing support to securing rich and abundant resources and sustainable development for modernization of the national defense and military.<sup>58)</sup> In short, this refers to a variety of approaches to deepen cooperation and exchange between the Chinese military and society with the goal of both strengthening China’s military capabilities and simultaneously providing the civilian population with economic development and an enhanced society.

The third plenary meeting of the CPC’s Eighteenth Central Committee in 2013 reached a decision on civil-military integration which laid out various steps to be taken, including the establishment of a unified leadership at the national level. Specific actions to start this process, however, do not seem to have gotten started until the third session of the Twelfth National People’s Congress in March 2015, when CMC Chairman Xi Jinping addressed a meeting of all military delegates to the Congress and announced that civil-military integration was being elevated to a national strategy.<sup>59)</sup>

Then, in early 2017, it was announced that a Central Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development would be established which would aim to determine critical questions for advancing civil military integration and seek to coordinate between various sectors in the central and local areas.<sup>60)</sup> In June, about five months after the initial announcement, the Central Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development finally held its first plenary session to determine such matters as the committee’s regulations, topics for immediate emphasis, and views on the establishment of local civil-military integration development guidance and business organizations. Another three months later, in September, a second plenary session was held, adopting such items as a position

paper entitled “Guidelines on Deepening the Civil-Military Integration in the Defense Technology Industry,” thereby making clear its policy of strengthening civil-military integration in, for example, the defense science and technology industry and logistical support.<sup>61)</sup>

This Central Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development can be viewed as the mechanism for control and adjustment at the national level, as decided at the Eighteenth Central Committee third plenum in 2013, but a more specific aim of launching its activities seems to be making the policies for civil-military integration more wide-ranging and formal than in the past, while at the same time coordinating how those policies are applied in the provinces and at the working level so as to avoid abuse.<sup>62)</sup> In addition, this commission is one of the “agenda coordination mechanisms” that are set up to deal with a certain subject above and beyond CPC and Chinese government structures. Four members of the commission were CPC Politburo Standing Committee members (at the time of establishment, chairman was Xi Jinping, and deputy heads were Li Keqiang, Liu Yunshan and Zhang Gaoli), and a large number of leading members of the CPC, the State Council, and the CMC also seem to have been included on the commission. There is only one other example of a Chinese agenda coordination mechanism which includes four members of the Politburo Standing Committee, i.e., the Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform at the very highest reaches of organization. This fact lets us deduce that the policies on civil-military integration are regarded as of particular importance compared to other policies.

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## East Asian Strategic Review 2018

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