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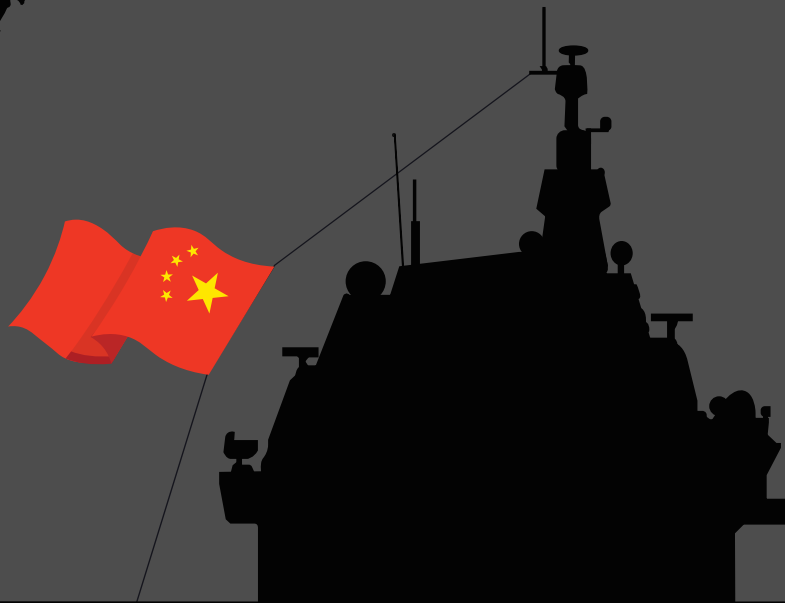
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中国海事研究所
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NOTES: 5



ADMIRAL Wang Renhua:

Exemplifying Jointness and Oversight for China's Navy amid Xi's
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Admiral Wang Renhua: Exemplifying Jointness and Oversight for China's Navy amid Xi's Grade-and-Rank Reforms

Andrew S. Erickson¹

A microcosm of China's ongoing military advancement, Admiral Wang Renhua (王仁华) embodies some of the subtle, complicated efforts underway to make the People's Liberation Army (PLA) a sophisticated fighting force that is more than the sum of its parts and whose human capital is narrowing the gap with its profusion of formidable hardware. On 28 March 2024, in a ceremony at the Central Military Commission (CMC)'s Bayi Building in Beijing, Xi Jinping concurrently promoted Wang to full admiral—three-star rank in the PLA (which, unlike the U.S. military, does not have a four-star rank)—and, apparently, Theater Command Leader grade.² Doing so in his capacity as CMC Chairman, Xi also oversaw the implementation of one of the key new management dynamics nearly a decade into his sweeping military reforms: simultaneous promotion in grade and rank in an effort to transition from the PLA's longstanding grade-centric system to a more Western-style rank-centric system.³ As in other professions, approaches to promoting personnel matter greatly in military performance. China heretofore employed a billet-grounded grade system, whereby not only every officer but also every organization is assigned one of fifteen grades; whereas agile, professional Western militaries have long benefitted from an individually-portable rank system. China's transformation toward the latter approach remains a work in progress, but Wang's trajectory is an important bellwether of things to come. More broadly, Wang's career advancement and rise to CMC insider status as the Secretary of the CMC's Politics and Law Commission also offers living testimony to other PLA efforts underway, particularly at increasing jointness. His varied resume includes a shift from Army to Navy officer in 2017 as well as service in the East Sea Fleet and at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.⁴

CMSI's Perspectives and Key Takeaways:

- Admiral Wang Renhua's promotion is the latest indication of efforts to synchronize grade-and-rank promotions at the full admiral/general level (three stars in the PLA).
- Wang's role may be best understood as a military loyalty enforcement boss.
- A key responsibility for Wang may well be to root out and destroy Xi's enemies within the PLA.
- A potential component of Wang's portfolio in the navy realm could be to maintain a tight grip on the wardrooms aboard China's growing fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).
- Having Wang serve in the Navy, and currently as head of the CMC's powerful Politics and Law Commission, helps the PLA shift to a more joint force as part of Xi's post-2015 reforms.
- Wang is not originally from the Navy and does not represent the institutional interests of the PLA Navy.

- It is not uncommon for a PLA Army political officer to switch uniforms to the Navy and retain them from that time forward, as Wang has done.



CMC Chairman Xi Jinping and other PLA leaders pose for a group photo with Admiral Wang Renhua (back row, left) and General Xiao Tianliang, who have been promoted to three-star rank at a ceremony in Beijing, 28 March 2024. Xi presented certificates to the officers and congratulated them. Source: Xinhua⁵

Wang Renhua is the sixteenth naval officer to be promoted to China’s top rank of three stars since the PLA implemented a rank system in 1988.⁶ Like Admiral Miao Hua (苗华)—standing on the far left in the front row of the above photo—who is currently Director of the CMC Political Work Department and a CMC Member, Wang served most of his career in the Army as a political officer until receiving a second star in 2019. Having Wang serve in the Navy and as a leader in the CMC helps the PLA shift to a more joint force as part of Xi’s post-2015 reforms. At the same time as the March 2024 flag officer promotion ceremony, the CMC Politics and Law Commission (中央军事委员会政法委员会) Wang heads was upgraded from Theater Command Deputy Leader grade to Theater Command Leader grade, most likely in order to help target corruption in the PLA—a persistent, politically-charged challenge that underscores the importance of Wang’s job. Wang received a concurrent rank (two stars) and grade (Theater Command Deputy Leader) promotion in 2019 and received a concurrent grade-and-rank promotion in the same billet in 2024. Of note, prior to 2020, grade-and-rank promotions did not occur simultaneously; however, since 2020 all three-star promotions and grade promotions have occurred concurrently.

Wang’s present position as the Secretary of the CMC’s Politics and Law Commission⁷ has put a Navy officer in a vital role: heading the revamped version of the Leninist linchpin that oversees and coordinates all legal and enforcement authorities across the PLA, including by running the military courts and prosecutors’ offices. As part of the PLA’s 2016 reorganization, the Politics and Law Commission was created as a new organization by combining the PLA Military Court (解放军军事法院) and the PLA Military Procuratorate (解放军军事检察院).⁸ Wang’s “security chief” position embodies significant power within China’s military superstructure. He is only the third Politics and Law Commission head since Xi’s post-2015 PLA reforms, and the first three star in the seat; his immediate predecessor, Lieutenant General Song Dan (宋丹),⁹ and their prior, Lieutenant General Li Xiaofeng (李

晓峰), were both two stars.¹⁰ The reason Wang is the first three-star officer is because the Commission was apparently upgraded from Theater Command Deputy Leader grade to Theater Command Leader grade, the better to enforce Xi’s anti-corruption efforts.¹¹ **Table 1** (below) offers systematic context.

Table 1: Flag and General Officer Subset of the PLA’s Fifteen-Grade and Ten-Rank Structure since 1988¹²

Grade	Primary Rank	Secondary Rank
CMC Chairman (军委主席) Vice Chairmen (军委副主席)	N/A GEN/ADM (上将)	N/A
CMC Member (军委委员)	GEN/ADM (上将)	
MR Leader (正大军区职) TC Leader (正战区职)	GEN/ADM (上将)	LTG/VADM (中将)
MR Deputy Leader (副大军区职) TC Deputy Leader (副战区职)	LTG/VADM (中将)	MG/RADM (少将)
Corps Leader (正军职)	MG/RADM (少将)	LTG/VADM (中将)
Corps Deputy Leader (副军职)	MG/RADM (少将)	SCOL/SCPT (大校)
Division Leader (正师职)	SCOL/SCPT (大校)	MG/RADM (少将)

One of three commissions (in addition to seven departments and five directly-affiliated bodies) that the CMC uses to administer China’s armed forces, “The Politics and Law Commission helps intensify the CMC’s leadership over the armed forces in political and legal work, deepen the rigorous military governance in accordance with the law, give larger play to the politics and law department, as well as prevent, investigate and deal with criminal activities, so as to keep the military pure and consolidated.”¹³ Heading the CMC Politics and Law Commission also gives Wang a seat on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission (CPLAC). An Asia Society study defines CPLAC as “a ministerial-level functional department of the CCP Central Committee that coordinates the politically sensitive work of law enforcement, social stability, and security services.”¹⁴ By virtue of this bureaucratic position, in turn, Wang is also among the 205 members of the exclusive CCP Central Committee.¹⁵ The authors explain that “CPLAC is still more influential than its ministerial rank suggests as it is led by a deputy national-level Politburo member.”¹⁶ Accordingly, they profile Wang among the eighteen most important PRC policy makers “in the security space,” in the same elite group as Xi himself.¹⁷

Wang personifies how pursuing the political track and donning a white uniform can be a solid, if circuitous, route to the very upper reaches of today’s PLA. Born in Sichuan province’s Santai County in 1962, he most likely joined the Army around 1980 as either an officer cadet or an enlisted member¹⁸ and pursued a career as a political officer. At some point before 2012, Wang served as the Director of the Security Department of the General Armament Department (GAD)’s Political Department (曾任总装备部政治部保卫部部长). Given the particular susceptibility of procurement efforts to some of the most

flagrant forms of corruption, its detection and mitigation may have been among his most important responsibilities there.

In 2012, Wang was named director of Political Department of the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center (酒泉卫星发射中心) (also known as Base 20 and the 20th Training Base (第20试验训练基地)). Then subordinate to the CMC's GAD, Jiuquan would be resubordinated under the PLA Strategic Support Force in 2016.¹⁹ This was a significant assignment indeed. One of China's four land-based spaceports, with extensive military functions, the sprawling, secretive facility is also known as Shuangchengzi Missile Test Center and Launch Complex B2. Established in 1958 as the Northwest Comprehensive Missile Testing Facility (西北综合导弹试验基地), Jiuquan launched China's first satellite in 1970, its first crewed space flight in 2003—together with all subsequent crewed missions, and China's (and the world's) first quantum communication satellite in 2016. Originally termed Shuang-Cheng-Tzu by the U.S. government,²⁰ Shuangchengzi has long test-launched new long-range ballistic missiles²¹ and surface-to-air missiles,²² as well as launched new reconnaissance satellites.²³ It has also served as a test launch facility for a direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missile system that the U.S. government terms the SC-19,²⁴ as well as a testing range for missiles designed to target foreign aircraft carriers.²⁵ Having been assigned to Jiuquan-Shuangchengzi might conceivably have enabled Wang to develop additional skillsets, and perhaps more influence over those working in the burgeoning missile- and space-related areas on the cutting edge of PLA efforts today. At a minimum, it surely broadened his perspective and helped him to better understand how PLA forces are developing and operating as a whole.

In 2013, Wang was promoted to major general (one star). In January 2015, he began responsibilities as the Director of the Political Department of the GAD's subordinate second-level Army Equipment Scientific Research Ordering Department (总装备部陆军装备科研订购部政治部主任). In a typical pattern, Wang parlayed a cumbersomely named post into a solid stepping stone. In January 2016 he became a Deputy Director of the PLA Army Political Work Department.²⁶ In January 2017, Wang finally assumed a maritime-oriented assignment as the Secretary of the East Sea Fleet's²⁷ Commission for Discipline Inspection, which is the key Party-connected anti-corruption body.²⁸ Given that he now had a PLA Navy billet, this is most likely when he began wearing a Navy uniform and was identified as a rear admiral. He subsequently retained his Navy uniform and rank. Of note, it is not uncommon for a PLA Army political officer to switch uniforms to the Navy and retain them from that time forward.²⁹

In 2018, Wang joined his current organization, the CMC's Politics and Law Commission, as a Deputy Secretary.³⁰ In December 2019, he received a concurrent grade (Theater Command Deputy Leader) and rank (two-star Vice Admiral) promotion, and assumed his present position as the Commission's Secretary.³¹ In October 2022 Wang was a delegate to the CCP's 20th National Congress.³² In a preparatory meeting before the Congress's convening, he was selected as one of the 243 members of its Presidium, charged with leading the event's organization and agenda.³³ On 30 November 2022, Wang was named a member of the late paramount leader Jiang Zemin's funeral committee, a function redolent with symbolism and status in Party politics.³⁴ On 30 December 2022, at the 38th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress, he was appointed a member of the PLA Election Committee.³⁵ Approaching the pinnacle of his career, Wang has served as a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) since its convening for a five-year term beginning on 5 March 2023.³⁶ On 8 March 2023, Wang attended Xi's speech at the plenary meeting of the PLA and the People's Armed Police (PAP) Delegation at the NPC's first session and subsequently offered public reflections on implementing his Commander-in-Chief's guidance that drew in part on his own military legal expertise and focus.³⁷ All told, this series of important working-level positions befits Wang's role as an important, if little-publicized, insider.



Admiral Wang Renhua heads the CMC's Politics and Law Commission, which oversees the military's courts, procuratorates, and prisons. Source: CCTV³⁸

Conclusion: Leninist-Legal Enforcer of Loyalty and Reform

One of the broadest, if nuanced and complex, takeaways from Wang's career has been its embodiment of ongoing efforts by Xi to reform, restructure, and realign the PLA to make it a more effective organization and fighting force. Specifically, China's Commander-in-Chief started pushing toward a rank-centric system in 2016, although progress has been very slow. Wang's promotion is the latest indication of PLA efforts to synchronize grade-and-rank promotions at the full admiral/general level, which began with two of seven three-star promotions in December 2019 and all 31 three-star promotions starting in July 2020. Wang's microcosm-like career has been shaped by some of the gradual adjustments underway to further Xi's vision of a PLA that is fully prepared to engage in, and win, all possible military operations in time to achieve his Centennial Military Building Goal of 2027.

On 7 March 2024, at the plenary meeting of the PLA and PAP delegation at the Second Session of the 14th National People's Congress, Xi delivered a speech enjoining participants to meet this wherewithal-development deadline, in part by achieving "strategic capabilities in emerging fields." The delegates' published reflections may seem like obsequious pabulum to outsiders in their verbiage, but they are thoroughgoing and extensive, including in their maritime security coverage. "Since the 18th CCP National Congress" of 8–14 November 2012, Wang underscored in his public remarks, "we have been coordinating and promoting the development of strategic emerging industries and new combat forces, and have achieved a series of significant results."³⁹ Few tracking the PLA closely would disagree.

As Wang clearly knows, with his responsibility for high-level coordination and implementation to operationalize Xi's directives, much work nevertheless remains. Until March 2024, the CMC Politics and Law Commission's grade was Theater Command Deputy Leader. However, Wang's receiving his third star this March clearly implies that the Commission's grade was raised to Theater Command Leader. As such, Wang received a concurrent grade-and-rank promotion. "My best guess is that the reason the Commission was upgraded from Theater Command Deputy Leader to Theater Command Leader was because of all the previous corruption issues," Ken Allen assesses, "which also fall under the Discipline Inspection Commission's responsibilities."⁴⁰ It is significant that the Politics and Law Commission has taken over at least some of this responsibility, which until now has been the main jurisdiction of the Discipline Inspection Commission at every level. As Allen's systematic data

compilation and curation documents, concurrent grade-and-rank three-star promotions began in late 2019 for some PLA flag and general officers (including Wang) but not all, and definitely was instituted for all in 2020.

Joel Wuthnow concurs, assessing that elevating the status of the Politics and Law Commission “is part of a strategy to disentangle the supervisory functions across different parts of the CMC. The important change came in 2015 when the Discipline Inspection Commission and the Political and Legal Affairs Commission were both taken out of the former General Political Department (GPD) and placed under direct CMC oversight, thereby eliminating what had been a single point of failure. This had been a problem in the past because senior GPD leadership was notoriously corrupt; including the last GPD Director, General Zhang Yang, whom Xi removed in 2017. Elevating this commission to Theater Command Leader grade probably gives it somewhat more authority and status in the system, because now it is on the same level as the theaters and the services.”⁴¹ It is reasonable to interpret this in light of the corruption scandals, as Allen suggests; which would explain “why now.” It is notable that, as discussed earlier, Wang himself served in the GAD prior to 2012 and from January 2015 to January 2016. “My understanding is that the investigations focused on the period in which [the recently-deposed former Defense Minister] General Li Shangfu was director of the Equipment Development Department (successor to the GAD),” Wuthnow suggests, “and so Wang probably was not tainted by those scandals.”⁴²

Importantly, in the PRC system under Xi, fighting “corruption” is not a simple process of procedural enforcement. The PLA has long played a role in CCP elite power struggles. In the broadest sense, two-line power struggles are constant, a defining feature of CCP politics. There are of course more than two lines all told, and even more lines within lines, but Mao always reduced the struggles into two principal lines for the purpose of decimating an identified enemy. CCP elites still follow this tradition under Xi, with Bo Xilai’s being charged with corruption, stripped of all his assets, and sentenced to life imprisonment a recent example. Corruption, broadly interpreted, nevertheless remains an enduring dynamic—in part as a key aspect of how the CCP system allows its loyalists to be rewarded in practice. Xi uses his “anti-corruption” drive not only for domestic political legitimacy and to curtail extreme undermining of military preparedness; but also to purge his political enemies.⁴³ Xi can (and indeed has) charged, removed, and punished a large number if limited portion of cadres; but not anything approaching a majority, let alone do anything that might risk dismantling the CCP system—the only way to truly end rampant corruption. Make no mistake, however: enduring corruption within certain parameters will not stop Xi from preparing for, or even waging, war. The totalitarian levers he holds in the CCP system can mobilize and concentrate resources and personnel dramatically, which CCP leaders have long touted as indicating their system’s superiority.⁴⁴ Purported preeminence aside, the sheer variety of world-class missiles being launched from Jiuchuan-Shuangchengzi offers a potent example.

Accordingly, Wang’s first duty is supporting Xi and the Party leadership and organization undergirding his rule. As such, Wang’s role may be best understood as that of a military loyalty enforcement boss. As there is no rule of law in China and no independent judiciary or other independent watchdog (e.g., investigative media), “anti-corruption” means a very different thing in the PRC than in non-Leninist societies. While Xi is certainly cleaning the ranks and making the PLA more lethal and combat credible, he is also obsessed with personal loyalty to himself above all else. Accordingly, a key responsibility for Wang may well be to root out and destroy Xi’s enemies within the PLA, both real and imagined, and to ensure that no coup attempts are ever made. In the naval realm, a potential component of Wang’s portfolio could be maintaining a tight grip on the wardrooms aboard China’s growing fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).⁴⁵ The Department of Defense reports that China is likely

“conducting near-continuous at-sea deterrence patrols with its six operational JIN-class SSBNs, which are equipped to carry up to 12 CSS-N-14 (JL-2) or CSS-N-20 (JL-3) SLBMs [submarine-launched ballistic missiles].”⁴⁶ Combined with enduring weaknesses in PRC undersea warfare, this would undoubtedly raise new stakes for personnel performance and reliability under demanding conditions.⁴⁷

Military personnel and promotion reforms remain a work in progress. When Wang received a concurrent grade-and-rank promotion in December 2019, he was one of only a few examples of current three-star flag officers receiving simultaneous two-star and grade promotions during that period. “In my discussions with PLA officers, everyone told me that they feel more comfortable with the grade system than the rank system, so that is why the reforms were being held up,” Ken Allen explains. “One of the biggest problems, however, is that the Army, Air Force, and Rocket Force have basically shifted to a corps-brigade-battalion structure instead of a corps-division-regiment-battalion structure. After serving as a battalion commander for three years, an officer cannot become a brigade deputy commander for another three years; so they meanwhile become a staff officer, which can include becoming a deputy chief of staff or chief of staff. The same things apply to an officer having served as a brigade commander for 3–5 years, who cannot become a corps-level deputy commander for another five-plus years; so they, too, must become a staff officer in the meantime.”⁴⁸

Finally, Admiral Wang’s Navy affiliation must be placed in context. He is not originally from the Navy and does not represent the institutional interests of that service. Political commissars have more fungible skills than others because they are managing party committees (by serving as the secretary, or party committee lead, at their level), dealing with promotions, handling political indoctrination, and so on, which do not require as great technical expertise. Yet they are not merely hacks, or even Soviet-style ideologues. They must attend some of the same professional military education programs as their commander counterparts, in part because they must know enough about operations to evaluate commanders’ decisions. All told, Wang can bring multifarious perspectives and expertise into his PLA management role.⁴⁹

Extensive growing pains and difficulties doubtless persist; but, overall, Xi’s ambitious efforts are clearly advancing. A three-star naval officer, Admiral Wang Renhua, is deeply involved in their implementation from the commanding heights of the all-powerful CMC.

¹ The views expressed here are the author’s alone. He deeply appreciates Christopher Sharman’s overall guidance and source provision; Ken Allen’s generous and extensive inputs; Dimon Liu’s, Ian Easton’s, and Joel Wuthnow’s insights concerning institutions, reforms, and enduring dynamics; and specific suggestions from Ryan Martinson as well as Susan Lawrence, former Swedish Ambassador to China and Mongolia Lars Peter Fredén, and other alumni of Harvard University’s Regional Studies–East Asia Program.

² “中央军委举行晋升上将军衔仪式 习近平颁发命令状并向晋衔的军官表示祝贺” [The Central Military Commission Held a Ceremony for Promotion to the Rank of General. Xi Jinping Issued an Order and Congratulated the Promoted Officers.], 解放军报 [PLA Daily], 29 March 2024, 1; “中央军委举行晋升上将军衔仪式 习近平颁发命令状并向晋衔的军官表示祝贺” [The Central Military Commission Held a Ceremony for Promotion to the Rank of General. Xi Jinping Issued an Order and Congratulated the Promoted Officers.], 新华社 [Xinhua News Agency], 28 March 2024, https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202403/content_6942104.htm; “Xi Presents Order to Promote Military Officers to Rank of General,” PRC State Council, 28 March 2024, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202403/28/content_WS66055f62c6d0868f4e8e58e9.html; 梅常伟 [Mei Changwei], “中央军委举行晋升上将军衔仪式 习近平颁发命令状并向晋衔的军官表示祝贺” [The Central Military Commission Held a Ceremony for Promotion to the Rank of General. Xi Jinping Issued a Certificate of Order and Congratulated the Officers.],

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³ Joel Wuthnow and Phillip C. Saunders, “A New Step Forward in PLA Professionalization,” *Jamestown China Brief* 21.5 (15 March 2021), <https://jamestown.org/program/a-new-step-forward-in-pla-professionalization/>.

⁴ “Security,” Center for China Analysis, Asia Society Policy Institute, 5 March 2024,

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⁵ “Xi Presents Order to Promote Military Officers to Rank of General,” PRC State Council, 28 March 2024, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202403/28/content_WS66055f62c6d0868f4e8e58e9.html.

⁶ Data from Kenneth Allen, “List of PLA and PAP 3-Star Promotions: 1988–2024,” unpublished report shared with author in April 2024. From 1988 to March 2024, a total of 208 People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and ten People’s Armed Police (PAP) officers were promoted to three stars in 38 ceremonies.

⁷ Although the official article identifies it as the Political and Legal Affairs Commission, China’s Ministry of National Defense website identifies it as the Politics and Law Commission. It is listed ninth in protocol order. “CMC,” PRC Ministry of National Defense, <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/index.html>.

⁸ “军委 4 总部改为 15 个职能部门(组图)” [The 4 Headquarters of the Military Commission Have Been Changed to 15 Functional Departments (Organizational Chart)], 华声在线-湖南日报(长沙) [Huasheng Online-Hunan Daily (Changsha)], 12 January 2016,

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⁹ “十九大授权发布: 中国共产党第十九届中央委员会委员名单” [The 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party is Authorized to Release: List of Members of the 19th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee], 新华网 [Xinhua Net], 24 October 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/19cpcnc/2017-10/24/c_1121848878.htm.

¹⁰ Joel Wuthnow and Phillip C. Saunders, “Introduction Appendix: Central Military Commission Reforms,” in Phillip C. Saunders, Arthur S. Ding, Andrew Scobell, Andrew N.D. Yang, and Joel Wuthnow, eds., *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2019), 25–42, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/Chairman-Xi/Chairman-Xi.pdf>.

¹¹ A PLA one-star officer can serve in four different grades, while a two-star can serve in three different grades, and a three-star can likewise serve in three different grades. Kenneth Allen, “What is a PLA Major General?” Presented at the CAPS-CSS-NDU-RAND International Conference on PLA Affairs, 17–18 November 2017.

¹² Adapted with permission from Kenneth Allen, “China Announces Reform of Military Ranks,” *Jamestown China Brief* 17.2 (30 January 2017), <https://jamestown.org/program/china-announces-reform-military-ranks/>.

¹³ Quotation from “Politics and Law Commission,” PRC Ministry of National Defense, <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/index.html#:~:text=The%20commission%20helps%20intensify%20the.as%20to%20keep%20the%20military>. For examples of the Committee’s activities, see “Politics and Law Commission,” China Military, Sponsored by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CMC/Departments/PoliticsandLawCommission/index.html>.

¹⁴ “Security,” Asia Society Policy Institute, 5 March 2024.

¹⁵ “中国共产党第十届中央委员会原名单 (205 名) (按姓氏笔画为序排列)” [Original list of the 10th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (205 People) (Arranged in Alphabetical Order by Surname Strokes)], 人民海军 [People’s Navy], 23 October 2022, 3.

¹⁶ “Security,” Asia Society Policy Institute, 5 March 2024.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ For details on this potential pathway, which others took into the PLA before its foreclosure 1982, see Kenneth W. Allen, Thomas Corbett, Taylor A. Lee, and Ma Xiu, *Personnel of the People’s Liberation Army*, 3 November 2022, <https://www.uscc.gov/research/personnel-peoples-liberation-army>.

¹⁹ “王三运刘伟平在兰会见酒泉卫星发射中心司令员尚宏” [Wang Sanyun and Liu Weiping Met with Shang Hong, Commander of Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Lan], Sina.com, 17 January 2014, <https://news.sina.com.cn/o/2014-01-17/083629269702.shtml>; Mark Stokes, “The People’s Liberation Army Second Artillery Force (PLASAF) as an

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²⁰ “Shuang-Cheng-Tzu Missile Test Center, China,” National Photographic Interpretation Center, August 1964, Approved for release 9 December 2003, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78B04560A002700010032-4.pdf>.

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²⁵ H.I. Sutton, “China Builds Missile Targets Shaped Like U.S. Aircraft Carrier, Destroyers in Remote Desert,” *USNI News*, 7 November 2021, <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/07/china-builds-missile-targets-shaped-like-u-s-aircraft-carrier-destroyers-in-remote-desert>.

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²⁷ It was not until 2018 that the PLA Navy officially changed the name of the North Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet, and South Sea Fleet to the Northern, Eastern, and Southern Theater Command Navy, respectively.

²⁸ “东海舰队发布”微信公众号 [“East China Sea Fleet Release” WeChat Official Account], “张平任海军后勤部政委, 王仁华任东海舰队纪委书记” [Zhang Ping is the Political Commissar of the Naval Logistics Department, and Wang Renhua is the Secretary of the East China Sea Fleet Discipline Inspection Committee], 澎湃新闻 [The Paper], 25 April 2017, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1670071; “Table 3. PLA Leaders with Previous Assignments in Different Services (March 2021),” in Joel Wuthnow, *Gray Dragons: Assessing China’s Senior Military Leadership* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, Press, September 2022), 16, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/china/china-perspectives-16.pdf>.

²⁹ For example, when Lieutenant General Miao Hua, who was a career Army officer, became the PLA Navy’s political commissar in December 2014, there was a special ceremony to “promote” him to a Navy Lieutenant General (Vice Admiral) and for him to don a Navy uniform. He received a rank promotion to Navy General (Admiral) in July 2015. When he became the Director of the Central Military Commission’s Political Work Department in October 2017, he retained his Navy uniform and rank.

³⁰ See, e.g., 郑祖 本报记者李高健 [Zheng Zu and *People’s Navy* reporter Li Gaojian], “海军隆重召开庆祝人民海军成立70周年大会: 高举习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想伟大旗帜; 深入贯彻习近平强军思想, 努力把人民海军全面建成世界一流海军” [The Navy Held a Grand Meeting to Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Navy: Hold High the Great Banner of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era; Deeply Implement Xi Jinping Thought on Strengthening the Military, Strive to Build the People’s Navy into a World-Class Navy], 人民海军 [People’s Navy], 22 April 2019, 1; 魏印魁 刘琨 [Wei Yinkui and Liu Kun], “聚焦中心铸军魂 创新驱动谱新篇——‘全国模范检察院’石家庄军事检察院工作纪实” [Focus on the Center to Build the Soul of the Military and Drive Innovation to Write a New Chapter—The “National Model Procuratorate” Shijiazhuang Military Procuratorate’s Work Record], 河北法制网 [Hebei Legal Network], 19 December 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20200604223104/http://szbz.hbfzb.com/html/2018-12/19/content_127582.htm?div=1.

³¹ “王仁华任中央政法委委员 宋丹不再担任” [Wang Renhua is a Member of the Central Political and Legal Committee, Song Dan is No Longer a Member], 经济日报-中国经济网综合 [Economic Daily - China Economic Network

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³² “解放军和武警部队选举产生出席中国共产党第二十次全国代表大会代表” [Delegates Elected by the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force to Attend the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China], 解放军报 [PLA Daily], 16 August 2022, 1.

³³ The meeting was the 1st Plenary Session the Standing Committee of the Presidium, headed by Xi himself. (新华社 10 月 15 日电) [(Xinhua, October 15)], “中国共产党第二十次全国代表大会主席团成名名单 (共二百四十三名) (按姓氏笔画为序排列)” [Names of the Members of the Presidium of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (Two Hundred and Forty-Three Names in Total) (In Alphabetical Order by Surname Strokes)], 人民海军 [People's Navy], 16 October 2022, 1; “解放军和武警部队选举产生出席中国共产党第二十次全国代表大会代表” [Delegates Elected by the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force to Attend the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party], 解放军报 [PLA Daily], 17 August 2022, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/n1/2022/0817/c441992-32504460.html>.

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³⁵ “中国人民解放军选举委员会主任、副主任、委员名单” [List of Directors, Deputy Directors and Members of the Election Committee of the Chinese People's Liberation Army], 解放军报 [PLA Daily], 31 December 2022, 1.

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⁴⁵ The author thanks Ian Easton for these points.

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