

# Promoting “Young Guards”: The Recent High Turnover in the PLA Leadership (Part III: Personal and Political)

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The most noticeable trend under the leadership of Xi Jinping since the 2012 National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been the continuing consolidation of power. In particular, the military has been a key forum in which Xi has strengthened both his personal power and his new administration’s authority. Xi has adopted several approaches and political tactics to achieve this, including purging the two highest-ranking generals under the previous administration for corruption and other charges; arresting 52 senior military officers on various charges of wrongdoing; reshuffling generals between regions, departments, and services; attempting to systematically reform the PLA’s structure and operations; and, last but not least, rapidly promoting “young guards” (少壮派) in the Chinese military.

These bold moves will have profound implications—not only for Xi’s political standing in the lead-up to the next leadership turnover in 2017, but also for the development of civilian-military relations in the country and for the trajectory of China’s military modernization. The third installment in this series focuses on personnel changes that have occurred during the early phase of military reform.

Who are the rising stars in the PLA following the recent reorganization and reshuffling? What are the distinguishing characteristics of the “young guards”? What are possible explanations for and implications of some of the highest-level personnel changes, such as the retirement of the heavyweight military figure General Liu Yuan and the marginalization of Xi’s confidant General Cai Yingting? How does Xi successfully perform the delicate balancing act in personnel appointments by aggressively promoting his own long-time protégés and new loyalists while avoiding making too many enemies?

Xi apparently likes to “reuse” (重新启用) so-called abandoned generals (弃将): senior military officers who were unfavorably treated under the leadership of Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao (especially if their career development suffered under Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong), and who remain at least a few years from retirement age. Ever since becoming the CMC chairman in November 2012, Xi has placed a handful of previously “abandoned generals” back on the fast track of career advancement, with many of them receiving multiple promotions over the past three years.

## *Reusing and Promoting “Abandoned Generals”*

The best example of Xi’s tendency to reinstate forsaken military leaders is probably General Li Zuocheng, the newly appointed commander of the PLA Army. Some analysts refer to Li as Jiang Zemin’s abandoned general.<sup>1</sup> Li was born in Anhua County, Hunan

Province, in 1953. He joined the PLA at the age of 17 and advanced his military career step by step as a platoon leader, company commander, battalion commander, regiment chief of staff, regiment commander, division chief of staff, division commander, and deputy army commander. In 1979, he participated in the Chinese-Vietnamese War and was honored by the CMC as “a war hero.” Three years later, at the 12th Party Congress in 1982, Li served on the presidium (主席团) of the Congress. At the age of 29, Li was the youngest PLA representative on the presidium and was considered a rising star in the officer corps. Over the years, Li led troops on the front lines of major disaster-relief campaigns, including the Yangtze “grand floods” in 1998, the Sichuan Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, the Sichuan Lushan earthquake in 2013, and the Yunnan Ludian earthquake in 2014. By 1998, Li already served as commander of the 41st Group Army.

It is believed that, around that time, Li offended then CMC chairman Jiang Zemin.<sup>2</sup> It thus took 10 years for him to be promoted to a deputy military-region-level officer. He finally was appointed deputy commander of the Chengdu Military Region in 2008. By comparison, other officers at the same level as Li who later served as commanders of military regions during the same period usually were promoted from the group army to the deputy military-region level after only four or five years.<sup>3</sup> Also, although Li was granted the rank of major general in 1997, he did not receive the rank of lieutenant general until 2009, a much longer interval for regular rank promotion than is typical among PLA senior officers. Under the Xi leadership, Li’s career advancement has returned to the fast track. In July 2013, he was appointed commander of the Chengdu Military Region. Two years later, he was granted the rank of general. As the inaugural commander of the PLA Army, Li is likely to obtain a seat on the next CMC, despite the fact that he is not even an alternate member of the current Central Committee.

Examining the backgrounds of the other top officers at the Army Headquarters reveals a similar phenomenon. Table 1 (next page) shows the top 11 officers of the PLA Army. It is interesting to note that none of them, including Commander Li Zuocheng and Commissar Liu Lei, both of whom were promoted from positions as heads of military regions, holds membership on the 18th Central Committee. By contrast, prior to the structural change to operational theaters, most of the heads of military regions served as members of the 18th Central Committee. Xi seems to aggressively promote the “less favored generals” of his predecessors. In 2013, for example, Liu Lei was only commissar of the Xinjiang Military District with the rank of major general (which was granted in 2004). A year later, in 2014, Liu received a two-step promotion, becoming commissar of the Chengdu Military Region. That same year, he was granted the rank of lieutenant general. At the end of 2015, he was appointed commissar of the newly founded Army Headquarters.

#### *Characteristics of Xi’s “Young Guards” in the New Military Leadership*

Several other top officers in the Army have also enjoyed frequent promotions over the past two to three years. Deputy Commissar Shi Xiao was commissar of Yunnan Military District in 2014. He then served as deputy commissar of the Lanzhou Military Region for a year before he was promoted to deputy commissar of the Army. Table 1 shows that six of the top officers in the PLA Army Headquarters currently hold only the rank of major general, demonstrating the unconventional way in which the Xi leadership promotes

young guards. A recent article in *New Beijing Daily*, a major Chinese newspaper, observes that these major generals actually share similar career trajectories, having been promoted numerous times under the Xi leadership.<sup>4</sup> Because of the fast-paced promotions in the PLA officer corps in recent years, many of these relatively young top officers are expected to enter the next Central Committee as full or alternate members.

Army Chief of Staff Liu Zhenli and Director of the Political Department Zhang Shuguo both were born in the 1960s. Liu Zhenli participated in the Chinese-Vietnamese War from 1986 to 1987. In 2014, he was transferred from his post as commander of the 65th Group Army and became commander of the 38th Group Army, the most elite army group in the PLA. A year later, Liu was appointed to be chief of staff of the PAP, a role in which he served for only five months before being promoted to his current position. Similarly, Zhang Shuguo was promoted from commissar of the 39th Group Army to deputy commissar of the Chengdu Military Region in January 2015. Six months later, he was appointed director of the Political Department of the Beijing Military Region. Five months after that, he assumed his current position. In other words, within a year, he was promoted three times.

All of these Army officers have collected leadership experience by running group armies, with most having served as group army commanders or commissars. This means that their military careers have been spent mostly or exclusively with ground forces. Some took temporary posts (挂职) in the Navy in order to gain joint operation experience. Such was the case with director of the Army Logistics Department Han Zhiqing and Director of Army Equipment Development Gao Bo. Han served as deputy chief of staff of the East China Sea Fleet from 2013 to 2014, and Gao served as deputy chief of staff of the South China Sea Fleet from 2009 to 2010. Han also had foreign study experience, earning a master's degree in joint battle command from the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia in Moscow.

Table 2 (page 5) presents background information on the heads of all 15 agencies directly under the leadership of the CMC. The pattern here is similar to that of the leadership of the Army Headquarters. Seven of these heads hold only the rank of major general or rear admiral, reflecting Xi's intention to promote young guards to the highest offices in the PLA. This also suggests that these 15 agencies do not necessarily carry equal weight — some are far more important than others.

Many of the recently promoted officers have war experience. For example, Li Zuocheng, PAP Commander Wang Ning, Commander of the Western Command Zhao Zongqi, and Commander of the Eastern Command Liu Yuejun all participated in the Chinese-Vietnamese War. It is also clear that many rising stars promoted by Xi joined the PLA at a very young age. Navy Commissar Miao Hua joined the PLA at the age of 14, Wang Ning and Liu Yuejun joined at the age of 15, Zhao Zongqi and Commissar of the Eastern Command Zheng Weiping joined at 16, and Li Zuocheng joined at 17.<sup>5</sup>

*(text continues on p. 6)*

**Table 1***Top Officers of the Newly Established PLA Army Headquarters (as of April 2016)*

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Native province</i>	<i>Military rank (year attained)</i>	<i>Previous position</i>	<i>Prospects for 19th CC</i>	<i>Service experience</i>	<i>Group Army experience</i>
Commander	Li Zuocheng	1953	Hunan	General (2015)	Commander, Chengdu MR	CMC FM	Army	41st
Political commissar	Liu Lei	1957	Shandong	Lt. general (2014)	Political commissar, Lanzhou MR	FM	Army	21st
Deputy commander	Peng Bo	1955	Henan	Lt. general (2014)	Deputy commander, Lanzhou MR	FM	Army	40th
	You Haitao	1958	Henan	Lt. General (2014)	Deputy commander, Nanjing MR	FM	Army	42nd
	Rong Guiqing	1958	Henan	Major general (2008)	Chief of staff, Chengdu MR	AM	Army	20th, 54th
Deputy Political Commissar	Shi Xiao	1957	Yunnan	Major general (2003)	Deputy political commissar, Lanzhou MR	AM	Army	14th
Secretary, Discipline Inspection Commission	Wu Gang	1951	Hebei	Lt. general (2012)	Deputy political commissar, Nanjing MR	CCDI Member	Army	27th, 38th
Chief of staff	Liu Zhenli	1964	Hebei	Major general (2010)	Chief of staff, Armed Police	AM	Army, PAP	65th, 38th
Director, Political Department	Zhang Shuguo	1960	Jilin	Major general (2008)	Director, Political Department, Beijing MR	AM	Army	39th
Director, Logistics Department	Han Zhiqing	1958	Shandong	Major general (2009)	Director, Logistics Department, Jinan MR	AM	Army, Navy	26th
Director, Equipment Development	Gao Bo	?	?	Major general (2009)	Director of Army Equipment, General Armament Department	AM	Army, Navy	39th

SOURCE: Author's database.

NOTES: AM = Alternate Member; CC = Central Committee; CCDI = Central Commission for Discipline Inspection; CMC = Central Military Commission; FM = Full Member; Lt. = Lieutenant; MR = Military Region; PAP = People's Armed Police.

**Table 2***Heads of the Newly Restructured Organizations Directly Under the Central Military Commission (as of April 2016)*

<i>New CMC organization</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Native province</i>	<i>Military rank (year attained)</i>	<i>Previous position</i>	<i>18th CC</i>	<i>Prospects for 19th CC</i>	<i>Service Experience</i>	<i>Ties to Xi</i>
General Office	Qin Shengxiang	1957	Hubei	Lt. general (2015)	Head of Organization Dept. of General Political Dept.		FM	Army	Xi's confidant
Joint Staff Department	Fang Fenghui	1951	Shaanxi	General (2015)	Commander, Beijing MR	CMC FM	CMC FM or retiring	Army	Fellow native of Shaanxi
Political Work Department	Zhang Yang	1951	Hebei	General (2010)	Political Commissar, Guangzhou MR	CMC FM	Retiring	Army	
Logistics Support Department	Zhao Keshi	1947	Hebei	General (2010)	Commander, Nanjing MR	CMC FM	Retiring	Army	31st Group Army
Equipment Development Dept.	Zhang Youxia	1950	Shaanxi	General (2011)	Commander, Shenyang MR	CMC FM	CMC VC or retiring	Army	Fellow native of Shaanxi
Training Management Dept.	Zheng He	1958	Shanghai	Major general (2009)	Deputy Commander, Chengdu MR		FM	Army	31st Group Army
National Defense Mobilization Dept.	Sheng Bin	1958	Liaoning	Major general (2007)	Deputy Commander, Shenyang MR		FM	Army	
Discipline Inspection Commission	Du Jincal	1952	Hebei	General (2012)	Deputy Director, General Political Dept.	FM	Retiring	Army	
Politics and Law Commission	Li Xiaofeng	1954	Jiangsu	Lt. general (2015)	Chief of PLA Military Procuratorate		FM	Army	Xi's confidant
Science & Technology Commission	Liu Guozhi	1960	Liaoning	Lt. general (2013)	Director, Science & Technology Dept., General Armament Dept.		FM	Army	Fellow Tsinghua alumnus
Strategic Planning Office	Wang Huiqing	1960	Shandong	Major general (2013)	Director of Strategic Planning Dept., General Staff Dept.		AM	Army	
Reform & Organizational Structure Office	Wang Chengzhi	1958	Hebei	Major general (2010)	Director of Directly Subordinate Work Dept., General Political Dept.		AM	Army	
International Military Cooperation Office	Guan Youfei	1957	Guangxi	Rear admiral (2009)	Director of Foreign Affairs, MOD		AM	Navy, Army	
Auditing Administration Off.	Guo Chunfu	1955	Tianjin	Major general	Dean of Academy of PLA Logistics		AM	Army	
Administrative Affairs Mgmt. Office	Liu Zhiming	1957	Jiangsu	Major general (2009)	Deputy Director of Joint Logistics Dept., Shenyang MR		AM	Army	

SOURCE: Author's Database.

NOTES: AM = Alternate Member; CC = Central Committee; CMC = Central Military Commission; Dept. = Department; FM = Full Member; Lt. = Lieutenant; MR = Military Region; MOD = Ministry of Defense; VC = Vice Chair.

Despite the fact that enhancing joint modern operations has been a widely emphasized goal of military reform, the majority of top leaders in the CMC's agencies have only worked in the army. This circumstance may be temporary or transitional as we are still at a very early stage of military reform.<sup>6</sup> Several of the "young guards" in the top leadership are protégés of Xi. Director of the CMC General Office Qin Shengxiang and Secretary of the CMC Politics and Law Commission Li Xiaofeng are widely regarded as Xi's confidants. Both of them were promoted to the rank of lieutenant general in 2015. It is unclear when and how Qin became Xi's trusted friend. Li, who has worked in PLA legal matters and law enforcement since 1978, was in charge of the Xu Caihou case and earned Xi's praise.<sup>7</sup>

Zheng He, the director of the CMC Training Management Department, which was recently promoted in importance, is also considered a rising star favored by Xi. Zheng was born in Shanghai in 1958 and advanced his military career largely through positions in the Nanjing Military Region, including by serving as chief of staff of the 31st Group Army, also known as Xi's "royal army" (近卫军).<sup>8</sup> Zheng was promoted three times under the Xi leadership: from deputy chief of staff of the Nanjing Military Region to director of the Training Division of the General Staff Department in 2013, and then to deputy commander of the Nanjing Military Region in July 2015. A few months later, he was appointed to his current position.

Another young guard with leadership experience in the 31st Group Army, Zhu Shengling, who is commissar of the newly elevated CMC National Defense Mobilization Department, has also been on the fast track of career advancement.<sup>9</sup> Prior to his current position, Zhu worked entirely in the Nanjing Military Region, serving as director of the Political Department of the 31st Group Army from 2005 to 2009, commissar of the Fujian Military District from 2009 to 2013, commissar of the Shanghai Garrison from 2013 to 2014, and director of the Political Department of the Nanjing Military Region from 2014 to 2015, before taking his current position in December 2015. Altogether, he was promoted three times in about two years.

It is important to note that some of the rising stars in the PLA leadership received their advanced military training in Russia. Similar to Director of the Army Logistics Department Han Zhiqing (mentioned above), CMC National Defense Mobilization Department Director Sheng Bin attended a six-month program at the Combined Arms Academy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Moscow in 2001, and Zheng He received his master's degree in military tactical operations from the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow. Director of the CMC Science and Technology Commission Liu Guozhi received his entire education in a Chinese civilian school, Tsinghua University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in engineering physics in 1983, a master's degree in 1986, and a doctorate in 1992. He is now in charge of China's nuclear weapons program.

#### *A Delicate Balancing Act in the Xi Leadership*

Although Xi tends to promote young guards in an extraordinarily fast manner as part of ongoing military reform, he still appears to be performing a delicate balancing act in trying not to undermine the power and status of heavyweight military figures. Up to the present, none of the CMC members who were appointed at the 2012 Party Congress has

lost membership. The recent retirements from military posts of the aforementioned 27 members of the 18th Central Committee were almost all due to age. Likewise, Xi has not forced too many senior officers to vacate their current posts. Nevertheless, most of the newly promoted young guards are well positioned now, even if they will not immediately be taking over some of the most important posts in the PLA leadership.

Table 3 shows how the structural change in the operational theaters, which were reduced from seven military regions to five commands, has affected commanders and commissars of these military regions. Interestingly enough, none of these 14 heads of military regions has retired. Six were promoted to military leadership at the national level, four were transferred to new regions, and four remained in their previous positions and locations. Four commanders have been transferred to new regions, while four commissars have remained in the same locations (see table 3).

**Table 3**

*New Positions of Top Officers from the Seven Military Regions after the Restructuring to Operational Theaters in January 2016*

<i>Previous position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Type of change</i>	<i>Position after restructuring</i>
Shenyang MR Commander	Wang Jiaocheng	1952	Regional transfer	Commander, STO
Shenyang MR Commissar	Chu Yimin	1953	None	Commissar, NTO
Beijing MR Commander	Song Puxuan	1954	Regional transfer	Commander, NTO
Beijing MR Commissar	Liu Fulian	1953	Promotion	Commissar, Strategic Support Force
Lanzhou MR Commander	Liu Yuejun	1954	Regional transfer	Commander, ETO
Lanzhou MR Commissar	Liu Lei	1957	Promotion	Commissar of Army
Jinan MR Commander	Zhao Zongqi	1955	Regional transfer	Commander, WTO
Jinan MR Commissar	Du Hengyan	1951	Promotion	Deputy director, CMC Political Work Dept.
Nanjing MR Commander	Cai Yingting	1954	Promotion	President, Academy of Military Science
Nanjing MR Commissar	Zheng Weiping	1955	None	Commissar, ETO
Guangzhou MR Commander	Xu Fenglin	1953	Promotion	Deputy Director, CMC Joint Staff Department
Guangzhou MR Commissar	Wei Liang	1953	None	Commissar, STO
Chengdu MR Commander	Li Zuocheng	1953	Promotion	Commander of Army
Chengdu MR Commissar	Zhu Fuxi	1955	None	Commissar, WTO

SOURCE: Author's database.

NOTES: CMC = Central Military Commission; Dept. = Department; MR = Military Region; ETO=Eastern Theater of Operations; NTO = Northern Theater of Operations; STO = Southern Theater of Operations; WTO = Western Theater of Operations

It is also evident that Xi is keenly aware that some of his political allies in the military

could be liabilities rather than assets in his consolidation of power, especially in the case of General Liu Yuan. Xi has also demonstrated his willingness to compromise on the issue of major personal appointments, such as in the case of General Cai Yingting, one of his closest confidants in the PLA leadership.

Liu Yuan, the son of former PRC president Liu Shaoqi, has long been a controversial figure in the country.<sup>10</sup> Many liberal intellectuals in China have considered Liu Yuan a “Bo Xilai-like figure in the military,” partly because of Liu’s princeling background and his demagogic manipulation of public opinion, but mainly because of his long-standing position as a conservative military hawk with ultra-nationalistic appeal.<sup>11</sup> The PLA establishment has never had much respect for Liu, largely because Liu has a thin résumé as a professional soldier. He joined the PAP in 1992 at the age of 41 and was transferred to the PLA as deputy political commissar of the General Logistics Department in 2003 at the age of 52.

It is widely known that Liu Yuan was the first military leader to challenge Gu Junshan, Xu Caihou, and Guo Boxiong.<sup>12</sup> Liu apparently played a key role in helping Xi Jinping get rid of these “three military tigers.” But Liu could be a big liability should Xi continue to rely heavily on such a controversial and ambitious man. To say the least, Liu has made too many enemies in the PLA leadership. According to an unverified report, in two CMC meetings in the fall of 2015, Executive Vice Chairman of the CMC Fan Changlong voted against the proposal to appoint Liu Yuan to be secretary of the PLA Discipline Inspection Commission and a new member of the CMC.<sup>13</sup> It looks as though Xi’s effort to promote Liu Yuan has failed due to strong opposition in the military establishment. But one could also reasonably argue that, for the reasons discussed above, Xi simply did not have any incentive to promote Liu.

The latter interpretation seems to accord with Liu’s own statement that he would “support the resolution of the Central Military Commission, and resolutely obey President Xi’s arrangements.”<sup>14</sup> According to the overseas Chinese media, Xi Jinping and Vice Chairman of the CMC Xu Qiliang hosted a banquet for Liu Yuan at the time of his retirement, calling Liu a man of “noble character and unquestionable integrity” (高风亮节), the same expression that Xi used when Hu Jintao stepped down as chairman of the CMC in the fall of 2012.<sup>15</sup> In a way, the departures of both Hu and Liu have been great victories for Xi, and both events have had consequences that reach far beyond elite politics.

What happened to Cai Yingting during military reform is quite a different story. Cai’s close association with Xi began when both worked in Fujian early in their careers.<sup>16</sup> According to some analysts, Cai was the first military officer that Xi promoted after becoming chairman of the CMC in 2012.<sup>17</sup> Prior to military reform, Cai was considered a leading candidate to be the next chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department and a member or even vice chairman of the next CMC. But in December 2015, Cai was transferred from his position as commander of the Nanjing Military Region to become president of the PLA Academy of Military Science. Cai may still have a chance for a seat in the CMC if his current position is just transitional. But, at present, Cai is no longer considered a top contender for the next CMC. A rumor circulating in the military establishment is that

Cai's daughter has married an American, and thus CCP regulations prohibit him from being considered for a top military post.

Both Cai's dramatic marginalization and the even more dramatic end to Liu's military career reveal the complicated nature of personnel appointments in the PLA leadership. For analysts of Chinese elite politics, these events are also reminders of the importance of institutional norms and regulations. On that note, the next installment in this series will elaborate on another important issue for military reform: the interplay between individual power and institutional constraints, and how this dynamic affects the formation of the new military leadership.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Qing Ping 青苹, "The rocket-like rise of Li Zuocheng: Xi Jinping puts Jiang Zemin's 'abandoned general' in an important position" (李作成火箭上升 江时“弃将”获习重用), Duowei Newsnet, January 4, 2016, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2016-01-04/59707956.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mu Rao 穆尧, "The reshuffling of 38 generals, dismantling of four general departments, and promotion of five new officers to headquarters positions in Beijing (38 上将洗牌 四总部解体与五马进京), Duowei News, December 11, 2015, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2015-12-11/59702583.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Jia Shiyu 贾世煜, "These five Army major generals have come to the fore of military reform" (这 5 位陆军少将军改中中脱颖而出) *New Beijing Daily* (新京报), January 21, 2016, <http://www.warchina.com/news/world/157534.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Mai Duo 麦垛, "Reshuffling of Generals: Valuing the Vietnamese War Experience" (上将大换血 越战经历显著吃重), Duowei News, August 11, 2015, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2015-08-11/59673596.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Ru Shi 如是, "Army-dominance in the CMC central departments during military reform is just transitional" (曝中共军改新高层以陆军为主只是过渡), Duowei News, January 7, 2016, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2016-01-07/59708831.html>.

<sup>7</sup> "Heads of the agencies of the Central Military Commission are decided, Li Xiaofeng runs the Politics and Law Committee" (中共军委部门人事落定 李晓峰掌军委政法委) *China Observer* (中国观察), November 2, 2015, <http://china.caixin.com/2015-11-02/100869102.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Cheng Li, "Promoting 'Young Guards': The Recent High Turnover in the PLA Leadership (Part I: Purges and Reshuffles)," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 48, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Zhu is not shown in table 2 because it only includes the director of the National Defense Mobilization Department, not the commissar.

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Liu Yuan, see Cheng Li, "Xi Jinping's Inner Circle (Part 2: Friends from Xi's Formative Years)," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 44 (Summer 2014), pp. 10–15.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>12</sup> Song Ruxin 宋如鑫, “Military reforms face resistance and Liu Yuan is rumored to be sacrificed” (军改遇阻力 传刘源被牺牲), Duowei News, January 7, 2016, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2016-01-07/59709056.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Sun Lan 孙澜, “Insider exposes Liu Yuan’s retirement: Fan Changlong voted against Liu’s CMC membership” (刘源退役内幕曝光: 范长龙投了反对票), Duowei News, January 3, 2016, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2016-01-03/59707933.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Song Ruxin 宋如鑫, “Liu Yuan receives high praise from Xi Jinping, who did the same to Hu Jintao in farewell” (获与胡锦涛相同赞誉 习近平高规格欢送刘源), Duowei News, January 5, 2016, <http://china.dwnews.com/news/2016-01-05/59708411.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Cheng Li, “Xi Jinping’s Inner Circle (Part 3: Political Protégés from the Provinces),” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 45 (Fall 2014), pp. 10–12.

<sup>17</sup> *Qingdao Daily* (星岛日报), November 2, 2012, <http://news.singtao.ca/calgary/2012-11-02/china1351843867d4175398.html>.