



General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party

The **General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party** is the head of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the sole ruling party of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since 1989, the CCP general secretary has been the paramount leader of the PRC.

According to the CCP constitution, the general secretary serves as an *ex officio* member of the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), China's *de facto* top decision-making body. The general secretary is also the head of the Secretariat, and sets the agenda of Central Committee, Politburo and PSC meetings. Since the 1990s, the holder of the post has been, except for transitional periods, the president of China, making the holder the head of state, and the chairman of the Central Military Commission, the supreme commander of the People's Liberation Army.^[note 1]

As the top leader of the world's largest economy by GDP purchasing power parity (PPP), the second largest economy by GDP nominal, the largest military in the world by personnel, a recognized nuclear weapons state, U.N. Security Council permanent member, and a potential superpower, the general secretary is considered to be one of the world's most powerful political figures.^[3]

The incumbent general secretary is Xi Jinping, who took office on 15 November 2012 and was re-elected twice on 25 October 2017 and 23 October 2022. The last person to rule the country for more than two terms was Mao Zedong, who served as Chairman of the CCP Central Committee from 1945 until his death in 1976.

History

The post was established by the 12th Central Committee in 1982, replacing the post of Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. Since its revival in 1982, the post of general secretary has been the highest office in the CCP, though it did not become the most powerful post until Deng Xiaoping's retirement in 1990.^[4]

Since the mid-1990s, starting with Jiang Zemin, the general secretary has traditionally also held the post of president of China.^[4] While the presidency is a ceremonial post, it is

General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party

中国共产党中央委员会总书记



Emblem of the Chinese Communist Party



Flag of the Chinese Communist Party



Incumbent
Xi Jinping
since 15 November 2012

customary for the general secretary to assume the presidency to confirm his status as head of state. It has additionally been held together with the post of chairman of the Central Military Commission, making the holder the supreme commander of the People's Liberation Army.^[4]

Election

The CCP general secretary is nominally elected by a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party from among the members of the Politburo Standing Committee.^[5] In practice, the *de facto* method of selecting the general secretary has varied over time. The two most recent general secretaries, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, were first elevated to the position of first Secretary of the Secretariat in the same process used to determine the membership and roles of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee. Under this informal process, the first secretary would be chosen during deliberations by incumbent Politburo members and retired Politburo Standing Committee members in the lead up to a Party Congress. The first secretary would later succeed the retiring general secretary as part of a generational leadership transition at the subsequent party congress.

Powers and position

The powers and roles of the general secretary are vaguely defined, with no term limits or written rules for selecting a successor.^[4] However, as China is a one-party state, the general secretary holds ultimate power and authority over state and government,^[6] and is usually considered the "paramount leader" of China.^[7] However, most of the people until Xi Jinping who have held the post have held far less power than Mao Zedong.^[8]

According to the Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party, the general secretary serves as an *ex officio* member of the Politburo Standing Committee.^[9] According to regulations of the CCP, the general secretary is responsible for convening the meetings of the Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee. The general secretary additionally presides over the work of the

<div>Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party</div> <div>Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party</div>	
Style	<div>General Secretary</div> <div>(总书记)</div> <div>(informal)</div> <div>Comrade (同志)</div> <div>(formal)</div>
Type	Party leader, paramount leader
Member of	Politburo Standing Committee
Reports to	Central Committee
Residence	Qinzheng Hall, Zhongnanhai ^[1]
Seat	Beijing
Nominator	Central Committee
Appointer	Central Committee
Term length	Five years, renewable
Constituting instrument	Party Constitution
Precursor	Chairman (1943–1976)
Inaugural holder	Chen Duxiu
Formation	23 July 1921

<div>General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party</div>	
<div>Simplified Chinese</div>	中国共产党中央委员会总书记
<div>Traditional Chinese</div>	中國共產黨中央委

Secretariat. The general secretary also sets the topics of Central Committee, Politburo and Politburo Standing Committee meetings.^[10]

List of general secretaries

See also

- Office of the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party
- Leadership core
- Orders of precedence in China
- Secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party

Notes

- Xi Jinping was named general secretary of the CCP and took over the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission from Hu Jintao in November 2012.^[2]

References

- "文革后的中南海：中央办事效率最高的时期" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180208124159/http://marry.lywzc.com/thread-78936-1-1.html>). *LYWZC.com*. Comsenz Inc. Archived from the original (<http://marry.lywzc.com/thread-78936-1-1.html>) on 8 February 2018. Retrieved 7 February 2018..
- "Who's Who in China's New Communist Party Leadership Lineup" (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-11-15/who-s-who-in-china-s-new-communist-party-leadership-lineup.html>). *Bloomberg News*. 15 November 2012. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20141024034823/http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-11-15/who-s-who-in-china-s-new-communist-party-leadership-lineup.html>) from the original on 24 October 2014. Retrieved 1 December 2019.
- McGregor, Richard (21 August 2022). "Xi Jinping's Radical Secrecy" (<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/08/china-xi-jinping-biography-opacity/671195/>). *The Atlantic*. Retrieved 12 September 2022.; Sheridan, Michael. "How Xi Jinping became the world's most powerful man" (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/xi-jinping-president-worlds-most-powerful-man-china-2snprgdm5>). *The Times*. ISSN 0140-0460 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0140-0460>). Retrieved 12 September 2022.; O'Connor, Tom (3 February 2022). "Xi and Putin, two of world's most powerful men, to meet in China, US absent" (<https://www.newsweek.com/xi-putin-most-powerful-men-meet-china-us-absent-1675570>). *Newsweek*. Retrieved 12 September 2022.
- Mai, Jun (8 May 2021). "Who leads the Communist Party?" (<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3132631/chinas-communist-party-how-general-secretary-became-countrys>). *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved 17 January 2023.
- "中共中央印发《中国共产党中央委员会工作条例》" (https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2020-10/12/content_5550656.htm) [The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the "Regulations on Work of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China"]. *State Council of the People's Republic of China*. 12 October 2020. Retrieved 27 September 2023.
- Buckley, Chris; Wu, Adam (10 March 2018). "Ending Term Limits for China's Xi Is a Big Deal. Here's Why" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-term-limit-explainer.html>). *The New York Times*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180312103512/https://www.n>

員會總書記	
Transcriptions	[show]
Standard Mandarin	
Hanyu	Zhōngguó Gòngchǎndǎng
Pinyin	Zhōngyāng Wěiyuánhui
	Zǒngshūjì
Commonly abbreviated as	
Simplified Chinese	中共中央总书记
Traditional Chinese	中共中央總書記
Transcriptions	[show]
Standard Mandarin	
Hanyu	Zhōnggòng Zhōngyāng
Pinyin	Zǒngshūjì

nytimes.com/2018/03/10/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-term-limit-explainer.html) from the original on 12 March 2018. Retrieved 1 December 2019. "In China, the political job that matters most is the general secretary of the Communist Party. The party controls the military and domestic security forces, and sets the policies that the government carries out. China's presidency lacks the authority of the American and French presidencies."

7. "China's 'Chairman of Everything': Behind Xi Jinping's Many Titles" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/25/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-titles-chairman.html>). *The New York Times*. 25 October 2017. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171026043525/https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/25/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-titles-chairman.html>) from the original on 26 October 2017. Retrieved 1 December 2019. "Mr. Xi's most important title is general secretary, the most powerful position in the Communist Party. In China's one-party system, this ranking gives him virtually unchecked authority over the government."
8. Phillips, Tom (24 October 2017). "Xi Jinping becomes most powerful leader since Mao with China's change to constitution" (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/xi-jinping-mao-thought-on-socialism-china-constitution>). *The Guardian*. ISSN 0261-3077 (<https://www.worldcat.org/isn/0261-3077>). Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171024053607/https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/xi-jinping-mao-thought-on-socialism-china-constitution>) from the original on 24 October 2017. Retrieved 16 January 2020.
9. "Chapter III Central Organizations of the Party – Article 22" (<http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/49109.htm#4>). *China Internet Information Center*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20071018054320/http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/49109.htm#4>) from the original on 18 October 2007. Retrieved 26 March 2013.
10. "中共中央印发《中国共产党中央委员会工作条例》" (https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2020-10/12/content_5550656.htm) [The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the "Regulations on Work of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China"]. *State Council of the People's Republic of China*. 12 October 2020. Retrieved 27 September 2023.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=General_Secretary_of_the_Chinese_Communist_Party&oldid=1179828664"

■