Title: Observations and implications of the first military and political chief of the newly formed group army of the Communist Party of China

Alt Title: Observations and Implications of the First Commanders and Political Commissars of the PLA's New Group Army

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# 1. Introduction

April 2017 , the CPC reorganized 13 group armies based on the original 18 group armies and announced the first military and political leaders, namely, the commander of the 71st group army, Wang Yinfang, and the political commissar, Xu Deqing; the commander of the 72nd group army, Zhu Xiaohui, and the political commissar, Wang Wenquan; the commander of the 73rd group army, Hu Zhongqiang, and the political commissar, Yang Cheng; the commander of the 74th group army, Xu Xianghua, and the political commissar, Liu Hongjun; the commander of the 75th group army, Gong Maodong, and the political commissar, Qin Shutong; the commander of the 76th group army, The commander of the regiment army, Fan Chengcai, and the political commissar, Zhang Hongbing; the commander of the 77th Group Army , Lin Huomao , and the political commissar, Li Zehua; the commander of the 78th Group Army, Wu Yanan, and the political commissar, Guo Xiaodong; the commander of the 79th Group Army, Xu Qiling, and the political commissar, Yu Yonghong; the commander of the 80th Group Army, Wang Xiubin, and the political commissar , Zhu Yuwu; the commander of the 81st Group Army, Huang Ming , and the political commissar, Fang Yongxiang; the commander of the 82nd Group Army , Lin Xiangyang, and the political commissar, Zhang Mengbin; the commander of the 83rd Group Army, Xie Zenggang, and the political commissar, Lu Shaoping. This article analyzes the reasons for their taking up their current positions and their future developments after the personnel reshuffle at the 20th CPC National Congress and the 14th National "Two Sessions" of mainland China (hereinafter referred to as the mainland), so as to understand the direction of Xi Jinping's layout.

# 2. Subsequent adjustments to the group army leaders

# 1. Promotion

# 1. General vacancies

# 1 , Xu Deqing

in Chongzhou, Sichuan in March 1963 , he served as deputy political commissar of the 13th Group Army of the Chengdu Military Region and led a team to participate in the relief mission of the Lushan earthquake in Sichuan; In August 2015 , he was promoted to the political commissar of the 47th Group Army of the Lanzhou Military Region , and led officers and soldiers from Guanzhong, Shaanxi to the Golmud training base in Qinghai with the then army commander Zhang Lianyi. Therefore, he is familiar with the customs and folkways as well as the military-civilian relations in Yunnan, Tibet, Sichuan and other provinces and regions. In April 2018 , he was appointed as the Political Commissar of the Western Theater Command Army and stepped up the combat readiness construction of the theater command army.

January 2022 , he took office as the Political Commissar of the Central Theater Command, highlighting that Xi Jinping continued to rely on Xu Deqing's cross-theater experience and rich political leadership experience, and continued to push the theater to deeply implement the new era of the Communist Party of China's military strengthening thinking and new era military strategic guidelines, complete various tasks with high standards, and create a new situation in the theater construction and preparation for war. In October 2022 , he was successfully elected as a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China .

# 2 , Qin Shutong

in Jiangyan, Jiangsu Province in November 1963 , he served as the director and deputy political commissar of the Political Department of the 31st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region . In March 2017 , he became the first political commissar of the 75th Group Army of the Southern Theater Command. After taking up the post of director of the Political Work Department of the Army in July 2018 , he participated in the symposium of "Learning from Lei Feng at Work and Being a Pioneer in Strengthening the Army" in the new era and delivered a speech. By taking advantage of public opportunities to express his firm belief in Xi Jinping's position on promoting the Lei Feng spirit after taking office, he became a politically reliable learner of the Lei Feng spirit. In January 2022 , he was successfully promoted to the political commissar of the Army, and in October he was elected a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Qin Shutong's propaganda activities, such as publishing many journal reports and supervising many news releases, not only show his attitude highly consistent with the Party Central Committee, but also reflect that in recent years the CPC has actively cultivated propaganda professionals and political cadres as one of the considerations for promotion, and strengthened cognitive combat effectiveness to prepare for future modern warfare and to support the achievement of military combat tasks.

# 3. Zhang Hongbing

A native of Xianning, Hubei, he was born in January 1966. In 2014 , he was promoted to director of the Political Department of the 20th Group Army of the Jinan Military Region. In March 2017 , he became the first political commissar of the 76th Group Army of the Western Theater Command. In December 2019 , he took up the post of political commissar of the Eastern Theater Command Army, reflecting his intention to leverage Zhang Hongbing's practical experience as a political leader in different theaters to strengthen training and preparation for combat against Taiwan.

January 2022 , he was appointed as the political commissar of the People's Armed Police Force, becoming the second general born after 1965. Combined with the changes in senior leaders of the People's Armed Police Force in recent years, including Commander Wang Chunning, Deputy Commander Zheng Jiagai, Director of the Political Work Department Xue Hongwei and other generals, all of whom came from the heads of the army and air force, it highlights the use of a cross-service model to ensure the unified leadership of the People's Armed Police Force and accelerate its integration into the combat system of the entire army; in addition, Wang Jianwu ( born in August 1958 ), political commissar of the Southern Theater Command, and Li Fengbiao ( born in October 1959 ), political commissar of the Western Theater Command, will reach the current retirement age ( 65 years old ) . Whether Zhang Hongbing will follow the footsteps of former political commissar of the People's Armed Police Force Zhu Shengling and be transferred to the position of political commissar of the theater command , subsequent developments are worthy of attention.

# 4. Wu Yanan

in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province in August 1962 , he served as deputy commander of the 16th Group Army of the Shenyang Military Region . During this period, he led the frontline command to Heilongjiang to direct flood control, rescue and disaster relief work. And the leader of the "Pingxingguan Battle Assault Company" model unit team commemorating the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War .

July 2020 , he was promoted to commander of the Northern Theater Command Army. Less than half a year later, he joined the Joint Staff Headquarters of the Central Military Commission, serving as deputy chief of staff and deputy commander-in-chief of the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters, highlighting his intention to rely on Wu Yanan's major on-site command capabilities and disaster relief experience; in January 2022 , he became commander of the Central Theater Command . Before the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China , stabilizing the army is an important factor in ensuring the regime, especially the Central Theater Command that guards the safety of the capital. It was a general trusted by Xi Jinping who took office. One year later, he entered the Joint Operations Command Center of the Central Military Commission and was familiar with the military joint combat operation process.

# 5 , Xu Qiling

A native of Huaiyang, Henan Province , Xu Qiling was born in July 1962. He was transferred to the Central Theater Command as deputy commander of the Army in 2016. In March 2017 , he became the first commander of the 79th Army Group of the Northern Theater Command. In December 2018 , he assumed the post of commander of the Army of the Eastern Theater Command. In April 2020 , he was transferred to the commander of the Army of the Western Theater Command. This reflects that Xu Qiling's tenure covers the Central, Northern, Eastern and Western Theater Commands, and he understands the strategic directions and tasks of different theater commands and enhances his joint combat thinking.

As the tension between India and China escalated, Xu Qiling was appointed as the commander of the Western Theater Command, which showed that Xi Jinping intended to rely on Xu Qiling's ground force combat experience to effectively deal with the India-China border sovereignty dispute and ethnic minority issues such as "Xinjiang independence" and "Tibetan independence" to ease the tense situation on the border. However, two months later, Xu Qiling became slightly ill. He will be transferred to the position of Deputy Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission. Although he was elected as a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China , if he fails to be included in the list of the Central Military Commission for the 21st National Congress of the Communist Party of China , he may end up in his current position.

# 6 , Wang Xiubin

in Rudong, Jiangsu Province in March 1964 , he served as the commander of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Division of the 1st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region . During his time there, he explored and researched new equipment, innovated training and combat methods, and achieved the transformation from traditional landing to three-dimensional landing combat methods. It highlights Wang Xiubin's familiarity with amphibious armored equipment and landing combat tactics, and strengthens the landing combat capability of the troops facing the Taiwan Strait.

2013 , he was promoted to deputy commander of the 31st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region , and in 2015 he was transferred back to the 1st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region.

Group Army, served as deputy commander and commemorated the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War

Leader of the "Heroic Company of the Yanmen Pass Ambush" Model Troop Parade at the AGM; In July 2016 , he was promoted to commander of the 1st Army Group of the Eastern Theater Command. In July 2019 , he took up the post of deputy commander and chief of staff of the Eastern Theater Command. In July 2021 , he was appointed commander of the Southern Theater Command . Since the theater command had completed the establishment of the naval and air command system during the tenure of the former commander Yuan Yubai , it is intended to rely on Wang Xiubin's practical experience in combat readiness against Taiwan to promote the theater command's combat readiness work.

# 7 , Huang Ming

in Yixing, Jiangsu Province in April 1963 , he served as Chief of Staff of the 16th Group Army of the Shenyang Military Region . During his time there, he served as the leader of the "Pingxingguan Battle Assault Company" model unit team commemorating the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War .

In March 2017 , he became the first commander of the 81st Army Group of the Central Theater Command . In June 2019 , he was transferred to the deputy commander of the Army. In September 2021 , he became the chief of staff of the Army . The most noteworthy thing is that he entered the Army Headquarters after serving in grassroots units. He was transferred from the initial deputy commander of the Army to the chief of staff. Although the two have the same rank, the ranking order is later. The biggest purpose of this move is to promote combat troops that have been trained for a long time and have participated in major national activities. In addition to meeting Xi Jinping’s current personnel standards of "good at planning war, daring to take responsibility, and outstanding performance", he also deliberately arranged for him to train the chief of staff of the main services, and then follow the model of former Army Chief of Staff Liu Zhenli "first train for important positions and then occupy the vacancy of generals" . He will become the commander of the Central Theater Command in January 2023 .

# 8 , Lin Xiangyang

in Fuqing, Fujian Province in October 1964 , he served as deputy commander of the 31st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region . He also led the "Model Combat Company" heroic troops parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti- Fascist War . In July 2016 , he was promoted to commander of the 47th Group Army of the Western Theater Command Army . In March 2017 , he served as commander of the 82nd Group Army of the Central Theater Command Army . In April 2019 , he was transferred to commander of the 72nd Group Army of the Eastern Theater Command Army, becoming the first general to hold three combat command positions after the "military reform" ; in October 2019 , he served as the leader of the army parade for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, becoming one of the few generals who have participated in major national events many times.

July 2020 , he was promoted to Commander of the Eastern Theater Command's Army, and in September 2021 he was appointed Commander of the Central Theater Command. In January 2022 , he was transferred back to the Eastern Theater Command as Commander. It is obvious that in addition to leveraging the practical experience of combat readiness in the region and accelerating the promotion of combat training and preparation for Taiwan, he also appointed generals trusted by Xi Jinping.

# (II) Lieutenant General vacancies

# 1 , Wang Wenquan

in Xinzhou, Hubei Province in December 1962 , he was promoted to the position of political commissar of the 27th Group Army of the Central Theater Command in June 2016. In March 2017 , he became the first political commissar of the 72nd Group Army of the Eastern Theater Command. In an interview, he said, "The group army studied Xi Jinping's thoughts on strengthening the military and carried out the activity of 'studying Xi Jinping's thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and being good soldiers of Chairman Xi'. In addition, in this adjustment and reform, many units were reassigned and relocated, and thousands of people and thousands of vehicles followed orders." The relevant remarks all implement Xi Jinping's concept of strengthening the military and the policy of adjusting and reforming the military system and organization, and openly express loyalty to Xi Jinping.

The above-mentioned military experience and actions are enough to show that Wang Wenquan has some understanding of the troops' tasks and political attributes. In June 2020 , he was promoted to deputy political commissar of the Army . Three months later, he was transferred to the political commissar of the Joint Logistics Support Force of the Central Military Commission. In October 2022, he was elected as a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China , highlighting the use of Wang Wenquan's rich experience in political leadership to promote the troops' political and ideological work and avoid the recurrence of corruption problems in the military logistics system.

# 2 , Hu Zhongqiang

in Liupanshui, Guizhou in January 1967 , he served as the commander of the 37th Division of the 13th Group Army of the Chengdu Military Region . During his tenure, he led a team to participate in the "Beyond -2012A " command confrontation exercise and served as the commander of the red side. In an interview, he said, "This exercise is to explore new ways to use information systems to command wars, practice new methods of organizing training based on information systems, and highlight new tactics based on information system operations." 13 shows that Hu Zhongqiang has the ability to use information systems to command wars. He was subsequently promoted to Chief of Staff of the 13th Group Army and Commander of the 14th Group Army . In March 2017 , he became the first commander of the 73rd Group Army of the Eastern Theater Command , becoming the youngest head of a newly formed group army .

December 2021 , he was promoted to Deputy Commander of the Armed Police Force, becoming the youngest senior leader of the Armed Police Force at the time. One year later, he was transferred to the commander of the Southern Theater Command Army. Considering that Hu Zhongqiang has never served in the functional departments of the Central Military Commission or the theater service units, this transfer is to accumulate his qualifications and increase his chances of promotion to general.

# 3. Yang Cheng

in Shaoyang, Hunan Province in December 1964 , he served as the first political commissar of the 73rd Army Group of the Eastern Theater Command in March 2017. He attended the plenary meeting of the PLA and the Armed Police Force delegation at the 3rd Session of the 13th National People's Congress , where he said, "To do a good job in training and preparing for war under the conditions of normalized epidemic prevention and control, we must make scientific adjustments according to the current situation, and commanders at all levels must take the lead in taking up their positions and training grounds to improve their ability and quality in commanding wars." Taking advantage of the opportunity of public meetings, they took the lead in supporting Xi Jinping's military building policies and set an example for officers and soldiers at the grassroots level.

July 2020 , he was transferred to the position of deputy political commissar of the People's Armed Police Force, and five months later he was transferred to the position of political commissar of the Xinjiang Military Region. Recently, he has been frequently transferred to important positions across the services and service headquarters. It is obvious that the current focus is on cultivating high-quality joint combat command cadres to break the traditional concept of a single service fighting alone. He was elected as a member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2022 , which adds room for promotion to general.

# 4 , Fan Chengcai

in Kaixian County, Chongqing in May 1964 , he served as the first commander of the 76th Group Army of the Western Theater Command in March 2017. After being promoted to commander of the Central Theater Command Army in January 2018 , he attended the Central Military Commission's military training meeting and said after the meeting that "Chairman Xi's important speech established the orientation of military training. We always focus on actual combat, connect with actual combat, and promote actual combat military training." In recent years, he has required the Central Theater Command Army's chief organs and subordinate units to enhance their sense of crisis, strengthen combat readiness construction according to the full-time combat standard, and strengthen system training according to the standard of being able to fight at any time. Taking advantage of central meetings or troop training opportunities, we can implement Xi Jinping's policy of strengthening the military and boost the training atmosphere of the troops.

In December 2022 , he was transferred to the position of Deputy Commander of the Western Theater Command. Although Fan Chengcai has gained experience in leadership positions in combat systems across theater commands after the "military reform" and is familiar with combat tasks in various strategic directions, which will facilitate the operation of the joint combat system, he lacks experience in serving in the functional departments of the Central Military Commission or the service headquarters. If he is not arranged to experience the above positions in the future, his future upward development space may be limited.

# 5. Yu Yonghong

in Nanchong, Sichuan in May 1963 , he served in the army's political work system for a long time. He was successively appointed as deputy director of the Political Department of the Chengdu Military Region, political commissar of the Yunnan Provincial Military Region, political commissar of the 14th Group Army of the Chengdu Military Region, the first political commissar of the 79th Group Army of the Northern Theater Command, and secretary of the Army Discipline Inspection Commission. He has rich experience in leading the political work of the troops.

In August 2021 , he was transferred to the position of Secretary of the Air Force Discipline Inspection Commission, becoming one of the few personnel adjustments in recent years from the Army to the Navy. Combined with the current senior political leaders of the Air Force, including Deputy Political Commissar Ji Duo, Director of the Political Work Department Jiang Ping and Deputy Director Shang Yaheng, all of whom are from the Navy and Strategic Support Force generals, it highlights the use of a cross-service model to break through the factionalism of the Air Force political cadres, and to make every effort to correct the bad atmosphere within the Air Force in order to achieve the effect of rectifying the internal discipline of the army. In addition, Yu Yonghong's performance during his tenure as Secretary of the Air Force Discipline Inspection Commission was recognized by senior officials of the Central Military Commission. In October 2022 , he was successfully elected as a member of the 20th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China , and continued to increase the intensity of the military's discipline inspection and supervision work.

# 6 , Fang Yongxiang

in Xiamen, Fujian in August 1966 , he served as the political commissar of the 92nd Brigade and the 86th Division of the 31st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region. After the "military reform", he served as the first deputy director of the Political Work Department of the Eastern Theater Army, the first political commissar of the 81st Group Army of the Central Theater Army, the assistant director of the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission and the first military deputy minister of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. During his work at the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, he led the team to conduct field research many times, and mentioned "grasping the annual demobilization and placement and veterans' training and employment work, and solving the reasonable demands of veterans". It is obvious that Fang Yongxiang is currently improving the problem of petitions and protests by retired military personnel, and achieving the important goal proposed by Xi Jinping at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China : "establishing a management and support agency for retired military personnel and safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of military personnel and their families."

December 2021 , he was promoted to Political Commissar of the Southern Theater Command Army. Comprehensive assessment of Fang Yongxiang's complete political work experience in grassroots units and central units, as well as his election as an alternate member of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2022 , increased his chances of being promoted to general.

# 2. Lateral transfer

# 1. Zhu Xiaohui

in Yueyang, Hunan in October 1965 , he served in the Guangzhou Military Region for a long time. During his tenure as deputy commander of the 41st Group Army, he served as the leader of the Red Army Command Group in the "Crossing -2014 Zhurihe" live-fire military exercise. Due to his performance, he was recognized by the top leaders of the Central Military Commission and was subsequently promoted to commander of the 42nd Group Army. In March 2017 , he became the first commander of the 72nd Group Army of the Eastern Theater Command.

After being transferred to the position of Deputy Commander of the Central Theater Command Army in July 2018, he served as Deputy Leader of the Leading Group of the Xinjiang Korla Division Army Organizing Committee of the "International Military Competition - 2021 " ; 17 In addition, Zhu Xiaohui is 57 years old and still has more than 2 years away from the maximum service period of his current rank ( 60 years old ) . In addition, he has served in large-scale military exercises or international military activities as a commander, which increases his development space for promotion to lieutenant general.

# (II) Gong Maodong

in Mengyin, Shandong Province in November 1963 , he served as the commander of the 162nd Motorized Infantry Division of the 54th Group Army of the Jinan Military Region . During this period, he led his troops to participate in the "Queshan Decisive Victory -2011 " confrontation exercise, and in 2012 , he organized divisional and regimental-level leading cadres and department and section chiefs and above to participate in the training of new recruits. In addition to showing that Gong Maodong pays attention to the troops' combat readiness training, he also requires his subordinates to grasp the overall situation and complete the tasks assigned by their superiors.

in September 2021 , he served as deputy leader of the Army Leadership Group of the "International Army Games -2022 " Korla Division in Xinjiang; It is also observed that although Gong Maodong was elected as a representative of the 14th National People's Congress of the mainland, he will reach the retirement age of the current level ( 60 years old ) at the end of the year, and he may end up in his current position in the future.

# (III) Forest Fire

in November 1963 in Shixing, Guangdong, he served as deputy commander of the 42nd Army Group of the Guangzhou Military Region . He led the headquarters of the then Chief of Staff Chen Xiangwen to march for 6 hours and crossed mountains and ridges for 35 kilometers. In 2016 , he was promoted to commander of the 26th Army Group of the Jinan Military Region and led the team to the Zhurihe training base to participate in the "Crossing - 2016‧ Zhurihe B " military exercise, and in March 2017 he became the first commander of the 77th Group Army of the Western Theater Command , highlighting the importance of Lin Huomao's cross-theater experience to accelerate the construction and development of the troops.

In March 2021 , he was transferred to the commander of the Liaoning Provincial Military Region. He has been out of the regular military system and his upward development space in the military has been reduced. In addition, he will reach the retirement age for his current level ( 60 years old ) at the end of the year . Unless he is promoted exceptionally, he will remain in his current position.

# 3. Retirement due to age

They include Wang Yinfang ( born in 1962 ), Liu Hongjun ( born in 1962 ), Li Zehua ( born in 1963), Guo Xiaodong ( born in 1960 ), Zhu Yuwu ( born in 1962), Zhang Mengbin ( born in 1962 ), Xie Zenggang ( born in 1963 ) and Lu Shaoping ( born in 1961 ), all of whom have reached the maximum service period for the rank of major general ( 60 years old ).

# 4. Dismissal for Violation of Discipline

In October 2019 , Xu Xianghua was dismissed from office by the 13th National People’s Congress of the Mainland for serious violations of discipline.

14th meeting of the Standing Committee passed an order to resign from the representative position.

#Participation , job transfer and personnel arrangement analysis

# 1. Strengthening the coordination and joint combat capabilities of the various services

Judging from the subsequent job changes of the heads of the newly formed group armies of the Communist Party of China, those who have served in the theater of war include Hu Zhongqiang who has served in the Eastern, Southern and Western Theater Commands, Wang Xiubin who has served in the Eastern, Southern and Northern Theater Commands, Zhang Hongbing who has served in the Eastern and Western Theater Commands, Xu Qiling who has served in the Eastern, Western and Northern Theater Commands, Xu Deqing who has served in the Eastern, Western and Central Theater Commands, Zhu Xiaohui, Lin Xiangyang and Lu Shaoping who have served in the Eastern and Central Theater Commands, Yang Cheng who has served in the Eastern Theater Command and Xinjiang Military Region, Fang Yongxiang who has served in the Southern and Central Theater Commands, Fan Chengcai who has served in the Western and Central Theater Commands, and Wu Yanan who has served in the Northern and Central Theater Commands; those who have served in the military branches include 14 generals who have served in the Eastern Theater Command and the Armed Police Force. There are four generals, including Hu Zhongqiang, Yang Cheng, and Zhang Hongbing from the Military Department of the Central Military Commission, and Yu Yonghong from the Army and Air Force Headquarters; there are ten generals from other departments, including Wang Wenquan, who had served in the Eastern Theater Command, the Army Headquarters, and the Joint Logistics Support Force of the Central Military Commission, Qin Shutong from the Southern Theater Command and the Army Headquarters, Xu Qiling from the Western Theater Command and the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, Lin Huomao from the Western Theater Command and Liaoning Provincial Military Region, Wu Yanan from the Northern Theater Command and the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, Yu Yonghong from the Northern Theater Command and the Army Headquarters, Fang Yongxiang from the Central Theater Command and the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission, and Huang Ming from the Central Theater Command and the Army Headquarters .

The above-mentioned generals have been through exchanges and training across war zones, services and departments. In addition to avoiding the potential risk of forming factions in the military due to long-term tenure, Xi Jinping intends to break the closed system of internal exchanges in the military, hoping to cultivate compound cadres who are familiar with combat tasks in various strategic directions and the construction of various services, so as to enhance the coordination and joint combat capabilities of the services.

# 2. Focus on cultivating candidates for future promotion

After investigation, it was found that the three generals, Zhu Xiaohui, Gong Maodong and Lin Huomao , who were transferred to other positions, Gong Maodong (born in November 1963 ) will reach the retirement age of major general at the end of the year, and Lin Huomao has been transferred outside the provincial military region system. Zhu Xiaohui, who has served in large-scale military exercises or international military activities, has the greatest potential for promotion to lieutenant general; the other six lieutenant generals, Wang Wenquan, Hu Zhongqiang, Yang Cheng, Fan Chengcai, Yu Yonghong and Fang Yongxiang, among whom Hu Zhongqiang has just been transferred to the commander of the Southern Theater Army, Fan Chengcai lacks experience in working in the functional departments of the Central Military Commission or the service headquarters, and Yu Yonghong has just been transferred to the secretary of the Air Force Discipline Inspection Commission. Considering that those who hold party and government positions such as representatives to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, members or alternate members of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and representatives of the 14th National People's Congress of the mainland , have more room for upward development. Wang Wenquan and Yang Cheng, who were elected members of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China , and Fang Yongxiang, alternate member, have the greatest potential for promotion to general.

14 generals, including Xu Deqing, Wang Wenquan, Hu Zhongqiang, Yang Cheng, Qin Shutong, Fan Chengcai, Zhang Hongbing, Wu Yanan , Xu Qiling, Yu Yonghong, Wang Xiubin, Huang Ming, Fang Yongxiang and Lin Xiangyang, were promoted to the rank of lieutenant general and general at ages between 54 and 58 and 56 and 60 respectively . This means that if Zhu Xiaohui, born in October 1965 , is not promoted to the rank of lieutenant general within the year, and if Wang Wenquan , born in December 1962 , and Yu Yonghong, born in May 1963 , are not promoted to the rank of general within the year , they may remain at their current rank.

# 3. Consolidate Xi Jinping’s control over the military leadership

It is observed that except for Liu Hongjun, Guo Xiaodong and Commissioner Zhu Yuwu , who were all promoted to the rank of major general in 2011 , the rest were promoted after Xi Jinping took office in 2012. This reflects that in recent years, Xi Jinping has gradually placed generals with high political loyalty, good professional ability and practical experience through each wave of personnel adjustments, fostering and cultivating the "Xi family army" and weakening the influence of the old faction of former Vice Chairmen of the Central Military Commission Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou.

At the same time, when Xi Jinping served in Fujian Province from 1985 to 2002 , he established close military-civilian relations with the 31st Group Army of the Nanjing Military Region. Therefore, after Xi Jinping came to power, he promoted generals with experience in the group army many times, including the current Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission He Weidong, Director of the Political Work Department Miao Hua, and Political Commissar of the National Defense University Zheng He. The outside world regards them as Xi's direct troops. Therefore, Qin Shutong, who had served as Director of the Political Department and Deputy Political Commissar of the 31st Group Army, Fang Yongxiang, Political Commissar of the 86th Division of the 31st Group Army , and Wang Xiubin, Deputy Commander of the 31st Group Army, and Lin Xiangyang were all promoted, highlighting that Xi Jinping cultivated generals who had worked with him and were trusted to serve in important positions. Among them, Lin Xiangyang planned to conduct military exercises and training operations in the sea and airspace around Taiwan in August last year . In April this year , the PLA conducted combat readiness patrols and the Joint Sword exercise in the Taiwan Strait and the sea and airspace to the north, south and east of Taiwan. It is clear that he has the ability to coordinate and command targeted military operations and is familiar with the battlefield environment in the sea and airspace around Taiwan. He should be a candidate for the Central Military Commission in the future. In addition to improving the overall effectiveness of joint operations against Taiwan, he will also consolidate Xi Jinping's core position in the military leadership.

#Four . Conclusion

at the promotions of the 26 first army commanders and political commissars of the newly formed group armies of the Communist Party of China , a total of 8 people were promoted to the rank of general, including deputy chief of staff of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, political commissars of the Army and the Armed Police Force, commanders of the East, South and Central Theater Commands, and 6 people were promoted to lieutenant general, including the political commissar of the Joint Logistics Support Force of the Central Military Commission, the political commissar of the Xinjiang Military Region, the secretary of the Air Force Discipline Inspection Commission, and the deputy commander of the Armed Police Force . More than half of them were promoted to the rank of lieutenant general or admiral, indicating that experience in this position is conducive to the development of military careers and it is an important position for promotion to higher levels.

"Law on Active Duty Officers" , the upper age limit for the rank of general is 65. It is observed that Wang Jianwu ( born in August 1958 ), political commissar of the Southern Theater Command, Zheng He ( born in November 1958 ), political commissar of the National Defense University, and Li Fengbiao ( born in October 1959 ), political commissar of the Western Theater Command, will retire this year and next year. Based on academic experience, special performance and other conditions, Wang Wenquan, Yang Cheng and Fang Yongxiang, who have served in leadership positions in the Eastern and Southern Theater Commands, have a greater advantage in promotion. In addition, at the 21st National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2027 , the members of the Military Commission will have vacant combat and political work system generals. Lin Xiangyang, who has long been in charge of the Taiwan Strait battlefield, Wu Yanan , who has accumulated experience in the Joint Operations Command Center of the Military Commission, and Qin Shutong, who has served in the 31st Group Army, are more likely to be included in the list of replacement and become important assistants to Xi Jinping to ensure his regime or extend his term.