ethelon /ˈeʆəlɒn/ noun

(also echelons)

a rank or level of authority in an organization, business etc, or the people at that level

upper/higher/lower echelons

***Key Communist Party powerbroker sacked*:**

**EMMA ALBERICI, PRESENTER: There have been dramatic developments in Chinese politics today with the sacking of a key powerbroker in the upper echelons of the Communist Party.**

***Chinese politician's wife implicated in murder, espionage* :**

**but many ordinary people are still feeling pretty much in the dark about what's really going on in the upper echelons of power here.**