

China's Top Future Leaders to Watch: Biographical Sketches of Possible Members of the Post-2012 Politburo (Part 4)

Cheng Li

The composition of the new Politburo, including generational attributes and individual idiosyncratic characteristics, group dynamics, and the factional balance of power, will have profound implications for China's economic priorities, social stability, political trajectory, and foreign relations. To a great extent, these leaders' political position and policy preferences are often shaped or constrained by their personal experience, leadership expertise, factional affiliation, and bureaucratic portfolio. This series will provide concise and primarily fact-based biographies for 25 to 30 possible members of the next Politburo, focusing on the following three aspects: personal and professional background, family and patron-client ties, and political prospects and policy preferences.¹ This is the final group of profiles in the series. The profiles of the complete list of the members of the post-2012 Politburo will also be available in the author's Brookings website soon after the Chinese official announcement.

Zhang Chunxian 张春贤

- Born 1953
- Xinjiang (Uyghur) Autonomous Region party secretary (2010-present)
- Xinjiang Military Region Party Committee First party secretary (2010-present)
- Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps first political commissar (2010-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2002-present)
- Deputy head of Central Coordinating Group for Xinjiang Affairs (2011-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Zhang Chunxian was born in 1953 in Yuzhou City, Henan Province. Zhang joined the CCP in 1973. He received his undergraduate education from the Northeastern Heavy Machinery Institute (now Yanshan University) in Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province (1976-80); attended a three-month mid-career program at the Central Party School in Beijing (2000); and graduated with a master's degree (on a part-time basis) in Management and Engineering from the Harbin Institute of Technology in Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province (1998-2002). He holds the title of senior engineer. Early in his career, Zhang was a soldier in a signal corps of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) based in Guangzhou Military Region (1970-75), and a grassroots party official in a people's commune in his native county (1975-76). In the 1980s, Zhang worked in the Ministry of Machinery and Electronic Industry, where he served as a technician, an engineer, and an official in the Organization Department and party secretary and vice president in the No. 10 Design Research Institute. He served as deputy director of the Industrial Machinery Supervision Bureau in the ministry (1991-92), deputy manager of China National Packaging Corporation (1992-93), party secretary and general manager of China National Packaging Corporation (1993-95), assistant to the governor of Yunnan Province (1995-97), vice minister of the Ministry of Communications (1998-2002), and minister of communications (2002-05). A full member of the Central Committee of the CCP since 2002, Zhang served as party secretary and Provincial People's Congress (PPC) chairman of Hunan Province (2006-10). Since April 2010, Zhang has served as party secretary of Xinjiang (Uyghur) Autonomous Region and first political commissar of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and first party secretary of the Xinjiang Military Region Party Committee. Since May 2011, Zhang has served as deputy head of the Central Coordinating Group for Xinjiang Affairs.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Zhang is widely considered a protégé of Jiang Zemin, but it is unclear where and when Zhang established his patron-mentor relationship with Jiang. It most likely occurred during the early 1980s, when both worked in the machinery and electronics industry. Zhang has been married twice. According to an unverified source, his ex-wife Tang Xian'e was a medical doctor and they divorced in 2002.² Zhang married his second and current wife, Li

Xiuping, in 2005. Li is a household name in the country, as she has been an anchorperson on the primary CCTV news program since 1989.³ Li was also previously married and divorced sometime during 2003-2004. Zhang has only one child (a daughter) from his previous marriage. His daughter was in a Ph.D. program (unclear whether in China or overseas) in 2011.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Zhang has often been regarded as a capable leader who can get things done. During his tenure as minister of communications in 2002-2005, he made significant contributions to the rapid growth of China's sea transportation and highways. While he was Hunan party secretary, this previously underdeveloped province became one of the top ten of the country's 31 provincial-level administrations in terms of GDP growth. Even more impressively, in 2009 the province was ranked No. 1 in the country in attracting foreign direct investment. An official with a reputation for being media savvy, Zhang has been among the most accessible leaders at the annual NPC meetings over the past decade.⁴ Zhang is also one of the very few provincial/ministerial-level leaders who have pledged to make records of his individual and family total assets available to the public.⁵ Zhang's so-called "flexible iron-fisted rule" in Xinjiang, which stands in contrast to his predecessor's "pure iron-fisted rule," seems to resonate well with both the CCP leadership and the Chinese public.⁶ Zhang possesses broad leadership experience in the central government (in the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Machinery and Electronics Industry), in top provincial posts (Xinjiang and Hunan), and in running a major state-owned enterprise (the China National Packaging Corporation). This combination of different leadership experiences has prepared him very well for further promotion. He may prove to be a dark horse within the top leadership in the months and years to come. Like Wang Lequan--his predecessor in Xinjiang, who has served on the Politburo--Zhang will likely obtain a seat in the 2012 Politburo. If he leaves Xinjiang, he may serve as vice premier or state councillor or take a top position in a major province or city while concurrently holding a seat in the Politburo. Anti-corruption and political transparency may be pet issues for Zhang when he moves into the national leadership.

Wang Min 王珉

- Born 1950
- Liaoning Province party secretary (2009-present)
- Chairman of the Liaoning Provincial People's Congress (2010-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2007-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Wang Min was born in 1950 in Huainan City, Anhui Province. Wang joined the CCP in 1985. He was a “sent-down youth” (working as a manual laborer in the countryside) in Sucheng, Anhui (1968-72) and a factory worker (1972-75) during the Cultural Revolution. He received his undergraduate education from the Huainan Coal Mining Institute⁷ in Huainan City, Anhui Province (1975-78), taught at the Institute (1978-79), and graduated from a post-graduate program at the Beijing Institute of Astronautics⁸ in Beijing Municipality (1979-81). Wang received a doctoral degree in Engineering in Machinery Manufacturing from the Nanjing Aeronautical Institute⁹ in Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province (1986). He then taught at the Nanjing Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province (1986-87), worked as a visiting scholar at the Hong Kong Polytechnic¹⁰ in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1987-89), and served as vice chairman of the Department of Engineering (1989-90), provost (1990-92), vice president (1992-94), and executive vice president of the Nanjing Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (1994) in Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province. He holds the title of professor. Wang was appointed assistant governor of Jiangsu Province (1994-96) and promoted to vice governor of Jiangsu Province (1996-02). Wang concurrently served as party secretary of Suzhou City and as a member of the Standing Committee of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee (2002-04). In 2004, Wang was transferred to Jilin Province where he served as deputy party secretary and governor of Jilin Province (2004-06). A full member of the CCP Central Committee since 2007, Wang served as party secretary of Jilin Province (2006-2009) and Provincial People's Congress chairman of Jilin Province (2008-2009). He has served as party secretary of Liaoning Province since 2009 and has served as Provincial People's Congress chairman of Liaoning Province since 2010.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Wang Min's father, Wang Jitun (now 94 years old), was a medical doctor in the Huainan Miners Hospital in Huainan City, Anhui Province. Although not a CCP member, Wang Jitun served as vice mayor of Huainan City, Anhui Province, in the early and mid-1960s and as vice chairman of the Huainan Municipal People's Congress in the early 1980s. Wang Min's twin brother, Wang Li, followed their father's professional career and became a medical doctor in the same hospital. Wang has four siblings.¹¹ One younger brother, Wang Wei, received a Ph.D. from Shanghai Medical University in 1987 and pursued his post-doctoral

studies at the University of Nebraska in 1988-90 and now is a tenured professor in Cardiovascular Physiology at the same university. Wang Min and his wife have one child, who is now 33 years old. Wang Min's factional affiliation is unclear. Wang served as party secretary of Suzhou City, Jiangsu, the position that has been known in recent two decades as a stepping-stone for further promotion (examples include former Jiangsu party secretary Liang Baohua, current Minister of Commerce Chen Deming, and current Shenzhen Party Secretary Wang Rong). Suzhou has also been considered part of the greater Shanghai region that has been under strong control by Jiang Zemin; Wang thus may be a protégé of Jiang. It has also been widely speculated that Wang formed a patron-client relationship with Li Yuanchao in 2000-2004, when Li was a top leader in Jiangsu.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Most of the fifth generation leaders obtained their advanced educational degrees (master's and/or doctoral degrees) in part-time studies, which are often viewed skeptically by the Chinese public. Wang Min, however, is an exception. He obtained both of his master's and doctoral degrees on a full-time basis at two of the top engineering schools in China, and thus has undisputable academic credentials. Wang also studied at the Hong Kong Polytechnic for two years as a visiting scholar early in his career. His lack of clear factional identity may also help him obtain an important position, such as head of the Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee. His broad provincial leadership experience in Liaoning, Jilin, and Jiangsu has prepared him well for taking the top position in major cities such as Tianjin, Chongqing, or Shanghai. His strong background in science and technology may make him a candidate for one of the senior positions in the State Council (vice premier or state councillor). Wang has a good reputation for promoting private sector development, the reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and foreign trade and investment.

Sun Zhengcai 孙政才

- Born 1963
- Jilin Province party secretary (2009-present)
- Chairman of the Jilin Provincial People's Congress (2010-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2007-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Sun Zhengcai was born in 1963 into a family of farmers in Wulongzui Village in Rongcheng County, Shandong Province. Sun joined the CCP in 1988. He studied at the Laiyang Agricultural College (1980-84)¹² in Laiyang City, Shandong Province. He graduated with a master's degree in agronomy from the Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences in Beijing Municipality (1984-87), during which he studied under the supervision of professor Chen Guoping, a well-known expert in maize cultivation. He later received a doctoral degree in the same field from China Agricultural University. During the course of his Ph.D. program, he also studied in the United Kingdom for a year as an exchange student.¹³ He worked as deputy director of the Research Department, director of the Soil and Fertilizer Research Institute (1993), and vice president and deputy party secretary of the Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences. He served as deputy party secretary, vice head and then head of Shunyi County in Beijing Municipality. He was promoted to party secretary of Shunyi District in 2002. He served as standing member and secretary-general of the Beijing Municipal CCP Committee (2002-06). He has been a full member of the CCP Central Committee since 2007. In December 2006, Sun was appointed minister and party secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture; aged 42 at that time, he was then the country's youngest ministerial-level leader. Sun has served as party secretary of Jilin Province since 2009 and PPC Chairman of Jilin Province since 2010.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Sun comes from a humble family background. No reliable information is available about Sun's wife, but Sun has a daughter who is currently attending Cornell University as an undergraduate. There have been different explanations for the quick rise of Sun Zhengcai and his relationships with senior leaders. Some believe that Sun has been Jia Qinglin's protégé, as he advanced his career largely in Beijing, where Jia served as mayor and party secretary from 1996 through 2002. It also has been speculated that Sun is a protégé of Wen Jiabao, who played a direct role in Sun's promotion to minister of agriculture and then party secretary of Jilin Province. Both explanations, however, may be correct.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Sun Zhengcai's relatively young age and his leadership experience in both national- and provincial/municipal-level administration make him a competitive aspiring leader within the jockeying for power at the 18th Party Congress. His solid educational background and academic credentials in the field of agriculture and his tenure both as minister of agriculture and party chief in one of the major agricultural provinces seem to indicate that he is an ideal candidate to succeed Hui Liangyu, vice premier and the Politburo member, who is in charge of agriculture. His main policy objectives likely include the promotion of rural socioeconomic development, the acceleration of agricultural innovation, and the protection and advancement of the economic interests of farmers.

Zhou Qiang 周强

- Born 1960
- Hunan Province party secretary (2010-present)
- Chairman of the Hunan Provincial People's Congress (2010-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2002–present)

Personal and Professional Background

Zhou Qiang was born in 1960 in Huangmei County, Hubei Province. Zhou joined the CCP in 1978. He was a “sent-down youth” (working as a manual laborer in the countryside) in his native county during the Cultural Revolution (1976-78). He received both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from the Law Department of the Southwest University of Political Science and Law in Chongqing Municipality (1978-85). Zhou worked as a clerk and a junior official in the Ministry of Justice (1985-93), during which time he also served as assistant director of the Bureau of Justice in the Shenzhen Municipal Government in 1993. Zhou concurrently served as deputy director of the General Office and director of the Office of the Minister (a *mishu* or personal secretary to Minister Xiao Yang) of the Ministry of Justice (1993-95). After briefly serving as director of the Rule of Law Department of the Ministry of Justice in 1995, Zhou became a member of the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL). He served as executive secretary (1997-98) and the first secretary (1998-2006) of the CCYL. He has been a full member of the CCP Central Committee since 2002. Since 2010, Zhou has served as party secretary of Hunan Province and Provincial People's Congress chairman of Hunan Province.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Zhou Qiang comes from a humble family and his father was a local official (deputy head of Xinkai Town, near his birthplace). Zhou Qiang has one son, who is currently an undergraduate student at Yale University. Zhou Qiang's experience as a *mishu* to Minister of Justice Xiao Yang was crucial for his political career. He has been seen as a prominent member of *tuanpai* (the Communist Youth League faction), as he established protege relationship with Li Keqiang, who was in charge of the CCYL Secretariat in the late 1990s.¹⁴

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Zhou Qiang's solid legal training and administrative background have positioned him very well at a time when the CCP leadership is concerned about the urgent need to promote

judicial development, especially in the wake of the Bo Xilai crisis. He will likely take a top position in one of the major cities or provinces such as Chongqing or Sichuan. He may also serve as head of one of the Central Committee departments. He is known for his very strong advocacy, especially among Chinese provincial leaders, of the rule of law, environmental protection, the promotion of strategic emerging industries, and green consumption. He will likely make these developments his pet issues when he moves to the national leadership.¹⁵

Liu Qibao 刘奇葆

- Born 1953
- Sichuan Province party secretary (2007-present)
- Chairman of the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress (2008-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2007-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Liu Qibao was born in 1953 in Susong County, Anhui Province. Liu joined the CCP in 1971. He worked as a manual laborer in the countryside of his native county during the Cultural Revolution (1968-72). He studied for two years in the History Department of the Anhui Normal University in Wuhu City, Anhui Province (1972-74) and continued his undergraduate education at Jilin University in Changchun City, Jilin Province (1975). He graduated (on a part-time study basis) with a master's degree in economic management from the Economics Department of Jilin University in Changchun City, Jilin (1993). Liu served as a clerk in the Propaganda Department of the CCP Committee of Anhui Province (1974-77). Liu then served as a personal secretary (*mishu*) in the General Office of the CCP Committee of Anhui Province (1977-80). In 1980, Liu was appointed deputy director of the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) in Anhui Province and was promoted to director two years later. Liu served as deputy secretary and secretary of the CCYL in Anhui (1982-85) during which he concurrently served as deputy party secretary and vice mayor of Suzhou City, Anhui (1984-85). Liu worked as secretary in the Secretariat of the CCYL Central Committee (1985-93) and then as deputy editor-in-chief of *People's Daily* (1993-94). Liu was deputy secretary-general of the State Council (1994-2000). Thereafter, he served as deputy party secretary of Guangxi Province (2000-06) and as party secretary of Guangxi (2006-07). Liu was elected earlier as an alternate member of the 16th Central Committee (2002) and as a full member of the 17th in 2007. Liu has served as party secretary of Sichuan Province and first party secretary of the Sichuan Provincial Military Region since 2007 and as Provincial People's Congress chairman of Sichuan Province since 2008.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

It has been widely reported that Liu's first principal patron was Wan Li, a heavyweight political leader who served as first party secretary of Anhui Province from 1977 to 1980, when Liu was a *mishu* in the general office of the Anhui Provincial Party Committee.¹⁶ Liu was born into a humble family of farmers with four siblings (he is the second) in Jinbei Village, Susong County. Liu has advanced his political career largely through the CCYL. He established his client relationship with Hu Jintao in the early 1980s, when Liu worked in the CCYL leadership in Anhui Province and Hu was in charge of the CCYL Secretariat. Liu and

Wang Yang worked closely together at the CCYL Committee in Anhui Province in the early 1980s, when Wang was Liu's deputy.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Liu possesses broad leadership experience in the central government (the State Council), the central party propaganda organ (the *People's Daily*) and top provincial posts (Sichuan and Guangxi). As the party chief of Sichuan, one of the most important provinces in the country, Liu can concurrently hold a seat in the next Politburo. Liu is a leading candidate for the post of director of the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee. Liu has been known for his emphasis on technology-led enterprise and industrial innovation and development of small cities on the economic front, as well as for his conservative views regarding media control and intellectual freedom.¹⁷

Sun Chunlan 孙春兰

- Born 1950
- Fujian Province party secretary (2009-present)
- Chairwoman of the Fujian People's People's Congress (2010-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2007-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Sun Chunlan was born in 1950 in Raoyang County, Hebei Province. She joined the CCP in 1973. She received an undergraduate education from the Anshan Institute of Iron & Steel Technology¹⁸ in Anshan City, Liaoning Province (1965-69); studied in a correspondence program in Economic Management in the Department of Economics of Liaoning University in Shenyang, Liaoning Province (1989-91); and attended a one-year training program at the Central Party School in Beijing (1992-93). She also completed a master's/MBA degree program (on a part-time basis) in Liaoning University in Shenyang (1992-95). She began her career as a worker in a watch factory in Anshan (1969), worked as a party official in the factory (1971-74), served as the secretary of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) of the Light Industry Bureau of Anshan City (1974-78), and served as a manager and party official of the Anshan Textile Factory (1978-91). She served as head of the Women's Association of Anshan City (1988-91), deputy head of the Workers' Union of Liaoning Province (1991-93), head of the Women's Association of Liaoning (1993-94), head of the Workers' Union of Liaoning (1994-97), and deputy party secretary of Liaoning (1997-2005). She served as party secretary of Dalian, Liaoning (2001-05), and served as first secretary of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) (2005-09). Sun was elected as an alternate member of the 15th Central Committee (1997) and of the 16th Central Committee (2002), and she was made a full member of the 17th in 2007. Sun has served as Fujian party secretary since 2009 and Fujian Provincial People's Congress chairwoman since 2010.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Sun Chunlan comes from a humble family, and her father was a worker. Sun is widely considered a protégé of Hu Jintao, but it is unclear where and when Sun established her client relationship with Hu. Their political connection likely occurred or was consolidated during her study at the Central Party School in the early 1990s, when Hu served as president of the school.¹⁹ According to some Chinese observers, Sun has effectively constrained the influence and power of Bo Xilai in Dalian after she took over the post of party chief in the city from 2001 to 2005.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Sun Chunlan has a number of advantages for further promotion. First, as the only female provincial chief in the country, she is often considered the top choice among woman leaders for the new membership of the post-2012 Politburo. Second, her leadership experiences in running an important province (Fujian) and a major city (Dalian), as well as her tenure as first secretary of All-China Federation of Trade Unions, have prepared her for even more important posts in the national leadership. Third, her low-profile personality and her toughness and political skill in removing Bo Xilai's protégés in Dalian even before Bo's downfall show her leadership capacity and political nerve. She may follow the career path of the current Politburo member Wang Zhaoguo, serving as the first vice chair of the National People's Congress. She could also be transferred to serve as a party chief in another major province or city (such as Tianjin) —a position that is entitled to a Politburo seat. Sun will most likely continue Hu Jintao's socioeconomic policies.

Ma Wen 马馥

- Born 1948
- Deputy secretary of the CCP Central Discipline Inspection Commission (2004-present)
- Minister of Supervision (2007-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2007-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Ma Wen was born in 1948 in Wuqiao County, Hebei Province. Ma joined the CCP in 1972. She started work in 1968 as a “sent-down youth” (working as a manual laborer in the countryside) in the Sudulun Commune, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and later became deputy head of a commune brigade and deputy head of the commune’s revolutionary committee (1972-78). She received an bachelor’s degree in Chinese history from Nankai University in Tianjin (1978-82). Ma served as deputy secretary of the CCP Committee of a branch campus of Nankai University in Tianjin and later as deputy party secretary of the university (1982-89). She became deputy director of the Publicity Department of the National Family Planning Commission (NFPC), and later she served as secretary of the disciplinary inspection committee of departments under the NFPC and a member of the Central State Organs Disciplinary Inspection Work Committee (1989-97). Ma became a Standing Committee member of the CCP Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) (1997-2004) and was concurrently secretary of the Central State Organs Disciplinary Inspection Work Committee (1997-2004). She was promoted to CDIC deputy secretary (2004)—she is one of only three women to hold this position (after Deng Yingchao and Liu Liying). Following the death of former Minister of Supervision Li Zhilun in April 2007, Ma succeeded him and served concurrently as the director of both the newly established National Bureau of Corruption Prevention as well as of the Correcting Industrial Illegitimate Practice Office of the State Council. A full member of the CCP Central Committee since 2007, Ma was re-appointed as minister of supervision at the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC) in March 2008. She has served as deputy secretary of the CDIC since 2004.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Ma Wen first met her husband Yu Zhenqi at the same high school in Tianjin. Both were “sent-down youths” in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and both were enrolled in the Department of History at Nankai University in 1978 (Ma as an undergraduate and Yu as a graduate student). Yu, who received a Ph.D. in international relations at the Foreign Affairs College in Beijing, later served as the PRC ambassador to Belarus (2002-05) and to Bulgaria (2005-07).²⁰ Yu is currently vice chairman and director of the Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Russia Research Center of the China Foundation for International Studies. Their daughter Yu Fan, who graduated from Duke University Law School in 2003, currently works in a law firm in Hong Kong. It has been widely believed that Li Ruihuan, a heavyweight political leader who originated from Tianjin, found Ma Wen and brought her to Beijing in 1989 when Li was appointed a member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Ma later formed a strong

protege relationship with Premier Wen Jiabao when both worked in the Central Government organs.²¹

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Ma Wen's career advancement in the past few years has been closely related to the CCP's new initiatives to restrain rampant official corruption. She has been a member of the core group that has handled the criminal cases of former minister of railway Liu Zhijun, former Chongqing party secretary Bo Xilai, as well as related cases. Ma may be a leading candidate to become a member of the Politburo or the State Council in charge of anti-corruption work if the CCP leadership decides to increase its efforts in this area in order to regain public confidence. Her most important policy agenda is to establish more effective measures to deal with rampant official corruption in legal, institutional, and sociopolitical domains.

Chang Wanquan 常万全

- Born 1949
- Member of the Central Military Commission (2007-date)
- Director of the PLA General Armaments Department (2007-date)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee (2002-date)
- Manned Space Project commander-in-chief (2008-date)

Personal and Professional Background

Chang Wanquan was born in 1949 in Nanyang City, Henan Province. He joined the CCP in 1968 and joined the PLA in the same year. He received an undergraduate education from a correspondence program at the Weinan Teachers School in Weinan City, Shaanxi Province (1985-87). He also attended a program in the Basic Operation Department of the National Defense University in Beijing (1994-95). He began his military career as a soldier and as a squad leader (1968-69). He advanced his career by serving as a staff officer of the Operation Department of the No. 140 Division (1970-74), a staff officer of the Operation Department of the No. 47 Army (1974-78), and as a staff officer of the Second Section of the Operation Department of the Lanzhou Military Region (MR), where he also served as a personal secretary (*mishu*) to General Han Xianchu, who was then commander of the Lanzhou MR (1978-80). Chang served as deputy director (1980-81) and director (1981-83) of the Operation Department of the 47th Group Army. He served as chief-of-staff (1983-85) and deputy commander (1985-90) of the No. 140 Division of the 47th Group Army. He served as director of the Operation Department of the Lanzhou MR (1990-92) and commander of the 61st Division (1992-94), and chief-of-staff of the 47th Group Army (1994-98). He served as director of the Operation Research and Teaching Section of the National University of Defense (1998-2000), commander of the No 47 Group Army (2000-02), chief-of-staff of the Lanzhou MR (2002-03) and of the Beijing MR (2003-04), and commander of the Shenyang MR (2004-07). A full member of the CCP Central Committee since 2002, he has served as director of the PLA General Armaments Department and as a member of the CCP Central Military Commission. Since 2008, he has also served as a member of the PRC Central Military Commission, commander-in-chief of the Manned Space Project, and Shenzhou No. 7 Task Commander-in-Chief. Chang received the rank of major general in 1997 and the rank of lieutenant general in 2003; since 2007 he has served at the rank of general.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Chang was born into a humble family of farmers with five siblings in Maiyadian Village, Shiqiao Town in Wolong District in Henan's Nanyang City. Chang served as a personal secretary (*mishu*) of Han Xianchu, a former PLA General who later became a vice chairman of the NPC. Chang is often regarded as a protégé of CMC Vice Chairman Guo Boxiong, who previously served in the 47th Group Army and the Lanzhou MR, where Chang advanced his military career. According to most Chinese sources, Chang has been very close to Hu Jintao.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Chang has solid and broad leadership experience in the PLA and is a leading candidate to receive both a seat in the Politburo representing the military and a vice chairmanship of the CMC at the 18th Party Congress. Chang is also a top candidate for the post of minister of defense. His humble family background has also made him more competitive at this highest level of military leadership, which is known for its predominance of generals with a princeling background. Partly due to his leadership background in military technology, including the manned space program, Chang has been a strong advocate of rapid modernization in PLA military equipment and of the integration of a combined operations supreme command, with an emphasis on better operational coordination among the army, navy, land forces, and missile forces in warfare.²²

Xu Qiliang 许其亮

- Born 1950
- Member of the Central Military Commission (2007-date)
- Commander of the PLA Air Force (2007-date)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (2002-date)

Personal and Professional Background

Xu Qiliang was born in 1950 in Linqu County, Shandong Province. Xu joined the PLA in 1966 and joined the CCP in 1967. He studied at the PLA Air Force No. 1 Preparatory School in Shenyang City, Liaoning Province (1966-67). He received an undergraduate education in aviation from the PLA Air Force's No. 8 Aviation School in Shenyang, Liaoning (1967-68) and the PLA Air Force's No. 5 Aviation School in Wuwei City, Gansu Province (1968-69). He also attended the Senior Officer Class of the PLA Air Force Academy in Xinyang City, Henan Province (1982). He studied at the Basic Operations Department (1986-88), and he attended the Battle Operations Seminar (1994) and the Full Army Commander-level class (2001) at the National Defense University in Beijing Municipality. He advanced his military career as a pilot, deputy head and head of an aviation brigade, and deputy commander of a division (1969-83). He served as commander of the PLA Air Force Division (1983-84), deputy commander of the PLA Air Force (1984-85), and chief-of-staff of Air Force Command in Shanghai Municipality (1985-88). He served as acting deputy commander of the PLA Air Force (1988-89), chief-of-staff and commander of the PLA Air Force (1989-93), deputy chief-of-staff of the PLA Air Force (1993-94), and chief-of-staff of the PLA Air Force (1994-99). He served concurrently as deputy commander of the Shenyang Military Region (MR) and commander of the PLA Air Force in the Shenyang MR (1999-2004). He was promoted to serve as deputy chief of the PLA General Staff Headquarters (2004-07) during which he also served as commander-in-chief of the Peace Mission of Joint Anti-Terrorism Operation Exercises (2007). Xu was first elected as an alternate member of the 14th Central Committee (1992) and 15th Central Committee (1997) And has been a full member since 2002, Since 2007, Xu has served as commander and deputy party secretary of the PLA Air Force and a member of the CCP Central Military Commission. Since March 2008, he has also served as a member of the PRC Central Military Commission. Xu received the rank of major general in 1991 and the rank of lieutenant general in 1996. Since 2007, he has held the rank of general in the PLA Air Force.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Some overseas Chinese publications have identified Xu as a princeling, but China's official media have corrected this as inaccurate information: Xu was actually born into a humble family of farmers.²³ Xu is considered a protégé of Jiang Zemin. He established his close ties with Jiang in Shanghai in the late 1980s when Jiang served as party secretary of Shanghai and Xu was in charge of the air force division in the region.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Having begun his career as a pilot, Xu has enjoyed a solid step-by-step military career. His experience as a deputy chief of the PLA General Staff Headquarters reflects the growing importance of the Air Force in the Chinese military. Xu has had a long tenure on the CCP Central Committee (as an alternate member since 1992) and this has positioned him well to obtain both a seat in the Politburo and a vice chairmanship in the CMC. His main competitors are those who have joined the CCP Central Committee after 2002 (as in the case of General Chang Wanquan) or even 2007 (such as Admiral Wu Shengli). Xu is also a top candidate for the post of minister of defense. Xu has long advocated for improvement of joint operations capability and digital capacity in PLA war preparation.

Wu Shengli 吴胜利

- Born 1945
- Member of the Central Military Commission (2007-present)
- Commander of the PLA Navy (2006-present)
- Full member of the CCP Central Committee CCP (2007-present)

Personal and Professional Background

Wu Shengli was born in 1945 in Wuqiao City, Hebei Province. Ma joined the PLA in 1964. It is unclear when Wu joined the CCP. He received an undergraduate education in professional ocean surveying and mapping from the Surveying and Mapping College of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province (1964-68). He also attended the Class for Captains at the Dalian Naval Academy in Dalian City, Liaoning Province (1972-74). He served as deputy captain and captain of a PLA Navy frigate and captain of a PLA Navy destroyer (1974-84), branch leader of the Sixth Detachment of destroyers and the deputy chief-of-staff of the Shanghai Base of the East China Sea Fleet (1984-92). He served as chief-of-staff of Fujian Naval Base in Fuzhou City, Fujian (1992-94), commandant of Dalian Naval Academy in Dalian, Liaoning (1994-97), commander of Fujian Naval Base in Fuzhou (1997-99), and deputy commander of the East China Sea Fleet in Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province (1999-2002). He served as deputy commander of the Guangzhou Military Region (MR) and commander of the China South Sea Fleet (2002-2004). He served as deputy chief of the PLA General Staff Headquarters (2004-06). He has served as a full member of the CCP Central Committee since 2007. Since August 2006, Wu has served as commander of the PLA Navy. Since October 2007, he has also served as a member of the CCP Central Military Commission. Wu received the rank of rear admiral in the PLA Navy in 1994 and the rank of vice admiral in 2003. He has held the rank of admiral since 2007.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

A princeling, Wu Shengli is the son of Wu Xian, a former Vice Governor of Zhejiang Province.²⁴ It has been widely reported that Wu formed a client relationship with Jiang Zemin in the late 1980s, when Jiang was party secretary in Shanghai and Wu was the deputy chief-of-staff of the Shanghai Base of the East China Sea Fleet. Some sources also indicate that Wu has been very close to General Xu Caihou, a current vice chairman of the CMC.

Political Prospects and Policy Preferences

Wu Shengli is a candidate for membership in the Politburo, a vice chairmanship in the CMC, and the post of minister of defense. Wu is at a disadvantage, however, in terms of age. He may be eliminated as a candidate for the Politburo and vice chairmanship of the CMC if the leadership decides to make this leadership body younger, consisting primarily of fifth-generation leaders. As one of the highest-ranking admirals in the PLA, Wu's hot-button policy agenda is to promote the development of the blue sea navy.²⁵

Notes:

*The author thanks John Hoffman, John Langdon, Andrew Marble, and Yinsheng Li for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. Chinese leaders' biographical information and career experiences are primarily based on information from the official Chinese news agency Xinhua. <http://www.news.cn/>

¹ For a more detailed discussion of the role of and the selection process for the Politburo, see Cheng Li, "The Battle for China's Top Nine Leadership Posts." *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Winter 2012): 131–145; and Li Cheng, *The Road to Zhongnanhai* (通往中南海之路; New York: Mirror Books, 2012).

² According to another unverified source, however, the name of Zhang's first wife is Yang Genghua.

³ "Anchor Li Xiuping marries Hunan Province Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian" (主播李修平嫁湖南省委书记张春贤). Shandong TV Net, April 10, 2006.

<http://www.sdtv.com.cn/amusement/star/starcn/200604/20060410140455.htm>.

⁴ Nan Lei 南雷, *Jockeying for Power at the 18th Party Congress* (逐鹿十八大; Hong Kong: Art & Culture Press, 2010), pp. 547-553.

⁵ "Zhang Chunxian: All Assets Can Be Open to Public Scrutiny" (张春贤: 可率先公布所有财产). Newsnet, March 9, 2011 http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/2011lianghui/content-0/detail_2011_03/09/5042493_0.shtml.

⁶ For more discussion of Zhang's "flexible iron-fisted rule in Xinjiang" (柔性铁腕治疆), see "Zhang Chunxian: Combining Both Hard and Soft Approaches" (刚柔张春贤), *Caijing Magazine Net*, August 14, 2011,

<http://magazine.caijing.com.cn/2011-08-14/110811421.html>.

⁷ This was the name prior to 1981; it was then renamed the Huainan Institute of Technology in 1997, and since 2002 it has been called the Anhui University of Science and Technology, in Huainan City, Anhui.

⁸ The name prior to 1988; now known as the Beijing University of Aeronautics & Astronautics.

⁹ The name prior to 1993; it is now known as Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

¹⁰ The name prior to 1994; it is now known as the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

¹¹ This discussion is based on Nan Lei 南雷, *Jockeying for Power at the 18th Party Congress* (逐鹿十八大; Hong Kong: Art & Culture Press, 2010), pp. 516-524; and "From a Son of the Coal Mine in Huainan to Party Secretary of Jilin Province" (从淮南煤矿子弟到吉林省委书记), *Huainan Coal Mine Market Net*, August 26, 2009.

<http://www.0554coal.com/DocHtml/2009/7/2/616244281836.html>.

¹² The name prior to 2000; it is now known as the Laiyang campus of the Qingdao Agricultural University.

¹³ Yang Qingxi and Xia Fei, 杨青溪, 夏飞, *Provincial Chiefs' Competition for Promotion to Beijing at the 18th Party Congress* (十八大诸侯进京; New York: Mirror Books, 2010), pp. 338-358.

¹⁴ Ren Huayi 任华一, *The Sixth Generation: The CCP's Last Generation of Successors* (第六代:中共末代接班群; New York: Mirror Books, 2010); pp. 100-140.

¹⁵ Zhou Qiang, 周强 "Leaders should not interfere in legal cases" (领导干部不要干预依法办案, China Newsnet (中国新闻网), August 7, 2012, see <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2012/08-07/4090245.shtml>; and Zhou Qiang, "Adopting an unconventional approach to the promotion of Hunan Province's long-term competitiveness" (打破常规立足提升湖南长远竞争力), *Hunan Daily* (湖南日报), July 16, 2012, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64102/12162395.html>.

¹⁶ Wang Bin 王斌, "Liu Qibao is Appointed Party Secretary of Guangxi" (刘奇葆出任广西壮族自治区党委书记) *First Financial Daily* (第一财经日报), June 30, 2006; also see

<http://news.eastday.com/eastday/node81741/node81762/node144854/userobject1ai2142959.html>.

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- ¹⁷ Yang Qingxi and Xia Fei, *Provincial Chiefs' Competition for Promotion to Beijing at the 18th Party Congress*, pp. 235-256.
- ¹⁸ The name prior to 2002; known since 2006 as Liaoning University of Science and Technology, in Anshan City, Liaoning Province.
- ¹⁹ Hu Min 扈炯, *Hu's Five Golden Flowers* (胡锦涛的五朵金花; Hong Kong: Beiyunhe Press, 2012), pp. 159-163.
- ²⁰ Yu Zhenqi, 于振起 *The Diplomatic Life of a Sent-down Youth Turned Ambassador* (驻外札记, 一个知青大使的外交生活片段 (Tianjin, Nankai University Press, 2009).
- ²¹ Lu Konghai 陆空海, "Ma Wen and her Lawyer Daughter" 马馥和她的律师女儿 *Mirror Monthly* 明镜月刊, No. 20, 2012.
- ²² Chang Wanquan 常万全, "The promotion of high-technology and new military equipment to achieve a frog-leap, self-sufficient, and sustainable development" (推动高新武器装备自主跨越可持续发展). *China News Net*, August 4, 2012, <http://www.chinanews.com/mil/2012/08-04/4082573.shtml>.
- ²³ "Xu Qiliang: Newly Appointed Commander of Air Force" (许其亮: 新任空军司令) *Oriental Outlook Weekly* (瞭望东方周刊), Nos. 41-42, 2007.
- ²⁴ Meng Ping 孟平, *Princelings in the Military* (军中太子党 Hong Kong, Xiafeier International Press House, 2010), pp. 24 - 25.
- ²⁵ "Wu Shengli on five types of force in the navy" (吴胜利谈海军五大兵种). *Global Leaders* (环球人物), September 28, 2012; and also see <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2012-09-28/0951702416.html>.