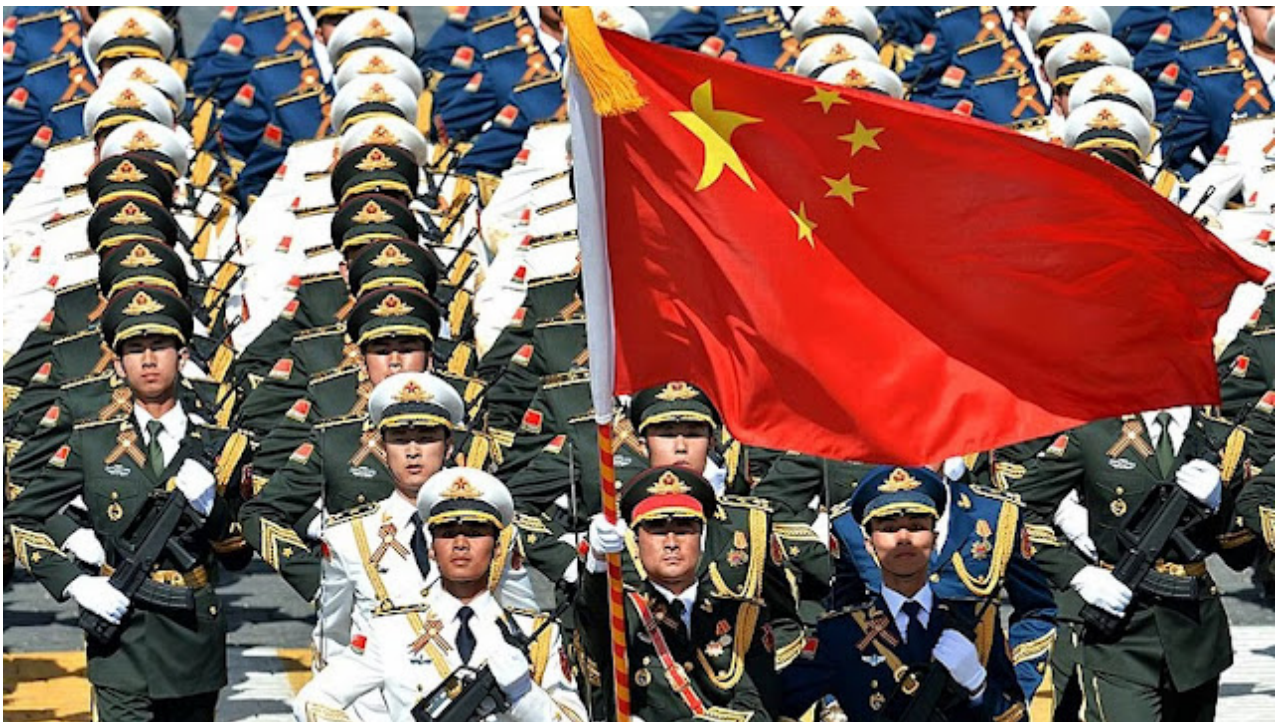


# Decoding the Enigma of China's Vanishing Generals & Politicians

[indrastra.com/2023/09/decoding-enigma-of-chinas-vanishing.html](https://indrastra.com/2023/09/decoding-enigma-of-chinas-vanishing.html)

IndraStra Global Wednesday, September 27, 2023 (2023-09-27T09:55:00-04:00) Edit this post

By IndraStra Global News Team



Over the past two months, several senior Chinese military officials, including the defense minister and key figures in charge of China's intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), have vanished from the public eye. These developments raise questions about Chinese President Xi Jinping's control over the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and reveal the challenges he faces in maintaining discipline and accountability within the military.

President Xi, often seen as a dominant figure in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), has traditionally allowed the PLA significant autonomy in managing its affairs. This autonomy is intended to ensure political compliance with the CCP's directives but also creates an environment where corruption and lack of accountability can thrive. Recent purges within the PLA not only continue but have affected some of its most sensitive branches, exposing Xi's concerns about his senior officers' competence.

The recent wave of disappearances began in August when the PLA Rocket Force's top commanders were replaced by navy and air force individuals, bypassing traditional hierarchies. This unusual move coincided with rumors of corruption and the sale of military secrets within the Rocket Force's senior ranks, although formal charges have yet to be announced. Subsequently, the head of China's military court was removed from office by the National People's Congress, and Defense Minister Li Shangfu missed several scheduled appearances due to ongoing investigations into procurement system graft. These developments have taken observers by surprise, considering Xi's reputation as one of the most influential leaders of the Chinese military since Deng Xiaoping.

The following politicians and generals have disappeared or undergone significant changes in their positions:

- Defense Minister General Li Shangfu / In Office of Minister of National Defense: 12 March 2023 - hasn't made a public appearance in the last three weeks.
- Foreign Minister Qin Gang / In Office of Minister of Foreign Affairs: 30 December 2022 – 25 July 2023
- General Li Yuchao / In Office of Commander of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force: January 2022 – July 2023
- General Liu Guangbin / In Office of Political Commissar of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force: January 2022 – July 2023

Xi's doubts about the competency of senior officers and the management of sensitive military equipment could influence his assessment of the risks associated with initiating a conflict. This mistrust in his own military leadership may serve as a deterrent to military action, as Xi questions the accuracy of information provided by his generals regarding their capabilities.

These recent developments are particularly concerning, given the roles occupied by the officers in question. The Rocket Force oversees China's ICBMs, making it one of the most critical components of the PLA. The military court plays a vital role in maintaining internal discipline, and the defense minister is responsible for managing military diplomacy with foreign powers, including Russia.

The disappearances highlight the unique structure of civil-military relations in China, where the PLA remains largely self-governing. Unlike Western military organizations, no external checks and balances exist, such as congressional oversight or an independent judiciary. Xi's decision not to appoint close aides with long-standing loyalty to him within the military bureaucracy further emphasizes this autonomy.

While Xi has encouraged the PLA to adopt higher standards of professionalism and transparency, he has maintained the fundamental bargain established by Deng Xiaoping, which grants the military considerable autonomy in exchange for political compliance.

This arrangement allowed Xi to implement significant military reforms, including downsizing and modernization, with the support of top brass.

However, the lack of rigorous oversight and substantial increases in military budgets have created opportunities for corruption and mismanagement within the PLA. Recent events suggest that Xi's control over the military may not be as complete as previously thought, potentially affecting his ability to manage the military bureaucracy effectively.

These concerns about the PLA's internal issues could also have implications for the CCP's future considerations regarding the use of force. Xi's awareness of the military's secretive nature and potential mismanagement of critical equipment purchased in recent years could impact military readiness and influence decisions about engaging in conflicts.

As the world watches China's actions on the global stage, Xi's knowledge of the PLA's internal challenges and the extent of its operational proficiency will likely shape his approach to international relations and military strategy. While China's military power continues to grow, the critical constraint on its actions may lie within its own military bureaucracy, raising essential questions for President Xi and the CCP leadership.

*COPYRIGHT: This article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.*

*<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>*

*REPUBLISH: Republish our articles online or in print for free if you follow these guidelines. <https://www.indrastra.com/p/republish-us.html>*