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China's Political System in Charts: A Snapshot Before the 20th Party Congress

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SUMMARY

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China's Political System in Charts: A Snapshot Before the 20th Party Congress

This report provides a visual representation of China's leading political institutions and current leaders in the form of 16 CRS-created organization charts and accompanying explanatory text. The charts present China's political system as it emerged from the Communist Party of China's (CPC's) 19th Congress in October 2017 and the First Session of China's 13th National People's Congress in March 2018. The CPC is scheduled to convene its 20th Congress in the second half of 2022. Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping is widely expected to seek to extend his time in power at that congress, possibly by seeking a third term as general secretary. That would break a norm established by his two predecessors that general secretaries serve two terms and then step down. Xi is also widely believed to be seeking appointment to a third term as state president at the First Session of the 14th National People's Congress in March 2023.

China's polity is a Party-state, featuring interlocking Communist Party and state hierarchies under Xi's increasingly personalized leadership. In addition to serving concurrently as general secretary of the CPC's Central Committee and state president, Xi also serves as chairman of the CPC and State Central Military Commissions and as the "core" of the Central Committee and the Party as a whole. Below him in the Party hierarchy are the Central Committee's elite 7-man Political Bureau (Politburo) Standing Committee, of which Xi is a member, and the Central Committee's broader 25-person Politburo, from which the Standing Committee is drawn.

The Central Committee's 204 voting members elect the General Secretary, Politburo Standing Committee, and Politburo, ratify the Party's choices for members of the CPC's Central Military Commission, and approve the Politburo Standing Committee's nominations for the Party Secretariat. The Secretariat oversees the powerful Central Committee bureaucracy, which keeps a tight grip on portfolios the Party deems critical to its survival. They include the security services, media and culture, and personnel appointments across the political system. The Party's Central Military Commission oversees China's armed forces. The Party tasks its Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the state's National Supervisory Commission, whose operations are fused, with rooting out wrongdoing among public servants and enforcing loyalty to the Party Central Committee and to Xi.

The CPC presents itself as "coordinating the work of all sides," and assuming "the role of leadership core among all other organizations at the corresponding level [of government]." Other hierarchies in China's political system are those headed by China's unicameral legislature, the National People's Congress; an administrative body, the State Council; an adjudicatory body, the Supreme People's Court; a prosecutorial body, the Supreme People's Procuratorate; and what China calls a "political consultation" body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). At every level of government, the heads of those bodies serve concurrently as senior Party officials at the same level. The Secretary of the Party Committee for each level of government is the most senior official at that level. The Party also operates "leading Party members groups" or Party committees within the other institutions, and requires the institutions to report to higher Party bodies.

Since ascending to the top position in Chinese politics in 2012, Xi has worked to bolster both the Party's authority and his own. His 2018 reorganization of the Party and state bureaucracies served to strengthen the Party at the expense of the state. Also in 2018, the Party under Xi ordered the establishment of the National Supervisory Commission, which works jointly with the Party's discipline inspectors to investigate public servants. In 2015, Xi reorganized China's Party military, the People's Liberation Army. The organization charts in this report reflect those changes.

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Introduction

The political system of the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) defies easy categorization. China is both a nation state and a Leninist "Party-state," with the Party being the Communist Party of China (CPC or Party), also known as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The political system operates under two "constitutions," one for the Party, China's dominant political institution, and one for the state.[1] State institutions operate fundamentally differently from their Western counterparts. In the case of China's national parliament, for example, because China eschews separation of powers, a third of the delegates are sitting senior Party and state officials, with China's top leader, CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping, among them.[2] The parliament, like every other political institution in China, both reports to the Party and includes a Party cell within it. Atop the political system is a leader, Xi, who is not subject to direct or competitive indirect election, and who has signaled an intention to remain in power indefinitely.[3]

As strategic competition between the United States and China has grown more acute in recent years, Congress has shown a strong interest in understanding China's political system. In the 116th Congress, Members introduced 99 bills referencing the CPC, six of which were enacted into law.[4] More than 100 such bills are pending in the 117th Congress. This report seeks to provide Congress with a detailed understanding of China's political system ahead of the CPC's 20th National Congress, which is scheduled to convene in the second half of 2022. The report opens with a discussion of how the CPC exercises its self-anointed leadership role in China's Party-state. The report then briefly discusses the ways the CPC has embedded its claim to Taiwan within China's political system. The main part of the report introduces readers to China's major political institutions through 16 organization charts and accompanying explanatory text. All individuals' names are listed in Chinese style, with family names preceding given names. CRS Visual Information Specialist Mari Y. Lee created all the charts in this report.

Note on Sources and Language

Much of the information in this report is drawn from PRC sources, including Chinese-language official websites and Chinese-language reports from China's state-controlled media. Where English translations of these sources are known to exist, CRS has endeavored to identify them in the footnotes. Because of the difficulty of tracing Romanized personal names back to their original Chinese characters, and because the names of Chinese political bodies can often be translated into English in multiple ways, CRS has included Chinese characters in the charts in this report for reference.

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[1] Although in English the Party-state refers to both documents as "constitutions," the Chinese-language terms are different. The Party document is a "*zhangcheng* 章程" The state document is a "*xianfa* 宪法" The Party constitution is also sometimes referred to in English as the Party "charter." "Constitution of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua, October 24, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com//english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf; "Constitution of the People's Republic of China," at http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/constitution2019/constitution.shtml.

[2] "领导干部比例降低! 一图看懂第十三届全国人大代表构成" ("The Proportion of Leadership Cadres Has Fallen! See the Composition of the 13th NPC Delegates in One Chart"), 新京报(*Beijing News*) via Huanqiu, March 4, 2018, at https://lianghui.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnK6PUS.

[3] Chris Buckley and Adam Wu, "Ending Term Limits for China's Xi Is a Big Deal. Here's Why," *New York Times*, March 10, 2018.

[4] The six laws from the 116th Congress referencing the CPC are the Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act (P.L. 116-35), the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2020 (P.L. 116-92), the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-145), the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act (P.L. 116-222), Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260), and the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (P.L. 116-283).

The Mechanics of Communist Party Rule in China

The CPC has led China continuously since Mao Zedong and his colleagues established the PRC on October 1, 1949. In July 2021, in a speech marking the 100th anniversary of the Party's founding in 1921, General Secretary Xi asserted that Communist Party leadership of China is "the foundation and lifeblood of the Party and the country, and the crux upon which the interests and wellbeing of all Chinese people depend."[5]

How the Party exercises its leadership is not straightforward, however. China's Leninist Party-state polity features interlocking Party and state hierarchies that extend from the national level down as far as the village. According to the Party constitution, the Party sees itself "guiding the overall situation," "coordinating the work of all sides," and assuming "the role of leadership core among all other organizations at the corresponding level [of government]."[6]

The Party's top national-level institution is the Central Committee, led by a General Secretary and including an elite 25-person Political Bureau (Politburo) and even more elite 7-person Politburo Standing Committee. Party bodies directly exercise leadership over portfolios the Party deems critical to its survival, including the armed forces (see "The CPC Central Military Commission"), the security services, media and culture, and personnel appointments across the political system (see "The CPC Central Committee Bureaucracy"). The Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission, the latter ostensibly a state body, enforce conformity with Party policies and loyalty to the Party and to Xi.

The state consists of several hierarchies. The national-level institutions in each hierarchy are the National People's Congress, China's unicameral legislature; the State Council, China's government cabinet; the National Supervisory Commission; the Supreme People's Court; the Supreme People's Procuratorate, China's top prosecutor's office; and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a "political consultation" body.

The interlocking nature of the Party's relationship with the state hierarchies manifests itself most prominently in personnel assignments and reporting lines.

- At every level of government, the Party committee is the leading political institution, with its Secretary (also known as the Party Secretary) serving as the most senior official at that level. At the provincial level, the secretary of the provincial Party committee outranks the provincial governor. At the city level, the secretary of the municipal Party committee outranks the mayor.
- The heads of the state institutions at every level of government serve concurrently on the Party committee at same level. CPC General Secretary Xi serves concurrently as state president, for example, while the CPC's number three official, Li Zhanshu, serves concurrently as chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. At the provincial level, the secretary of the Party committee often serves concurrently as chair of the provincial people's congress, while a deputy secretary of the provincial Party committee always serves concurrently as the provincial governor.
- In a wide array of non-Party institutions, the Party establishes "leading Party members groups" (*dang zu*) or Party committees (*dang wei*). According to Article

[5] Xi Jinping, "Speech at a Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the Communist Party of China," July 1, 2021, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2021-07/01/c_1310038244.htm.

[6] "Constitution of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua, October 24, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com//english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf.

48 of the Party constitution, the role of leading Party members groups is to "play the role of the leadership core" within each institution. The Party constitution stipulates that, among other tasks, leading Party members groups ensure implementation of Party policies, "discuss and make decisions on matters of major significance" within the institution, "manage officials to proper effect" (i.e., control personnel matters), and "encourage non-Party officials and the people in fulfilling the tasks entrusted to them by the Party and the state." The head of the leading Party members group serves as the institution's powerful Party secretary. The leading Party members group reports to the Party organization that approves its establishment—the Party committee at the same level of government.[7]

- Article 45 of the Party constitution requires that the Party's discipline inspection commissions—charged with investigating wrongdoing among Party members—"accredit discipline inspection teams to all Party and state organs at the corresponding level." The Party constitution states that the teams "shall attend relevant meetings of the leading Party organizations in the organs." The leading Party members groups are required to support the teams' work.[8]
- State institutions are required to report to Party bodies. The Ministry of Culture, for example, reports to the Party's Publicity Department (also known as the Propaganda Department).[9]

The Party has worked to build a Party presence in every workplace and neighborhood. As of June 2021, the Party boasted 4.86 million "primary-level" Party organizations, including in all neighborhoods.[10]

Moves to Bolster Communist Party Rule

Since coming to power in 2012, General Secretary Xi has worked to strengthen the Party's presence and authority in institutions throughout the Party-state. In a major reorganization in 2018, the Party moved a group of government offices directly into the Party bureaucracy, citing the need to "strengthen the Party's centralized and unified leadership" over "work involving the overall state of the Party and the country" as well as over specific areas of administration.[11] As part of the same restructuring, the Party upgraded four "leading small groups" that had operated

[7] Constitution of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua, October 24, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com//english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf.

[8] Constitution of the Communist Party of China," Xinhua, October 24, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com//english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf.

[9] The Publicity Department's (Propaganda Department's) website is http://www.wenming.cn/. A full list of "Central Publicity and Cultural Institutions" is available at http://www.wenming.cn/syzhq/ljq/zyxcwhdw/.

[10] "China Focus: CPC Membership Exceeds 95 Million as Its Centenary Nears," Xinhua, June 30, 2021, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2021-06/30/c_1310036387.htm.

[11] See CRS In Focus IF10854, *China's Communist Party Absorbs More of the State*, by Susan V. Lawrence. See also "中共中央印发《深化党和国家机构改革方案》" ("CPC Central Committee Releases 'Deepening Party and State Institutional Reform Plan'"), Xinhua, March 21, 2018. Translation by the Center for Security and Emerging Technology available at https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/ccp-central-committee-publishes-plan-for-deepening-the-reform-of-party-and-state-agencies/. See also "《中共中央关于深化党和国家机构改革的决定》和《深化党和国家机构改革方案》诞生记" ("An Account of the Birth of the CPC Central Committee Decision on Deepening Party and State Institutional Reform and the Deepening Party and State Institutional Reform Plan"), Xinhua, March 22, 2018, at http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-03/22/content_5276718.htm.

in the shadows to become high-profile commissions.[12] The CPC also created a new institution—the "supervisory commission"—that works hand-in-hand with the Party's discipline inspection commissions, expanding those subject to investigations to all public servants. Under Xi, leading Party member groups within the major state institutions report annually to the Politburo Standing Committee about their work, underscoring the Party's control of those institutions.[13]

With a 2018 amendment to the state constitution, the Party explicitly sought to strengthen the legal basis for its rule. In a front-page article justifying the amendment, the CPC's paper of record, *People's Daily*, blamed the collapse of the Soviet Union on Soviet leaders' 1990 decision to amend Article 6 of the Soviet constitution to remove the requirement for Communist Party rule. In China, the article's author insisted, "The Party's leadership can only be strengthened; it cannot be weakened."[14]

As Xi has sought to bolster the Party's authority, he has increasingly equated its authority with his own, creating a highly personalized form of governance. In 2016, the Party named Xi the "core" of the leadership. Since 2018, top Party leaders and Xi himself have exhorted Party members first to "uphold General Secretary Xi's position as the core of the Party Central Committee and of the whole Party" and second to "uphold the Party Central Committee's authority and centralized, unified leadership." The formulation is known in China as "the two upholds."[15]

At the 20th Party Congress in the second half of 2022, Xi is widely expected to seek to extend his time in power, possibly by seeking a third five-year term as General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee.[16] Alternatively, some have speculated that he may seek to reinstitute the position of chairman of the Central Committee, which the CPC abolished in 1982.[17] Whether Xi faces resistance to his plans within the Party, and if so, how much, remains unknown.

Taiwan in China's Political System

The Republic of China (ROC), led by the Kuomintang (KMT or Nationalists), assumed control of Taiwan from Japan in 1945, after the end of World War II. The KMT moved the seat of the ROC government to Taiwan in 1949, before the CPC established the PRC on mainland China.[18] The PRC has thus never controlled Taiwan. It has consistently claimed sovereignty over the island, however, and has embedded that claim in China's political system.

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[12] They are the Financial and Economic Affairs Commission, Commission for Foreign Affairs, Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission, and Central Commission for Deepening Overall Reform.

[13] The Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, "Full Text: The CPC: Its Mission and Contributions," Xinhua, August 26, 2021, at http://www.news.cn/english/2021-08/26/c_1310148193.htm.

[14] Zhong Yan, "把'中国共产党领导是中国特色社会主义最本质的特征'载入宪法的理论、实践、制度依据" ("The Theory, Practice, and Institutional Basis for Adding 'The defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the Communist Party of China" to the Constitution," 人民日报(*People's Daily*) via Xinhua, February 28, 2018, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-02/28/c_1122465517.htm.

[15] "坚决维护习近平总书记核心地位维护党中央权威和集中统一领导" ("Resolutely Uphold General Secretary Xi Jinping's Core Position, Uphold the Party Central Committee's Authority and Centralized, Unified Leadership"), Xinhua via *The People's Daily*, p. 1, May 15, 2018; Zhou Hanmin, "坚决做到'两个维护'" ("Resolutely Do the 'Two Upholds'"), 红旗文稿 (Red Flag Manuscripts), QSTheory.com, at http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/hqwg/2021-08/11/c_1127750103.htm.

[16] Jude Blanchette and Richard McGregor, "China's Looming Succession Crisis: What Will Happen When Xi is Gone?" *Foreign Affairs*, July 20, 2021, at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-07-20/chinas-looming-succession-crisis.

[17] Ling Li, "How Xi Jinping Could Rule China for Life," *Washington Post*, November 11, 2021.

[18] "History," Government Portal of the Republic of China (Taiwan), https://www.taiwan.gov.tw/content_3.php.

- The PRC describes itself as having 23 provinces, including Taiwan.
- Since 1975, China's National People's Congress has included a delegation purporting to represent "Taiwan Province."[19]
- The CPC Central Committee's 14 departments include one dedicated to Taiwan affairs, the Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee (also known as the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council). The mission of another Central Committee department, the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, includes promoting unification with Taiwan.
- China's eight officially-sanctioned minor political parties include two ostensibly linked to Taiwan.[20] The chairs of both parties serve as vice chairs of the NPC Standing Committee, and both parties are among those with seats set aside for them in China's political consultation body, the CPPCC.
- The CPPCC also allots seats to a delegation from the All-China Federation of Taiwan Compatriots.
- The CPPCC's 10 special committees include a Committee on Liaison with Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and Overseas Chinese.

China's Leading Political Institutions

The PRC has cycled through four state constitutions in the 72 years since its establishment in October 1949. The NPC adopted the current constitution in 1982 and has since amended it five times, most recently in 2018.[21] Prior to 2018, all references to the Party were confined to the state constitution's preamble. In 2018, the Party directed the legislature to insert a reference to the Party into Article 1 of the state constitution, in an explicitly acknowledged bid to "strengthen the legal authority" for Party rule.[22] After stating that "the socialist system" is the PRC's "fundamental system," Article 1 now states, "Leadership by the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics." The state constitution provides no additional detail about how the Party exercises that leadership.

Chapter III of the state constitution outlines the roles of and relative relationships among state institutions, including "the highest organ of state power" (the National People's Congress), and administrative (State council), supervisory (National Supervisory Commission), adjudicatory

[19] People with family ties to Taiwan served in the NPC prior to 1975, but not as part of a "Taiwan Province" delegation. Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League Central Publicity Department, "全国人大台湾省代表团的由来" ("The Origin of the Taiwan Provincial Delegation in the National People's Congress"), The United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, at http://www.zytzb.gov.cn/tzgs/353594.jhtml.

[20] The two parties are the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, officially described as "composed of Taiwan compatriots residing in the mainland and intellectuals in Taiwan studies," and the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT), which includes members with historical links to the KMT, now Taiwan's leading opposition party, and those with "relationships with Taiwan compatriots." State Council Information Office of the PRC, "Full Text: China's Political Party System: Cooperation and Consultation," June 25, 2021, at http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1707413/1707413.htm.

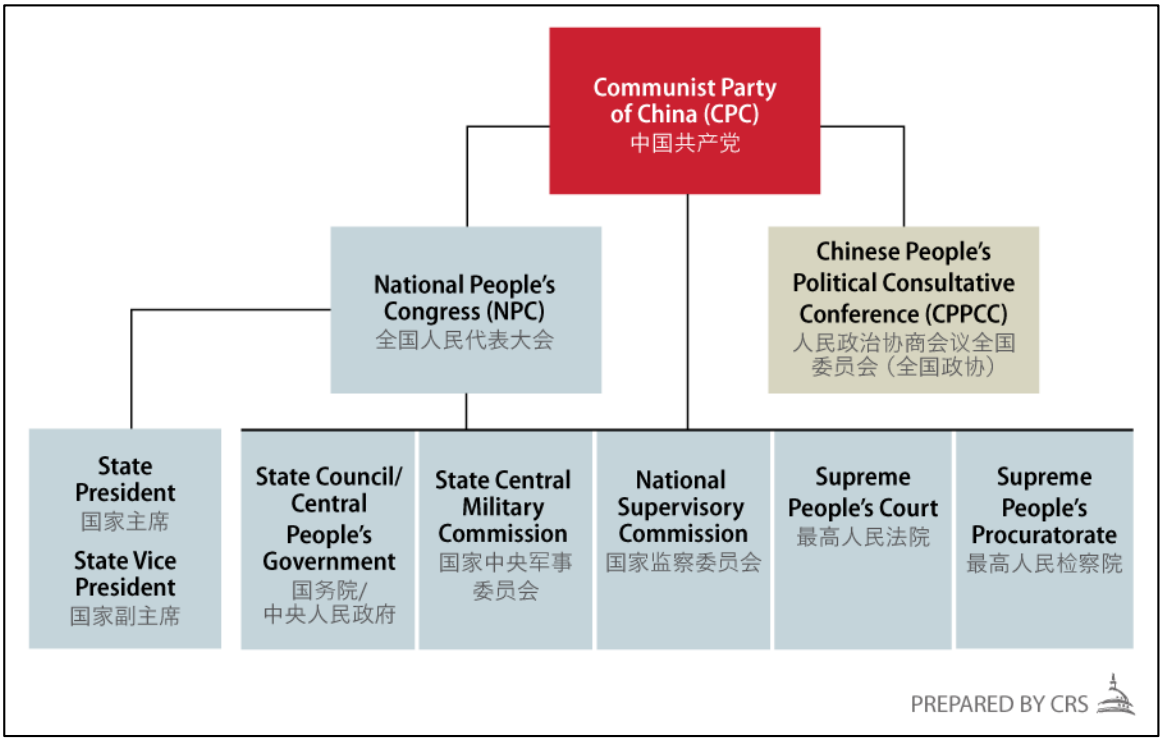
[21] China's legislature amended the 1982 state constitution in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004, and 2018. For an official English translation of the constitution, as amended, see http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/constitution2019/constitution.shtml.

[22] Zhong Yan, "把'中国共产党领导是中国特色社会主义最本质的特征'载入宪法的理论、实践、制度依据" ("The Theory, Practice, and Institutional Basis for Adding 'The defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the Communist Party of China" to the Constitution"), 人民日报 (*People's Daily*) via Xinhua, February 28, 2018, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-02/28/c_1122465517.htm.

(Supreme People's Court), and prosecutorial (Supreme People's Procuratorate) organs. The state Central Military Commission is believed to exist in name only, with the Party Central Military Commission commanding China's armed forces. The preamble to the state constitution mentions one more leading Chinese political institution, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), referring to it as "a broadly based representative organization of the united front." The Party describes its "united front" work as a "means for the Party to unite all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, both at home and abroad" to support the Party's goal of "national rejuvenation."[23] **Figure 1** depicts China's national-level political institutions as described in the state constitution.

Figure 1. China's National-Level Political Structure

According to China's 1982 state constitution as last amended in March 2018



Source: Graphic by CRS, based on the 1982 Constitution of the PRC, as last amended in March 2018.

Notes: (a) CPC Central Committee General Secretary Xi Jinping serves concurrently as state president. The NPC elects the president and vice president, but does not oversee their work.

(b) The State Military Commission is believed to exist in name only; the Party Central Military Commission leads China's armed forces.

(c) The National Supervisory Commission operates jointly with and shares leadership with the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

(d) The state constitution mentions the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in its preamble, but not in Chapter III, which covers state institutions.

[23] "CPC United Front Work Transparent, Open: Official," Xinhua, August 26, 2021, at http://www.news.cn/english/2021-08/26/c_1310150185.htm.

Levels of Administration and Leading Political Institutions

Article 30 of the state constitution outlines three sub-national levels of administration: provinces, counties, and townships. In practice, China's political system includes two additional levels of administration between provinces and counties, namely quasi-provincial and prefectural-level administrative units.[24] China's government does not treat villages as a formal part of the political system. **Figure 2** depicts the leading political institutions at each level of administration. Each level of formal administration is introduced below.

Provincial level: 34 administrative units: 4 municipalities directly under central government jurisdiction (Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, and Tianjin), 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions (Guangxi Zhuang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia Hui, Tibet, and Xinjiang Uyghur), and 2 special autonomous regions (Hong Kong and Macao). Although the PRC has never controlled Taiwan, it counts Taiwan among the PRC's 23 provinces.[25] The Party secretaries of six provincial-level jurisdictions outrank their counterparts because they serve concurrently as members of the Party Politburo. They are the leaders of Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangdong Province, and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Quasi-provincial level: 15 cities, of which 10 are provincial capitals: Changchun, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Harbin, Jinan, Nanjing, Shenyang, Wuhan, and Xi'an. The 5 that are not provincial capitals are Dalian, Ningbo, Qingdao, Shenzhen, and Xiamen.[26]

Prefectural level: 318 administrative units. They comprise 278 prefectural-level cities, 7 prefectures, 30 autonomous prefectures, and 3 "leagues" (in Inner Mongolia).[27]

County level: 2,844 administrative units. They include 973 city districts, 388 county-level cities, 1,312 counties, 117 autonomous counties, and more than 50 "banners" (in Inner Mongolia).

Township level: Nearly 39,000 administrative units. They comprise more than 8,000 neighborhoods, more than 21,000 towns, nearly 8,000 townships, and nearly 1,000 ethnic minority townships.

The leading political institutions at each level of formal administration are known as the "four teams" (*sì tào bānzi*): the Party committee, the People's congress, the people's government, and the CPPCC. At every level, the Party's role is to provide leadership and coordinate the work of the other institutions. The head of the Party committee, known as the Party Secretary, is the most senior official at every level of government.[28]

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[24] Central People's Government of the PRC, "中国的行政区划概述" ("Overview of China's Administrative Divisions"), April 17, 2009, at http://www.gov.cn/test/2009-04/17/content_1288030.htm; "中国行政区划（2020年）" ("China's Administrative Divisions (2020)"), September 15, 2021, at http://www.xzqh.org/html/show/cn/2020.html.

[25] Central People's Government of the PRC, "中国的行政区划——省级行政单位" ("China's Administrative Divisions—Provincial-Level Administrative Units," April 17, 2009, at http://www.gov.cn/test/2009-04/17/content_1288035.htm.

[26] Lin Xiaozhao, "15个副省级城市上半年GDP：深圳总量第一，厦门增速最快" ("First Half GDP for the 15 Quasi-Provincial Cities: Shenzhen Is No. 1 Overall, Xiamen's Growth Is Fastest"), *Yicai*, August 8, 2021, at https://www.yicai.com/news/101134571.html.

[27] Including the quasi-provincial-level cities, the total would be 333 administrative units, including 293 cities.

[28] This is usually the case for provinces, but not for the cities of Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, and Tianjin, or for the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. For current provincial-level leaders, see http://district.ce.cn/zt/rwk/rw/rspd/201302/17/t20130217_766061.shtml.

Figure 2. Leading Political Institutions at Each Level of Administration

The four institutions are known as the "four teams"; the Party provides leadership at every level

Level of Administration	Party	Legislature	Government	Consultative Body
National-level 国家级	CPC Central Committee 中央委员会	National People's Congress 全国人民代表大会	State Council 国务院/ Central People's Government 中央人民政府	National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) 中国人民政治协商会议全国委员会
Provincial-level 省级	Party Committee 党委	People's Congress 人大	People's Government 人民政府	CPPCC 政协
Quasi-provincial -level 副省级	Party Committee 党委	People's Congress 人大	People's Government 人民政府	CPPCC 政协
Prefectural-level 地级	Party Committee 党委	People's Congress 人大	People's Government 人民政府	CPPCC 政协
County-level 县级	Party Committee 党委	People's Congress 人大	People's Government 人民政府	CPPCC 政协
Township-level 乡级	Party Committee 党委	People's Congress 人大	People's Government 人民政府	None 无
Village-level 村级	Party Branch 党支部	None 无	Village Committee 村委会	None 无

PREPARED BY CRS

Source: Graphic by CRS. Central People's Government of the PRC, "地方各级人民代表大会和地方各级人民政府" ("Each Local Level of People's Congress and People's Government"), March 23, 2018, http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/23/content_5274724.htm.

Notes: China does not consider villages and urban neighborhoods to be part of the formal administrative hierarchy. The people's congress hierarchy extends down to the township level. The CPPCC hierarchy extends down to the county level.

The Communist Party of China (CPC)

Figure 3 depicts the senior CPC hierarchy, showing both the power relationship between institutions (solid arrows) and the formal selection process for those institutions (dotted arrows). At the top of the hierarchy is Xi Jinping, who first assumed the position of General Secretary of the Central Committee at the 18th Party Congress in 2012. The Central Committee reelected him to a second five-year term in 2017. In 2016, to boost Xi's authority further, the Party named Xi the "core" of the Party leadership, a designation previously granted to three leaders: Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin.[29] In addition to his General Secretary post, Xi serves as chairman of the Party Central Military Commission, overseeing China's armed forces. (He is also chairman of the State Central Military Commission, which exists in name only.) Rounding out his troika of top positions, Xi serves as State President.

The General Secretary is required to be drawn from among the members of the Political Bureau (Politburo) Standing Committee, the Party's most senior decisionmaking body. The Standing Committee currently has seven members. It is an elite body of the full 25-person Political Bureau (Politburo). The Secretariat serves as the "working body" of the Politburo and its Standing Committee, charged with drafting the directives to implement their decisions and overseeing the Central Committee bureaucracy. The Politburo Standing Committee nominates its members and the Central Committee formally approves them.

Per the CPC Constitution, the Party's Central Committee formally elects the members of the Politburo and its Standing Committee, as well as the General Secretary. The Central Committee also "decides" (appoints) the members of the Party Central Military Commission.[30] Sitting and retired top leaders draw up the candidate lists, however. The Politburo and Politburo Standing Committee elections are non-competitive, with the top leadership offering Central Committee members offered as many candidates as available positions.

The Party holds a national congress every five years. Delegates to the congress elect the Central Committee and Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). This process is modestly competitive. At 19th Party Congress in 2017, delegates could choose 204 candidates for full Central Committee membership from a list of 222, for example, allowing them to reject 18 candidates, or 8.8% of the candidate pool. At that congress, almost a quarter of the nearly 2,300 delegates were themselves Party leadership-proposed candidates for the new Central Committee and CCDI, who were able to vote for themselves.[31] Delegates to each national congress ostensibly represent the Party's more than 95 million dues-paying members, the equivalent of 6.7% of China's population of 1.41 billion.[32] Article 22 of the CPC Constitution requires the Politburo to convene meetings of the Central Committee at least annually. Each such meeting is known as a plenary session, or plenum. The 18th Congress held seven plenums.

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[29] "CPC Central Committee with President Xi as 'Core' Leads China to Centenary Goals," Xinhua, October 28, 2016, at http://www.scio.gov.cn/m/32618/Document/1495816/1495816.htm. Since 1982, three General Secretaries have not served as the leadership "core": Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, and Hu Jintao.

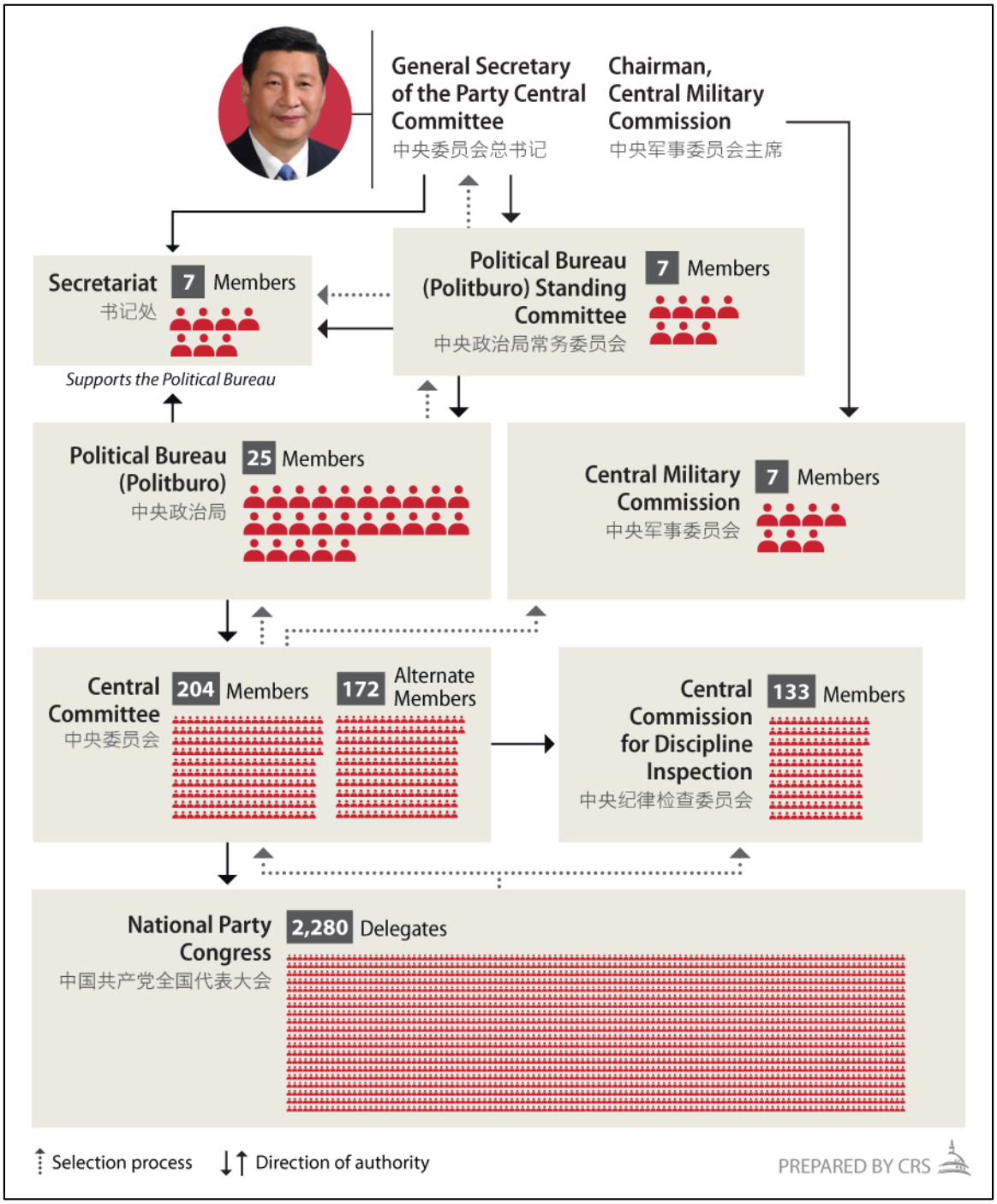
[30] "Full Text of Constitution of Communist Party of China," Xinhua News Agency, November 3, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725945.htm.

[31] Zhao Cheng, Huo Xiaoguang, Zhang Xiaosong, and Luo Zhengguang, "肩负历史重任开创复兴伟业——新一届中共中央委员会和中共中央纪律检查委员会诞生记" ("Shouldering Historical Duty, Creating the Great Mission of Revival: The Birth of the New Central Committee and the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection"), *Xinhua News Agency*, October 24, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/19cpcnc/2017-10/24/c_1121850995.htm.

[32] "China Focus: CPC Membership Exceeds 95 Million as its Centenary Nears," Xinhua, June 30, 2021, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2021-06/30/c_1310036387.htm. The membership total is as of June 5, 2021.

Figure 3. Communist Party of China (CPC) Hierarchy

Numbers are for the 19th Central Committee, elected for a five-year term in October 2017; solid black arrows reflect the direction of authority; dotted gray arrows reflect the formal selection process



Source: Graphic by CRS, based on "第十九届中共中央组织结构图" ("19th CPC Central Committee Organizational Structure Chart"), CPC News Portal, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/414940/index.html and "中国政要" ("China's Important Political Figures"), http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/394696/index.html.

Note: The CPC Constitution does not require the CPC General Secretary to serve concurrently as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, but Xi Jinping holds both positions, as well as that of State President.

The CPC Political Bureau (Politburo) Standing Committee

The CPC Political Bureau (Politburo) Standing Committee (PBSC) is China's most senior decisionmaking body, exercising the functions and powers of the Central Committee when the latter body is not in session. According to a public Party database of PBSC meetings, which may not be complete, in 2020, the PBSC met 14 times, or an average of just over once a month.[33] Article 23 of the CPC constitution requires the General Secretary to be drawn from the PBSC's members. It also requires all Party committees to operate according to "the principle of combining collective leadership with individual responsibility based on the division of work."[34] On the current PBSC, Xi Jinping's dominant role challenges that collective leadership principle, but members continue to divide responsibility for specific portfolios, as shown in **Figure 4**.

The CPC's process for choosing its top leaders is opaque. One U.S. scholar suggests that "incumbent and retired leaders (essentially current and past members of the Politburo) negotiate over who will be appointed and to what positions in order to maintain a balance of power among key leaders and their factions."[35] In recent decades, the process has been guided by certain norms. The first is that a general secretary serves two five-year terms and then steps down. Although the CPC constitution does not include term limits for the general secretary, Xi's immediate predecessors in the post, Jiang Zemin (in office 1989-2002) and Hu Jintao (in office 2002-2012), each ceded the post to his successor after serving two full five-year terms.

A second norm relates to age. Ahead of the 15th Party Congress in 1997, Jiang decreed that Politburo members aged 70 or over at the end of their five-year terms should retire. (Jiang, aged 71 at the time, exempted himself.) Ahead of the 16th Party Congress in 2002, Jiang tightened the mandate to require those aged 68 or above at the end of their terms to step down.[36] (Jiang retired as general secretary at that congress, but stayed on as Party Central Military Commission chairman for another two years, implicitly exempting the CMC chairman position from the retirement age.) At the 17th (2007), 18th (2012), and 19th (2017) Party Congresses, the Party appointed no one aged 68 or older to a new term on the Politburo. A final, nascent norm related to the General Secretary appointing a successor to the PBSC at the start of his second term. Hu and Xi both served a term on the PBSC, handling Party affairs, before taking on the top job.

Term limits and retirement ages helped to move older leaders out of top jobs every five or ten years and to give ambitious younger officials a path to higher office. Having an anointed successor serve on the top decisionmaking body for a term helped take some of the drama out of leadership transitions. Xi's apparent desire to remain in power after the conclusion of his second term as general secretary has cast the future of those norms into question, however. He has already ended one norm: entering his second term, in 2017, Xi declined to appoint anyone to the PBSC who was young enough to serve two terms as his successor. If he serves a third term as general secretary, he will have cast aside the other two norms.

[33] "中共中央政治局常务委员会会议" ("CCP Central Committee Politburo Standing Committee Meetings"), website of the CPC Central Organization Department, at http://www.12371.cn/special/zzjcwwyhhy/index.shtml.

[34] "Full Text of Constitution of Communist Party of China," Xinhua News Agency, November 3, 2017, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725945.htm. The principle of collective leadership is presented in Chapter 2, Article 10 (5).

[35] Bruce J. Dickson, *The Party and the People: Chinese Politics in the 21st Century*, Princeton University Press, 2021, p. 48.

[36] Dickson, pp. 48-53. Joseph Fewsmith, *Rethinking Chinese Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 80, 86.

Figure 4. The 19th CPC Political Bureau (Politburo) Standing Committee

The Politburo Standing Committee is China's most senior decisionmaking body. Numbers indicate rank in the Party hierarchy; all members were elected in 2017 for five-year terms ending in 2022.

Source: Graphic by CRS. Name list from "第十九届中共中央组织结构图" ("19th CPC Central Committee Organizational Structure Chart"), Communist Party of China (CPC) News Portal, at http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/414940/index.html, accessed November 1, 2021. Titles from "中国政要" ("China's Important Political Figures"), http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/394696/index.html.

The CPC Political Bureau (Politburo)

The full CPC Politburo is China's second-most-senior decisionmaking body. Its 25 members include the 7 members of the Politburo Standing Committee plus 18 regular members. **Figure 5** and **Figure 6** show the current 19th Central Committee Politburo members, arranged according to their primary areas of responsibility, as determined by CRS. The current 19th Politburo includes:

- The only Politburo member ever to be subject to U.S. sanctions, Chen Quanguo. The U.S. government designated Chen in 2020 for "serious rights abuses against ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," where he serves concurrently as Party Secretary.[37] The sanctions remain in effect.
- A single woman, Vice Premier Sun Chunlan. She is the sixth woman ever to have served as a member of a CPC Politburo. No woman has ever served on a Politburo Standing Committee.[38]
- The two vice chairmen of the Party's Central Military Commission. The last military officer to serve on the elite Politburo Standing Committee was Admiral Liu Huaqing, who served on the 16th PBSC, from 1992 to 1997.
- Six of the seven members of the Party Secretariat, one of whom is a PBSC member. The only Secretariat member who is not a Politburo member is You Quan, head of the CPC Central Committee's United Front Work Department.
- Two current regular Politburo members, Cai Qi and Yang Xiaodu, who joined the Politburo without having first served on the Central Committee. In a political system in which officials almost always work their way up rung by rung, both effectively skipped two rungs. (The last senior official to make a leap of such proportions was Premier Zhu Rongji in 1998.) Four more regular members of the current Politburo—Ding Xuexiang, Huang Kunming, Li Qiang, and Li Xi—skipped one rung when they joined in 2017. They were promoted from the ranks of alternate members of the Central Committee directly into the Politburo.[39]
- Nine regular members born after 1954. If the Party retains its norm of treating those age 67 or below as eligible for appointment to a new term, all would be eligible for reappointment and possible promotion to the PBSC in 2022.

The 19th Politburo meets approximately once a month. The Politburo often schedules group study sessions on the days it meets. Recent topics include rural policy and artificial intelligence.[40] Xi requires that each Politburo member submit an annual written report on his or her work to him and the CPC Central Committee. The Party portrays this as one of several "institutional arrangements for strengthening and upholding the Central Committee's centralized leadership."[41]

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[37] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Chinese Entity and Officials Pursuant to Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act," July 9, 2020, at https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1055; U.S. Department of State, "The United States Imposes Sanctions and Visa Restrictions in Response to the Ongoing Human Rights Violations and Abuses in Xinjiang," July 9, 2020.

[38] The others are Liu Yandong (17th, 18th Politburos, 2007-2017), Wu Yi (16th Politburo, 2002-2007), Deng Yingchao (11th, 12th Politburos, 1978-1987), Jiang Qing (9th, 10th Politburos, 1969-1974), and Ye Qun (9th Politburo, 1969-1971).

[39] Joseph Fewsmith, *Rethinking Chinese Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 165.

[40] "中央政治局集体学习（十九届）" ("Central Committee Political Bureau Group Study (19th)"), web portal of the CPC, at http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1025/c414940-29608670.html.

[41] The Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, "Full Text: The CPC: Its Mission and Contributions," Xinhua, August 26, 2021, at http://www.news.cn/english/2021-08/26/c_1310148193.htm.

Figure 5. The 19th CPC Political Bureau (Politburo) (Part 1)

The Politburo has 25 Members; 16 are listed here and 9 are listed in **Figure 6**, all according to their primary areas of responsibility as determined by CRS. All were appointed for five-year terms in 2017.

Primarily Responsible for Party Affairs		
★	Xi Jinping 习近平 *(b. 1953)*	General Secretary, CPC Central Committee; Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Chairman, Party Central Military Commission; State President; Chairman, State Central Military Commission
★	Wang Huning 王沪宁 *(b. 1955)*	Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Secretary, CPC Central Committee Secretariat
★	Zhao Leji 赵乐际 *(b. 1957)*	Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Secretary, Party Central Commission for Discipline Inspection
	Ding Xuexiang 丁薛祥 *(b. 1962)*	Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat; Director, General Office of 19th CPC Central Committee; Director, Office of the State President; Secretary, Work Committee for Organs Directly Under the CPC Central Committee
	Yang Xiaodu 杨晓渡 *(b. 1953)*	Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat; Deputy Secretary, 19th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection; Director, National Supervisory Commission
	Chen Xi 陈希 *(b. 1953)*	Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat; Director, Organization Committee of the CPC Central Committee; President, Party School of the Party Central Committee *(also known as the China National Academy of Governance)*
	Guo Shengkun 郭声琨 *(b. 1954)*	Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat; State Councilor; Member, State Council Party Group; Secretary, Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Central Committee
	Huang Kunming 黄坤明 *(b. 1956)*	Member, CPC Central Committee Secretariat; Head, CPC Central Committee Publicity Department *(also known as Propaganda Department)*
	Yang Jiechi 杨洁篪 *(b. 1950)*	Secretary General and Office Director, Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee
Primarily Responsible for Military Affairs		
	Xu Qiliang 许其亮 *(b. 1950)*	Vice Chairman, Party and State Central Military Commissions
	Zhang Youxia 张又侠 *(b. 1950)*	Vice Chairman, Party and State Central Military Commissions
Primarily Responsible for State Council Affairs		
★	Li Keqiang 李克强 *(b. 1955)*	Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Premier, State Council; Secretary, State Council Leading Party Members Group
★	Han Zheng 韩正 *(b. 1954)*	Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Executive Vice Premier; Deputy Secretary, State Council Leading Party Members Group
	Sun Chunlan 孙春兰 *(b. 1950)*	Vice Premier; Member, State Council Leading Party Members Group
	Hu Chunhua 胡春华 *(b. 1963)*	Vice Premier; Member, State Council Leading Party Members Group
	Liu He 刘鹤 *(b. 1952)*	Vice Premier; Member, State Council Leading Party Members Group; Director, General Office, Central Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs

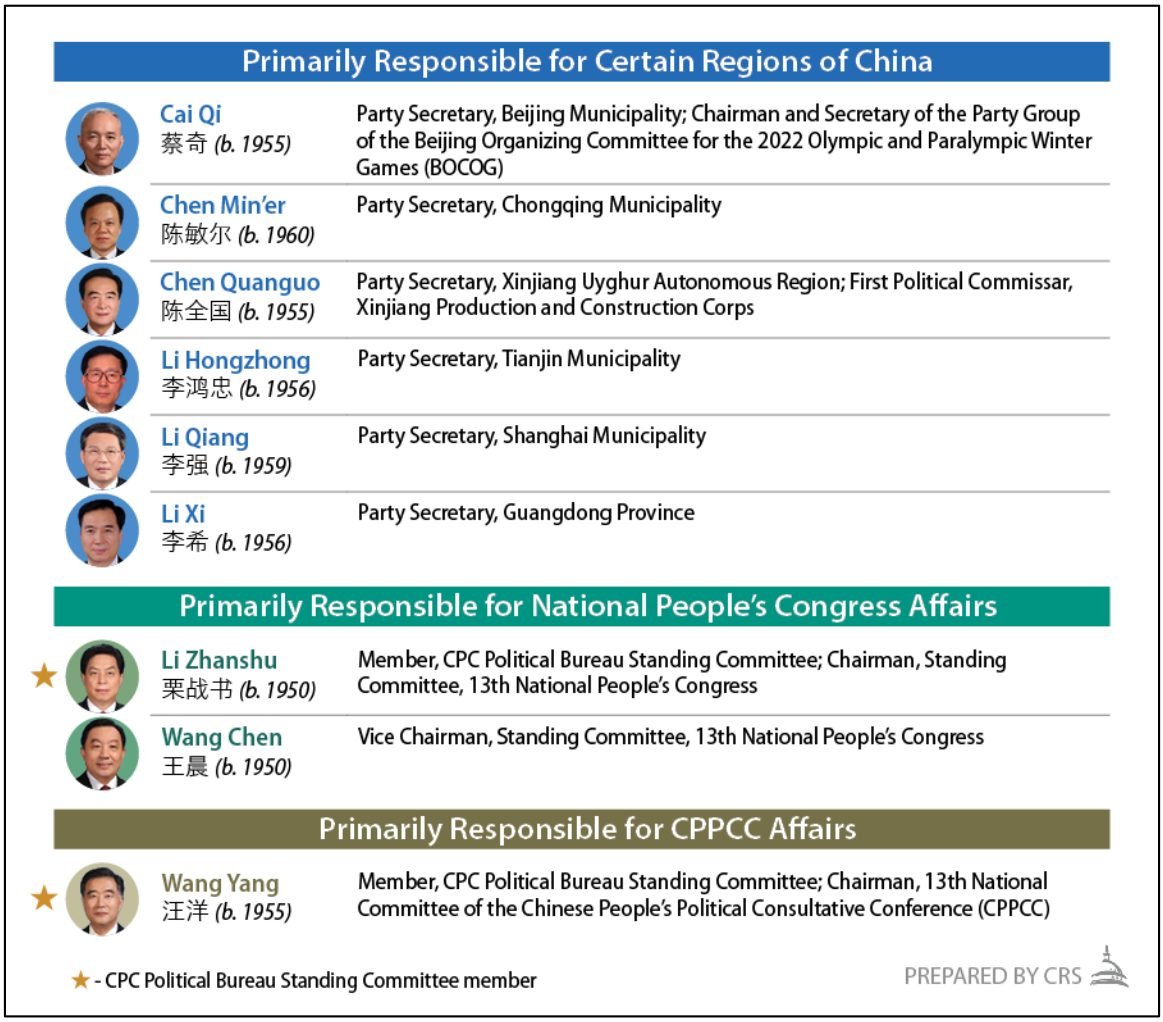
★ - CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee member

PREPARED BY CRS

Source: Graphic by CRS. Name list from "第十九届中共中央组织结构图" ("19th CPC Central Committee Organizational Structure Chart"), Communist Party of China (CPC) News Portal, accessed November 1, 2021.

Figure 6. The 19th CPC Political Bureau (Politburo) (Part 2)

The Politburo has 25 Members; 9 are listed here and 16 are listed in **Figure 5**, all according to their primary areas of responsibility as determined by CRS. All were appointed for five-year terms in 2017.



Primarily Responsible for Certain Regions of China	
Cai Qi 蔡奇 *(b. 1955)*	Party Secretary, Beijing Municipality; Chairman and Secretary of the Party Group of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (BOCOG)
Chen Min'er 陈敏尔 *(b. 1960)*	Party Secretary, Chongqing Municipality
Chen Quanguo 陈全国 *(b. 1955)*	Party Secretary, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region; First Political Commissar, Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps
Li Hongzhong 李鸿忠 *(b. 1956)*	Party Secretary, Tianjin Municipality
Li Qiang 李强 *(b. 1959)*	Party Secretary, Shanghai Municipality
Li Xi 李希 *(b. 1956)*	Party Secretary, Guangdong Province
Primarily Responsible for National People's Congress Affairs	
★ Li Zhanshu 栗战书 *(b. 1950)*	Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Chairman, Standing Committee, 13th National People's Congress
Wang Chen 王晨 *(b. 1950)*	Vice Chairman, Standing Committee, 13th National People's Congress
Primarily Responsible for CPPCC Affairs	
★ Wang Yang 汪洋 *(b. 1955)*	Member, CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee; Chairman, 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

★ - CPC Political Bureau Standing Committee member

PREPARED BY CRS

Source: Graphic by CRS. Name list from "第十九届中共中央组织结构图" ("19th CPC Central Committee Organizational Structure Chart"), Communist Party of China (CPC) News Portal, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/414940/index.html, accessed November 1, 2021.

The CPC Central Military Commission

The Party's armed forces consist of the active and reserve forces of China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA); a paramilitary force, the People's Armed Police Force (PAP), which includes the China Coast Guard; and a militia. The PLA, with approximately two million active personnel, is not a national army, sworn first to protecting the nation.[42] Rather, it is a Party army, loyal first to the Party. The Party constitution states that the CPC "shall uphold its absolute

[42] "Full Text: China's National Defense in the New Era," Xinhua, July 24, 2019, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/24/c_138253389.htm. For more information, see CRS Report R46808, *China's Military: The People's Liberation Army (PLA)*, by Caitlin Campbell.

leadership over the People's Liberation Army and other people's armed forces" and "build people's forces that obey the Party's command, can fight and win."

The Party's **Central Military Commission** (CMC) (**Figure 7**) exercises unified command over the armed forces. Unlike Party committees, which notionally operate according to the principle of collective leadership, the CMC operates according to a "chairman responsibility system," with Xi firmly in charge.[43] Other than Xi, the members of the CMC are all serving military officers. The two vice chairmen, Xu Qiliang and Zhang Youxia, serve concurrently as CPC Politburo members. Regular CMC members include Wei Fenghe, who serves concurrently as a state councilor for military affairs (see **Figure 12**) and as Minister of Defense, and who is responsible for managing the military diplomacy. China has presented Wei as the appropriate counterpart to the U.S. Defense Secretary. Because Wei is outranked on the CMC by two vice chairmen and by Xi, however, the Biden Administration has sought to establish Vice Chairman Xu as Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III's counterpart instead. China has reportedly rebuffed the effort.[44]

Following a far-reaching reorganization of the PLA's structure that Xi launched in 2015, CMC members also include the chiefs of two PLA departments, the Joint Staff Department and the Political Work Department. The Joint Staff Department is responsible for combat planning, military strategy, capability assessments, joint training, combat readiness, and "routine war preparedness work."[45] The Political Work Department is responsible for managing the Party's presence throughout the military. That presence includes Party committees, which are the decision-making body in each PLA unit, and political commissars, also known as political officers, who serve as the co-equals of commanders in every unit. The political commissar usually serves as the secretary of the unit's Party committee and the commander as the deputy secretary.[46] The Political Work Department is also responsible for personnel matters.

The seventh CMC member is the chief of the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission (DIC), a position elevated to the CMC in 2017. The DIC is responsible for investigating violations of discipline, including corruption, in the military. Corruption has plagued the PLA, with the buying and selling of promotions a particular problem. Then-recently-retired CMC vice chairmen, Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong fell to anti-corruption investigations in 2014, soon after Xi came to power. CMC members Fang Fenghui and Zhang Yang fell to anti-corruption investigations in 2017. All were found to have offered and accepted bribes.[47]

Since 1989, CPC Central Committee general secretaries have all served concurrently as CMC Chairmen, but not always at the start of their tenure as general secretary. Jiang Zemin, who was drafted to become general secretary in June 1989, in the wake of the Tiananmen massacre, added the CMC chairmanship after five months, in November 1989. Hu Jintao, who was elected general secretary in November 2002, waited nearly two years, until September 2004, for Jiang to hand off the CMC chairmanship to him. Both Jiang and his predecessor as CMC chairman, Deng Xiaoping, held no other Party posts in the last years of their tenures as CMC chairmen, creating a

[43] James Mulvenon, "The Yuan Stops Here: Xi Jinping and the 'CMC Chairman Responsibility System,'" China Leadership Monitor, Hoover Institution, Issue 47, July 14, 2015, at https://www.hoover.org/research/yuan-stops-here-xi-jinping-and-cmc-chairman-responsibility-system.

[44] Minnie Chan, "China Rejected Lloyd Austin's Phone Calls 'After U.S. Defence Secretary Requested Wrong Person,'" *South China Morning Post*, May 25, 2021, at https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3134781/china-rejected-lloyd-austins-phone-calls-after-us-defence.

[45] Ministry of National Defense of the PRC, "CMC," at http://eng.mod.gov.cn/cmc/index.htm.

[46] Roderick Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, Fall 2020, p. 136, at https://media.defense.gov/2020/Aug/31/2002488091/-1/-1/1/LEE.PDF.

[47] "PLA Backs Investigation of Senior Military Official," Xinhua, January 10, 2018, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/10/c_136885601.htm.

situation in which they commanded the Party's armed wing, but had no formal institutional ties to other Party bodies.

Figure 7. The 19th CPC Central Military Commission

All took office in October 2017 for five-year terms ending in 2022

Source: Graphic by CRS. Name list from "第十九届中共中央组织结构图" ("19th CPC Central Committee Organization Chart"), CPC news portal, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/414940/index.html, accessed November 1, 2021.

The CPC Central Committee Bureaucracy

Figure 8 depicts the Communist Party Central Committee's powerful bureaucracy, which has expanded and come out of the shadows under General Secretary Xi.[48] It includes functional departments, offices, and a work commission. Under the Central Committee are training academies, an institute, and publications. The five functional departments are discussed below.

- **The Organization Department** is responsible for recruiting and training Party, civil service, and other personnel, assigning them to positions across the Party-state, including state-owned corporations and such public institutions as universities and hospitals, and evaluating their performance. The department's current head, Chen Xi, is a member of the CPC Central Committee's Politburo and its Secretariat. He serves concurrently as president of the Party's elite training academy for Party and state officials, the Party School of the CPC Central Committee.[49]
- **The Publicity Department** (also referred to in Western scholarship as the **Propaganda Department**) is responsible for the Party's messaging and for control of the media, cultural institutions, and ideology. Several ostensibly state agencies are Publicity Department units, including the State Council Information Office.[50] Publicity Department head Huang Kunming serves concurrently as a member of the CPC Central Committee's Politburo and its Secretariat.[51]
- **The Commission for Political and Legal Affairs** is responsible for managing public security and safeguarding social stability. It oversees the work of the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and the Ministries of Public Security, State Security, and Justice, with the heads of all of those institutions serving as commission members. The commission's current leader, Guo Shengkun, serves concurrently as a member of the CPC Central Committee's Politburo and its Secretariat.[52]
- **The United Front Work Department (UFWD).** The UFWD works to coopt China's satellite political parties, ethnic minorities, religious groups, private business, ethnic Chinese living overseas, people from "new social classes"—personnel in foreign enterprises, for example—and intellectuals who are not Party members. It also has responsibility for work related to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan; Tibet; and Xinjiang. UFWD's leader You Quan is a member of the CPC Central Committee's Secretariat, but not the Politburo.[53]

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[48] A list of core Central Committee departments and entities under the Central Committee, with links to each, is available on the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee's website, at http://news.12371.cn/dzybmbdj/ and on the homepage of the Central Commission of Politics and Law, at http://www.chinapeace.gov.cn/.

[49] The Organization Department's website is https:/www.12371.cn.

[50] 中华人民共和国中央人民政府(Central People's Government of the PRC), "国务院组织机构" ("State Council Organizations and Organs"), at http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/zuzhi.htm. The State Council website identifies the State Council Information Office as being appended to (加挂牌子) the Publicity Department, meaning that its functions are performed by the Publicity Department.

[51] The Publicity Department's (Propaganda Department's) website is http://www.wenming.cn/. A full list of "Central Publicity and Cultural Institutions" is available at http://www.wenming.cn/syzhq/ljq/zyxcwhdw/.

[52] The Central Commission for Political and Legal Affairs's website is http://www.chinapeace.gov.cn/.

[53] The United Front Work Department's website is http://www.zytzb.gov.cn.

Figure 8. The CPC Central Committee Bureaucracy

Reflecting a 2018 Party re-organization of the Party and state bureaucracies

CPC Central Committee Departments (党中央部门)

General Office of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央办公厅)

Functional Departments (职能部门)

- Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央组织部)
  Includes National Civil Service Administration
- Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央宣传部)
  Includes State Council Information Office, National Press and Publication Administration, National Copyright Administration, and China Film Administration
- United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央统一战线工作部)
  Includes State Administration for Religious Affairs and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council
- International Department of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央对外联络部)
- Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央政法委员会)

Offices

- Policy Research Office of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央政策研究室)/Office of the Central Committee for Deepening Overall Reform (中共中央全面深化改革委员会办公室)
- Office of the National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央国家安全委员会办公室)
- Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission (中共中央网络安全和信息化委员会办公室)/Cyberspace Administration of China (国家互联网信息办公室)
- Office of the Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央军民融合发展委员会办公室)
- Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央台湾工作办公室)/Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council (国务院台湾事务办公室)
- Office of the Financial and Economic Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央财经委员会办公室)
- Office of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央外事工作委员会办公室)
- Office of the Institutional Organization Commission of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央机构编制委员会办公室)

Work Commission

- Central and State Organs Work Commission (中央和国家机关工作委员会)

Public Institutions Under the Central Committee (党中央直属事业单位)

Training Academies

- Party School of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央党校)/Chinese Academy of Governance (国家行政学院)
- China Executive Leadership Academy, Pudong (中国浦东干部学院)
- China Executive Leadership Academy, Jinggangshan (中国井冈山干部学院)
- China Executive Leadership Academy, Yan'an (中国延安干部学院)
- Central Institute of Socialism (中央社会主义学院)

Institute

- Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央党史和文献研究院)
  Includes Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (中共中央编译局)

Publications

- People's Daily (人民日报社)
- Qiushi ("Seeking Truth") Journal (求是杂志社)
- Guangming Daily (光明日报社)

PREPARED BY CRS

Source: Graphic by CRS. Agency list from Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee. "党中央机构" "(Party Central Committee Agencies"), https://www.12371.cn/2021/06/17/ARTI1623919675902188.shtml.

- **The International Department** pursues party-to-party exchanges and offers foreign policy advice to the Central Committee.[54] Reflecting the International Department's lower relative status compared to other CPC functional departments, its current leader, Song Tao, is a full member of the CPC's Central Committee, but does not serve on either its Politburo or its Secretariat.

The Central Committee bureaucracy also includes the offices for seven high-level commissions, all but one of which General Secretary Xi chairs. The Party elevated four of the commissions (noted below with asterisks) from the lower-profile status of leading small groups in 2018.[55] Office directors manage the commissions' everyday work. The CPC commission offices are:

- **Office of the Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development** (also known as "military-civil fusion"). Office Director Han Zheng is a member of the seven-person Politburo Standing Committee and a State Council vice premier.
- **Office of the National Security Commission.** Office Director Ding Xuexiang is a Politburo member who also serves on the Central Committee Secretariat and as head of the Central Committee's General Office. Among the commission's missions is reportedly to "improve information-sharing and coordination between the PLA and civilian agencies."[56]
- **Office of the Financial and Economic Affairs Commission.*** Office Director Liu He is a Politburo member and State Council vice premier.
- **Office of the Commission for Foreign Affairs.*** Office Director Yang Jiechi, a Politburo member, serves concurrently as the commission's Secretary General.
- **Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission.*** Reflecting the commission's subordination to the Central Committee's Publicity Department, Office Director Zhuang Rongwen serves concurrently as the Publicity Department deputy director. He is not a member of Party leadership bodies.[57]
- **Office of the Central Commission for Deepening Overall Reform.*** Office director Jiang Jinquan serves concurrently as head of the Central Committee's Policy Research Office. He, too, is not a member of Party leadership bodies.
- **Office of the Central Institutional Organization Commission.** Subordinate to the Organization Department, the commission is reportedly headed by Premier Li Keqiang. Office Director Zhou Zuyi is not a member of Party leadership bodies.

The **Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee** and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council are a single institution within the Party bureaucracy. Its tasks include drafting policies related to Taiwan affairs and "guiding" Taiwan-related work.[58]

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[54] The International Department is the only Central Committee Department with an English-language website: https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/. Its Chinese-language website is https://www.idcpc.org.cn/.

[55] "中共中央印发《深化党和国家机构改革方案》" ("CPC Central Committee Releases 'Deepening Party and State Institutional Reform Plan'"), Xinhua, March 21, 2018.

[56] *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms*, National Defense University Press, 2019, p. 545, at https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/Chairman-Xi/Chairman-Xi.pdf.

[57] The Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission's website is http://www.cac.gov.cn.

[58] "Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council," *China Daily* online, November 17, 2020, at https://govt.chinadaily.com.cn/s/202011/17/WS5fb3360d498eaba5051bcb77/taiwan-affairs-office-of-the-state-council.html.

The CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and National Supervisory Commission

The Party's commissions for discipline inspection (CDIs) enforce Party "discipline," including compliance with Party regulations and loyalty to the Party Central Committee and to Xi. They also root out corruption within the Party's ranks. Article 40 of the Party constitution refers to "ensuring that those who have committed minor misconduct are made to 'redden and sweat,'" and that "those who have committed serious disciplinary and/or criminal violations are expelled from the Party." Only after CDIs finish their investigations do they turn cases involving alleged criminal wrongdoing over to the state judiciary for prosecution and trial.[59]

China's highest-level disciplinary body is the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), which operates under the leadership of the Central Committee. Its current leader, Zhao Leji, serves concurrently as a member of the elite Politburo Standing Committee, though the Party constitution does not require CCDI leaders to be dual-hatted in this way. CDIs exist at every level of government. Article 45 of the Party constitution requires CDIs to embed discipline inspection teams in all Party-state institutions at the same level to monitor the work of the institutions' Party groups. Separately, Article 14 of the Party constitution requires national and provincial-level Party committees to conduct routine inspections of Party organizations under their jurisdiction at least once every five years. The CCDI has launched eight rounds of such inspections since the 19th Party Congress in 2017, using mobile teams that take up residence in the targeted institutions for periods of about two months. The eighth round, launched in October 2021, involves 15 inspection teams deployed to 25 financial institutions, including financial regulators, banks, stock exchanges, and asset management companies.[60] The Party's Central Leading Group for Inspection Work oversees the mobile inspection teams' work.

The CCDI is fused with the National Supervisory Commission, a state institution created in 2018 that also has branches at every level of government.[61] **Figure 9** shows the two institutions' shared leadership. The National Supervisory Commission is empowered to investigate all public servants, regardless of whether they are Party members, effectively extending the CCDI's mandate to a much broader population. On its establishment, the National Supervisory Commission absorbed a fifth of the personnel of the State People's Procuratorate, China's top prosecutor's office, effectively boosting the manpower available for CCDI inspections and investigations.[62] In 2019, the NPC granted the National Supervisory Commission the power to pass its own regulations. Previously, the only entities empowered to pass regulations were the State Council, local people's congresses, and the Central Military Commission.[63] A separate discipline body, the Central Military Commission's Discipline Inspection Commission, or CMC DIC, is responsible for enforcing political discipline and combatting corruption in the armed forces.

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[59] In the case of former Vice Minister of Public Security Sun Lijun, for example, the CCDI and National Supervisory Commission began investigating in April 2020 and turned his case over to prosecutors in September 2021.

[60] "CPC Launches Disciplinary Inspection of Financial Institutions," Xinhua, October 13, 2021.

[61] A 2018 amendment to the state constitution created the National Supervisory Commission. The 2018 *Supervision Law* further clarified its mission and powers. For an English translation of the Supervision Law, see the ICC Legal Tools Database, at https://legal-tools.org/doc/ef4c4d/pdf.

[62] Ling Li, "Politics of Anticorruption in China: Paradigm Change of the Party's Disciplinary Regime 2012–2017," *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 28, no. 115, 2019, p. 62, at https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1497911.

[63] Laney Zhang, "China: National Supervision Commission Granted Power to Make Supervision Regulations," January 10, 2020, Law Library of Congress Global Legal Monitor, at https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2020-01-10/china-national-supervision-commission-granted-power-to-make-supervision-regulations/.

Figure 9. The CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and National Supervisory Commission

The CCDI is a Party body and the NSC a state body, but they work jointly and share top leaders

	Central Commission for Discipline Inspection 中共中央纪律检查委员会 Position	National Supervisory Commission 国家监察委员会 Position
Zhao Leji 赵乐际 • Member, Political Bureau Standing Committee • Chairperson, Central Leading Group for Inspection Work 中央巡视工作领导小组	Secretary	None
Yang Xiaodu 杨晓渡 • Member, Political Bureau • Member, Party Secretariat • President, China Academy of Discipline Inspection and Supervision 中国纪检监察学院 • Member, Central Leading Group for Inspection Work • Member, National Committee of the CPPCC	Deputy Secretary	Director
Zhang Shengmin 张升民 • Member, Party and State Central Military Commissions • Secretary, CMC Discipline Inspection Commission • Secretary, CMC Discipline Inspection Commission Party Committee	Deputy Secretary	None
Liu Jinguo 刘金国	Deputy Secretary	Deputy Director
Yang Xiaochao 杨晓超 • Member, Central Leading Group for Inspection Work	Deputy Secretary; Secretary General	Deputy Director
Xu Lingyi 徐令义	Deputy Secretary	Deputy Director
Xiao Pei 肖培	Deputy Secretary	Deputy Director
Yu Hongqiu 喻红秋	Deputy Secretary	Deputy Director
Fu Kui 傅奎	Deputy Secretary	Deputy Director

PREPARED BY CRS

Source: Graphic by CRS. Name list and titles from website of the CCDI/National Supervisory Commission, at https://www.ccdi.gov.cn/xxgk/ldjg/, accessed November 1, 2021.

Notes: The only CCDI Deputy Secretary who does not hold a post with the National Supervisory Commission is Zhang Shengmin, who heads the Party Central Military Commission's Discipline Inspection Commission.

The National People's Congress (NPC)

Figure 10 shows the National People's Congress, China's unicameral legislature. The state constitution confers on the NPC the powers to amend the state constitution; oversee its enforcement; enact and amend "criminal, civil, state institutional and other basic laws"; elect and remove top officials of the state and the judiciary; approve the state budget and plans for national economic and social development; and "decid[e] on issues concerning war and peace."

China's people do not directly elect the NPC's nearly 3,000 delegates. Rather, delegates to provincial-level people's congresses and members of election councils for the People's Liberation Army, Hong Kong, Macao, and "Taiwan compatriots" elect NPC delegates, based on candidate lists drawn up by the Party. China rejects separation of powers, so a third of NPC delegates are serving Party and state officials. (In the current congress, the 13th (2018-2023), Xi Jinping is a member of the Inner Mongolia delegation. In the 12th Congress (2013-2018), Xi was a member of the Shanghai delegation.) A quarter of delegates to the current congress are women.[64]

All delegates meet for a single annual session of about a week in early March. For the rest of the year, the NPC Standing Committee (NPCSC) exercises the legislative power of the state. The NPCSC Chairman is the NPC's highest official. He serves concurrently on the Party's Politburo Standing Committee and is the Party's third-highest-ranking official. Eight of the NPC's 14 vice chairpersons head minor political parties loyal to the CPC. (For more on these parties, see "The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).") All of the vice chairpersons are currently subject to U.S. sanctions pursuant to Section 5(g) of the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, so designated because of the NPCSC's role in "developing and adopting" a 2020 national security law for Hong Kong.[65] The NPCSC currently has 168 members. The state constitution stipulates that none of them may concurrently hold office in other state bodies. (Concurrent Party posts are allowed.) Many of the NPC's top officials are thus retired senior officials. They are able to extend their political careers by up to 10 years by serving in the NPC.

The NPCSC usually convenes every two months. The state constitution assigns it specific powers, including interpreting the constitution; enacting and amending laws other than those to be enacted by the full NPC; interpreting laws; overseeing the work of the State Council, Central Military Commission, National Supervisory Commission, Supreme People's Court, and Supreme People's Procuratorate; deciding on the appointment or removal of the PRC's representatives abroad; ratifying and abrogating treaties and other important agreements with foreign countries; in certain circumstances, declaring a state of war; deciding on national or local mobilization; and deciding whether to declare a state of emergency nationwide or in parts of the country. Four working bodies, composed of staff and outside experts, support the NPCSC. Ten NPC specialized committees, composed of deputies, meet throughout the year, usually once a month. They do not have the power to amend legislation, but do have a formal role in advising the Standing Committee and the full Congress on legislation.

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[64] "领导干部比例降低! 一图看懂第十三届全国人大代表构成" ("The Proportion of Leadership Cadres Has Fallen! See the Composition of the 13th NPC Delegates in One Chart"), 新京报(*Beijing News*) via Huanqiu, March 4, 2018, https://lianghui.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnK6PUS.

[65] U.S. Department of State, "Update to Report on Identification of Foreign Persons Involved in the Erosion of the Obligations of China Under the Joint Declaration or the Basic Law," March 16, 2021, at https://www.state.gov/update-to-report-on-identification-of-foreign-persons-involved-in-the-erosion-of-the-obligations-of-china-under-the-joint-declaration-or-the-basic-law/; U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Hong Kong-Related Designations Updates," March 17, 2021, at https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/recent-actions/20210317; U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Hong Kong-related Designations," December 7, 2020, at https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/recent-actions/20201207.

Figure 10. The National People's Congress

The NPC is China's unicameral legislature

Source: Graphic by CRS, based on National People's Congress of the PRC, "人大机构" ("NPC Agencies"), at http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/c507/rdjg.shtml.

Notes: With vacancies, as of November 15, 2021, the NPC Standing Committee comprised 168 members, including the chairperson, 14 vice-chairpersons, and the secretary-general. Because the NPC does not have a specialized committee specifically focused on military affairs, the Foreign Affairs Committee is responsible for advising on legislation on both foreign affairs and defense matters. The Foreign Affairs Committee also has responsibility for international parliamentary exchanges and issues public statements on major foreign policy developments.

The State Presidency

The state president serves as China's head of state.[66] The Party nominates candidates for the positions of President and Vice President and deputies to the National People's Congress formally elect them. So far, such elections have always been non-competitive, with deputies offered a single candidate for each position.

Prior to 2018, Article 79 of the state constitution stated that PRC presidents and vice-presidents "shall serve no more than two consecutive terms."[67] In 2018, however, the Party directed the NPC to amend the constitution to remove those words, opening the way for Xi Jinping to seek a third term as state president starting in March 2023.[68] NPC Spokesperson Zhang Yesui defended the move by pointing to the absence of term limits for the positions of Party general secretary and Party Central Military Commission chairman, both positions Xi currently occupies. Removing term limits for state president, Zhang said, "benefits protecting the authority of the party center and collective leadership with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, and benefits the strengthening and perfecting of the national leadership system."[69] Zhang appeared to be suggesting that Xi would need to be able to serve a third term as state president because that position and the general secretary position are linked, and Xi would be continuing to serve in his Party posts after the 20th Party Congress in 2022.

As **Figure 11** shows, Jiang Zemin was the first general secretary of the CPC Central Committee to serve concurrently as state president, adding the post in 1993, nearly four years into his tenure as general secretary. Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping both served a five-year term as vice president before their elevation to the concurrent positions of Party general secretary and state president. Xi, however, has resisted appointing a vice president who might succeed him. The vice president in his first term, Li Yuanchao, retired in 2017 after a single term, at age 67. Current Vice President Wang Qishan, who was born in 1948, had already exceeded the Party's retirement age for Politburo members when he took office in 2018. He holds no concurrent Communist Party post.[70]

Article 80 of the constitution states that pursuant to decisions of the NPC and NPC Standing Committee, the President promulgates laws; appoints or removes the State Council's premier, vice premiers, and secretary general, and the heads of constituent departments of the State Council; confers national medals and titles of honor; issues orders of special pardon; declares a state of emergency; and declares a state or war; and issues mobilization orders. Article 81 of the constitution states that the President also engages in affairs of state; receives foreign diplomatic envoys on behalf of the PRC; appoints or recalls representatives abroad, pursuant to NPC Standing Committee decisions; and ratifies or abrogates treaties and important agreements with foreign countries, also pursuant to NPC Standing Committee decisions. Other than appointing

[66] A literal translation of the Chinese name for the office of state president is "Chairman," but China's official translation of the title is "President."

[67] "Constitution of the PRC (Full text after amendment on March 14, 2004)," at http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/laws_regulations/2014/08/23/content_281474982987458.htm.

[68] The vote to amend the constitution was 2,958 for, to 2 against, with 3 abstentions and one ballot invalidated. Nectar Gan, "Xi Jinping Cleared to Stay on as China's President with Just 2 Dissenters Among 2,964 Votes," *South China Morning Post*, March 11, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2136719/xi-jinping-cleared-stay-president-chinas-political.

[69] "China Says Lifting Term Limits Is About Protecting Authority of Party," Reuters, March 4, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-parliament-politics/china-says-lifting-term-limits-is-about-protecting-authority-of-party-idUSKBN1GG0CR.

[70] Central People's Government of the PRC "王岐山简历" ("Resume of Wang Qishan"), March 17, 2018, at http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2018-03/17/content_5275066.htm.

and, if need be, removing its top officials, the President officially has no role in the operations of the State Council, a separate political institution. The state constitution states that the state vice president "shall assist the president in his or her work" and may "when so entrusted by the president, exercise part of the functions and powers of the president on his or her behalf."

Figure 11. State Presidents and Vice Presidents 1983-Present

CPC General Secretaries have served concurrently as state president since 1993

Source: Graphic by CRS."历届中华人民共和国主席"("Successive Presidents of the People's Republic of China," Website of the Central People's Government of the PRC, http://www.gov.cn/test/2007-11/12/content_802099.htm, accessed November 1, 2021.

The State Council of the PRC

The State Council is the cabinet of China's government, the Central People's Government. The state constitution describes the State Council as "the highest organ of State administration." It is officially responsible for implementing policies formulated by the CPC and laws passed by the National People's Congress, and for overseeing the day-to-day work of the state bureaucracy. The State Council has the power to pass its own regulations and to draft or authorize ministries to draft legislation, which it forwards to the National People's Congress for passage into law.

During the early decades of Communist rule, the Party and the state operated as one. In the late 1970s, during the transition away from Maoism, the CPC began separating Party and government functions, authorizing the State Council and "people's governments" at lower levels to manage the day-to-day administration of the country.[71] Now, under General Secretary Xi, the CPC appears to be moving in the opposite direction, with the Party bureaucracy increasingly taking over functions previously performed by the State Council. In the 2018 institutional reorganization, the seventh for the state and the fourth for the Party since 1981, the Party took over direct management of several agencies that were previously part of the State Council. It also elevated what had been Party "leading small groups," operating behind the scenes, to become high-profile Party commissions leading policy in their respective areas.[72]

Figure 12 shows the State Council leadership. The State Council is headed by a premier, who serves concurrently as the Party's second-highest-ranked official. The state president formally appoints him to his post. Four vice premiers assist the premier. One sits with him on the Party's Politburo Standing Committee. The remaining three are regular members of the Party's 25-person Politburo. Just below the vice premiers in rank are five state councilors. State councilors are full members of the Party's Central Committee, but do not hold seats on the more elite Politburo. All hold office for five-year terms.

The government does not announce the portfolios of vice premiers. That information comes into focus over time as vice premiers conduct public activities in their areas of responsibility. Because most state councilors serve concurrently in other major State Council positions, their portfolios are, by contrast, usually clear early on. In the current State Council, Wang Yi is the first foreign minister since 1993 to serve concurrently as a state councilor, a position more senior than foreign minister.[73] As a state councilor, Wang is the bureaucratic equal of the ministers of defense and public security, who also hold the title of state councilor. As a diplomat, however, Wang is outranked by his colleague Yang Jiechi, a former state councilor and foreign minister, who is a member of the Party Politburo and serves as Secretary General of and Office Director for the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the CPC Central Committee.

In addition to the premier, the vice premiers, the state councilors, and a secretary general, the State Council includes the ministers of China's 21 government ministries, the chairmen of three ministerial-level commissions, the governor of the central bank, known as the People's Bank of China, and the head of the National Audit Office. (See **Figure 13**.)

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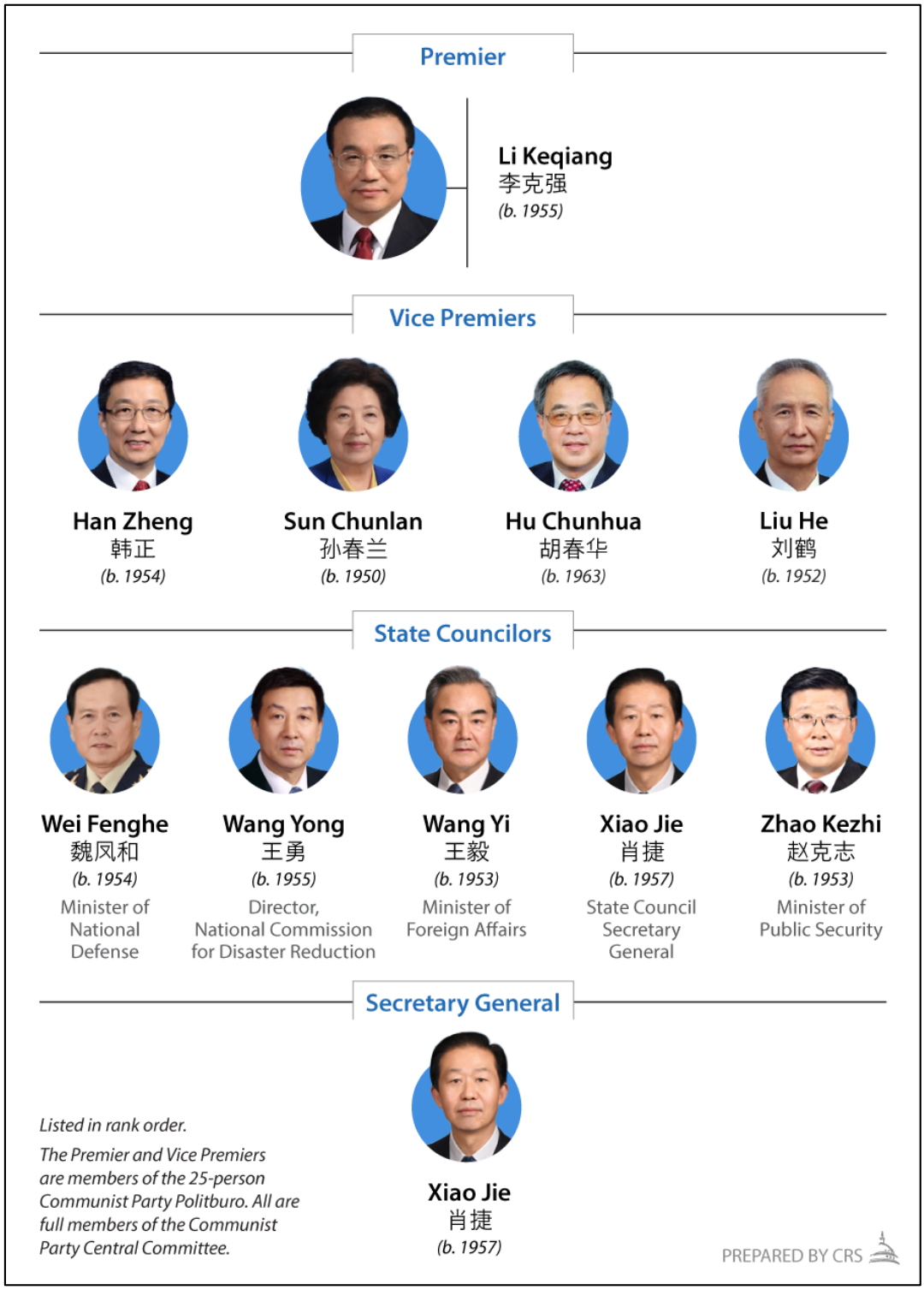
[71] For more information about the establishment of the state system as a separate political institution, see Zhou Guanghui, "Towards Good Government: Thirty Years of Administrative Reforms in China," in Yu Keping, ed., *The Reform of Governance* (Koninklijke Brill NV and Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010), pp. 137-180.

[72] "中共中央印发《深化党和国家机构改革方案》" ("CPC Central Committee Releases 'Deepening Party and State Institutional Reform Plan'"), Xinhua, March 21, 2018, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-03/21/c_1122570517.htm.

[73] Prior figures who have served concurrently in both posts are Qian Qichen (1991-1993); Wu Xueqian (1983-1988); and Huang Hua (1982-1983). The 1982 state constitution created the position.

Figure 12. Leadership of the State Council of the PRC

All took office in March 2018 for five-year terms



Source: Graphic by CRS. PRC Central People's Government, "国务院领导" ("State Council Leaders"), http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/index.htm, accessed November 1, 2021.

The broader State Council organization includes agencies, offices, and public institutions under the State Council. (See **Figure 14**.) The current state bureaucracy is the product of the 2018 government reorganization, which created seven new ministries and commissions and eight new agencies under the State Council.[74]

The CPC controls the state bureaucracy in part through the presence of leading Party member groups within each state institution. (See "The Mechanics of Communist Party Rule in China.") For most constituent departments of the State Council, the minister, chairperson, or director serves concurrently as Party secretary of the department's leading party members group. As of November 2021, 4 of the State Council's 26 constituent departments did not follow that rule: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), Ministry of Transport, and People's Bank of China (PBOC).[75] State institutions also report to higher-level Party bodies. The Minister of Defense, for example, serves concurrently as a member of the Party's Central Military Commission (CMC), where he is outranked by the CMC's chairman and two vice chairmen. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Xinhua News Agency, China Media Group and other agencies all report to the Central Committee's Publicity Department.[76]

China's State Council website confirms that several institutions with "State Council," "state," or "national" in their names belong to the Party bureaucracy, rather than the state.[77] They include:

- the State Council Information Office and the National Press and Publication Administration, both units of the CPC Publicity Department;
- the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council and the National Religious Affairs Administration, both units of the CPC United Front Work Department; and
- the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, also known as the Taiwan Work Office of the CPC Central Committee.

Entities under the State Council include the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Council of the State Council, known as SASAC. It supervises the state-owned assets of enterprises under the supervision of the Central Government, a category that currently comprises 96 giant state-owned enterprises. They include three of the top five companies on the 2021 *Fortune* Global 500 list.[78]

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[74] For a translation of the reorganization plan, see Center for Security and Emerging Technology, "CCP Central Committee Publishes Plan for Deepening the Reform of Party and State Agencies中共中央印发《深化党和国家机构改革方案》," March 18, 2021, at https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/ccp-central-committee-publishes-plan-for-deepening-the-reform-of-party-and-state-agencies/.

[75] "司法部结束'双首长制'设置，部委党政领导分设有何讲究？" ("Ministry of Justice Ends 'Double Boss System' Arrangement, What Are the Details of the Division of Party and Government Leaders in Ministries and Commissions?"), 南方都市报 (*Southern Metropolis News*), August 4, 2021, at https://www.sohu.com/a/481460428_161795. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and PBOC websites list the Party secretary after the minister. The MEE and Ministry of Transport websites list the Party secretary ahead of the minister.

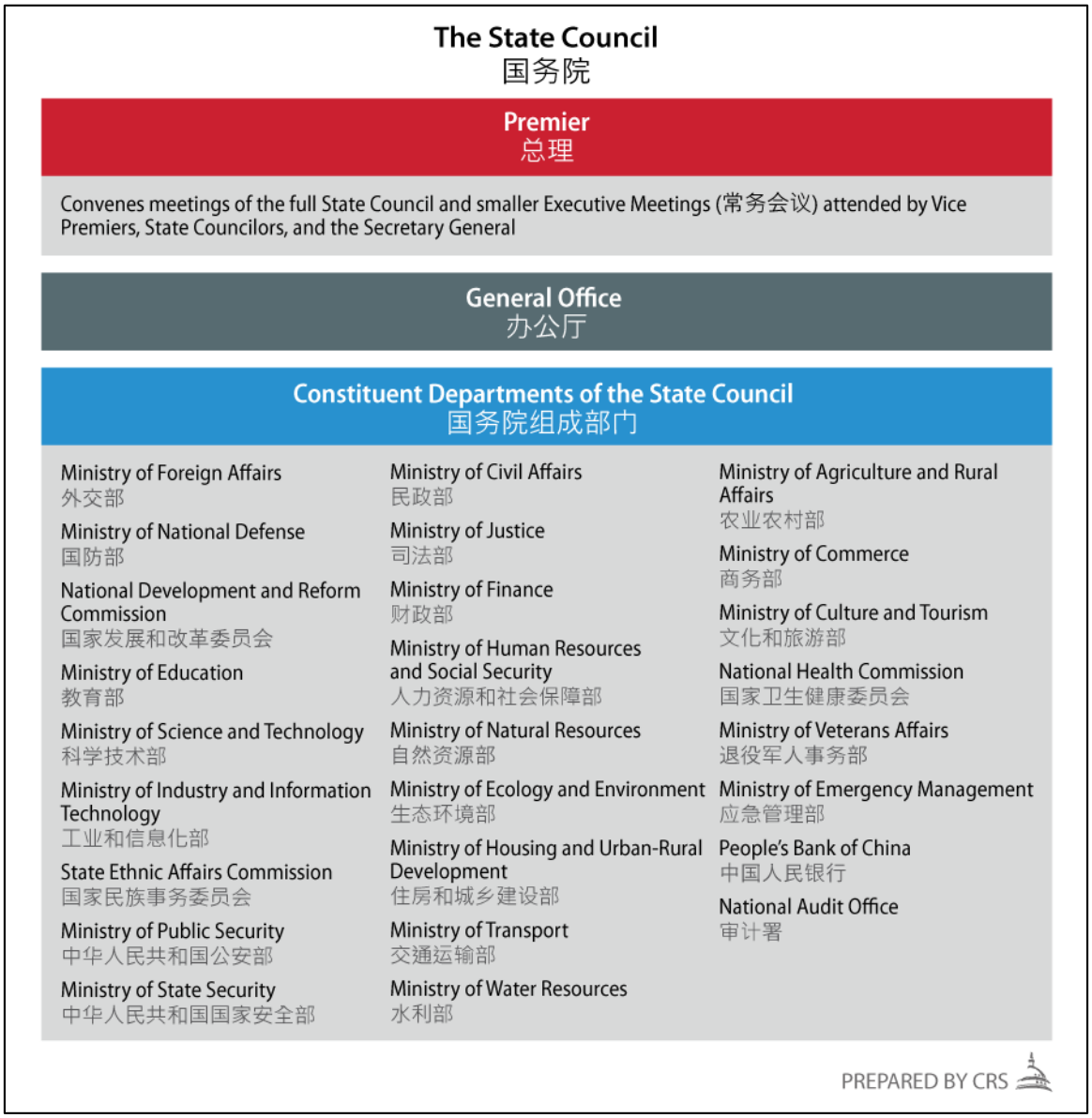
[76] A full list of "Central Publicity and Cultural Institutions" is available at http://www.wenming.cn/syzhq/ljq/zyxcwhdw/.

[77] Central People's Government of the PRC, "国务院组织机构" ("State Council Organizations and Organs"), at http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/zuzhi.htm. PRC terminology in such situations can be difficult to parse. The NPC Observer blog provides a useful glossary. NPC Observer, "Bilingual State Council Organizational Chart," July 20, 2021, at https://npcobserver.com/resources/bilingual-state-council-organizational-chart/.

[78] The three companies are China State Grid Corporation of China, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), and China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec). State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Council of the State Council (SASAC), "Directory," at http://en.sasac.gov.cn/n_688.htm; Ding Yining, "18 Chinese Companies Make Debut in Fortune Global 500 List," Shanghai Daily, August 2, 2021, https://www.shine.cn/biz/economy/2108023008/.

Figure 13. State Council Constituent Departments

Reflecting the March 2018 government reorganization



Source: Graphic by CRS. Central People's Government of the PRC, "国务院组织机构" ("Organization Structure of the State Council)," http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/zuzhi.htm.

Figure 14. Entities Under the State Council

Reflecting the March 2018 government reorganization

Special Agency Directly Under the State Council
国务院直属特设机构

State-owned Assets Supervision and Admin. Commission of the State Council
国务院国有资产监督管理委员会

Offices of the State Council
国务院办事机构

Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council
国务院港澳事务办公室

Research Office of the State Council
国务院研究室

Agencies Directly Under the State Council
国务院直属机构

General Admin. of Customs
海关总署

State Admin. of Taxation
国家税务局

State Admin. for Market Regulation
国家市场监督管理总局

National Radio and Television Admin.
国家广播电视总局

General Admin. of Sport
国家体育总局

National Bureau of Statistics
国家统计局

China International Development Cooperation Agency
国家国际发展合作署

National Healthcare Security Admin.
国家医疗保障局

Counsellors' Office of the State Council
国务院参事室

National Government Offices Admin.
国家机关事务管理局

Public Institutions Directly Under the State Council
国务院直属事业单位

Xinhua News Agency
新华通讯社

Chinese Academy of Sciences
中国科学院

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
中国社会科学院

Chinese Academy of Engineering
中国工程院

Development Research Center of the State Council
国务院发展研究中心

China Media Group
中央广播电视总台

China Meteorological Admin.
中国气象局

China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission
中国银行保险监督管理委员会

China Securities Regulatory Commission
中国证券监督管理委员会

PREPARED BY CRS

National Administrations Managed by Higher-Level State Council Entities
国务院部委管理的国家局

General Office of the State Council:
- National Public Complaints and Proposals Admin. 国家信访局

National Development and Reform Commission:
- National Food and Strategic Reserves Admin. 国家粮食和物资储备局
- National Energy Admin. 国家能源局

Ministry of Industry and Information Technology:
- State Admin. of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense 国家国防科技工业局
- State Tobacco Monopoly Admin. 国家烟草专卖局

Ministry of Public Security:
- National Immigration Admin. 国家移民管理局

Ministry of Natural Resources:
- National Forestry and Grassland Admin. 国家林业和草原局

Ministry of Transport:
- National Railway Admin. 国家铁路局
- Civil Aviation Admin. of China 中国民用航空局
- State Post Bureau 国家邮政局

Ministry of Culture and Tourism:
- National Cultural Heritage Admin. 国家文物局

National Health Commission:
- National Admin. of Traditional Chinese Medicine 国家中医药管理局

Ministry of Emergency Management:
- National Mine Safety Admin. 国家矿山安全监察局

People's Bank of China:
- State Admin. of Foreign Exchange 国家外汇管理局

State Admin. for Market Regulation:
- National Medical Products Admin. 国家药品监督管理局
- China National Intellectual Property Admin. 国家知识产权局

Source: Graphic by CRS. Central People's Government of the PRC, "国务院组织机构" ("Organization Structure of the State Council)," http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/zuzhi.htm.

Notes: "Admin." is an abbreviation for "Administration."

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

The CPPCC defines its duties as "upholding and strengthening the [Communist] Party's leadership over all areas," "unifying, educating and guiding representatives of ethnic minorities and all sectors on the Party's new theories," and "defusing problems and building consensus."[79] In practice, the CPPCC serves as a vehicle for the CPC's efforts to win over a broad array of groups to support the CPC's goals. The CPC refers to this exercise as building a "patriotic united front." The CPPCC is also at the center of the CPC's claim to lead a system of "multiparty cooperation and political consultation," a political model that the CPC touts as superior to Western-style democracy.[80] Signaling the importance of the CPPCC's agenda to the Party leadership, the Party's fourth-most-senior official traditionally serves as chairman of the National Committee of the CPPCC.

The Party and state constitutions define the united front as including "all socialist workers, all those working for the socialist cause, all patriots who support socialism, all patriots who support the reunification of the motherland, and all patriots who are dedicated to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." The CPPCC breaks the united front into 34 groups targeted for representation in its ranks: 9 political parties, personages without Party affiliation, 8 social organizations, 13 "social circles," and 3 categories of "specially invited personages."[81] (See **Figure 15**.)

The eight political parties other than the CPC all date from before the CPC came to power. The CPC requires them all to accept its leadership. The CPC also restricts their recruitment. The largest of the minor parties, the China Democratic League, has a membership of approximately 330,000. The smallest, the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League, claims a membership of about 3,300. The combined membership of all eight parties is just over 1.3 million, compared to the CPC's membership of 95 million.[82] Several of the minor parties have names unrelated to their constituencies. The Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party, for example, is the party for those in "medicine, health care, human resources, the eco-environment, and relevant fields of education, science and technology." The China Association for Promoting Democracy recruits "intellectuals in education, culture, publishing, and relevant fields of science and technology."[83]

The eight social organizations represented in the CPPCC National Committee include two youth groups, the Communist Youth League of China and the All-China Youth Federation. Another of the social organizations is China's only officially-sanctioned trade union organization, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. The 13 "social circles" represented in the CPPCC National Committee include professions such as agriculture, education, journalism, and medicine. They also include ethnic minorities and religious groups. Organizations dedicated to "friendship with foreign countries" constitute their own "social circle."

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[79] The National Committee of the CPPCC, "Roles and Functions of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference," August 26, 2021, at http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/2021-08/26/c_470023.htm.

[80] State Council Information Office of the PRC, "Full Text: China's Political Party System: Cooperation and Consultation," June 25, 2021, at http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/32832/Document/1707413/1707413.htm.

[81] The National Committee of the CPPCC, "中国人民政治协商会议第十三届全国委员会委员名单" ("Name List for the 13th National Committee of the CPPCC"), May 11, 2020, at http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2020/05/11/ARTI1589179608333237.shtml.

[82] State Council Information Office of the PRC, "Full Text: China's Political Party System: Cooperation and Consultation," June 25, 2021.

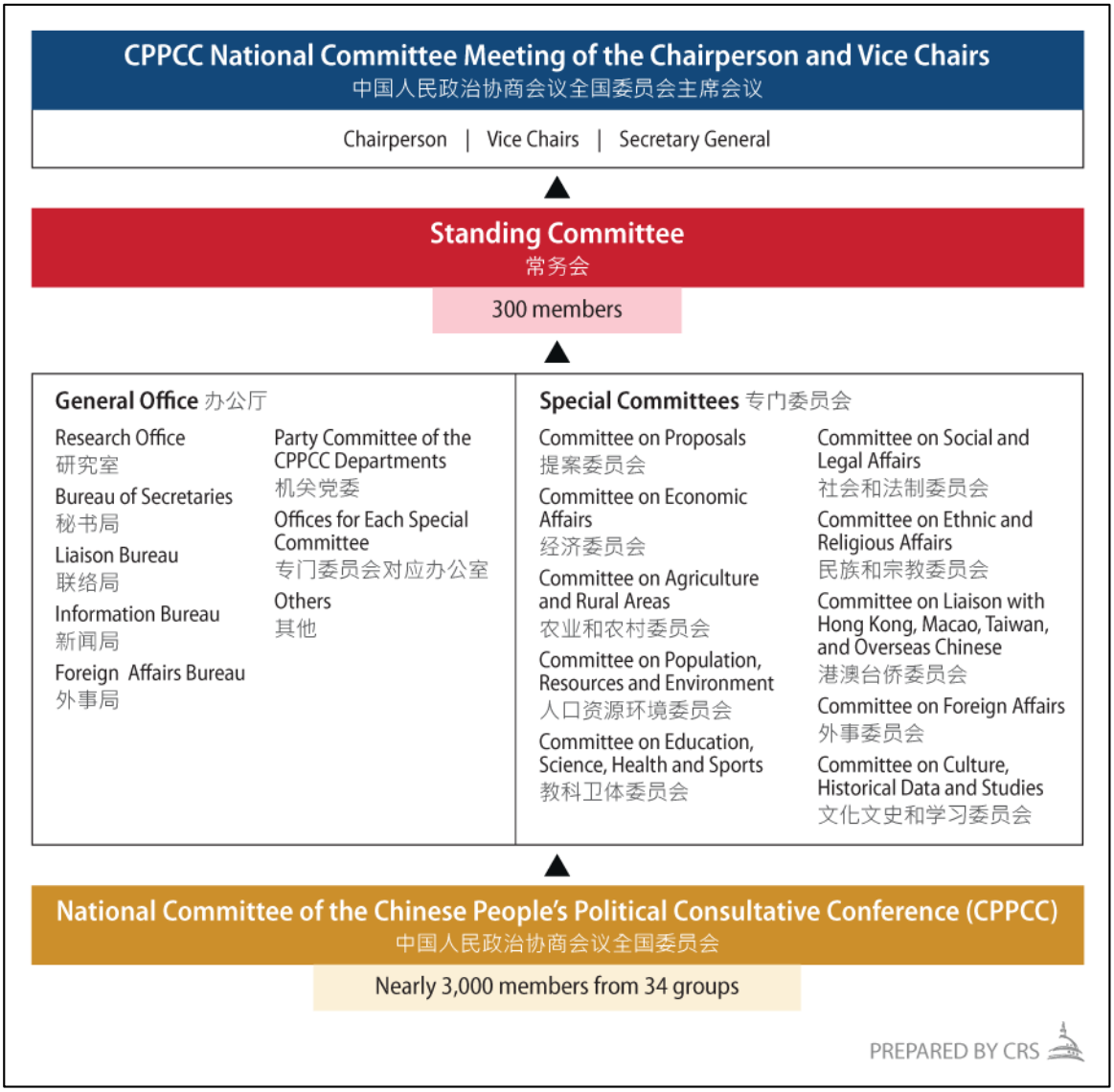
[83] Ibid.

Figure 15. Composition of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

Reflecting the 13th National Committee of the CPPCC (2018-2023)

Source: Graphic by CRS. The National Committee of the CPPCC, "中国人民政治协商会议第十三届全国委员会委员名单" ("Name List for the 13th National Committee of the CPPCC"), May 11, 2020, http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2020/05/11/ARTI1589179608333237.shtml; National Committee of the CPPCC, "Participating Groups," http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/participatinggroups.html.

Figure 16. The CPPCC's Organizational Structure



Source: Graphic by CRS. National Committee of the CPPCC, "中国人民政治协商会议" ("CPPCC"), http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/newcppcc/jgzc/index.shtml; "中国人民政治协商会议第十三届全国委员会常务委员名单" ("Name List for 13th National Committee of the CPPCC Standing Committee"), March 14, 2018, http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2018/03/14/ART11521024517368985.shtml; "The CPPCC," http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/structure.html.

Figure 16 depicts the CPPCC's organizational structure. The CPPCC chairperson serves as China's most senior official responsible for united front activities. His responsibilities include outreach to and policy toward Taiwan and the PRC Special Administrative Regions of Hong

Kong and Macao.[84] The chairperson's portfolio also includes policies toward ethnic minorities and religious groups.[85]

The top body within the CPPCC is the Chairperson's Council, which includes the chairperson, 24 vice chairpersons, and a Secretary General. Among the current vice chairpersons are two former Chief Executives of Hong Kong and a former Chief Executive of Macao.[86] The Chairperson's Council handles the "important routine work" of the CPPCC Standing Committee. The Standing Committee itself is composed of approximately 300 members and meets about once every two months.[87]

The CPPCC's special committees, like those of the NPC, meet throughout the year. Committee chairs are all members of the CPC delegation to the CPPCC. Committee vice chairs often include members of delegations related to the committees' areas of focus. In the case of the CPPCC's Committee on Foreign Affairs, for example, Chair Lou Jiwei, a former Minister of Finance, is a member of the CPC delegation. Of the committee's six vice chairs, five are members of the "friendship with foreign countries" delegation and one is a special invited Hong Kong personage.[88]

Like the NPC, the National Committee of the CPPCC, with almost 3,000 members, meets in full session once a year in early March. The PRC government and media refer to the nearly simultaneous NPC and CPPCC meetings as "the two sessions." China's state media give the meetings lavish coverage, often showcasing CPPCC members' policy proposals and statements. The CPC is not, however, obliged to act upon those suggestions. The PRC government refers to CPPCC members as "political advisors."[89]

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[84] See "Wang Yang Stresses Confidence in Realizing National Rejuvenation," Xinhua, September 29, 2021, at http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/2021-09/29/c_665156.htm.

[85] See "Wang Yang Attends Closing Gala of Ethnic Minority Art Festival," Xinhua, September 26, 2021, at http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/2021-09/26/c_663720.htm.

[86] The National Committee of the CPPCC, "Leadership," at http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/leadership.html.

[87] The National Committee of the CPPCC, "Standing Committee Meetings," at http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/standingcommitteemeetings.html; The National Committee of the CPPCC, "Chairpersons Council Meetings," at http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/chairpersonscouncilmeetings.html.

[88] The National Committee of the CPPCC, "外事委员会" (Committee on Foreign Affairs), at http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/newcppcc/wswyh/index.shtml. The National Committee of the CPPCC, "中国人民政治协商会议第十三届全国委员会委员名单" ("Name List for the 13th National Committee of the CPPCC"), May 11, 2020, at http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2020/05/11/ARTI1589179608333237.shtml.

[89] "Understanding China's 'Two Sessions' in a Minute," Xinhua, March 3, 2021, at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-03/03/c_139780076.htm.

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