

The PLA and Mission Command

*Is the Party Control System Too Rigid
for Its Adaptation by China?*

by Larry M. Wortzel



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In Brief

- The concept of mission command developed in the 19th century, allowing subordinate leaders in Western militaries flexibility in implementing a commander's intent. In contrast, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) employs a strict, top-down structure that does not allow for flexible interpretation.
- While some PLA officers and military publications explore the benefits of mission command, Xi Jinping encourages innovation in technology and weapon development rather than creative thinking that might deviate from party guidelines.
- Senior leaders, political commissars, soldiers and NCOs must increasingly follow centrally directed orders and depend on automated decisionmaking to orchestrate operations, which will impose new challenges on the PLA—including vulnerability to enemy intervention and cyberattack.

The PLA and Mission Command: Is the Party Control System Too Rigid for Its Adaptation by China?

Introduction

The entire system of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership and control of the armed forces and society is built on a foundation of strict, top-down guidance from the central leadership, covering all aspects of national security and military affairs. Ultimately, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the guarantor of the CCP's continued leadership of China.

The CCP does not allow deviation from party guidelines provided by Xi Jinping, CCP General Secretary, Chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC) and President of China. At a meeting of political commissars at the PLA, the "All Army Party Building Meeting" in 2013, Xi Jinping directed the PLA to "unswervingly support the party and its spirit, [and] ensure the party and the people are under the command of the Central Military Commission."¹ In the same speech, Xi told political commissars that the PLA must increase its technological and scientific advancements. Xi's challenge to the PLA is not a call to innovate, understand the commander's intent or use creativity and initiative to accomplish military missions. It is a call to innovate in developing new weapon systems and ways to control them.

The concept of mission command and independently carrying out the commander's intent would therefore seem anathema in the political culture of the CCP and PLA.

In 2022, however, four field grade officers from various organizations and backgrounds in the PLA authored an exploratory article on the theory of mission command (任务式指挥的理论). It was published in the PLA's authoritative doctrinal journal, *China Military Science* (中国军事科学), a publication of the Academy of Military Sciences (中国解放军军事科学院), or AMS.²

The published article is important because AMS is China's premier military theory and doctrinal institution that directly advises the CMC.³ The fact that the PLA has followed the concept of mission command and its practice in the U.S. Army is worthy of study. The level of

initiative expected of officers, NCOs and soldiers embodied in the mission command concept seems so antithetical to the rigid, top-down structure of command and control and political culture; in particular, the practice of the dual command of units by commanders and CCP political commissars (PCs) (政治委员) would seem to dictate that China's military could not adopt mission command.⁴

Indeed, the PC tends to dominate what is supposed to be shared command of units. The PC controls promotions, awards, security dossiers and political reliability dossiers on the commander and all soldiers in a unit.⁵

The 19th Century and Mission Command

In the 19th century, reformers like Helmuth von Moltke sought to develop a new approach for planning campaigns and commanding large armies over extended battlefields. The effort recognized that subordinate commanders in the field often had a better understanding of what was happening in battle than the general staff. The commanders were more likely to respond effectively to threats and opportunities if they were allowed to make decisions based on their knowledge. After decades of debate, the concept of mission command, *Auftragstaktik*, was codified in 1888 German drill regulations.⁶ In *Auftragstaktik*, commanders give subordinates a clearly defined goal along with the resources and a time frame to accomplish it. Subordinate commanders have to plan and execute their mission within the higher commander's intent. The subordinate commanders must adapt to the situation as they see it. This style of command is based on a common approach to operations and on subordinates who are competent in independent decisionmaking.

A Belgian military officer at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College explained the evolution of the concept of mission command this way:

Historically, Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of Staff of the Prussian Army between 1857 and 1888, was the first military leader to recognize that one commanding officer from a central position on the battlefield could no longer direct military formations. He understood that the operational environment, including new technologies, imposed a different command philosophy on strategic, operational and tactical level, based on a clear mission statement and intent.⁷

PLA Officers Examine the Evolution of Mission Command in the U.S. Army

The authors of the 2022 *China Military Science* article on mission command divide the use of the concept in the U.S. Army into four stages (阶段). These stages are consistent with the way that the United States developed the concept.

Stage 1, according to the PLA authors, is outlined in brief in the 1905 U.S. Army *Field Service Regulations*.⁸ The 1905 *Field Service Regulations* told leaders that "when giving orders you do not need to instruct subordinates how to carry them out. Let subordinates engage the enemy according to the field conditions they face."⁹ This is very close to the way that the concepts in the 1905 *Field Service Regulations* were described in a 2013 *Military Review* article:

An order should not trespass on the province of the subordinate. It should contain everything which is beyond the independent authority of the subordinate, but nothing more. When the transmission of orders involves a considerable period of time, during which the situation may change, detailed instructions are to be avoided. The same rule

holds when orders may have to be carried out under circumstances which the originator of the order cannot completely forecast; in such cases letters of guidance is more appropriate. It should lay stress upon the object to be attained, and leave open the means to be employed . . . in order to make progress toward the enemy.¹⁰

Stage 2 begins with the 1982 issuance of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*.¹¹ Phrases like “self-disciplined initiative” (自律主动性) were used, as well as “commander’s intent” (指挥意图) and “advocate for (or initiate) decentralization” (倡导分权).¹² These resonated with the PLA writers, and the 1982 issuance of FM 100-5 was reinforced for them with the issuance of the 1986 modification of FM 100-5.¹³

According to one U.S. Army author, “The 1986 FM 100-5 sustained the manual’s operational focus by introducing the term operational art into our doctrinal lexicon. Overall, however, the 1986 manual was more ‘theoretical and general’ than its predecessors. The FM was expected to provide ‘a long-term foundation for the development of more transitory [and specific] tactics, techniques, and procedures.’”¹⁴ For the PLA officers, the fact that the U.S. Army had reexamined its operating concepts in light of new organizations and global conditions validated the importance of the evolution of the concept of mission command.

Stage 3 was marked by the U.S. Army’s 2003 issuance of the field manual for commanders and staffs, FM 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*.¹⁵ The four PLA authors saw this as a new phase because they assessed it was a fuller implementation of the mission command concept in the U.S. Army than the 2002 FM 6-0. This section of the 2003 FM resonated with them:

Mission command is the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders for effective mission accomplishment. Successful mission command results from subordinate leaders at all echelons exercising disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to accomplish missions. It requires an environment of trust and mutual understanding. Successful mission command rests on the following four elements: Commander’s intent, Subordinates’ initiative, Mission orders, and Resource allocation.¹⁶

The fact that the 2003 FM 6-0 also provided vignettes of 12 major battles that took place between the 331 BC Battle of Arbel to the 1942 Battle of Buna in World War II also made an impression on the PLA thinkers. They appreciated that the historical vignettes were accompanied by maps and discussions of the use of mission command or the failure to use the concept.¹⁷

Stage 4 was marked by the U.S. Army’s later issuance of two sets of explanations and instructions on mission command. These were an Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) and an Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP). Both the ADP and the ADRP provided more detailed explanations of the concepts behind mission command.¹⁸ The ADRP in particular “describes how commanders, supported by their staffs, combine the art of command and the science of control to understand situations, make decisions, direct action, and lead forces toward mission accomplishment.”¹⁹

The irony here is that the PLA does not focus a great deal on the use of individual initiative or understanding of commander’s intent. The PLA is the CCP’s army, and its political culture is that of the CCP. Units and party organizations conduct study groups of soldiers and party members that isolate those who do not adopt the party view. They then conduct struggle sessions to

criticize individuals who resist the party line and self-criticism sessions in which participants must confess ideological or practical mistakes that deviate from the party line.²⁰ Some in the PLA may admire the concepts embodied in mission command, but nothing could be further from practice in the PLA culture.

A question the PLA authors never asked is why, after providing a cogent explanation of the concept of mission command in the 2003 FM, the Army had to follow up with two more detailed explanations of the concept in the ADP and ADRP. Did this indicate that successive U.S. Army chiefs of staff were dissatisfied with the way that the concept of mission command was understood and implemented? Did some in the U.S. chain of command resist the concept?

The PLA Authors Advance a Formula for Mission Command in the Chinese Military

In their summary section and discussion of mission command, the four PLA authors are inspired by Friedrich Engels: “It is people and their will and bravery, not weapons, that win wars.”²¹ They also quote Mao Zedong: “War is two military commanders and their skill in the use of military force with competing strengths and abilities. The result of the competition is the subjective command correctness of the victor, who is able to overcome the subjective command errors of the opponent.”²²

The authors argue that in using the concept of mission command, Western militaries take advantage of the spirit and initiative of subordinate leaders. The references to Engels and Mao are ways to avoid internal criticism for arguing that a Western style of command and control has merit. The four authors imply that the PLA should study and perhaps adopt mission command, but they seek to insulate themselves from party criticism. The authors also argue that the concept of mission command reflects confidence in the dialectical reasoning of Marxists because subordinates examine the potentially conflicting sides of their own initiative.²³ They also have attempted to shield themselves from internal political criticism by using some of Xi Jinping’s own words—for instance, the ideas that modern military leaders must use initiative, encourage subordinates to do the same and understand directions from superiors.²⁴

The article closes with the comment that the concept of mission command and its relationship to the commander’s intent should help subordinate leaders with flexibility and creativity (创造性和灵活性). Using these two terms reflects Xi Jinping’s speeches on the qualities military personnel should develop in the “new age” under Xi’s leadership.

Other PLA Examinations of the Concept of Mission Command

Other authors and officers in the PLA are also exploring the idea of mission command and working toward developing a relationship between senior and subordinate commanders that fosters “mutual understanding” and a changed relationship.²⁵ In a 2021 *PLA Daily* exploratory article, a PLA author explains that “in mission-based command, the unit leaders concentrate on the intention of the combat, the operational concept, subordinate tasks and necessary coordinated instructions, which must be clearly defined by the superior. But execution is decentralized so that the specific methods and means of completing the task are determined by the subordinates independently.”²⁶ According to the party-controlled newspaper, this is intended to foster initiative and to improve the “multidimensional expansion of the operational space of ‘informationized warfare,’ discrete deployment of combat forces and cross-domain integration of combat operations.”²⁷

Yet in another PLA authoritative doctrinal publication, in the form of an entire manual on joint mobile ground operations, a PLA editorial group emphasizes the need for commanders to be flexible and to innovate ways and places to attack the enemy by assessing where the enemy might defend or attack.²⁸ However, there is no discussion in the manual of political work or the role of political commissars. Instruction on operations focuses on the coordination of fires, particularly heavy, concentrated artillery fires.²⁹ Also, any discussion of the concepts of mission command or commander's intent is absent. Thus, although *China Military Science* allowed the 2022 article by the four PLA authors, it does not mean that there is formal acceptance of the doctrine in the PLA.

Some in the PLA also recognize the need to foster leadership and independent initiative and decisionmaking in noncommissioned officers.³⁰ In a 2018 exercise chronicled in *PLA Daily*, NCOs in training were directed to conduct a live-fire drill. The drill was conducted by cadet NCOs under the direction of an NCO instructor and leader acting as mission commander. On order, the NCO trainees moved to battle positions, erected their missiles and launched a live-fire mission.

According to the article, "In previous live-fire drills, the trainees were only responsible for accurately executing the instructor's orders at their own positions. In this exercise, the trainees were assigned to carry out all the functions of a firing unit, including acting as the firing officer of a missile position and battery."³¹ The exercise taught initiative and how a firing officer or NCO manages a battery. It was characterized as a "baby step" in training NCOs by the *PLA Daily* authors, but it represents an understanding in the PLA of the role of NCOs and teaches the concept of mission command.

Political Commissars in the Soviet Army, the German Army and the PLA

Readers of this paper must understand the historical focus on political commissars in the Chinese military. The PLA is an arm of the CCP and has been since it was formed. China's Nationalist government, meanwhile, had its own National Revolutionary Army. The Soviet Union supported both the National Revolutionary Army of China under the Kuomintang (Guomintang or KMT) and the armed forces of the CCP. The Soviet objective was to form a united front between the KMT and CCP forces. But Mao Zedong objected to the united front. Still, Soviet influence and support continued in the CCP's Red Army.³²

In the Soviet armed forces, over time, the influence of political commissars waxed and waned. But in the Chinese military, political commissars exercised great authority and were coequals with the commanders of units at all echelons above company level.³³ In the Soviet military, after the Russian Revolution, "the influx of many ex-tsarist officers into the Civil War Red Army created a need for Communist representatives in each unit to watch over the actions of the professional soldiers who were thought to be politically untrustworthy." Until 1925, "the commissar of each unit was in effect a watchdog. His mission was not simply to assist the commander but to supervise him."³⁴ The political commissar validated operational orders and was important for a commander's future career. That essentially describes how PCs function in the PLA today.

By the end of World War II, Soviet political officers could "carry out training and combat missions for the purpose of their unit; but their work focused on propaganda and morale."³⁵ One longtime observer of the Soviet military, a U.S. Army Reserve major with extensive academic

experience and security-related experience in Russia, felt that “while the military professionals were outwardly subservient to the Party system . . . regular officers despised the zampolits [political commissars].”³⁶

After the fall of the Soviet Union, political officers continued to work on the loyalty and morale of soldiers, but they did not supervise commanders. That system and function was rejuvenated by President Vladimir Putin.³⁷ After the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2018, Putin put out a presidential decree that created a directorate in the Russian military to promote patriotism. This is “designed to ensure soldiers’ loyalty at a time when Moscow is locked in a geopolitical standoff with the West.”³⁸

In the German military in World War II, Hitler apparently resented the tradition of mission command. He believed it detracted from his absolute control over the Wehrmacht.³⁹ A Wehrmacht Propaganda Group was created, initially focused on the media and propaganda in the Wehrmacht and Waffen SS. By 1943, it had grown to 23 Wehrmacht propaganda companies embedded in units. They delivered National Socialist propaganda and reinforced the ideology of race hatred.⁴⁰ But they apparently did not interfere with a commander’s operational authority.

In the Chinese military today, however, there is no debate about retaining the political commissar system. It is the basis for CCP control of the PLA and ensuring that China’s military is responsive to the party. Xi Jinping has reinforced the role of the political commissar. As discussed in the conclusion of this article, that may impede individual initiative and influence the success of commanders, but it does not threaten Xi’s control of the military.

Conclusion

The top-down system of CCP leadership is built on the party’s firm control of the military. Ultimately, the PLA has the mission of keeping the party in power.⁴¹ The party warns soldiers not to deviate from party guidelines. There is no call to innovate and forge ahead with creative, new ideas except in some limited areas. Xi Jinping often discusses creativity and innovation, but his focus is on weapon development or scientific experimentation. At a meeting of political commissars at the PLA’s “All Army Party Building Meeting” in 2013, Xi Jinping himself directed the PLA to “unswervingly support the party and its spirit, [and] ensure the party and the people are under the command of the Central Military Commission.”⁴² In the same speech, Xi told political commissars that the PLA must increase its technological and scientific level. There was no urging by Xi to understand the commander’s intent and use creativity and initiative to accomplish military missions.

In a speech to an expanded meeting of the CCP CMC, Xi Jinping emphasized that the entire PLA must maintain a “firm and correct political direction,” focusing on the role of the political commissar system.⁴³ This type of meeting often includes senior theater commanders and their political commissars.

The fact that the *China Military Science* journal even carried the article by the four authors discussed in this paper means that at least some in the PLA and its senior ranks think that the stranglehold on the PLA held by the dual command structure of the political commissar system might need reconsideration if the PLA is to become a modern military force and keep up with changes on the 21st-century battlefield. Certainly, the Soviet military learned that lesson.

Xi Jinping’s vision for the future of the PLA seems different, however. The PLA is to be driven by data and information technology and conduct integrated, joint operations that take

advantage of automation and artificial intelligence to assist with decisionmaking and weapon control. This means that senior leaders, commanders, PCs, soldiers and NCOs do not need to have the flexibility to interpret the commander's intent. Instead, they must increasingly follow centrally directed orders and depend on automated decisionmaking to orchestrate operations. This will undoubtedly impose new challenges on the PLA, particularly as these automated decision systems are vulnerable to enemy intervention and electromagnetic or cyberattack.⁴⁴ Xi Jinping wants leaders who use information technology to orchestrate military operations.⁴⁵ Real initiative and innovation by individuals and teams seems to be acceptable to Xi only when it is scientific and weapon research, not military operations.

There should be little doubt that the internal contradictions between using automation and remaining under the control of the political commissar system will create conflict in the PLA—between the party system and a group of officers who see another path, one that involves mission command and interpreting the commander's intent.

Notes

- ¹ Xi Jinping (习近平), “不断提高军队党的建设科学化水平为实现强军目标提供坚强思想和组织保证 (Continuously improve the scientific level of party building in the military and provide a strong ideological and organizational guarantee for achieving the goal of strengthening the army),” 13 November 2013, in PLA General Political Department (中国人民解放军总政治部), ed., 习近平关于国防和军队建设重要论述选编, Vol. 1 (*Selected Expositions of Xi Jinping on National Defense and Army Building, Vol. 1*) (Beijing: PLA General Political Department, 2014), 197.
- ² Huang Changjian (黄昌建), Shi Fuxiang (师福祥), Liu Xiaoliang (刘孝良) and Wang Fei (王飞), “外军任务式指挥的理论及启示 (Theories of Foreign Militaries on Mission Command and their Implications),” 中国军事科学 (*China Military Science*) 4, no. 184 (2022): 141–47. Title translated to English by the PLA Academy of Military Science. Huang is a colonel and an assistant group army chief of staff; Shi is an Army specialized senior colonel at the PLA National Defense University (NDU) Joint Operations College; Liu is an Army specialized senior colonel and an assistant instructor at the PLA NDU Joint Operations Staff College; Wang is a specialized technical colonel and lecturer at the PLA Air Force Command College.
- ³ See Xi Jinping (习近平), “习近平: 努力建设高水平军事科研机构 为实现党在新时代的强军目标提供有力支撑 (Xi Jinping: Strive to build high-level military scientific research institutions to provide strong support for the realization of the party’s goal of strengthening the army in the new era),” Xinhua News Service (新华社), 16 May 2018, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0516/c64094-29994980.html>.
- ⁴ See Larry M. Wortzel, “The General Political Department and the Evolution of the Political Commissar System,” in *The People’s Liberation Army as Organization, Reference Volume v1.0*, ed. James C. Mulvenon and Andrew N. D. Yang (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2002), 225–46.
- ⁵ From what is known as the CCP’s Gutian Conference of 18 December 1929 to today, the Party Branch system in units and the PCs have been responsible for personnel matters, security, discipline and ideology in units at all levels down to the company level. Wortzel, “The General Political Department,” 225–26.
- ⁶ Andrew J. Kiser, “Mission Command: The Historical Roots of Mission Command in the US Army” (master’s thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Defense Technical Information Center, 21 May 2015), 2–6.
- ⁷ Gunter Rosseels, “Moltke’s Command Philosophy in the Twenty-First Century: Fallacy or Verity?” (master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Defense Technical Information Center, 6 August 2012), 30–56.
- ⁸ General Staff, *Field Service Regulations, U.S. Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1905).
- ⁹ Huang, Shi, Liu and Wang, “Theories of Foreign Militaries on Mission Command and Their Implications,” 142.
- ¹⁰ Colonel Clinton Ancker III, “The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present,” *Military Review* (March–April 2013): 43.
- ¹¹ Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982).
- ¹² Huang, Shi, Liu and Wang, “Theories of Foreign Militaries on Mission Command and Their Implications,” 142.
- ¹³ On the 1986 issuance, see General Williams R. Richardson, “FM-100-5: The AirLand Battle in 1986,” *Military Review* (January–February 1986): 174–75.

- ¹⁴ Michael McCormick, *The New FM 100-5: A Return to Operational Art* (monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS 18 April 1987), 6.
- ¹⁵ Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 2003).
- ¹⁶ FM 6-0, 1-17.
- ¹⁷ FM 6-0, vii.
- ¹⁸ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 2012); Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 2012).
- ¹⁹ ADRP 6-0, iii.
- ²⁰ These are outlined succinctly in Ian Johnson, *Sparks: China's Underground Historians and Their Battle for the Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 102.
- ²¹ Huang, Shi, Liu and Wang, "Theories of Foreign Militaries on Mission Command and Their Implications," 144.
- ²² Huang, Shi, Liu and Wang, "Theories of Foreign Militaries on Mission Command and Their Implications," 145.
- ²³ Huang, Shi, Liu and Wang, "Theories of Foreign Militaries on Mission Command and Their Implications," 144–45.
- ²⁴ See 中央军委深化国防和军队改革领导小组编辑 (Central Military Commission and Military Reform Small Study Group, eds.), 习近平关于深化国防和改革重要论述摘编 (*Selections from Xi Jinping's Important Speeches on National Defense and Army Building*) (Beijing: PLA Press, 2016), 20–21, 59–60.
- ²⁵ Dong Wei (董伟), "怎样塑造任务式指挥氛围 (How to shape the atmosphere of mission-based command)," *People's Liberation Army Daily* (hereafter PLA Daily), no. 3-2, 2 March 2021, 7.
- ²⁶ Dong, "How to shape the atmosphere of mission-based command," 7.
- ²⁷ Dong, "How to shape the atmosphere of mission-based command," 7.
- ²⁸ Xu Lisheng (徐立生), Feng Liang (冯良) and Wang Zhaoyong (王兆勇), eds., *路上联合机动作战 (Joint Mobile Ground Operations)* (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2015).
- ²⁹ Xu, Feng and Wang, *Joint Mobile Ground Operations*, 142–45.
- ³⁰ Chen Shuai (陈帅) and Li Zongren (李宗任), "角色-任务指挥长 (The Role of the Mission Commander)," *PLA Daily*, no. 9-18, 18 September 2018, 11.
- ³¹ Chen and Li, "The Role of the Mission Commander," 11.
- ³² Boris Egorov, "How the USSR Helped the Communists Seize Power in China," *Russia Beyond*, 14 January 2021; see also "Soviet Intervention in China—1937–1941," Global Security.org, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/precivil-su.htm>.
- ³³ Jonathan R. Adelman, "Origins of the Difference in Political Influence of the Soviet and Chinese Armies: The Officer Corps in the Civil Wars," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 347–69.
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- ³⁵ Ray C. Finch, “Ensuring the Political Loyalty of the Russian Soldier,” *Military Review* (July–August 2020): 52–67.
- ³⁶ Kent J. Goff, “The Political Officer (Zampolit) in the Soviet Army” (graduate thesis submitted to Arkansas State University Graduate School, 1 December 2005).
- ³⁷ Finch, “Ensuring the Political Loyalty of the Russian Soldier,” 63–66.
- ³⁸ Andrew Osborn, “In Soviet Echo, Putin Gives Russian Army a Political Wing,” Reuters, 31 July 2018.
- ³⁹ Rolf-Dieter Muller, *Hitler’s Wehrmacht 1935–1945*, trans. Janice W. Ancker (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 34–35.
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- ⁴¹ Qiu Jin 邱进, “为中国式现代化提供坚强安全保障: 深入学习贯彻习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想 (Provide a strong security guarantee for Chinese-style modernization: In-depth study and implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era),” *人民日报* (*People’s Daily*), 17 January 2023.
- ⁴² Xi Jinping (习近平), “不断提高军队党的建设科学化水平为实现强军目标提供坚强思想和组织保证 (Continuously improve the scientific level of party building in the military and provide a strong ideological and organizational guarantee for achieving the goal of strengthening the army),” 13 November 2013 in PLA General Political Department (中国人民解放军总政治部), ed, 习近平关于国防和军队建设重要论述选编, *Vol. 1 (Selected Expositions of Xi Jinping on National Defense and Army Building, Vol. 1)* (Beijing: PLA General Political Department, 2014), 197.
- ⁴³ Xi Jinping, “确保军队建设坚定正确的政治方向 (We must ensure a firm and correct political direction for army building),” 26 December 2012 in PLA General Political Department (中国人民解放军总政治部), ed, 习近平关于国防和军队建设重要论述选编, *Vol. 1 (Selected Expositions of Xi Jinping on National Defense and Army Building, Vol. 1)* (Beijing: PLA General Political Department, 2014), 54–58.
- ⁴⁴ See Lindsay Maizland, “China’s Modernizing Military,” Council on Foreign Relations, 5 February 2020.
- ⁴⁵ Li Yun (黎云), “中央军委印发: 关于提高军事训练实战化水平的意见 (The Central Military Commission issued the ‘Opinions on Raising the Level of Actual Military Training’),” 20 March 2014, *China Central Government Portal*.



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