Twitter Thread by Neil Thomas ■■



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THREAD: Who are the rising stars of Chinese elite politics in the central Party-State bureaucracy?

For @MacroPoloChina I analyzed last year's ministerial-level promotions to posts in Beijing

TLDR: Ties to Xi Jinping—or a Xi ally—are very helpful! (1/14)

https://t.co/kO2A0Efyq2

Table 1. Ministerial-Level Promotions in Central Party Agencies since January 2020

Name	Position	Previous Position	Central Committee	Age (2022)
Chen Gang	All-China Federation of Trade Unions Party Secretary; Central Guidance Commission on Building Spiritual Civilization Member (leadership group for ideology work)	Hebei Deputy Party Secretary; Hebei Xiong'an New Area Party Secretary	Alternate	57
Liang Yanshun	Central Party and State Organs Working Committee Executive Deputy Secretary	Propaganda Department Deputy Director	No	60
Li Shulei	Central Party School Executive Vice President	Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Deputy Secretary; National Supervisory Commission Deputy Director	No	58
Jiang Jinquan	Central Policy Research Office Director; Central Comprehensively Deepening Reforms Commission Office Director	Central Policy Research Office Executive Deputy Director	No	63
Meng Xiangfeng	General Office Executive Deputy Director	Central Party and State Organs Working Committee Executive Deputy Secretary	Member	58
Tuo Zhen	People's Daily President & Editor-in-Chief	People's Daily Editor-in-Chief	Alternate	63
Pan Yue	United Front Work Department Deputy Director; Central Institute of Socialism Senior Vice President; State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office Director	Central Institute of Socialism Party Secretary and Senior Vice President	Alternate	62

Note: Blue shading shows a promotion from deputy provincial-ministerial level to full provincial-ministerial level. Others listed had already reached full provincial-ministerial

Seven politicians were promoted to ministerial-level positions in central Party agencies last year

All are likely to feature on the next Central Committee selected at the 2022 Party Congress

Some could make the CCP's elite 25-person Politburo (2/14)

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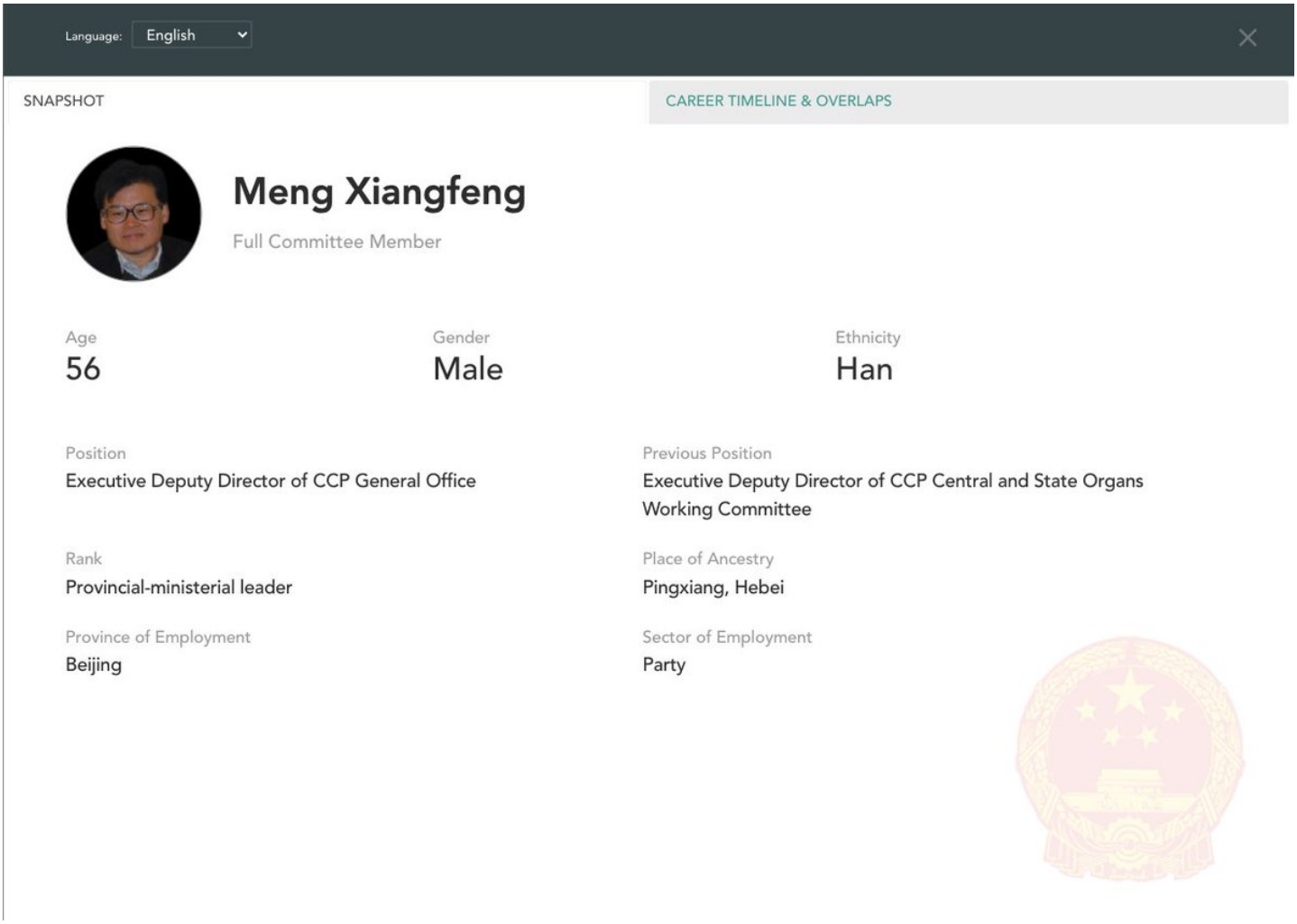
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Likeliest for the Politburo is Meng Xiangfeng, new Executive Deputy Director of the CCP General Office

He would replace Xi ally Ding Xuexiang as CCP chief-of-staff if Ding is promoted further in 2022

Meng worked under Xi allies Cai Qi in Hangzhou and Chen Xi in Liaoning (3/14)



Less likely for the Politburo but still important is Jiang Jinquan, new Director of the CCP Policy Research Office

He replaces 5th-ranked leader Wang Huning who led the Party's brains trust for 18 years

Wang remains prominent and will be <68 in 2022, so he'll stay around (4/14)



Other notable central Party promotions include Li Shulei and Liang Yanshun, who both assisted Xi when he led the Central Party School from 2007-2012

Li is a political conservative who is said to be quite close with Xi, even drafting his 2014 speech on culture and art (5/14)



Nine of 26 State Council cabinet ministries got a new leader in 2020

But less ministers become national leaders under Xi

Only 3 of the 19th Politburo (2017-2022) had been State Council ministers, compared to 5 in the 18th Politburo (2012-2017) (6/14)

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Table 2. Ministerial-Level Promotions in the State Council since January 2020

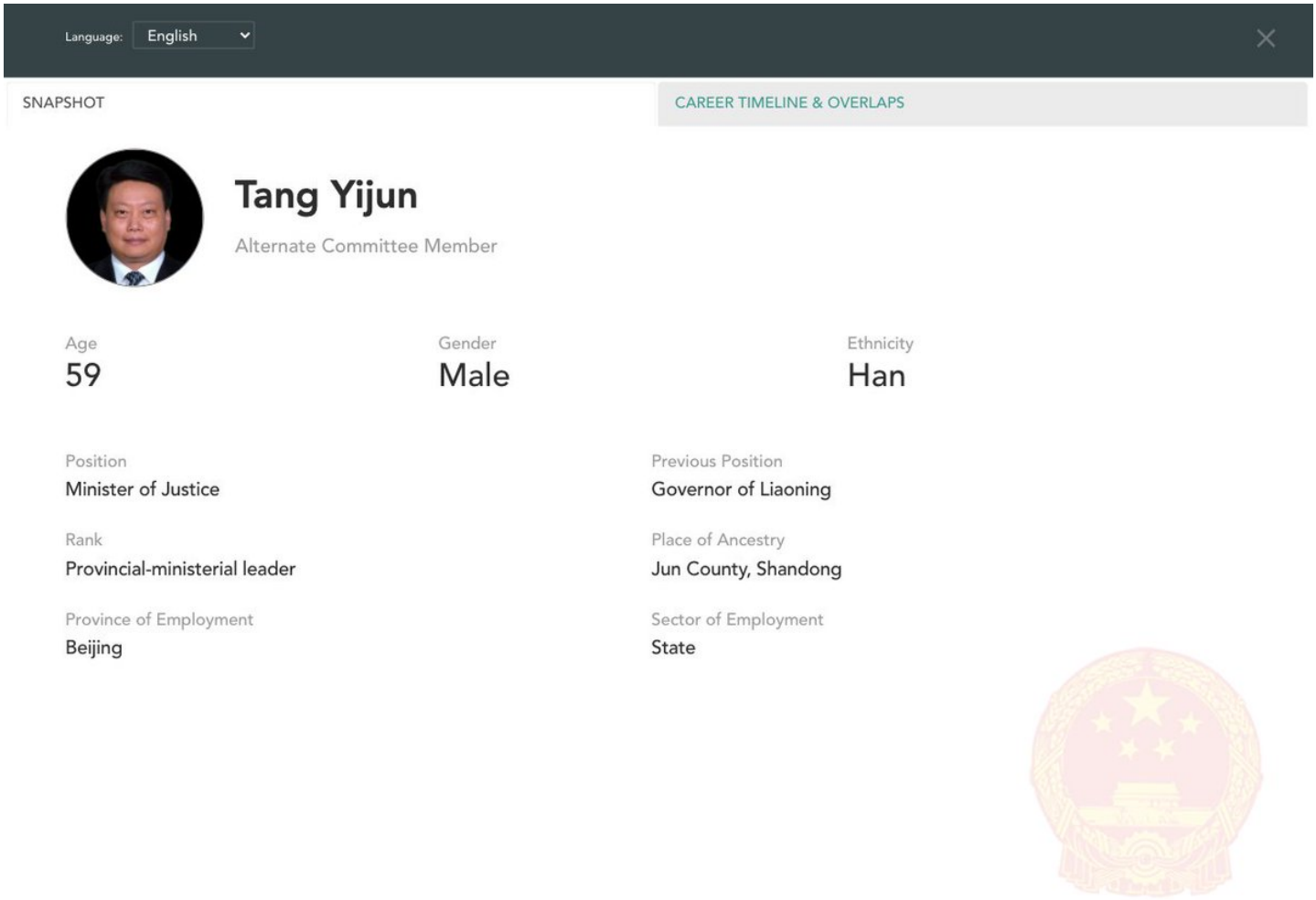
Name	Position	Previous Position	Central Committee	Age (2022)
Hou Jianguo*	Chinese Academy of Sciences President	Chinese Academy of Sciences Vice President	Member	63
Yin Hejun*	Chinese Academy of Sciences Vice President	Tianjin Deputy Party Secretary	Alternate	59
Tang Renjian	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs	Gansu Governor	Member	60
Wang Wentao	Minister of Commerce	Heilongjiang Governor	Alternate	58
Yu Jianhua	Ministry of Commerce International Trade Representative & Vice Minister	Ministry of Commerce Deputy International Trade Representative & Vice Minister	No	61
Hu Heping	Minister of Culture and Tourism; CCP Propaganda Department Deputy Director	Shaanxi Party Secretary	Member	60
Huang Runqiu	Minister of Ecology and Environment	Vice Minister of Ecology and Environment	No (Minor Party)	59
Sun Jinlong	Ministry of Ecology and Environment Party Secretary & Vice Minister	Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps Party Secretary	Member	60
Xiao Yaqing	Minister of Industry and Information Technology	State Administration for Market Regulation Director	Member	63
Tang Yijun	Minister of Justice; CCP Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission Member	Liaoning Governor	Alternate	61
Li Guoying	Minister of Water Resources (awaiting final appointment)	Anhui Governor	Member	59
Hou Kai	National Audit Office Auditor-General; CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Standing Committee Member	CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Standing Committee Member; National Supervisory Commission Member; Central Party and State Organs Working Committee Deputy Secretary	No	60
Tang Dengjie	National Development and Reform Commission Vice Chair	Fujian Governor	Alternate	58
Chen Xiaojiang	National Ethnic Affairs Commission Director (first non-minority director since 1954); CCP United Front Work Department Deputy Director	CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Deputy Secretary; National Supervisory Commission Deputy Director	No	60
Zhang Gong*	State Administration for Market Regulation Director	All-China Federation of Trade Unions Vice Chair	Alternate	61
He Ping*	Xinhua News Agency President & Editor-in-Chief	Xinhua News Agency Editor-in-Chief	No	65

Notes: Blue shading shows a promotion from deputy provincial-ministerial level to full provincial-ministerial level. Others listed had already reached full provincial-ministerial level. An asterisk indicates a person who leads a ministerial-level agency that is under

Tang Yijun, new Minister of Justice, is one of the more likely Politburo hopefuls

Guo Shengkun, head of the CCP Political and Legal Affairs Commission, will retire in 2022

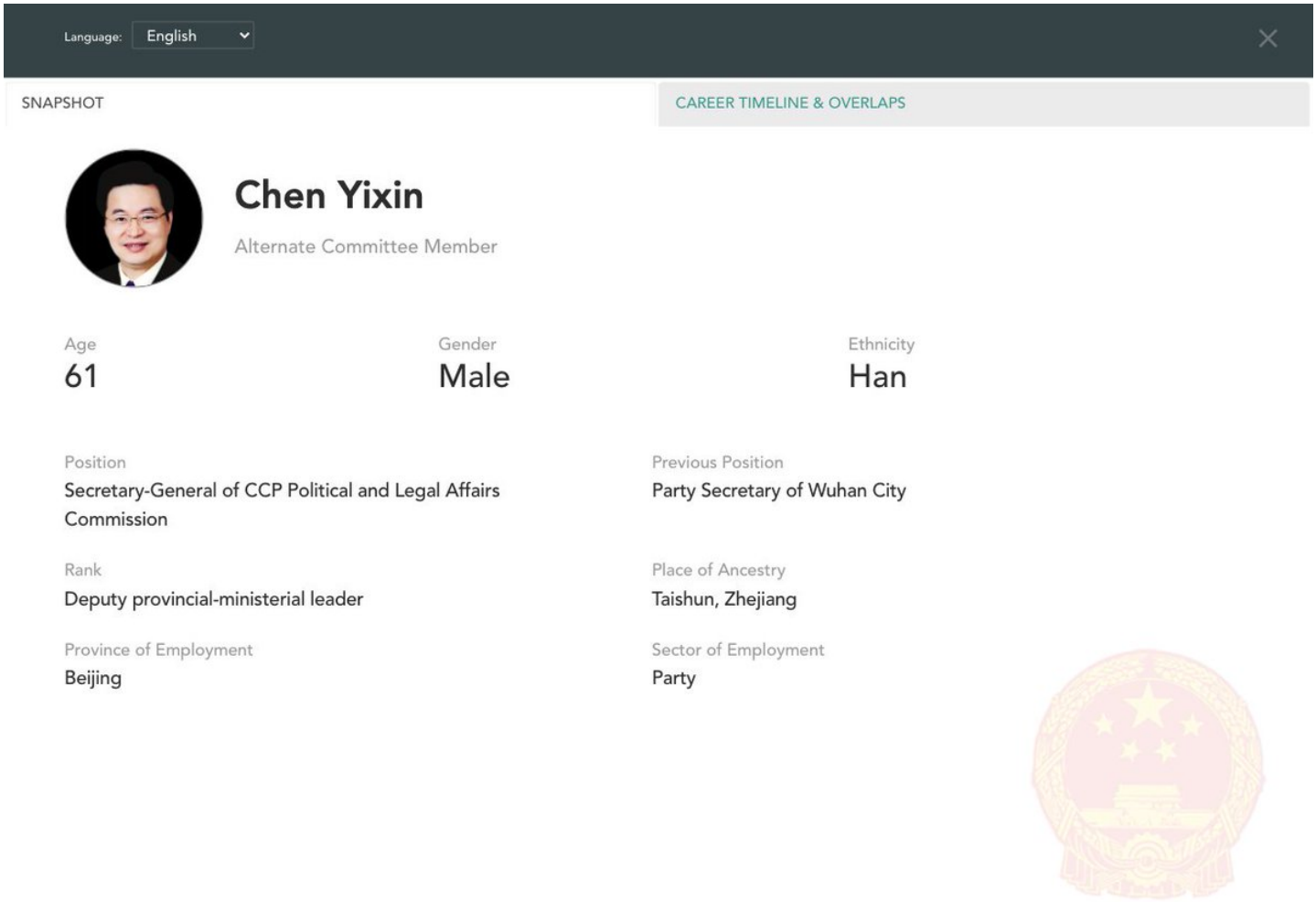
He'd usually be replaced by the Minister of Public Security, but Zhao Kezhi also retires in 2022 (7/14)



Current PLAC Sec-Gen Chen Yixin is favorite to replace Guo on the Politburo, but Tang also seems a contender

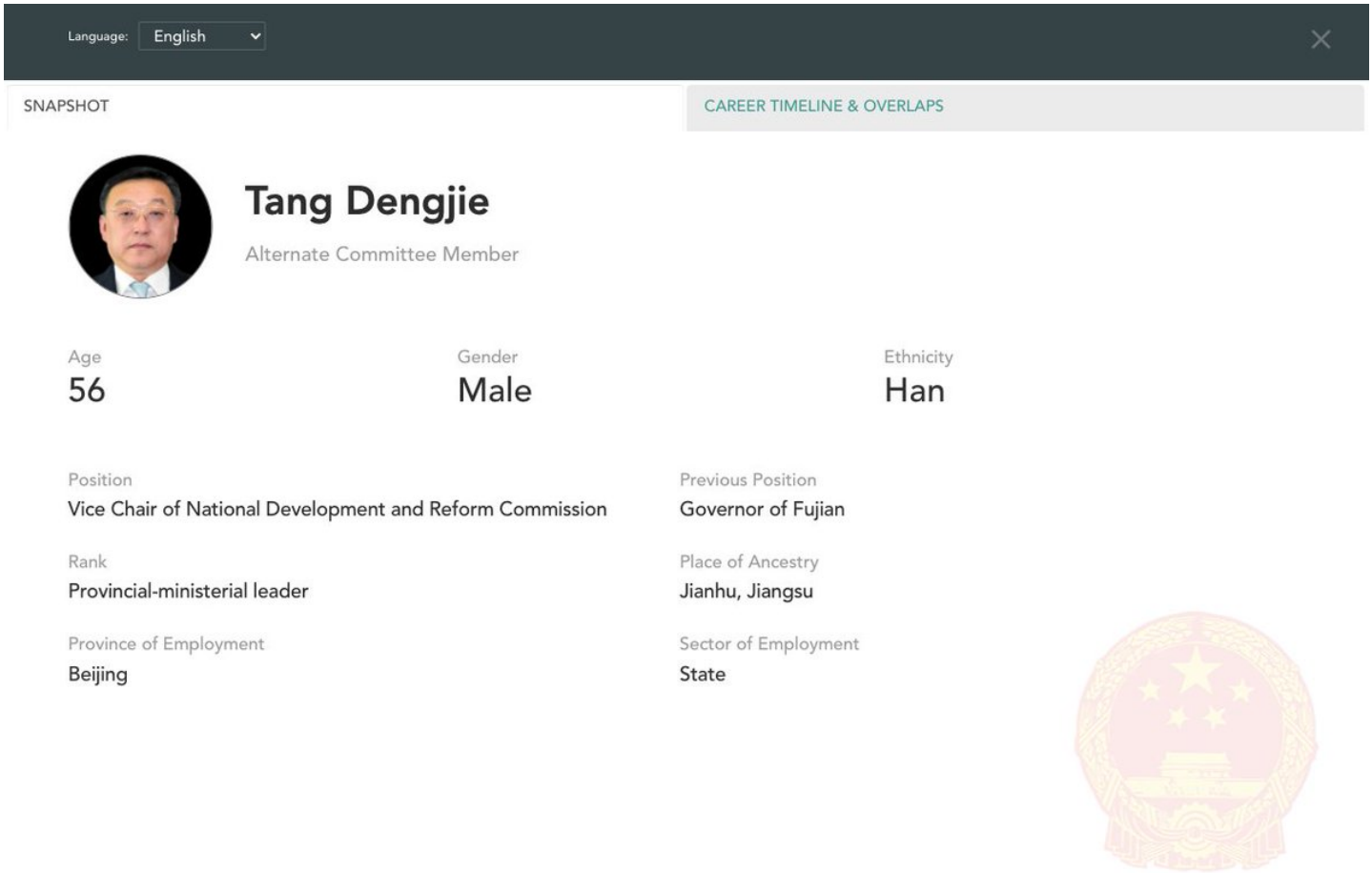
Both worked under Xi when he was Zhejiang Party Secretary (2002-2007)

But Tang is on many leading groups, led a province & is a minister (like last 4 PLAC heads) (8/14)



The two youngest SC promotions—Tang Dengjie and Wang Wentao—both served under Xi during his stint as Shanghai Party Secretary in 2007

Tang Dengjie, a former weapons and auto SOE executive, could replace He Lifeng as Chair of the National Development and Reform Commission (9/14)



Interestingly, many rising stars have not worked with Xi, but have worked closely with Xi's allies on the Politburo

Tang Renjian has worked under Liu He

Hu Heping — Chen Xi

Yin Hejun, Zhang Gong — Cai Qi

Chen Xiaojiang, Hou Kai — Wang Qishan, Yang Xiaodu, Zhao Leji

(10/14)

"All told, six of the nine new cabinet ministers either worked with Xi or one of his Politburo associates. Proximity to Xi now seems to hold more explanatory power for personnel shifts in Chinese elite politics than factional competition."

(11/14)

https://t.co/kO2A0Efyq2

This finding resonates with a piece I did for @MacroPoloChina last year

I found the proportion of Xi associates on the Party's elite 25-member Politburo increased from 20% in 2012 to 60% in 2017

I haven't seen evidence this trend won't intensify (12/14)

https://t.co/isCzKeaO5n

Table 2. The 19th CCP Politburo (2017-2022)

Name	Position in 18th Central Committee (2012-2017)	Past Affiliation with Xi	Age (2022)
Xi Jinping	General Secretary	Himself	69
Li Keqiang	Politburo Standing Committee	None (Communist Youth League)	67
Li Zhanshu	Politburo	Worked close to Xi in Hebei	72
Wang Yang	Politburo	None (Communist Youth League)	67
Wang Huning	Politburo	None (Loyal adviser)	67
Zhao Leji	Politburo	Shaanxi family connection	65
Han Zheng	Politburo	Worked under Xi in Shanghai	68
Ding Xuexiang	Alternate Member	Worked under Xi in Shanghai	60
Wang Chen	Full Member	Shaanxi Cultural Revolution connection	72
Liu He	Full Member	Childhood friend from 1960s	70
Xu Qiliang	Politburo	Worked under Xi in Fujian	72
Sun Chunlan	Politburo	None (Hu Jintao)	72
Li Xi	Alternate Member	Family associate from 1980s	66
Li Qiang	Alternate Member	Worked under Xi in Zhejiang	63
Li Hongzhong	Full Member	None (Early supporter of Xi as CCP core)	66
Hu Chunhua	Politburo	None (Communist Youth League)	59
Yang Jiechi	Full Member	None (Loyal adviser)	72
Yang Xiaodu	None	Worked under Xi in Shanghai	69
Zhang Youxia	Full Member	Family associate from 1960s	72
Chen Xi	Full Member	Classmate at Tsinghua University	69
Chen Quanguo	Full Member	None (Communist Youth League)	67
Chen Min'er	Full Member	Worked under Xi in Zhejiang	62
Guo Shengkun	Full Member	None (Jiang Zemin)	68
Huang Kunming	Alternate Member	Worked under Xi in Fujian and Zhejiang	66
Cai Qi	None	Worked under Xi in Fujian and Zhejiang	67

Ties to Xi Jinping Promoted from Alternate Member Promoted from outside Central Committee

Part 1 of this series showed rising stars promoted to local leadership positions as the new Party Secretaries and Governors of Chinese provinces

Provincial leadership was already the surest path to national positions, but is even more so under Xi (13/14)

https://t.co/rHqxMbuoCz

We @MacroPoloChina maintain an updated database of demographic & career data for all ~370 members of the CCP Central Committee

You can see career overlaps between different members and search by demographic criteria like gender, ethnicity, sector (14/14)

https://t.co/kfzmrb4uOF