

INSS



INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL
STRATEGIC STUDIES

CHINA STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES 14

China's Other Army: The People's Armed Police in an Era of Reform

by Joel Wuthnow



Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs
Institute for National Strategic Studies
National Defense University

Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs

The mission of the China Center is to serve as a national focal point and resource center for multidisciplinary research and analytic exchanges on the national goals and strategic posture of the People's Republic of China and the ability of that nation to develop, field, and deploy an effective military instrument in support of its national strategic objectives. The Center keeps officials in the Department of Defense (DOD), other government agencies, and Congress apprised of the results of these efforts. The Center also engages the faculty and students of the National Defense University and other components of the DOD professional military education system in aspects of its work and thereby assists their respective programs of teaching, training, and research. The Center has an active outreach program designed to promote exchanges among American and international analysts of Chinese military affairs.

Cover photo: Chinese paramilitary policemen take part in military training, Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, December 22, 2017
(Li Shijin/Imagechina via Associated Press)

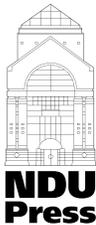
China's Other Army

China's Other Army: The People's Armed Police in an Era of Reform

by Joel Wuthnow

*Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs
Institute for National Strategic Studies
China Strategic Perspectives, No. 14*

Series Editor: Phillip C. Saunders



National Defense University Press
Washington, D.C.
April 2019

Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Defense Department or any other agency of the Federal Government. Cleared for public release; distribution unlimited.

Portions of this work may be quoted or reprinted without permission, provided that a standard source credit line is included. NDU Press would appreciate a courtesy copy of reprints or reviews.

First printing, April 2019

For current publications of the Institute for National Strategic Studies, please visit inss.ndu.edu/Publications.aspx.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	4
Background	5
Key Organizational Changes.....	9
Drivers of Reform.....	16
Challenges and Indicators of Further Progress	24
Implications.....	28
Conclusion	31
Appendix: PAP Grade Structure.....	32
Notes	33
About the Author	45

Executive Summary

China's premier paramilitary force—the People's Armed Police (PAP)—is undergoing its most profound restructuring since its establishment in 1982.

- Previously under dual civilian and military command, the PAP has been placed firmly under China's military. As chairman of the Central Military Commission, Xi Jinping now has direct control over all of China's primary instruments of coercive power. This represents the highest degree of centralized control over China's paramilitary forces since the Cultural Revolution.
- Local and provincial officials have lost the ability to unilaterally deploy PAP units in the event of civil unrest or natural disasters, but can still request support through a new coordination system.
- The China Coast Guard, which previously reported to civilian agencies, has been placed within the PAP and is thus now part of the military command structure.
- New PAP operational commands, known as “mobile contingents,” have been established with a diverse mix of capabilities. They will play a key role in protecting the capital and could be deployed in a Taiwan contingency, among other missions.
- Geographic distribution of mobile PAP units remains skewed to western China, providing rapid reaction capabilities that could be used to repress dissent in Xinjiang and Tibet.

Politically, the reforms reaffirm Chinese Communist Party (and Xi Jinping's) control over the PAP and may reduce the scope for local abuse of power.

- Despite earlier reforms, the PAP's chain of command was convoluted, confusing, and decentralized. These reforms sought to ensure central party control over an organization deemed vital for ensuring the party's security and survival.
- Centralizing command also attempts to bolster the party's legitimacy by reducing the ability of local officials to misapply PAP assets through corruption or overuse of force to handle local grievances.

- A consequence of tighter control, however, could be slower responses to incidents as local officials have to submit requests through PAP channels. In some cases, officials may be reluctant to request PAP support in order to avoid negative attention from senior leaders.
- The reforms place Xi firmly in charge of the PAP, though he will have to exercise authority through trusted agents. The success of continued PAP reforms will depend on elite consensus that centralized management of PAP deployments is desirable.

Operationally, the reforms narrow the PAP's responsibilities to three key areas: domestic stability, wartime support, and maritime rights protection.

- Several law enforcement and economic functions previously under the PAP, such as border guards and gold mining, have been divested and placed within appropriate civilian ministries and localities.
- PAP internal security forces remain focused on domestic security missions, including maintaining stability in western China, guarding government compounds, and disaster relief. PAP units would also be on the frontlines in responding to a major threat to the regime.
- The PAP has also been encouraged to play a stronger role in supporting People's Liberation Army (PLA) combat operations. Key roles could include guarding critical infrastructure and supply lines during wartime. Nevertheless, current PAP-PLA cooperation appears superficial and will remain so if the PAP is not better integrated into the PLA's joint command system.
- Incorporating the coast guard into the PAP could presage stronger integration with the navy in terms of operations, training, and equipment development, but this will require closer institutional cooperation than currently exists.
- The PAP will continue to face capabilities gaps, especially in niche areas such as special operations forces and helicopters. Its ability to close those gaps will depend on its political effectiveness in future budget negotiations.

PAP activities beyond China's borders are likely to increase and could have implications for the United States and other Indo-Pacific states.

- The PAP has emerged as a partner of choice for foreign governments in areas such as counterterrorism and peacekeeping training, in addition to its longstanding role as contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions.
- PAP units are also likely to deploy overseas to support counterterrorism operations. In some cases, Beijing may also rely on PAP capabilities to protect Chinese citizens and assets abroad, such as projects under the Belt and Road Initiative.
- Closer coast guard–navy cooperation, if it emerges, would increase risks to U.S. and allied maritime operations in the South and East China seas. U.S. officials will need to determine if new agreements are needed, and feasible, to cover coast guard encounters.
- Over the long run, PAP forces may one day deploy to support Chinese combat operations; one example is a potential role in providing stability during a pacification campaign on Taiwan.

Introduction

Established in 1982, the People's Armed Police (PAP) is the paramilitary wing of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with a primary responsibility for maintaining domestic stability and a secondary role in providing rear area support for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) during wartime. The PAP—with a strength of up to a million personnel—also fills a variety of other important roles and missions, such as responding to natural disasters, guarding government compounds, and participating in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations around the world. For most of its existence, the PAP was under the dual leadership of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and the State Council, with provincial and local officials granted significant latitude over PAP deployments in the event of emergencies. Some efforts to centralize authority were made during the 1990s and 2000s, but the basic character of the PAP went unchanged for three decades.

Under Xi Jinping's tenure, China has embarked on a series of major reforms to the PAP. These followed, and in some ways complemented, earlier organizational reforms to the PLA.¹ Indeed, while changes to the PLA came first, the breadth of reforms to the PAP—which were unveiled toward the end of 2017 and into 2018—is no less ambitious. Key changes included:

- restructuring PAP headquarters
- placing the PAP under the sole authority of the CMC and limiting the ability of local officials to deploy PAP units during a crisis
- establishing new mobile contingents, which will provide national leaders with additional rapid response capabilities
- divesting the PAP of certain law enforcement and economic responsibilities, such as border inspections and gold mining
- merging the coast guard—previously under civilian authority—into the PAP, and thus into the military command structure.

These changes raise a number of questions: what goals motivated Xi and other officials to develop such an expansive reform agenda? What political, operational, and bureaucratic challenges will the PAP encounter as it implements the reforms? What implications could the

reforms have for China's domestic governance and elite politics, the Chinese armed forces, and for the United States and others in the region?

This paper explores the key dimensions, drivers, and implications of the PAP reorganization. The first section chronicles the PAP's development between 1982 and 2017, highlighting the enduring problems that eluded previous reforms. The second section provides a detailed overview of the five major changes outlined in the bullets above. The third section argues that the reforms can be explained by a mix of political and operational factors. Politically, the reforms strengthened Xi's (and the party's) control over the paramilitary forces while enhancing the party's legitimacy by diminishing problems such as misapplication of force and corruption. Operationally, the PAP will focus more squarely on three core missions: internal security, wartime support, and maritime law enforcement.

This is followed by a discussion of new and enduring challenges, including a near-term disruption of the PAP due to new responsibilities and personnel; ambiguities in the new system for deploying PAP units; weak institutional coordination between the PAP and PLA, including between the coast guard and navy; and gaps between existing and desired capabilities, which may be difficult to fill for budgetary reasons. The fifth section discusses the implications of the reforms, focusing on stronger unified party control, better management of resources, and an increasing ability to accomplish core domestic and international missions. The latter category includes a more prominent role in regional law enforcement activities; more cohesive maritime operations, strengthening Beijing's ability to wage "hybrid warfare" in the South and East China seas;² and potential PAP involvement in future overseas contingencies.

The paper is based primarily on authoritative CCP, PLA, and PAP sources, including *PAP Daily* articles and selections from PAP journals. It is supported by Chinese media commentary, international news reporting, discussions with Chinese civilian and PLA analysts held in late 2018, and foreign assessments. Chinese open sources remain limited in some areas, such as identifying the occupants of some key PAP billets, though the data are rich enough to allow for an initial examination of the reforms and their consequences.

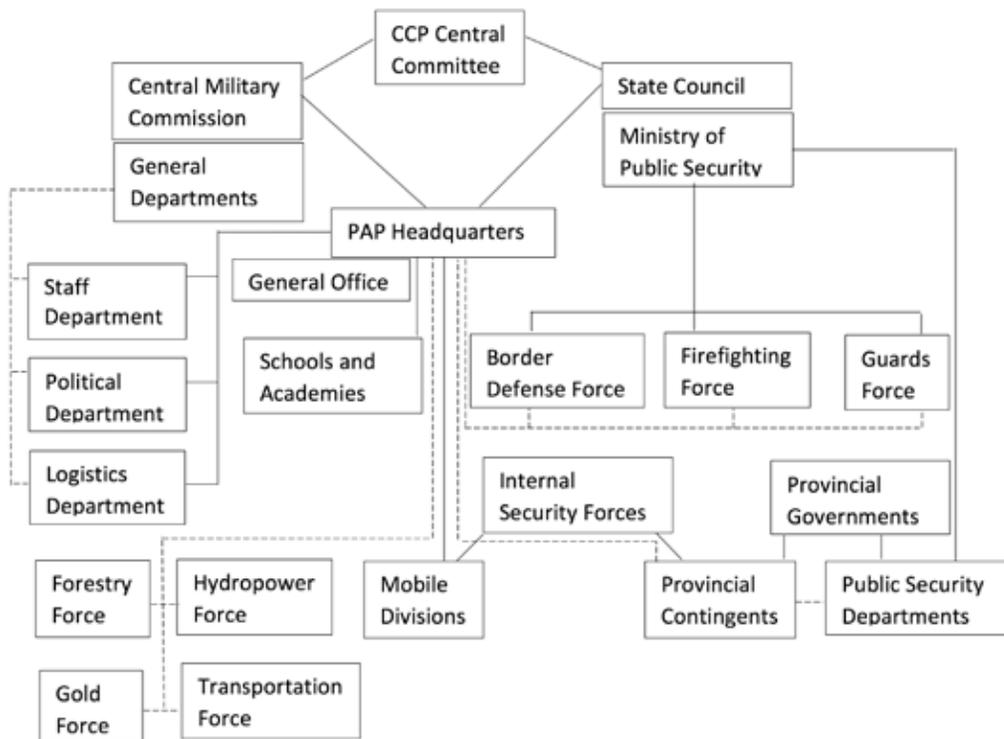
Background

Since the 1930s, the CCP has fielded a paramilitary force to protect the party and, after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, ensure domestic stability. This force existed under different names, moved between different organizations, and involved a shifting degree of central versus local control.³ The modern PAP, established on June 19, 1982, was the result of Deng Xiaoping's desire to streamline the military's responsibilities and organizational

structure—the PAP’s predecessor had been under PLA authority for several years prior to Deng’s arrival—and reduce its bureaucratic clout while handing more authority over to local officials. The PAP remained an integral part of China’s armed forces, alongside the PLA and the militia, and was ultimately responsible to central party leaders, but actual lines of authority varied over time and across different operating forces within the PAP.

Prior to the recent reforms, the PAP was under the dual leadership of the CMC and State Council (see figure 1). According to the 2006 defense white paper, the CMC was responsible for “management of officers” (including selection and promotions), organizational structure, training, and political work, while the State Council—via “relevant functional departments,” referring principally to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS)—oversaw PAP operations, budgets, size, and composition.⁴ Reporting to both the CMC and State Council was PAP headquarters, led by a military region grade [*dajunqu ji*, 大军区级] commander and a first political commissar who

Figure 1. PAP Organizational Structure Prior to Reform



Key: Straight line: supervisory relationship; dotted line: coordinating relationship

served concurrently as MPS director.⁵ PAP headquarters was organized along the same lines as the PLA, with first-level staff, political, and logistics departments and a general office to manage paper flows. One difference was that, unlike the PLA, which established a General Armament Department in 1998, the PAP's equipment bureau remained under the staff department.

PAP headquarters had only limited authority over 31 contingents [*zongdui*, 总队] based in the provinces, autonomous regions, and provincial-level cities. Each contingent was composed of detachments [*zhidui*, 支队], battalions [*dadui*, 大队], and companies [*zhongdui*, 中队] at the prefecture, county, and township levels, respectively.⁶ Prior to 1995, command and management authority over these units was delegated to provincial- and lower level MPS departments, an arrangement cemented by double-hatting MPS chiefs as first political commissars in PAP units at the same level. Spurred by the lessons of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, in which PAP forces proved ineffective at handling a national crisis, the State Council and CMC issued a directive in March 1995 that placed PAP personnel management under centralized CMC control. However, local MPS bureaus—and thus provincial leaders and others with oversight of those departments—retained the authority to deploy [*tiaodong*, 跳动] PAP units within their area of responsibility. In August 2009, the National People's Congress (NPC) approved the PAP Law, which stated that deployments must strictly adhere to procedures prescribed by the CMC and State Council, but did not provide details on those processes.⁷

This autonomy allowed local officials opportunities to use PAP units at their disposal in illicit or egregious ways. Most notably, PAP forces were used to quell protests and other “mass incidents” [*quntixing shijian*, 群体性事件] on many occasions in the 1990s and 2000s. These incidents, which centered on local grievances ranging from labor disputes to environmental concerns, topped 58,000 in 2003, with about 700 of those involving direct clashes with police forces.⁸ Some of these involved the use of force by PAP units. For instance, in December 2005, local officials summoned the PAP to quash an uprising in Shanwei, Guangdong, resulting in the death of at least 20 protesters, while in June 2008, local PAP forces clashed with protesters following a similar incident in Wenjian county, Guizhou Province.⁹ Use of PAP forces to abet local corruption was also a problem, as discussed below.

In 1997, central leadership over the PAP was strengthened with the transfer of 14 mobile divisions [*jidong shi*, 机动师] from the PLA as part of a 500,000-person downsizing.¹⁰ These divisions, accounting for roughly 150,000 personnel, were at a second-tier [*yi ji*, 乙级] level of readiness and thus less able to execute modern combat operations than other units, but could perform basic stability maintenance functions and provide rear area support to PLA units during wartime.¹¹ Once absorbed into the PAP, they were rebranded as “forces” [*budui*, 部队] and

geographically dispersed throughout the country. The mobile divisions offered national leaders additional capabilities to address crises such as the 2009 Urumqi riots—and one mobile division was in fact based within Xinjiang—and support events such as the 2008 Olympics.

Along with the provincial contingents, the mobile divisions comprised the internal security forces [*neiwei budui*, 内卫部队], the largest of the PAP's operational commands. The *Military Balance* estimated the overall size of the internal security forces at 400,000 during the 2000s (representing perhaps two-thirds of all PAP forces),¹² though some estimates have run higher, putting the total number at up to 800,000.¹³ The internal security forces were also the largest recipient of PAP expenditures, which increased in the 2000s both in absolute terms and as a share of China's domestic security spending.¹⁴ This funding came primarily from State Council coffers (with some contributions from local governments) and was thus not included in China's military budget, although some foreign analysts regarded it as a type of defense spending.¹⁵

Growing budgets allowed the internal security forces to modernize significantly during the 1990s and 2000s. Provincial units were increasingly mobile and lethal, with many units possessing armored personnel carriers and military-grade equipment such as anti-tank weapons and Type-05/06 submachine guns.¹⁶ The PAP, like the PLA, also focused on building “new-type capabilities” [*xinxing lilian*, 新型力量] such as helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which could be used in tandem with ground patrols to carry out a range of missions.¹⁷ Key developments included the introduction of Z-11WB light attack helicopters, which could provide support for counterterrorism, counternarcotics, battlefield reconnaissance, and other missions;¹⁸ establishment of helicopter units within five provinces as part of a June 2011 CMC and State Council decision;¹⁹ and the proliferation of special operations forces (SOF) capabilities in all of the provinces, as well as the creation of elite commando teams such as the Falcons and Snow Leopards.²⁰

Until the most recent reforms, the PAP also included seven other operating forces. However, in practice, none were directly supervised by PAP headquarters. Three were law enforcement services that reported to the MPS: the Public Security Border Defense Force [*gong'an bianfang budui*, 公安边防部队], which conducted surveillance and inspection activities along China's land and sea borders; Public Security Firefighting Force [*gong'an xiaofang budui*, 公安消防部队]; and Public Security Guards Force [*gong'an jingwei budui*, 公安警卫部队], which protected officials as well as visiting dignitaries. Li Zuobiao, a professor at the PAP Academy, assessed that placing Border Defense and other forces under their own command created a system of “horizontal internal relations” that was “not conducive to the long-term construction and sustainable

development of the PAP” and advocated centralizing these units under PAP headquarters (a suggestion that was not adopted).²¹

Through the Border Defense Force, the MPS also oversaw the China Maritime Police [*zhongguo gongan bianfang haijing budui*, 中国公安边防海警部队] (CMP), which was the largest and best equipped of China’s maritime law enforcement forces. Because of this affiliation, CMP personnel wore PAP uniforms, followed PAP ranks, and attended PAP academies. In July 2013, the CMP was merged into a new China Coast Guard [*zhongguo haijingju*, 中国海警局] (CCG) under the dual leadership of the MPS and State Oceanic Administration, thus ending its direct affiliation with the PAP, though former CMP troops continued to follow PAP customs.²²

The remaining four forces were specialized economic units that had been absorbed from the PLA in the mid-1980s. These included the Gold Force [*huangjin budui*, 黄金部队], responsible for securing gold and other mineral resources; Hydropower Force [*shuidian budui*, 水电部队], which managed hydroelectric dams; Forestry Force [*senlin budui*, 森林部队], responsible for fighting forest fires; and the Transportation Force [*jiaotong budui*, 交通部队], which maintained China’s national highways. These forces also reported to their own commands, rather than PAP headquarters, and coordinated with relevant State Council departments. China’s defense white papers credited these units with a number of accomplishments such as the Three Gorges Dam and the Sichuan-Tibet highway, which aided China’s overall economic growth.²³

In sum, the PAP developed into a proficient force capable of addressing a range of internal security, law enforcement, and economic challenges over its 35-year history. However, despite occasional reforms, such as the 1995 State Council/CMC directive and the 2009 PAP Law, PAP structure and lines of authority were not fundamentally altered.²⁴ Several problems and weaknesses persisted, including a fragmented chain of command, excessive authority in the hands of local officials, and missions that extended well beyond ensuring regime security.²⁵ The reasons for these failures are murky, but likely mirrored the impediments to overhauling the PLA during the same period, such as lack of effective political leadership from Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, bureaucratic intransigence, and threats that changes would pose to the interests of corrupt officers and local officials.²⁶

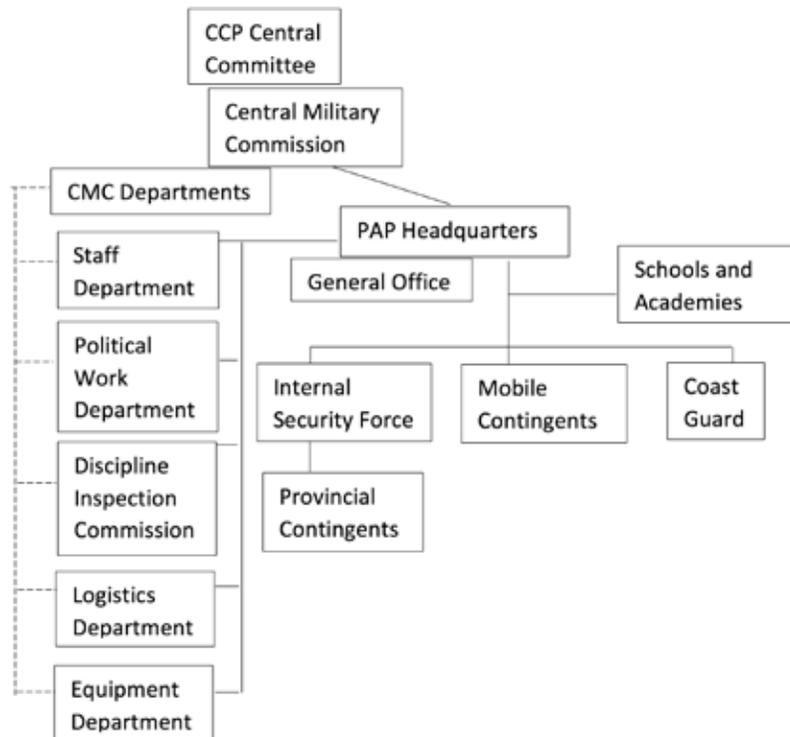
Key Organizational Changes

After Xi Jinping became party general secretary and CMC chairman in November 2012, a number of signs indicated that reforms to the PAP were forthcoming. At the Third Plenum of the 18th Party Congress in November 2013, the Central Committee decided to “improve the

structure and command and management system of the PAP.”²⁷ This complemented similar proposed “above the neck” changes to the PLA, including updating the military’s command and leadership structure, and denoted that reforms to the PAP were an integral part of updating China’s armed forces. In December 2014, Xi appointed Wang Ning, a long-time colleague and former PLA ground force officer, as PAP commander, ensuring that a reliable ally would be in place to oversee the reforms.²⁸ On January 1, 2016, the CMC published a detailed outline of a 5-year reform plan for the armed forces, which reiterated that the PAP’s “command and management system” would be updated.²⁹ Xi also visited a number of PAP units throughout this period, seeking to personally drum up support for reform within the ranks.³⁰

A series of major structural reforms were subsequently announced throughout the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018, leading to a significantly altered organizational configuration and new lines of authority (see figure 2). First were reforms to the PAP headquarters that were completed by October 2017.³¹ The PAP’s Discipline Inspection Commission was elevated to a first-level

Figure 2. PAP Organizational Structure after Reform



Key: Straight line: supervisory relationship; dotted line: coordinating relationship

department from its previous status as a subordinate unit of the PAP political department. This paralleled a similar change in which the PLA's Discipline Inspection Commission was promoted to independent status as part of a restructuring of the CMC in January 2016. The effect was to give more autonomy to anti-graft inspectors, freeing them from potential manipulation by officials within the political department.³²

The other key headquarters change was promoting the PAP equipment department to a first-level organization. This brought the PAP headquarters into alignment with the PLA's standard departmental structure and underscored the importance of acquiring advanced weapons and equipment in transforming the PAP into a more effective force. Former PLA officer Song Zhongping explained that the PAP had previously depended on the PLA to meet many of its equipment needs, but this was no longer a useful arrangement given the specialized capabilities the PAP would require in the future. A stronger equipment department, in Song's view, would be able to undertake this task more effectively.³³

Second, the PAP was placed under the sole authority of the CMC, thus eliminating the dual leadership system that had prevailed since 1982. The legal basis for this change was laid at the National People's Congress in November 2017, when delegates suspended provisions to the National Defense Law and the PAP Law, which established dual command.³⁴ In late December, the CCP Central Committee formalized the decision, which took effect on January 1, 2018.³⁵ In historical context, this decision returned the PAP to the status of its predecessor, which had been under full military control from 1966 to 1972 during the height of the Cultural Revolution.³⁶ As a consequence, the State Council would no longer exercise authority over PAP budgets, size, and composition, and MPS directors would not be dual-hatted as PAP first political commissars.

With the PAP now fully part of the military chain of command, local officials would no longer be able to unilaterally deploy PAP units. The Central Committee's December 2017 directive stated that, instead, relevant state and party organs at all levels would establish "mission needs and work coordination mechanisms" [*renwu xuqiu he gongzuo xietiao jizhi*, 任务需求和工作协调机制].³⁷ This mandate was repeated in provincial and local sources. For instance, a November 2018 Guangxi party committee opinion on emergency management work stated that working mechanisms should be established for party committees and governments at all levels to request military and PAP support in disaster response, and called for a clarification of work processes and responsibilities.³⁸ Similarly, the deputy mayor of Changzhou, Jiangsu, stated that a coordination mechanism should be established for PLA and PAP roles in flood mitigation and

response.³⁹ Meanwhile, the PAP eliminated the organizational basis of local control by removing MPS leaders from their concurrent positions as PAP first political commissars.⁴⁰

However, few details on the new coordination mechanism have emerged. One PLA interviewee speculated that local officials might retain some ability to mobilize local PAP forces in the event of a natural disaster, but would have to seek permission in the case of domestic unrest given the possibility of excessive use of force.⁴¹ Another PLA source suggested that all deployment decisions would have to be routed through the CMC.⁴² Speaking in a semi-authoritative media outlet, a local PAP staffer claimed that the PAP itself could approve deployment requests and that during emergencies, “frontline” forces could be called out with formal approvals from higher officials obtained after the fact.⁴³ This confusion was either the result of unclear guidance or, as in the old system, secrecy requirements that limit access to information on deployment regulations.

Third, the PAP’s internal security forces were reorganized. The 14 mobile divisions were dismantled, with their subordinate units (roughly equivalent to PLA army regiments) renamed as mobile detachments [*jidong zhidui*, 机动支队].⁴⁴ Some of these detachments were allocated to the provincial contingents, providing local authorities rapid reaction capabilities that could be utilized via the new coordination mechanism in the event of terrorism, natural disasters, or civil unrest.⁴⁵ While most provinces now appear to have only one such unit, several western provinces and autonomous regions were afforded multiple mobile detachments (see table 1). This sustained, or in some cases possibly augmented, existing PAP mobile capabilities in these locations.⁴⁶ This clearly reflected the judgment that mobile PAP units continue to be needed to maintain social order among ethnic minority populations in Xinjiang and Tibet, as well as in areas of surrounding provinces with large ethnic minority populations. In addition, PAP forces within the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps were elevated to the status of a full contingent—meaning that Xinjiang is now the only provincial-level region with two contingents.⁴⁷ Among China’s provincial-level cities, Beijing and Shanghai were both allocated multiple mobile detachments, suggesting concerns about terrorism in the capital and in China’s most important financial hub.⁴⁸

Other forces previously subordinate to the mobile divisions were assigned to two new “mobile contingents” [*jidong zongdui*, 机动总队].⁴⁹ Unlike the provincial contingents, these commands do not have a fixed geographic area of responsibility, but appear to provide national and local leaders additional capabilities that can be deployed for crisis response purposes. The mobile contingents are composed of a mix of mobile detachments as well as specialized capabilities, including two or three SOF and transportation detachments apiece, and one engineering/chemical defense and helicopter detachment (see table 2 for an order of battle).⁵⁰ Indicative

Table 1. Provincial Contingents with Multiple Mobile Detachments

Contingent	No. Mobile Detachments	Locations
Xinjiang	7	Urumqi (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd), Yining (4 th), Kashgar (5 th , 6 th), Hotan (7 th)
Beijing	4	Beijing
Sichuan	4	Chengdu (1 st , 4 th), Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (2 nd , 3 rd)
Yunnan	3	Kunming (1 st), Yulong Naxi Autonomous County (2 nd), Honghe Meng Autonomous County (3 rd)
Tibet	3	Lhasa (1 st , 2 nd), Chambdo (3 rd)
Qinghai	2	Xining (1 st), Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (2 nd)
Shanghai	2	Shanghai

Sources: Huatu; various local government Web sites

of their relatively high bureaucratic status, these are corps leader grade [*zhengjun ji*, 正军级] commands within the PAP's 15-level organizational hierarchy, one step higher than all of the provincial contingents other than Xinjiang and Beijing.⁵¹

The geographic distribution of units within the new mobile contingents provides clues about their operational priorities. The 1st Mobile Contingent is based in Shijiazhuang, a few hundred kilometers south of Beijing, with subordinate units located in Hebei and other provinces and cities in north-central China.⁵² This command would likely reinforce PAP units in Beijing in the event of a threat to the regime. Having such capabilities situated outside the capital is important given the lessons of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, in which some Beijing-based units refused to follow orders to use deadly force against local citizens. The 2nd Mobile Contingent is based in Fuzhou, with units concentrated in Fujian and surrounding provinces along the southeast coast. A key role of this command is supporting the PLA in preparing for a conflict across the Taiwan Strait. As discussed below, these units, along with others based in the provinces, would provide rear area support such as maintaining roads and safeguarding supply routes.

Fourth, several ancillary forces were separated from the PAP (see table 3).⁵³ Streamlining PAP functions was a consistent theme throughout the reform process. The May 2015 edition of China's defense white paper stated that the PAP should focus on counterterrorism, contingency

Table 2. Mobile Contingents Order of Battle

	1st Mobile Contingent	2nd Mobile Contingent
Headquarters	Shijiazhuang, Hebei	Fuzhou, Fujian
1 st Mobile Detachment	Panjin, Liaoning	Wuyi, Jiangsu
2 nd Mobile Detachment	Shenyang, Liaoning	Wuyi, Jiangsu
3 rd Mobile Detachment	Gutongliao, Inner Mongolia	Wuyi, Jiangsu
4 th Mobile Detachment	Tianjin	Putian, Fujian
5 th Mobile Detachment	Dingzhou, Hebei	Putian, Fujian
6 th Mobile Detachment	Baoding, Hebei	Guangzhou
7 th Mobile Detachment	Puzhong, Shanxi	Foshan, Guangdong
8 th Mobile Detachment	Zhengzhou, Henan	Mengzi, Yunnan
9 th Mobile Detachment	Pingliang, Gansu	Nanchong, Sichuan
1 st Special Operations Detachment	Beijing (Falcons)	Guangzhou (Snow Leopards)
2 nd Special Operations Detachment	Tianjin	Huzhou, Zhejiang
3 rd Special Operations Detachment	Shijiazhuang, Hebei	None
1 st Transportation Detachment	Beijing	Hefei, Anhui
2 nd Transportation Detachment	Xi'an, Shaanxi	Mianyang, Sichuan
3 rd Transportation Detachment	None	Linzhi, Tibet
Engineering/Chemical Defense Detachment	Huludao, Liaoning	Fuzhou, Fujian
Helicopter Detachment	Puzhong, Shanxi	Chengdu, Sichuan

Sources: *The Paper*, various (2018); Huatu

response, and stability maintenance, contrasting with previous white papers that lauded the PAP's economic construction and law enforcement duties.⁵⁴ The CMC reform plan adopted in November 2015 implemented a principle for the PAP that the “military is the military, the police are the police, and civilians are civilians” [*jun shi jun, jing shi jing, min shi min*, 军是军, 警是警, 民是民], suggesting a reduced set of PAP responsibilities.⁵⁵ Wang Qiang, a research fellow at the PLA National Defense University, explained that carrying out economic activities “distracts [the PAP] from the battlefield” and should be eliminated so that the PAP can “prepare to fight

and win.”⁵⁶ Military legal scholar Li Weihai similarly argued that any functions “not related to combat effectiveness should be discarded.”⁵⁷

In March 2018, the CCP Central Committee published its plan for reorganizing party and state organs, which outlined the intended destination of six PAP law enforcement and economic services.⁵⁸ The Border Defense Force and Guards Force were to be absorbed by the MPS, ending their status as active-duty PAP forces. Two others—the Firefighting Force and Forestry Force—would be placed under a new State Council Emergency Management Department [*yingji guanli bu*, 应急管理部], which would take charge of internal disaster prevention and relief.⁵⁹ The Gold Force and Hydropower Force were both designated as “non-active duty professional teams” [*fei xianyi zhuanye duiwu*, 非现役专业队伍] and reconstituted as state-owned enterprises under the supervision of the relevant State Council ministries. No announcement was made regarding the Transportation Force, but at least some of its subordinate units appear to have been merged into the new mobile contingents.⁶⁰ Table 3 identifies the status of the PAP forces after the reforms.

Fifth, on July 1, 2018, the China Coast Guard was transferred from State Council to PAP command and its formal name revised to become the Maritime Police Contingent of the PAP [*wuzhuang jingcha budui haijing zongdui*, 武装警察部队海警总队]. An indication of the pending merger came at the Fourth Session of the 12th NPC in March 2016, when PAP political commissar Sun Sijing argued that laws should be adjusted to reflect the PAP’s expanding missions, including in the area of “maritime rights protection” [*haishang weiquan*, 海上维权].⁶¹ PAP Academy professor Li Zuobiao noted that while the PAP did not have any actual maritime responsibilities (having lost a maritime function when the coast guard was established in 2013), Sun’s suggestion would create a legal pretext for the CCG to be integrated into the PAP.⁶²

The significance of the change was that the CCG would report through the military chain of command via PAP headquarters and no longer follow the directions of the State Oceanic Administration and MPS. This suggested a closer operational relationship with the navy, as discussed below, though precise details on how the two maritime services would coordinate are lacking. Nevertheless, there was also substantial continuity with the previous system. A PLA spokesman confirmed that despite the change in oversight, the CCG’s “basic duties” would not be altered.⁶³ A June 2018 NPC Standing Committee decision stated that those functions will include combating maritime crimes, protecting maritime security, developing maritime resources, maritime ecological protection, and fisheries management.⁶⁴ The decision also noted that the CCG would coordinate with public security organs and relevant departments.⁶⁵

Table 3. PAP Operating Forces before and after Reform

Prior to Reforms	After Reforms
Internal Security Force —Provincial Contingents —Mobile Divisions	—Remain —Dismantled; some units transferred to provincial contingents, others to mobile contingents
Gold Force	Ministry of Natural Resources and China National Gold Corporation
Forestry Force	State Council Emergency Management Department
Hydropower Force	China Aneng Construction Corporation, managed by State Council
Transportation Force	Some units transferred to mobile contingents
Border Defense Force	National Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Public Security/People's Police
Firefighting Force	State Council Emergency Management Department, localities
Guards Force	Ministry of Public Security/People's Police

Overall, the PAP has unveiled successive changes designed to improve its “command and management system” as part of the CMC’s 5-year armed forces reform agenda. Speaking at the NPC in November 2017, PAP commander Wang Ning identified several other potential reforms, most of which parallel ongoing changes in the PLA. These include adjustments to the PAP rank system to reflect proposed (but not yet announced) changes in PLA ranks, adjusting the audit system, amending supervision of the PAP logistics and equipment systems, and developing new guidance on the transfer of PAP units.⁶⁶ Taken together with the initial (completed) round of reforms, this agenda marks the most ambitious attempt to streamline the PAP’s structure, missions, and authorities since its establishment in 1982, and, as with China’s military reforms, reflects Xi’s ability to enact needed changes to a key system.

Drivers of Reform

Just as in the larger PLA reforms, the motives driving the PAP restructuring in 2017–2018 fall generally into political and operational categories.⁶⁷ The political imperative behind the two sets of reforms is identical in principle: solidifying the unified leadership of the party, and Xi in particular, as a corrective to the excessive delegation of authority to lower level officials. The

difference was that PLA reforms focused more on removing authority from corrupt senior military officers, while changes to the PAP emphasized the need to reduce civilian, and especially local, control over units. Both reforms were also driven by the impetus to create a more effective organizational structure to guide future operations. While PLA reforms focused on enabling future joint operations, changes to the PAP centered on improving effectiveness in three mission areas: internal stability, wartime support, and maritime law enforcement.

Political

Politically, the reforms can be attributed to three interrelated goals. First was strengthening Xi's control over a key instrument of coercive power. One of the broader trends in Chinese civil-military relations under Xi was centralization of power around himself as CMC chairman.⁶⁸ This was both a way to consolidate his authority within the party-state and to address mismanagement in the PLA, which had resulted in widespread corruption, opposition to reform, and poor coordination between the military and civilian authority. Xi used several tools to enhance his control over the PLA beginning in late 2012, including an anti-corruption campaign focused on key rivals (notably former CMC vice chairman Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong); dismantling the four general departments, where corruption had thrived; and compensating losers of reform, such as by finding new positions for officers whose commands were restructured.⁶⁹ PLA political work also emphasized the "CMC chairman responsibility system" [*junwei zhuxi zerenzhi*, 军委主席责任制], signifying that ultimate decisions rested with Xi alone.⁷⁰

These reforms, however, did not rectify Xi's limited authority within the PAP. Under the dual leadership system, Xi wielded power only indirectly through personnel appointments—for example, placing Wang Ning as PAP commander and Sun Sijing as political commissar—and did not directly supervise PAP operations or budgets.⁷¹ Under the Jiang- and Hu-era compromises, those authorities were held by the State Council rather than augmenting the power of the CMC chairman. The ability of provincial leaders to deploy PAP assets was also a source of power for Xi's political opponents. One case that exemplified the political dangers of dual command involved Bo Xilai, a Xi rival who had cultivated influence in provincial PAP forces as Chongqing party secretary. This control was on display in February 2012, when Bo dispatched mobile PAP units to apprehend his former police chief, Wang Lijun, who had fled to the U.S. consulate in Chengdu with damaging information about Bo. Xi likely hoped that by eliminating dual leadership, accumulation of power by others could be reduced.

As part of the end of dual leadership, PAP sources emphasized the need for loyalty to Xi as CMC chairman. At an NPC debate in March 2016, PAP political commissar Sun Sijing argued

that the CMC chairman responsibility system needed to be written into the PAP Law “to ensure that the Party Central Committee, the CMC, and President Xi firmly grasp the highest command of the armed forces.”⁷² In a *Study Times* article, PAP commander Wang Ning argued that implementing the CMC chairman responsibility system was the “supreme political requirement” for all PAP personnel, who must promise to “safeguard the core” (referring to Xi).⁷³ At an NPC meeting in November 2017, Wang similarly argued that suspending dual leadership was needed to “strengthen the unified leadership of the CCP Central Committee and the CMC over the PAP.”⁷⁴ This language clearly implied that Xi’s authority over the paramilitary forces was absolute.

A second factor was strengthening party leadership within the PAP. One of the hallmarks of domestic governance under Xi has been increasing the CCP role, often at the expense of state agencies. Examples include empowering the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, which has played a key anti-corruption role and moving authority over media outlets from the state to the CCP Propaganda Ministry.⁷⁵ Enhancing party control was a major driver of the PLA reforms, as evidenced by greater attention to ideological work among PLA personnel. This reflected not only Xi’s argument that party control is necessary to ensure China’s economic success, but also the specific concern that some elements within the armed forces, albeit rarely identified by name, continue to support the “nationalization” [*guojiahua*, 国家化] and “de-party-ification” [*feidanghua*, 非党化] of the army. Those concerns have been periodically raised since the 1950s, but were piqued in 1989 when some PLA units sided with the people over the party.

Enhancing party control over the PAP was likely seen as a priority given the pivotal role of the paramilitary forces in protecting the regime. Over the past three decades, PLA modernization has focused on preparing for combat in China’s immediate periphery and, to a lesser extent, nontraditional security operations such as disaster relief. Responding to mass protests, formerly a PLA mission, has fallen to the PAP (though the PLA could be called on in an extreme case). The experience of Tiananmen provides a constant reminder that those responsible for such missions need to be unflinchingly loyal to the party and its top leaders. Dual leadership, in which the state and localities retained significant autonomy, was at odds with this imperative insofar as PAP units were responsible to multiple authorities. As one retired PLA senior colonel has argued, dual command weakened the principle that the “party commands the gun.”⁷⁶ While Chinese sources do not suggest that a popular revolt is imminent, party officials still place high value on ensuring political reliability in the PAP given its sensitive responsibilities.

It is no surprise, then, that PAP sources frequently cited the need to strengthen CCP authority. A *PAP Daily* article published just prior to the transfer of the PAP to full CMC control

cont. on 20

How Vulnerable Was Xi?

Several Hong Kong and overseas Chinese news reports have suggested that Xi Jinping's political vulnerability was a key motive behind the 2017–2018 People's Armed Police reforms.¹ These articles frequently cite the 2012 Bo Xilai episode and allude to lingering influence of Jiang Zemin and former Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang within the PAP. One dubious version of events is that Zhou used his influence in the PAP to stage an aborted coup attempt against Hu Jintao in March 2012.²

While power consolidation was a likely motive, there are several reasons to discount these more sensationalist accounts. First is that the elite power struggles said to be animating Xi took place more than 5 years prior to the key PAP reforms. Xi had already taken steps to strengthen his authority over the People's Liberation Army and the broader party-state (such as by installing himself as chairman of the new National Security Commission in late 2013). If Xi had been overly concerned about his status in the PAP, he could have undertaken those reforms earlier. Second, Xi's political position going into the reforms was already strong: rivals such as Zhou and Bo had long been eliminated and Xi's status as Central Military Commission chairman was unrivaled. By contrast, Jiang remained as CMC chairman for the first 2 years of Hu's tenure as party general-secretary. This likely gave Xi confidence that reforms to the PAP, though necessary, were not urgent. Third, provincial officials had some leeway over PAP deployments but did not exercise budgetary control: funding for the internal security forces came from State Council coffers.³ Thus, despite the drama surrounding the 2012 Bo incident, the political threat from provincial leaders was limited.

A related observation is that Xi did not attempt to unify all PAP responsibilities under his personal authority: several functions were, in fact, delegated to the State Council or localities. Sending units responsible for emergency management to the State Council, and placing Border Defense units under Ministry of Public Security command indicates that he saw no political value in trying to consolidate those functions under the CMC. Most interestingly, Xi accepted continued MPS supervision of the Guards Force, responsible for protecting some national officials (though not Xi personally or other members of the senior party elite and PLA high command) as well as provincial leaders.⁴ Delegating this responsibility to the state sector illustrates Xi's confidence in the current MPS leadership—which Xi hand-selected—including longtime confidante Zhao Kezhi, who serves concurrently as minister and party secretary. Had Xi felt more vulnerable, he likely would have tried to retain those units under his purview.

¹ See June Mai and Minnie Chan, "Proposal to Expand Role of China's Armed Police Force Would Strengthen Xi Jinping's Power: Analysts," *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), March 9, 2016; "Beijing 'Important Political Decision,' Officially Carried Out on New Year's Day 2018," Aboluo News, January 2, 2018; "Why Did the People's Armed Police Increase Leadership Authority? Chinese Officials Respond," Duowei News, December 28, 2017.

² Jamil Anderlini, "Beijing on Edge amid Coup Rumors," *Financial Times*, March 21, 2012.

³ Adrian Zenz, "Coralling the People's Armed Police: Centralizing Control to Reflect Centralized Budgets," *China Brief* 18, no. 7 (April 24, 2018).

⁴ Protection for top party and military leaders is a responsibility of the PLA's Guards Bureau within the Central Military Commission General Office.

noted that the “biggest test” for PAP personnel is the “political test” and that only by “listening to the party can we ensure that the troops are absolutely loyal, absolutely pure, and absolutely reliable.”⁷⁷ In a similar article, the director of the Zhejiang contingent’s political department stated that the top priority for building a “modern” PAP is for personnel to “resolutely listen to the party’s commands and always be the loyal guardian of the party and the people.”⁷⁸ Another piece, written by the Heilongjiang contingent’s political commissar, described the reforms as a “major political decision to fully implement the party’s absolute leadership over the country’s armed force and to uphold and develop a socialist military system with Chinese characteristics.”⁷⁹

Third was bolstering the party’s legitimacy in the eyes of the public and, to a lesser extent, the international community. As noted above, CCP leaders were concerned about the overuse of PAP capabilities to address local grievances. In the 2005 Shanwei case, for example, local officials ordered PAP troops to use live ammunition after tear gas had failed to disperse protesters; this decision was apparently made without higher approval.⁸⁰ In 2011, PAP units blockaded the Guangdong village of Wukan after residents protested in response to an incident involving the local abuse of police power. Use of force was only averted after a deal was negotiated with residents.⁸¹ Isolated incidents can quickly attract national (and international) attention and damage the party’s legitimacy. One PAP Academy professor writes that the 2009 PAP Law permitted local authorities too much discretion in responding to incidents and notes that the PAP should be “particularly cautious about the mobilization of force” and “never use the armed police to solve mass incidents caused by the reasonable claims of the people.”⁸² Reducing local autonomy over PAP deployments does not mean that top leaders believe that force should never be used to resolve incidents—only that higher authorities should be consulted.

Another challenge to party legitimacy was corruption, both in terms of local misuse of PAP assets and within PAP ranks. Murray Scot Tanner notes that, in its early years, local officials used the PAP to appropriate grain, intervene in commercial disputes, enforce birth control policies, and establish “improper traffic management stations.”⁸³ Earlier PAP reforms aimed to reduce these problems by centralizing control over personnel appointments and tightening rules governing PAP deployments.⁸⁴ However, those reforms had limited success in reining in officials as evidenced by the 2012 Bo scandal. Corruption was also alleged at the highest levels of the PAP, with Wang Jianping, who served as PAP commander from 2009 to 2014, being investigated for bribery.⁸⁵ Several senior PAP Transportation Force officers have also been accused of corruption in recent years.⁸⁶ The reforms sought to combat these problems by raising the status of the Discipline Inspection Commission. Like its PLA counterpart, the PAP Discipline Inspection Commission likely has a direct, independent reporting chain to CMC chairman

Xi Jinping through General Zhang Shengmin, the Director of the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission.

Operational

The key operational motive behind the reforms was refocusing the PAP on a handful of core missions. As noted, Chinese analysts argued that the previous PAP structure was too unwieldy and unfocused, leading to a diminished focus on essential tasks. The reforms addressed this problem in part by divesting the PAP of most law enforcement and economic functions. Applauding the new system, Li Weihai writes that reforms would make the “armed police management system smoother, the functions more clear, and law enforcement more efficient.”⁸⁷ Xie Yongliang of the PLA Academy of Military Science likewise argues that the “previous system of being unable to clearly differentiate military, police, and civilian functions is now history.”⁸⁸ Moreover, unlike previous PLA downsizings, the PAP did not absorb demobilized soldiers as part of Xi’s effort to reduce the army by 300,000 personnel (which was a main focus of the PLA reforms). This was helpful since PAP budgets would not need to accommodate these personnel, few of whom likely possessed the specialized skills needed to perform PAP missions.

In January 2018, the PLA spokesman noted that the remaining operational units—the internal security forces, mobile contingents, and the recently integrated CCG—would focus squarely on three problems: internal stability, wartime support, and maritime rights protection. This tripartite structure of organizations and missions was reflected in the three olive stripes on the PAP’s new flag (figure 3). The flag also contains the yellow star of the CCP and the characters for “81,” which symbolizes a closer relationship between the PAP and PLA, founded on August 1, 1927.⁸⁹

The focus on internal stability reflects the PAP’s obligation to defend the party from domestic unrest and opposition. The primary driver of PAP developments in this arena appears to be the threat of turmoil in China’s western regions. The 2015 defense white paper noted that China faces a “formidable task” in safeguarding political stability, pointing specifically to the Tibetan independence movement and the “escalating violent terrorist activities” of “East Turkestan independence” forces in Xinjiang.⁹⁰ The reforms addressed these problems by concentrating multiple PAP mobile detachments in areas with large ethnic Tibetan populations, including Tibet, Sichuan, and Yunnan, as well as in Xinjiang. Those rapidly deployable forces include SOF, aviation, and other specialized units, allowing commanders to develop force packages tailored to mission requirements. An example is the new “air-land” patrol mechanism in which helicopters are being used to support ground units in Xinjiang.⁹¹

Figure 3. New PAP Flag



other forms of social control, such as CCTV surveillance and the advent of social credit scores.⁹² Retaining a formidable PAP presence across the country also suggests limits to the “Wukan model” of addressing protests through dialogue and economic compensation.⁹³ However, it is likely that PAP rapid reaction units are meant as a backstop rather than a frontline force, as indicated in the new coordination system that makes it harder for local and provincial officials to summon PAP capabilities when needed.

Supporting wartime operations is another enduring mission for the PAP. According to the 2006 *Science of Campaigns*, the PAP would coordinate “defensive operations” [*fangwei zuozhan*, 防卫作战] with active and reserve PLA units and local governments in areas, such as anti-air assault, anti-psychological warfare, and counter-sabotage, and would help maintain transportation networks.⁹⁴ These themes persisted in the 2017 *Science of Strategy*, which stated that the PAP must be able to conduct “defense operations” including guarding key sites, building “joint area defense forces” [*quyu lianhe fangshou liliang*, 区域联合防守力量], maintaining roads and bridges, providing specialized disaster relief services, and maintaining social stability.⁹⁵

Providing support to combat forces was also a theme of the current reforms. Conferring a new flag on the PAP commander in January 2018, Xi himself called on the PAP to improve its “combat-ready training” and to “speed up its integration with the PLA’s joint operation system,” implying closer coordination during both peacetime and wartime.⁹⁶

The reforms advanced this goal in three ways. First was establishing CMC authority over PAP operations, budgets, structure, and composition. Uniformed military officers, rather than State Council bureaucrats, will now be able to shape PAP expenditures and force structure, taking

Nevertheless, PAP reforms also ensured that all provinces, autonomous regions, and provincial-level cities retain mobile detachments as well as “duty detachments” [*zhiqin zhidui*, 执勤支队], which protect government compounds and perform other routine duties. This suggests that party leaders were not confident that local officials would be able to handle “mass incidents” through their own public security resources, even though local police are increasingly well-equipped—including carrying firearms—and despite

military requirements into account (though it remains to be seen how much authority the CMC will delegate to the PAP headquarters). Second was divesting local officials of unilateral deployment authority, which simplifies the operational chain of command and helps ensure that unified CMC control over the armed forces would be maintained during a conflict. Third was establishing the 1st and 2nd Mobile Contingents, which, as noted, will help maintain order in Beijing during a crisis and support defensive operations in a Taiwan conflict, respectively.

Maritime rights protection reflects China's increasing emphasis on developing maritime economic interests and asserting territorial claims in the South and East China seas.⁹⁷ It was a bureaucratic anomaly that the CCG, which performed paramilitary duties such as enforcing maritime territorial claims and possessed military-grade weapons such as 76mm cannons, was established outside the CMC.⁹⁸ Ryan Martinson notes that the CCG's militarized character was apparent in its officer accession program, wherein candidates would be commissioned in the PAP, and in recruitment materials that advertised the CCG as a "militarizing" [*bei junshi hua fangxiang jianshe*, 被军事化方向建设] force.⁹⁹ Li Zuobiao of the PAP Academy likewise portrayed the PAP as a more sensible parent organization, since most key CCG personnel are already "active-duty armed police" [*xianyi wujing*, 现役武警], and stated that merging other CCG employees, such as civil servants and contractors, into the PAP could be done without difficulty.¹⁰⁰ Another scholar observed that many foreign coast guards, including those of Russia and the United States, were closely aligned with their countries' militaries, suggesting that China's unique bureaucratic arrangement was out of step with international standards.¹⁰¹

Bringing the coast guard into the military command structure helps China extend its maritime influence by encouraging closer cooperation with the navy, which has been a long-term aspiration for Chinese planners.¹⁰² Indeed, the CCG and navy have had some success in coordinating activities, including intelligence-sharing and combined exercises, while some CCG personnel have received navy training.¹⁰³ CCG and PLA navy ships have also coordinated activities in the South China Sea, with the former on the frontlines and the latter over the horizon in a deterrent or reserve capacity. One PLA commentator referred to this as a "cabbage strategy," since contested territory would be wrapped in successive layers of maritime capabilities.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, cooperation has been complicated because the two services did not share a common chain of command: CCG ships reported to the State Oceanic Administration, with operational guidance from the MPS, while the navy reported to the CMC.¹⁰⁵

Chinese analysts cite several operational advantages of merging the CCG into the PAP. One is that, with a closer organizational relationship, the CCG and navy would be able to conduct more frequent exercises and patrols and cooperate more efficiently during a crisis, while

still dividing their labor between combat and maritime law enforcement functions.¹⁰⁶ Two experts from the China Maritime Police Academy write that closer coordination could be solidified through a “common command platform,” which would “ensure the synchronization and efficiency of decision-making during missions” (though the form that this has taken in the new structure remains unclear).¹⁰⁷ Another benefit is that subordinating both services to the CMC would reduce duplicative development in maritime capabilities, which would be useful in an era of declining PLA budget growth.¹⁰⁸ In sum, the reforms aimed to both strengthen unified party leadership over the PAP and improve its ability to accomplish key missions.

Challenges and Indicators of Further Progress

Despite ambitious organizational changes adopted under Xi, the PAP will continue to face a number of constraints as it develops into a more modern paramilitary force. First, reconfiguring the PAP’s organizational structure and chain of command will lead to at least some disruption in cohesion, morale, and readiness as mobile division headquarters are abolished, new mobile contingent commands established, commanders geographically rotated,¹⁰⁹ and as PAP party committees lose MPS representation. A *PAP Daily* report published just after the reforms noted that officials were still struggling to understand their responsibilities under the new system.¹¹⁰ A related challenge was finding new occupations for the former mobile division leadership. Open source evidence suggests that, at least in a few cases, senior mobile division officials were placed in similar positions within the provincial contingents.¹¹¹ Overall, this challenge is transitory and will abate as new routines are established.

Second are problems that may result from stronger party control over the PAP. One is a tension between ensuring CCP control and the drive to improve its professional competence. Achieving the former goal requires the PAP to strengthen ideological education (including for officers, who must be CCP members in good standing) and to retain Leninist features, such as party committees and dual command, whereby commanders and political commissars are jointly responsible for major decisions. These requirements, however, may come at the expense of performance: encumbered by ideological indoctrination, PAP personnel have less time for professional training, and collective decisionmaking may reduce the autonomy and flexibility of lower level commanders to act promptly in a crisis. Similar challenges face the PLA, which has constantly tried to navigate the balance between being “red” (loyal to the party) and “expert” (proficient in professional duties).¹¹²

Another consequence of tightening party control could be delayed crisis response. While the parameters of the new “coordination mechanism” through which local officials can request

PAP support remain unclear, one possibility is that officials will hesitate to submit requests due to concern that this will attract negative attention of high-level party leaders and tarnish their reputations for being able to defuse incidents without the need to resort to force. This could paradoxically increase problems of social control as officials look after their own interests. A similar problem is that, depending on the level of approval needed, decisions on whether to authorize deployments may have to be adjudicated by senior officials, which could delay responses to crises (even if this reduces cases of indiscriminate force).¹¹³ To assess the extent of this problem, analysts should observe how the system is being put into practice, including the level at which deployment decisions are made. Key indicators will include specifics on how localities are actually responding to future mass incidents and details on how local emergency response plans are being updated to account for the new system.¹¹⁴

Third, the mobile contingents could play a role in supporting key missions, but uncertainties about their potential effectiveness remain. For instance, the wide dispersal of units raises questions about how cohesively the contingents will be able to plan and conduct operations. At face value, it is unlikely that SOF units based in Guangdong will be able to operate effectively with mobile detachments based in Fujian and Jiangsu and helicopters located in Sichuan, as is the case with the 2nd Mobile Contingent. Growing cohesion could be demonstrated by geographic consolidation of units, frequent cross-theater and cross-functional exercises, and real-world performance. In the absence of such evidence, it is unclear how the mobile contingents would have any advantages over the former mobile divisions.

Fourth, PAP support to the PLA could be reduced by conflicting responsibilities and weak coordination. Given finite resources, the provincial and mobile contingents will face a tradeoff between their two primary missions—domestic stability and wartime support. In the past, the PAP focused more on its domestic role, only occasionally taking part in PLA exercises focused on regional conflict.¹¹⁵ Restructuring the mobile divisions into mobile contingents does not clearly indicate that this balance will shift in favor of the latter mission; if anything, PAP mobile capabilities remain concentrated in western China rather than along the maritime periphery where most future wars will be waged. Some skills, such as guarding critical infrastructure, may be applicable to both missions, but it is unclear whether internal security units will increase their participation in PLA training.¹¹⁶

Questions also remain about the degree of PAP integration into the PLA joint operations system. A key component of recent PLA reforms has been to strengthen joint command through the creation of a new Joint Staff Department and the transformation of the military regions into five regional theater commands, each focused on a specific geographic area of responsibility.¹¹⁷

While most of the PLA's services are well integrated into this system, there does not appear to be a strong link between PAP forces and the theater commands. Without such coordination, PAP units are less likely to be involved in joint planning and training, and less familiar with key PLA officials and procedures. Signs that this problem is being addressed would include more PAP participation in joint exercises, PAP officers being assigned to theater headquarters, and increasing enrollment of PAP students in PLA joint operations courses.¹¹⁸ Observers should also consult forthcoming PLA doctrinal regulations and teaching materials for signs of change in the PAP's role in joint combat operations.¹¹⁹

Another sign of stronger links between the PAP and PLA would be transfer of PLA officers to the PAP. At the highest level, Xi has done this by appointing Wang Ning as commander. Wang was a career PLA officer who served in senior positions such as chief of staff of the Beijing Military Region and deputy chief of the general staff. Similar transfers have taken place at lower levels. An example is the inaugural commander of the 2nd Mobile Contingent, Chen Hong, who previously served as commander of the 1st Group Army and led the CMC Training and Administration Department's Inspection Bureau, signifying confidence in his abilities among Xi and the PLA senior leadership.¹²⁰ Other examples include the commander of the Xinjiang contingent, Zhou Jianguo, who previously served as deputy commander of the 21st Group Army, and PAP deputy commander Yang Guangyue, who formerly commanded the Yunnan military district.¹²¹ In addition to bringing personal connections with PLA officials, these transferees could provide insight into how the PAP may be used to augment PLA operations during wartime and promote more combat-realistic training.

A related challenge is tenuous linkages between the CCG and navy. While the coast guard now reports to the CMC, it is unclear how the two maritime forces (along with the maritime militia) will coordinate since there is no overlap in the chain of command below the CMC.¹²² Presumably both navy and CCG officers will continue to be represented in national- and theater-level border and coastal defense commissions, which also include civilian representatives, but this does not explain how practical, day-to-day coordination will be implemented.¹²³ As with the ground forces, a key indicator of growing cooperation could be the seconding of naval personnel into CCG billets. An initial example was the posting of Rear Admiral Wang Zhongcai, who previously served as a deputy chief of staff of the East Sea Fleet, as CCG commander in December 2018.¹²⁴ Another sign of progress would be CCG officers assigned as liaisons in theater joint operations command centers or in the three navy fleet headquarters (that is, North, East, and South Sea fleets), where they would work directly with their navy counterparts.¹²⁵ Other evidence would include participation of CCG officers in the navy's professional military

education courses and more routine operations involving the coast guard and navy (as well as the maritime militia).

Fifth, the PAP may face continuing capabilities gaps. A *PAP Daily* article described, in general terms, two “bottlenecks” on PAP development: first, a gap between the “level of military construction” and the “requirements of modernization,” and, second, a gap between “mission capabilities” and the “fulfilment of mission requirements.”¹²⁶ In May 2018, PAP commander Wang Ning stated that the PAP is “strong on land, but weak in the air and at sea,” “strong inside [China’s] borders, but weak outside,” and “strong with conventional forces but weak with information support,” indicating the need for greater maritime, aviation, SOF, and information technology capabilities.¹²⁷ Two months later, Wang argued that in order to “adapt to the requirements of the times,” the PAP should focus on building mobile forces as a “sudden fist,” complemented by SOF “as a counterterrorism knife,” airpower “for efficient support,” maritime power “as the main force for rights enforcement,” and networked information support.¹²⁸

Despite these goals, budgetary constraints could limit the acquisition and deployment of new capabilities. PAP budgets have grown in recent years, but often at a rate lower than increases in the military budget (see table 4). The year 2018 was notable in that military spending grew by 8.1 percent, while PAP expenses grew only 1 percent despite ongoing reforms.¹²⁹ Beijing also clearly spends far more on PLA equipment, which may represent about one-third of official budgets, than on PAP equipment.¹³⁰ Moreover, in the context of slowing economic growth, PAP officials may have to compete more intensely with other domestic security departments such as

Table 4. PAP vs. PLA budgets, 2010–2018

	PLA*		PAP	
	Expenses (RMB)	Growth (%)	Expenses (RMB)	Growth (%)
2010	518.6 billion	7.5	66.3 billion	-2.3
2011	582.9 billion	12.6	78.4 billion	12.1
2012	647.9 billion	11.1	87.6 billion	11
2013	717.7 billion	10.7	100.6 billion	10.2
2014	805.5 billion	12.2	107.4 billion	7.1
2015	886.9 billion	10.1	120 billion	3.4
2016	954.4 billion	7.6	126.5 billion	8.5
2017	1.023 trillion	7.1	139.8 billion	7.5
2018	1.107 trillion	8.1	141.4 billion	1

* Includes active, reserve, and militia forces.

Source: Ministry of Finance

the MPS and PLA, most notably the growing navy and air force, for scarce resources. An indicator of PAP success in future budget negotiations will be overall expenditures, both in absolute and relative terms.¹³¹ In short, organizational changes carried out in 2017–2018 left a number of problems unaddressed. Observers will need to look for indications that these are being addressed in the next few years.

Implications

As with the preceding organizational reforms to the PLA, the implementation of the PAP reforms both reflected and deepened Xi's ability to counter bureaucratic resistance and effect practical changes of the sort that eluded Jiang and Hu. The result is that Xi's authority now encompasses *all* of China's armed forces, though that change should not be exaggerated since he already had control over PAP personnel appointments, political work, and training as CMC chairman, in addition to his direct leadership of the PLA. Nevertheless, as CMC chairman, he is now able to leverage PAP budgets and force structure to solidify his influence within the PAP, has operational authority over the internal security forces and the two new mobile contingents, and oversees the CCG. Given his other responsibilities, Xi must obviously rely on trusted agents within the PAP to formulate and carry out policies in line with his wishes.

Aside from strengthening Xi's position, the key political implication will be more effective management over PAP resources and operations. Incidences of corruption may decline as local governments are less able to misuse PAP assets and as the PAP's Discipline Inspection Commission is more empowered to root out malfeasance within the ranks. Assuming that the new coordination system works as intended, embarrassing cases involving the use of force against civilians could decline (or at least shift to local police forces, where blame can be more easily attributed to local mismanagement) and thus aid the party's domestic legitimacy. As Adrian Zenz notes, the reforms also brought PAP management into alignment with budgetary authorities: the internal security forces had been primarily funded by the central government and will now be under the tighter operational oversight of central leaders.¹³²

The restructured internal security forces could be more effective in quelling unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang as well as in ethnic minority areas of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Qinghai. From the perspective of the CCP, this would contribute to stronger social and political control and either deter or enable better responses to mass incidents, especially as specialized capabilities such as helicopters and SOF are added. A more capable PAP presence in Xinjiang would complement, but not replace, other forms of social coercion that the CCP has been developing to manage discontent among ethnic Uighurs. These include augmenting local police forces, increasing

use of facial recognition and other surveillance technology, and the opening of “re-education training centers” that international observers have compared to concentration camps. These developments have led to statements of concern by the United Nations as well as human rights advocates.¹³³

An ancillary benefit of the reforms could be in the area of emergency management. Dispatching the Forestry and Firefighting forces to the State Council Emergency Management Department, for instance, could promote better integration of those functions with other civilian capabilities.¹³⁴ PAP internal security forces will likely continue as first responders in large-scale disasters, although local autonomy over deployments will be curtailed. It is telling that one of the first reported exercises of the 2nd Mobile Contingent was a winter drill in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, involving PAP transportation units working alongside provincial and municipal units to clear roads.¹³⁵ It is also likely that some high-level coordination persists between the PAP and civilian agencies through the National Security Commission [*zhongyang guojia anquan weiyuanhui*, 中央国家安全委员会], established in late 2013 to improve interagency cooperation.¹³⁶

The provincial and mobile contingents may also provide stronger support for PLA combat operations, assuming that the PAP devotes more attention to its wartime support mission and coordination challenges between the PAP and PLA are resolved. Key PAP roles will include protecting critical infrastructure within China, guarding supply routes, and maintaining social stability (including responding to potential unrest in Beijing and other major cities). Despite the transfer of Border Defense Force units to the State Council, the PAP may also reinforce China's borders during a conflict involving North Korea and handle an influx of refugees in the event of a North Korean collapse.¹³⁷ In comparative context, this mirrors the role that the newly reconfigured Russian national guard is anticipated to play in the event that Russian territory is threatened during a regional conflict.¹³⁸

While the PAP will remain focused on domestic missions, there are also several notable international implications of PAP reform. First is that the PAP is emerging as a valued training and operational partner in the nontraditional security arena. Some of these activities take place within China. As early as 2002, the PAP opened a training center for foreign police forces engaged in UN peacekeeping operations.¹³⁹ In August 2016, the PAP Academy initiated another UN-related course for foreign police forces, with the first class drawn from several African countries.¹⁴⁰ In 2016, the PAP also launched a biennial “Great Wall” counterterrorism forum in which it has brought representatives from many countries to China for discussions and to observe drills.¹⁴¹ PAP forces have also conducted joint counterterrorism exercises in China, such

as a December 2017 event with Russian national guard forces that focused on “jointly cleaning up terrorist groups . . . [including scenarios] such as a bus hijacking.”¹⁴²

The PAP is also poised to expand its overseas partnerships. One way is through participation in UN peacekeeping operations. The PAP first deployed civilian police to a UN mission in East Timor in 2000 and has participated in subsequent missions in countries such as Liberia, Haiti, and Afghanistan.¹⁴³ These activities may continue or even increase as China looks to buttress its international reputation as a “responsible” country.¹⁴⁴ Another avenue is through joint counterterrorism operations with individual countries. A legal basis was provided in the 2015 Counter-Terrorism Law, which permitted PAP (and PLA) overseas deployments with CMC approval.¹⁴⁵ Recent media reports suggest that PAP assets are pursuing this mandate through joint patrols in Afghanistan and have even opened a forward base in Tajikistan, from which PAP units are attempting to interdict terrorists flowing into Xinjiang.¹⁴⁶ An advantage of using PAP assets is that Beijing can deny official “military” intervention in neighboring countries; those claims, however, will ring less true now that the PAP is fully under CMC control.¹⁴⁷

Second is that the PAP may be called on to protect Chinese civilians and assets abroad. Overseas protection has become a key security challenge for Beijing in recent years, as illustrated in the evacuations of Chinese civilians from Libya in 2011 and Yemen in 2015.¹⁴⁸ The challenge has increased under Xi’s Belt and Road Initiative, which involves Chinese construction activities in unstable regions such as Pakistan’s Baluchistan Province.¹⁴⁹ Beijing has a diverse set of capabilities at its disposal to address this challenge, including PLA-led noncombatant evacuations, host-country support, and services provided by private security companies, but the PAP also has a role to play. In a narrow sense, the PAP will continue its mission of guarding Chinese embassies and consulates (similar to the role played by U.S. Marine guards). PAP units might also be deployed in some cases, given their training and real-world experience in handling civilian unrest with minimal use of lethal force, which the PLA lacks.

Third is safeguarding Chinese maritime interests. Improved coordination between the CCG and PLA Navy will allow Beijing to improve enforcement of territorial claims, protect civilian assets (such as oil rigs and fishing fleets), and intimidate foreign naval and commercial vessels. A sign of increasingly intricate cooperation between the maritime services was the completion of initial joint navy-CCG law enforcement patrols in the Paracels and Senkakus in May and July 2018, respectively.¹⁵⁰ Aside from their value in deterring rival territorial claimants, these patrols allowed naval and CCG personnel to improve interoperability, including practicing specialized terminology.¹⁵¹ The commander of the joint patrol in the Senkakus stated that “If we discover a foreign military vessel, our navy can immediately deal with it; if we discover

foreign fishing vessels violating the law, our coast guard ships can enforce the law.”¹⁵² U.S. naval planners thus have good reasons to better understand China’s evolving maritime command system.

A practical issue for the United States in this context will be determining whether existing agreements on rules of behavior for naval forces should be expanded to cover activities of the China Coast Guard. A 2014 U.S.-China agreement provided guidelines for safe encounters between U.S. and Chinese naval vessels based on the 1972 International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and other international standards.¹⁵³ However, with the CCG now fully under the Chinese military, a case could be made that those standards should also apply to CCG vessels (as well as perhaps U.S. Coast Guard vessels when operating under U.S. military authority).¹⁵⁴ This broader interpretation would mean that incidents could be raised in U.S.-China military engagements such as Military Maritime Consultative Agreement talks.

Fourth, though less likely in the near future, is supporting overseas combat operations. For instance, the PAP could be called on to take part in the later stages of a PLA invasion of Taiwan. Unlike the PLA, which has had little combat experience since 1979, PAP personnel have been on the frontlines of armed clashes in Xinjiang and Tibet. Even though the geographic and operational circumstances would be quite different, such “battle-tested” PAP forces might be better suited to maintain order in Taiwan. Such a role, however, assumes that the PLA ground forces are unwilling or incapable of functioning as an occupation force and would likely require different PAP training and more effective PAP-PLA coordination than currently exists.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

The People’s Armed Police has taken an organizational leap forward as part of the larger reforms to China’s armed forces. The result is a smaller PAP that is under the firmer grasp of central party leaders and better positioned structurally to accomplish its core missions. How durable these reforms prove to be will depend on Xi’s continuing grasp on power as well as a consensus among CCP elites that a more centralized PAP is desirable. It is worth considering that the nature of authority over the PAP has fluctuated many times since the 1930s; the pendulum may ultimately swing back toward decentralized management. Local officials, and those wary about an overconcentration of power in the hands of one individual, might support a relaxation of control—or an interpretation of new guidelines that gives flexibility to the localities—but there is little evidence of any such momentum at present. In the absence of a catalytic event, such as a calamity attributed to Xi, the more muscular, centrally managed format of PAP authority appears destined to remain for many years.

Appendix: PAP Grade Structure

Theater Command Grade	Deputy Theater Command Grade	Corps Leader Grade	Deputy Corps Leader Grade	Division Leader Grade
PAP HQ Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAP HQ Staff Department • PAP HQ Political Work Department (PWD) • PAP HQ Discipline Inspection Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAP HQ Logistics Department • PAP HQ Equipment Department 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Dept. Training, Intelligence Bureau • PWD Propaganda, Soldier and Civilian Personnel Bureau
Operational Units		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Mobile Contingents • Beijing Contingent • Xinjiang Contingent 	Contingent: Staff, Political Work Bureaus; Discipline Inspection; Detachments	Contingent: Logistics, Equipment Bureaus
		Coast Guard (?)	Other Provincial Contingents	Contingent: Staff, Political Work; Discipline Inspection; Detachments
Universities and Academies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAP Academy • PAP Engineering University • PAP Command Academy 		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAP Logistics Academy • PAP Officers Academy • PAP Special Police Academy 	

Notes

¹ For an overview of the reforms, see Joel Wuthnow and Phillip C. Saunders, “Introduction: Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA,” in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms*, ed. Phillip C. Saunders et al. (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2019); and Joel Wuthnow and Phillip C. Saunders, *Chinese Military Reforms in the Age of Xi Jinping*, China Strategic Perspectives 10 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2017).

² For a discussion of hybrid warfare, see Frank G. Hoffman, “Hybrid Warfare and Challenges,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 52 (1st Quarter 2009), 34–39.

³ For a description of the People’s Armed Police (PAP)’s predecessor organizations, see Murray Scot Tanner, “The Institutional Lessons of Disaster: Reorganizing the People’s Armed Police After Tiananmen,” in *The People’s Liberation Army as Organization*, ed. James C. Mulvenon and Andrew N.D. Yang (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 589–600.

⁴ *China’s National Defense in 2006* (Beijing: State Council Information Office, December 2006), available at <www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/194421.htm>.

⁵ PAP units also had a political commissar who was a professional PAP political officer.

⁶ Depending on size, counties may also have a company-size PAP unit [*zhongdui*, 中队].

⁷ “People’s Republic of China People’s Armed Police Law” [中华人民共和国人民武装警察法], Article 8, August 27, 2009, available at <www.gov.cn/flfg/2009-08/27/content_1403324.htm>.

⁸ Thomas Lum, *Social Unrest in China*, RL 33416 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 8, 2006), 1–2.

⁹ Xuezhi Guo, *China’s Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 242–243; Jim Yardley, “Chinese Riot Over Handling of Girl’s Killing,” *New York Times*, June 30, 2008, available at <www.nytimes.com/2008/06/30/world/asia/30riot.html>.

¹⁰ For a discussion of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) downsizings, see Daniel Gearin, “PLA Force Reductions: Impact on the Services,” in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA*.

¹¹ For the locations of PAP mobile division headquarters, see: Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 111.

¹² International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2009–2018). The 2006 defense white paper stated that the PAP’s strength was 660,000 personnel.

¹³ Adrian Zenz, “Coralling the People’s Armed Police: Centralizing Control to Reflect Centralized Budgets,” *China Brief* 18, no. 7 (April 24, 2018), available at <<https://jamestown.org/program/corralling-the-peoples-armed-police-centralizing-control-to-reflect-centralized-budgets/>>. Moreover, Blasko notes that PAP end strength might have reached one million if the official figure did not include forces subordinate to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 110.

¹⁴ Sheena Chestnut Greitens, “Rethinking China’s Coercive Capacity: An Examination of PRC Domestic Security Spending, 1992–2012,” *China Quarterly* 232 (December 2017), 1011–1012.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* On sources of PAP funding, see Zenz, “Coralling the People’s Armed Police”; Cortez A. Cooper III, “Controlling the Four Quarters: China Trains, Equips, and Deploys a Modern, Mobile People’s Armed Police Force,” in *Learning by Doing: The PLA Trains at Home and Abroad*, ed. Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Travis Tanner (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 145–146. For an

earlier analysis, see Tanner, “The Institutional Lessons of Disaster,” 620–625.

¹⁶ Maxim Popenker, “Top 5 Submachine Guns Used by China’s Military and Police,” *Tactical Life*, January 12, 2015, available at <www.tactical-life.com/firearms/top-5-submachine-guns-china/>. See also Cooper, “Controlling the Four Quarters,” 140–142.

¹⁷ Xiao Tianliang, ed., *Science of Strategy* [战略学] (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2017), 412–414.

¹⁸ “China’s Armed Police Looks to Buy New Z-11WB Light Attack Helicopters,” Defence blog, October 16, 2016, available at <<https://defence-blog.com/news/chinas-armed-police-looks-to-buy-new-z-11wb-light-attack-helicopters.html>>.

¹⁹ “Shanxi People’s Armed Police Helicopter Complex Training Area Increases Counter-Terrorism Capabilities” [山西武警武装直升机复杂地域训练提升反恐能力], *PAP Online* [中国武警网], June 6, 2014, available at <www.chinanews.com/mil/2014/06-06/6250027.shtml>.

²⁰ “In the People’s Armed Police Shanghai Zongdui Counter-Terrorism Exercises, Why Did the Experienced Special Operations Team Lose?” [武警上海总队反恐演练，经验丰富的特战队为何吃了败仗], *Liberation Daily* [解放报], August 1, 2018, available at <www.jfdaily.com/news/detail?id=98272>; Murray Scot Tanner, *China’s Response to Terrorism*, with James Bellacqua (Arlington, VA: CNA, 2016), 42; Guo, *China’s Security State*, 233.

²¹ Li Zuobiao, “Legal Thoughts on the People’s Armed Police Missions and Structure” [武警部队职责与体制的法学思考], *Journal of the Chinese People’s Armed Police Force Academy* [武警学院学报] 26, no. 7 (July 2010), 39.

²² Lyle J. Morris, “Organizing for the Gray Zone: Assessing the Rights Protection Capabilities of the New China Coast Guard,” in *China’s Maritime Gray Zone Operations*, ed. Ryan D. Martinson and Andrew S. Erickson (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018). See also Linda Jakobson, “The PLA and Maritime Security Actors,” in *PLA Influence on China’s National Security Policymaking*, ed. Phillip C. Saunders and Andrew Scobell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 300–323.

²³ See especially the 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2012 China defense white papers.

²⁴ On the implications of the PAP Law, see Murray Scot Tanner, “China’s People’s Armed Police Force Leadership, Command, and Organization in the Wake of the 2009 PAP Law,” in *The PLA as Organization v2.0*, ed. Kevin Pollpeter and Kenneth W. Allen (Vienna, VA: DGI, 2015); and Yuning Wu, Ivan Y. Sun, and Aaron Fichtelberg, “Formalizing China’s Armed Police: The 2009 PAP Law,” *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 56, no. 3 (2011), 243–263.

²⁵ As Tai Ming Cheung assessed in 1996, the PAP clung to a “fragmented command structure with widely varying standards of professionalism, competing institutional loyalties, and poor coordination and communication between the components.” See Tai Ming Cheung, “Guarding China’s Domestic Front Line: The People’s Armed Police and China’s Stability,” *China Quarterly* 146 (June 1996), 528.

²⁶ See, for example, “Two Senior Chinese Officers Expelled from Communist Party,” Reuters, October 28, 2016, available at <www.reuters.com/article/us-china-corruption-defence/two-senior-chinese-officers-expelled-from-communist-party-idUSKCN12S0B3>. On obstacles to PLA organizational reform, see Wuthnow and Saunders, *Chinese Military Reform in the Age of Xi Jinping*, 8–9.

²⁷ “Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform,” China.org.cn, January 16, 2014, available at

<www.china.org.cn/china/third_plenary_session/2014-01/16/content_31212602.htm>.

²⁸ Minnie Chan and Choi Chi-yuk, “Top Chinese General Linked to Disgraced Security Tsar Zhou Yongkang Arrested for Corruption,” *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), August 25, 2016, available at <www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2009370/top-chinese-general-linked-disgraced-security-tsar-zhou>.

²⁹ “Central Military Commission Opinion on Deepening National Defense and Military Reform” [中央军委关于深化国防和军队改革的意见], Xinhua, January 1, 2016, available at <www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2016-01/01/c_1117646695.htm>.

³⁰ For instance, as early as January 29, 2013, Xi Jinping visited a PAP unit and enjoined troops to develop a “modern armed police force that listens to the party’s commands, can win battles, and has a good style,” echoing the slogans he recited to PLA personnel. See Yu Yu, Liu Fengqiao, and Xiao Yisha, “Striving to Promote the Construction of a Modernized People’s Armed Police” [奋力推进现代化武装警察部队建设], *PAP Daily* [武警报], December 30, 2017, 1.

³¹ The date of these headquarters reforms is uncertain but was completed by October 4, 2017. See “People’s Armed Police Reform: Local Governments No Longer Have Power Over Command and Deployments” [武警改革: 地方政府不再拥有对其指挥和调动权力], *The Paper* [澎湃], December 29, 2017, available at <<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/nd/2017-12-29/doc-ifyqchnr7089541.shtml>>.

³² For a discussion of Xi’s political strategy in the PLA, see Phillip C. Saunders and Joel Wuthnow, “Large and In Charge: Civil-Military Relations under Xi Jinping,” in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA*.

³³ “People’s Armed Police Reform.”

³⁴ Those were the National Defense Law and the PAP Law.

³⁵ “Decision of the CCP Central Committee Adjusts the Leadership and Command System of the People’s Armed Police” [中共中央决定调整中国人民武装警察部队领导指挥体制], Xinhua, December 27, 2017, available at <www.xinhuanet.com/2017-12/27/c_1122175909.htm>.

³⁶ In 1972, Mao Zedong gave local MPS bureaus operational and financial authority over local paramilitary forces. See Tai Ming Cheung, “Guarding China’s Domestic Front Line,” 526–527.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Party Committee, Government Opinion on Advancing Reforms in Disaster Preventing, Reduction, and Relief” [中共广西壮族自治区委员会广西壮族自治区人民政府关于推进防灾减灾救灾体制机制改革的实施意见], Nanning City Civil Affairs Bureau, November 16, 2018, available at <www.nanning.gov.cn/xxgk/xxgkml/shgysyjslyxxgk/shjzhshfl/t1415528.html>.

³⁹ “Changzhou 2018 Military-Locality Joint Flood Control Rescue Drill Successfully Held” [常州市2018军地联合防汛抢险演练成功举行], Changzhou Emergency Management Department, June 8, 2018, available at <http://ajj.changzhou.gov.cn/html/ajj/2018/PPEAMIBP_0608/26236.html>.

⁴⁰ Li Yan, “Three Days Later, Local Governments Will Have No Power to Mobilize People’s Armed Police Forces” [3天后, 地方政府将无权调动武警力量], Zhengzhijian [政知见], December 28, 2017. Zhengzhijian is a public WeChat account operated by *Beijing Youth Daily*, which is run by the Communist Youth League.

⁴¹ Interview, Beijing, October 2018.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Li Yan, “Three Days Later, Local Governments Will Have No Power to Mobilize People’s Armed Police Forces.”

⁴⁴ Like the mobile divisions, these were also known as forces [*budui*, 部队] and sometimes by their former appellations as regiments [*tuan*, 团].

⁴⁵ The situation is somewhat muddled because provincial contingents already possessed some mobile capabilities, and some of these were also apparently rebranded as mobile detachments. See Guo, *China’s Security State*, 233.

⁴⁶ Some of these units were drawn from the former mobile divisions. For instance, the Xinjiang 4th Mobile Detachment likely was assembled from the former 8661 Force (Yining), while the Yunnan 3rd Mobile Detachment likely came from the former 8751 Force (Honghe).

⁴⁷ Yue Huairang, “PAP Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps Command Adjusted to a Corps Contingent in October 2017” [武警新疆生产建设兵团指挥部于去年10月整编成立为兵团总队], *The Paper* [澎湃], February 12, 2018, available at <www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1996363>.

⁴⁸ Beijing now has at least four mobile detachments, while Shanghai has two.

⁴⁹ As early as January 2018, non-authoritative Chinese and foreign media reported on the creation of two new mobile contingents. The PLA’s spokesman eventually confirmed the existence of the mobile contingents during a press conference in June 2018, indicating that these would be distinct from the internal security forces (but not mentioning the status of the mobile divisions). See “Beijing ‘Important Political Decision,’ Officially Carried Out on New Year’s Day 2018” [北京“重大政治决定”2018年首日正式执行], Aboluo News [阿波罗新闻], January 2, 2018, available at <www.aboluowang.com/2018/0102/1049012.html>; “Beijing Observer: People’s Armed Police Reform Creates Mobile Contingents” [北京观察：武警改革组建机动总队], *Ta Kung Pao* [大公网], February 14, 2018, available at <<http://news.takungpao.com/mainland/focus/2018-02/3544027.html>>; “The Cross-Military Reform of the People’s Armed Police Is Progressing in an Orderly Manner” [武警部队跨军地改革按计划有序推进], *People’s Daily* [人民日报], June 29, 2018, available at <http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2018-06/29/nw.D110000renmrb_20180629_2-11.htm>.

⁵⁰ While the mobile detachments appear to have been drawn from the former mobile divisions, some of the specialized units were likely drawn from the provincial contingents. For instance, non-authoritative reports suggest that the Snow Leopard commando team has been moved from the Beijing contingent to the 2nd Mobile Contingent and is now based in Guangzhou. See <www.xhclub.net/thread-247634-5-1.html>.

⁵¹ Beijing and Xinjiang are also corps-level commands. The appendix provides more data on the PAP’s post-reform grade structure.

⁵² Wang Jun, “Two North and South PAP Mobile Contingents Come to Light: Respectively Located in Fujian, Hebei” (武警部队南北两支机动总队驻地亮相：分别位于福建、河北), *The Paper* [澎湃], August 1, 2018, available at <www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2310886>.

⁵³ “Unprecedented Degree of People’s Armed Police Organizational Reform, Maritime Police Forces ‘Enter the Army’” [武警部队编制改革力度空前海警力量‘当兵入伍’], *People’s Daily Online* [人民网], March 22, 2018, available at <<http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0322/c1011-29882805.html>>.

⁵⁴“Advancement of People's Armed Police Reforms, Eight Types of Police Are Fit and Slim” [武警改革的出与进 八大警种瘦身健体], *Beijing News* [新京报], April 6, 2018, available at <www.bjnews.com.cn/inside/2018/04/06/482152.html>.

⁵⁵ Wang Ning revealed this formulation's appearance in the November 2015 document during a National People's Congress (NPC) speech 2 years later. See “Explanation of the Draft Decision on Temporary Adjustments to Relevant Laws and Regulations of the People's Armed Police During the Reform Period” [关于“关于中国人民武装警察部队改革期间暂时调整适用相关法律规定的决定(草案)”的说明], *China National People's Congress Online* [中国人大网], November 8, 2017, available at <www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2017-11/08/content_2032260.htm>.

⁵⁶“Wang Qiang: Deep Significance of the People's Armed Police Adjustment and Reform” [王强: 武警部队调整改革的深远意义], *Global Times* [环球时报], January 2, 2018, available at <<http://opinion.huanqiu.com/hqpl/2018-01/11488528.html>>.

⁵⁷“Advancement of People's Armed Police Reforms, Eight Types of Police Are Fit and Slim.”

⁵⁸“CCP Central Committee Publishes ‘Plan on Deepening the Reform of Party and State Organizations’” (中共中央印发“深化党和国家机构改革方案”), *Xinhua*, March 21, 2018, available at <www.gov.cn/zhengce/2018-03/21/content_5276191.htm#1>.

⁵⁹“Advancement of People's Armed Police Reforms, Eight Types of Police Are Fit and Slim.”

⁶⁰ Wang Jun, “People's Armed Police Second Mobile Contingent and Subsidiary Mobile Detachments and Transportation Detachments Come to Light” [武警第二机动总队及所属多个机动支队和交通支队集中亮相], *Pengpai News* [澎湃新闻], July 18, 2018, available at <www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2273118>.

⁶¹“Revising the PRC People's Armed Police Law” [修订“中华人民共和国人民武装警察法”], *PLA Daily* [解放军报], March 8, 2016, available at <www.npc.gov.cn/npc/dbdhhy/12_4/2016-03/08/content_1973601.htm>.

⁶² Li Zuobiao, “On the Work Relationship Between the State Oceanic Administration, the China Coast Guard, and the Ministry of Public Security” [试论国家海洋局中国海警局和公安部之间的职务关系], *Journal of the Armed Police Academy* [武警学院学报] 32, no. 11 (November 2016), 8. The author is a professor in the Border Defense Department at the PAP Academy.

⁶³“Chinese Coast Guard to Be under the Command of Armed Police from July,” *ChinaMil*, June 28, 2018, available at <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-06/28/content_8074409.htm>.

⁶⁴“NPC Standing Committee Decision on the Law Enforcement Authority of the China Coast Guard” [全国人民代表大会常务委员会关于中国海警局行使海上维权执法职权的决定], NPC, June 22, 2018, available at <www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2018-06/22/content_2056585.htm>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶“Explanation of the Draft Decision on Temporary Adjustments to Relevant Laws and Regulations of the People's Armed Police During the Reform Period.”

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the drivers of PLA reform, see David M. Finkelstein, “Breaking the Paradigm: Drivers Behind the PLA's Current Period of Reform,” in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA*.

⁶⁸ Saunders and Wuthnow, “Large and In Charge.”

⁶⁹ Wuthnow and Saunders, *Chinese Military Reform in the Age of Xi Jinping*, 32–35.

⁷⁰ James Mulvenon, “The Cult of Xi and the Rise of the CMC Chairman Responsibility System,”

China Leadership Monitor 55 (Winter 2018).

⁷¹ Viola Zhou, “Security Shake-up in Store as New Names Tapped to Run China’s Police and Intelligence Services,” *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), November 1, 2017, available at <www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2117894/china-appoints-new-communist-party-chief-oversee-police>.

⁷² “Reforming the People’s Republic of China People’s Armed Police Law” [修订中华人民共和国人民武装警察法], *PLA Daily* [解放军报], March 8, 2016, available at <www.npc.gov.cn/npc/dbdhhy/12_4/2016-03/08/content_1973601.htm>. The *CMC chairman responsibility system* refers to language in the 1982 People’s Republic of China constitution, which states that the Central Military Commission chairman “assumes overall responsibility for the work of the CMC.” It has been emphasized in the Xi era to underscore that all major decisions ultimately rest with him. For a discussion, see James Mulvenon, “The Yuan Stops Here: Xi Jinping and the ‘CMC Chairman Responsibility System,’” *China Leadership Monitor*, July 14, 2015, available at <www.hoover.org/research/yuan-stops-here-xi-jinping-and-cmc-chairman-responsibility-system>.

⁷³ Wang Ning, “Resolutely Defend and Implement the CMC Chairman Responsibility System, Ensure the Party’s Absolute Leadership Over the People’s Armed Police” [坚决维护和贯彻军委主席负责制 确保党对武警部队绝对领导], *Study Times* [学习时报], October 11, 2017, available at <<http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1011/c40531-29580014.html>>.

⁷⁴ “Explanation of the Draft Decision on Temporary Adjustments to Relevant Laws and Regulations of the People’s Armed Police During the Reform Period.”

⁷⁵ Timothy Heath, *The Consolidation of Political Power in China under Xi Jinping*, Testimony Before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, February 7, 2019, 2.

⁷⁶ “Why Did the People’s Armed Police Increase Leadership Authority? Chinese Officials Respond” [武警部队为何变更领导权? 中国官方回应], *Duowei News* [多维新闻], December 28, 2017, available at <<http://news.dwnnews.com/china/news/2017-12-28/60032514.html>>.

⁷⁷ Yu, Liu, and Xiao, “Striving to Promote the Construction of a Modernized People’s Armed Police,” 1.

⁷⁸ Fu Yiyun, “Starting a New Journey for Building a Powerful and Modernized People’s Armed Police” [开启建设强大现代化武装警察部队新征程], *PAP Daily* [武警报], February 4, 2018, A3.

⁷⁹ Zhao Shuyi, “Adapt a New System, Carry Out New Missions, Seek New Ways” [适应新体制履行新使命, 谋求新作为], *PAP Daily* [武警报], May 20, 2018, 3.

⁸⁰ Edward Cody, “Chinese Police Bring Villagers to Heel After Latest Uprising,” *Washington Post*, December 21, 2005, available at <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/20/AR2005122001810.html>.

⁸¹ Jamil Anderlini, “Wukan Villagers Agree to Peace Deal,” *Financial Times*, December 21, 2011, available at <www.ft.com/content/431ec782-2b9b-11e1-98bc-00144feabdc0>.

⁸² Zhang Liping, “Legal Considerations of the People’s Armed Police’s Management of Mass Incidents” [武警部队处置群体性事件的法律思考], *Police Practical Combat Training* [警察实战训练研究], no. 2 (2013), 92–95.

⁸³ Tanner, “The Institutional Lessons of Disaster,” 613.

⁸⁴ See, for example, Jonathan Walton, “China Plans for Internal Unrest: People’s Armed Police

and Public Security Approaches to ‘Mass Incidents,’” in *The People’s Liberation Army and Contingency Planning in China*, ed. Andrew Scobell et al. (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2015), 55–84.

⁸⁵ However, this investigation may also have been triggered by Wang’s ties to Zhou Yongkang. See Chan and Choi, “Top Chinese General Linked to Disgraced Security Tsar Zhou Yongkang Arrested for Corruption.”

⁸⁶ “Two Senior Chinese Officers Expelled from Communist Party.” In addition, ChinaFile’s database of anti-corruption cases lists four PAP Transportation officers as having been investigated: Major General Liu Zhanqi (commander), Major General Wang Xin (political commissar), Major General Miu Guirong (chief engineer), and Major General Qu Mutian (commander). See <www.chinafile.com/infographics/visualizing-chinas-anti-corruption-campaign>.

⁸⁷ “Advancement of People’s Armed Police Reforms, Eight Types of Police Are Fit and Slim.”

⁸⁸ Xie Yongliang, “Why Is the Current People’s Armed Police Reform a Revolutionary Reform?” [为什么说这次武警部队改革是一次革命性变革], *Beijing News* [新京报], March 22, 2018, available at <http://news.ifeng.com/a/20180322/56947571_0.shtml>.

⁸⁹ “Defense Ministry’s Interpretation on AFP Flag,” *China Military Online*, January 11, 2018, available at <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-01/11/content_7904961.htm>.

⁹⁰ “Full Text: China’s Military Strategy,” Xinhua, May 26, 2015, available at <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2015-05/26/content_4586805.htm>.

⁹¹ “Xinjiang Deploys over 10,000 Armed Police in Latest Show of Force after Terror Attacks,” *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), February 28, 2017, available at <www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2074711/china-stages-another-huge-show-force-xinjiang-wake>.

⁹² See William Wan and Xu Jing, “Newly Armed Police in China Say They Fear Their Guns as Much as Public,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 2014, available at <www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/09/26/newly-armed-police-in-china-say-they-fear-their-guns-as-much-as-public/?utm_term=.31e899ffb04e>. For an overview, see Anna Mitchell and Larry Diamond, “China’s Surveillance State Should Scare Everyone,” *The Atlantic*, February 2, 2018, available at <www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/china-surveillance/552203/>.

⁹³ According to one analysis, government officials respond to 30 percent of mass incidents through economic compensation. See Yanqi Tong and Shaohua Lei, “Large-Scale Mass Incidents and Government Responses in China,” *International Journal of China Studies* 1, no. 2 (2010), 487–508. Notably, the “Wukan model” suffered a blow when residents of that village once again protested in 2016. See Austin Ramzy, “Protests Return to Wukan, Chinese Village That Once Expelled Its Officials,” *New York Times*, June 20, 2016, available at <www.nytimes.com/2016/06/21/world/asia/china-wukan-protest.html>.

⁹⁴ Zhang Yuliang, *Science of Campaigns* [战役学] (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2006), 123.

⁹⁵ Xiao, *Science of Strategy*, 420. Moreover, A 2013 Academy of Military Science volume on joint tactics similarly noted that the PAP should “maintain the security of important targets” and conduct urban defense, enemy reconnaissance, and other duties during a battle. See Chen Rongdi, *Course of Instruction on Joint Battles* [联合战斗教程] (Beijing: Academy of Military Science, 2013), 80.

⁹⁶ Zhao Lei, “Armed Police Must Obey Party,” *China Daily*, January 11, 2018, available at

<www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201801/11/WS5a568f1ca3102e5b17374094.html>.

⁹⁷ See Michael McDevitt, *Becoming a Great "Maritime Power": A Chinese Dream* (Arlington, VA: CNA, 2016).

⁹⁸ Lyle Morris, "China Welcomes Its Newest Armed Force: The Coast Guard," *War on the Rocks*, April 4, 2018, available at <<https://warontherocks.com/2018/04/china-welcomes-its-newest-armed-force-the-coast-guard/>>.

⁹⁹ Ryan D. Martinson, *The Arming of China's Maritime Frontier* (Newport, RI: China Maritime Studies Institute, 2017), 20.

¹⁰⁰ Li Zuobiao, "On the Duty Relationship Between the State Oceanic Administration, China Coast Guard, and the Ministry of Public Security," 8.

¹⁰¹ Su Yanshan, "Thoughts on China's Maritime Law Enforcement System Construction" [我国海上执法体制建设影响因素分析及其构想初探], *Journal of the Armed Police Academy* [武警学院学报], 34, no. 3 (March 2018), 23–24.

¹⁰² For instance, Senior Captain Liang Fang of the PLA National Defense University wrote that the 2013 consolidation of China's maritime law enforcement services would enable better coast guard–navy cooperation, since the latter would only have to deal with a single entity. See "Experts: China's Coast Guard Bureau Will Form a Ladder Defense System with the Navy" [专家: 中国海警局将与海军形成梯次防卫体系], *Southeast Online* [东南网], March 19, 2013, available at <<http://news.sohu.com/20130319/n369408973.shtml>>.

¹⁰³ Ryan D. Martinson, *Echelon Defense: The Role of Sea Power in Chinese Maritime Dispute Strategy* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, 2018), 25–27.

¹⁰⁴ Jeff Himmelman, "A Game of Shark and Minnow," *New York Times*, October 27, 2013, available at <www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/index.html>.

¹⁰⁵ "Advancement of People's Armed Police Reforms, Eight Types of Police Are Fit and Slim."

¹⁰⁶ Xu Hailin, "China's Military to Lead Coast Guard to Better Defend Sovereignty," *Global Times*, June 24, 2018, available at <www.globaltimes.cn/content/1108223.shtml>.

¹⁰⁷ Yang Yang and Li Peizhi, "Analysis of Problems of China Coast Guard–Navy Fusion-Type Development" [中国海警海军融合式发展问题探究], *Journal of China Maritime Police Academy* [公安海警学院学报] 16, no. 1 (February 2017), 12. It is unclear whether this refers to the "Integrated Command Platform" that the PLA has developed to foster communication across services and regions; a sign of closer coast guard–navy cooperation would be use of this or a similar command system.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Although data on PAP personnel appointments are limited, there are at least a few examples of rotations between the provinces in the last few years. For instance, current commander of the Tibet contingent, Liu Guorong, previously served as commander of the Hunan contingent, while current political commissar of the Xinjiang contingent, Wang Aiguo, previously served in the same role in Shandong. Sources: 2016 and 2018 *Directory of PRC Military Personalities*.

¹¹⁰ Cai Xiang and Zhang Wei, "Rebirth in Remodeling and Reconstruction" [在重塑重构中重生], *PAP Daily* [武警报], May 17, 2018, 3.

¹¹¹ For instance, Wang Yadong, political department director of the former 8710 Force, became political commissar of the Guangdong contingent; Wang Qiang, chief of staff of the former 8620 Force,

became commander of the Guangxi contingent; and Hua Ronglin, commander of the former 8730 Force, became commander of the Guizhou contingent. Source: 2016 and 2018 *Directory of PRC Military Personalities*.

¹¹² Wuthnow and Saunders, *Chinese Military Reforms in the Age of Xi Jinping*, 45–47.

¹¹³ Indeed, local effectiveness is a reason why officials had deployment authority in the first place. See Tanner, “The Institutional Lessons of Disaster,” 605–606.

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of local emergency response plans, see Catherine Welch, “Civilian Authorities and Contingency Planning in China,” in *The People's Liberation Army and Contingency Planning in China*.

¹¹⁵ The PAP was able, however, to coordinate with the PLA in areas such as counterterrorism and border defense. See Cooper, “Controlling the Four Quarters,” 142–143.

¹¹⁶ As a baseline, in 2013, the PAP reportedly carried out 40 combined exercises with the PLA in areas such as air-land combat, joint air defense, and long-range missile attacks. See “PLA and PAP Forces Will Carry Out a Series of Exercises to Boost Combat Capabilities” [解放军和武警部队将举行系列军演提高打仗能力], *PLA Daily* [解放军报], February 26, 2013, available at <www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-02/26/content_2340538.htm>.

¹¹⁷ For an overview of the evolving joint command and control structure, see Joel Wuthnow, “A Brave New World for Chinese Joint Operations,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, nos. 1–2 (2017), 169–195. On the five theaters, see Edmund J. Burke and Arthur Chan, “Coming to a (New) Theater Near You: Command, Control, and Forces,” in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA*.

¹¹⁸ A handful of PAP officers already participate annually in the PLA National Defense University's senior-level (“Dragons”) command course.

¹¹⁹ Current PLA joint campaign doctrine dates from the early 2000s, but a new “6th generation” of doctrine is reportedly being written. See M. Taylor Fravel, “Shifts in Warfare and Party Unity,” *International Security* 42, no. 3 (Winter 2017/2018), 79–80; Elsa B. Kania, “When Will the PLA Finally Update Its Doctrine?” *The Diplomat*, available at <<https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/when-will-the-pla-finally-update-its-doctrine/>>.

¹²⁰ The inaugural commander of the 2nd Mobile Contingent, Major General Chen Hong, previously served as deputy commander of the 1st Group Army and led the CMC Training and Administration Department's Inspection Bureau, signaling a high level of confidence in his abilities. See “Commanders of the PAP Second Mobile Contingent Come to Light: Chen Hong as Commander and Yang Zhenguo as Political Commissar” [武警第二机动总队军政主官亮相: 陈宏任司令员, 杨振国任政委], *The Paper* [澎湃], August 1, 2018, available at <www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2310373>.

¹²¹ *The 2016 and 2018 Directory of PRC Military Personalities*. It is worth noting, however, that some of these PLA transferees may have joined the PAP as a result of ground force reductions rather than operational competence, per se.

¹²² The maritime militia continues to operate under a dual-leadership system, with command exercised both by local governments and the PLA via the military districts. There is also evidence that the coast guard coordinates its activities with the maritime militia. For a discussion, see Andrew S. Erickson and Conor M. Kennedy, *China's Maritime Militia* (Arlington, VA: CNA, March 7, 2016), 8–12.

¹²³ Mark Stokes, “PLA Reform and Reorganization: Who Are the Masters of Cyber, Space,

Nuclear, and Maritime Domains?” Paper presented at the 2016 CAPS-RAND-NDU Conference on the PLA, Arlington, VA, November 18–19, 2016, 11–17.

¹²⁴ “Rear Admiral Ren Zhongcai Assumes Command of the China Coast Guard” [王仲才少将任中国人民武装警察部队海警总队司令员], Sohu, December 8, 2018, available at <www.sohu.com/a/280556724_726570>. For biographic details, see Ying Yu Lin, “Changes in China’s Coast Guard,” *The Diplomat*, January 30, 2019, available at <<https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/changes-in-chinas-coast-guard/>>.

¹²⁵ Cooperation between the three regional PLA Navy headquarters and three regional China Coast Guard (CCG) commands is also possible. This is perhaps likeliest in Qingdao, where both the North Sea Fleet and North Sea detachment are based. By contrast, the East Sea Fleet is based in Ningbo and the CCG East Sea detachment is based in Shanghai; the South Sea Fleet is based in Zhanjiang while the CCG South Sea detachment is based in Guangzhou.

¹²⁶ Yu, Liu, and Xiao, “Striving to Promote the Construction of a Modernized People’s Armed Police,” 1.

¹²⁷ Wang Jun, “People’s Armed Police Commander Wang Ning: Armed Police Force System Facing Clear Problem of Strong on Land, Weak in the Air and Sea” [武警部队司令员王宁: 武警力量体系陆上强, 海空弱问题凸显], *The Paper* [澎湃], May 15, 2018, available at <<http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2018-05-15/doc-ihapkuv2198908.shtml>>.

¹²⁸ “Wang Ning: Strive to Build a Strong and Modernized People’s Armed Police Force” [王宁: 努力建设强大的现代化武装警察部队], *People’s Daily* [人民日报], July 20, 2018, available at <www.forestry.gov.cn/main/74/20180720/091246768574107.html>.

¹²⁹ “2018 Central Level Expenditure Budget” [2018年中央本级支出预算表], Ministry of Finance, March 2018, available at <http://yss.mof.gov.cn/2018zyys/201804/t20180403_2859400.html>.

¹³⁰ Adam P. Liff and Andrew S. Erickson, “Demystifying China’s Defense Spending: Less Mysterious in the Aggregate,” *China Quarterly* 216 (2013), 814–815.

¹³¹ In 2018, PAP expenses were still reported under “public security spending” [*gonggong anquan zhichu*, 公共安全支出] rather than incorporated into the official Chinese defense budget. A key reason is likely that adding PAP expenses would result in a major increase in China’s defense spending (of about 13 percent), potentially alarming China’s neighbors. For an analysis of China’s defense budget, see Adam P. Liff and Andrew S. Erickson, “Demystifying China’s Defense Spending: Less Mysterious in the Aggregate,” *The China Quarterly* 216 (December 2013), 805–830.

¹³² Zenz, “Coralling the People’s Armed Police.”

¹³³ For a discussion, see “Eradicating Ideological Viruses’: China’s Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang’s Muslims,” Human Rights Watch, September 9, 2018, available at <www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs#>. See also Greitens, “Domestic Security in China under Xi Jinping.”

¹³⁴ Zhang Han, “PLA Downsizing Continues with Firefighters Transfer to Non-Military Department,” *Global Times* (Beijing), October 9, 2018, available at <www.globaltimes.cn/content/1122335.shtml>. See also “Advancement of People’s Armed Police Reforms, Eight Types of Police Are Fit and Slim.” This new organization also integrated related functions such as the China Earthquake Administration and State Administration of Coal Mine Safety. See “China to Form Ministry of Emergency

Management,” Xinhua, March 13, 2018, available at <http://english.gov.cn/state_council/ministries/2018/03/13/content_281476076465182.htm/>.

¹³⁵ “Military-Locality Exercise Comprehensive Emergency Support for Winter Road Traffic” [军地联合演练冬季公路交通综合应急保障], Ministry of Transport, November 15, 2018, available at <www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-11/15/content_5340646.htm>.

¹³⁶ For background, see Joel Wuthnow, “China’s New ‘Black Box’: Problems and Prospects for the National Security Commission,” *China Quarterly* 232 (2017), 886–903; and Andrew S. Erickson and Adam Liff, “Installing a Safety on the ‘Loaded Gun’: China’s Institutional Reforms, National Security Commission, and Sino-Japanese Crisis (in) Stability,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 98 (2016), 197–215. Placing similar functions under a common organizational framework is significant given poor bureaucratic cooperation in responding to previous crises. For instance, after the May 2008 Sichuan earthquakes, disputes between premier Wen Jiabao and CMC vice chairman Guo Boxiong reportedly led to a breakdown in coordination between civilian and military assets. See Michael S. Chase et al., *China’s Incomplete Military Transformation* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015), 45–46.

¹³⁷ Oriana Skylar Mastro, “Conflict and Chaos on the Korean Peninsula: Can China’s Military Help Secure North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons?” *International Security* 43, no. (2018), 106. However, it is unclear if this would have been a responsibility of the Border Defense Force, now under the MPS, or the internal security forces (or both, depending on the circumstances).

¹³⁸ Zdzislaw Sliwa, *The Russian National Guard: A Warning or a Message?* (Riga: National Defence Academy of Latvia, 2018), 33.

¹³⁹ “Langfang Homes to Asia’s Largest UN Police Training Center,” Xinhua, August 19, 2002, available at <<http://china.org.cn/english/2002/Aug/39878.htm>>.

¹⁴⁰ Zhang Yi, “Training Begins in Beijing for UN Police Mission,” *China Daily* (Beijing), August 9, 2016, available at <www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2016-08/09/content_26397779.htm>.

¹⁴¹ “Chinese Armed Police Host International Counter-Terrorism Forum,” ChinaMil, May 28, 2018, available at <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-05/28/content_8043868.htm>.

¹⁴² “China, Russia Conclude Joint Counter-Terror Exercises,” Xinhua, December 13, 2017, available at <www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-12/13/c_136823461.htm>.

¹⁴³ On the East Timor deployment, see Marc Lanteigne, “A Change in Perspective: China’s Engagement in the East Timor UN Peacekeeping Operations,” in *China’s Evolving Approach to Peacekeeping*, ed. Marc Lanteigne and Miwa Hirono (New York: Routledge, 2012). See also Guo, *China’s Security State*, 237.

¹⁴⁴ For instance, Beijing routinely notes that China is the top United Nations (UN) permanent-5 contributor to UN peacekeeping missions as a way to demonstrate its status as a responsible country.

¹⁴⁵ Peter Mattis, “New Law Reshapes Chinese Counterterrorism Policy and Operations,” *China Brief* 16, no. 2 (January 25, 2016), available at <<https://jamestown.org/program/new-law-reshapes-chinese-counterterrorism-policy-and-operations/>>.

¹⁴⁶ Gerry Shih, “In Central Asia’s Forbidding Highlands, a Quiet Newcomer: Chinese Troops,” *Washington Post*, February 18, 2019, available at <www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9>.

-a759-2b8541bbbe20_story.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Charles Clover, “Mystery Deepens over Chinese Forces in Afghanistan,” *Financial Times*, February 26, 2017, available at <www.ft.com/content/0c8a5a2a-f9b7-11e6-9516-2d969e0d3b65>.

Thanks to Andrew Small for bringing this article to my attention.

¹⁴⁸ Shaio Zerba, “China’s Libya Evacuation Operation: A New Diplomatic Imperative—Overseas Citizen Protection,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 90 (November 2014), 1093–1112.

¹⁴⁹ On security challenges along Belt and Road Initiative routes and potential options to address those threats, see Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2017), 13–21; and Timothy R. Heath, *China’s Pursuit of Overseas Security* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018), 21–32.

¹⁵⁰ Xu Hailin, “Coast Guard, Newly under Military Command, Announces Diaoyu Patrol,” *Global Times* (Beijing), July 4, 2018, available at <www.globaltimes.cn/content/1109496.shtml>; Catherine Wong, “China’s Navy and Coast Guard Stage First Joint Patrols Near Disputed South China Sea Islands as ‘Warning to Vietnam,’” *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), May 22, 2018, available at <www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2147154/chinas-navy-and-coastguard-stage-first-joint-patrols>.

¹⁵¹ “Chinese Warships, Coast Guard Ships, and Law Enforcement Ships Carry Out First Joint Patrol in the Paracels” [中国军舰海警船及执法船首次联合巡逻南海岛礁], *Military Reporter* [军报记者], May 20, 2018, available at <<http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/china/2018-05-20/doc-ihaturft0588677.shtml>>.

¹⁵² Catherine Wong, “China’s Navy and Coast Guard Stage First Joint Patrols Near Disputed South China Sea Islands as ‘Warning to Vietnam,’” *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), May 22, 2018, available at <www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2147154/chinas-navy-and-coastguard-stage-first-joint-patrols>.

¹⁵³ See “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China Regarding the Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters,” November 9–10, 2014, available at <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/141112_MemorandumOfUnderstandingRegardingRules.pdf>.

¹⁵⁴ The Rules of Behavior apply to *naval auxiliaries*, defined as “a vessel, other than a warship, that is owned by or is under the exclusive control of the armed forces of the State and used for the time being on government non-commercial service.” *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵⁵ As Kevin McCauley notes, “Provisions for civilian control and reconstruction [of Taiwan], supported by the employment of People’s Armed Police national-level units, would need careful advanced planning.” See Kevin McCauley, “Amphibious Operations: Lessons of Past Campaigns for Today’s PLA,” *Real Clear Defense*, February 27, 2018, available at <www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/02/27/amphibious_operations_lessons_of_past_campaigns_for_todays_pla_113123.html>.

About the Author

Dr. Joel Wuthnow is a Research Fellow in the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, Institute for National Strategic Studies, at the National Defense University. Prior to joining NDU, he was a China analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, a post-doctoral fellow in the China and the World Program at Princeton University, and a pre-doctoral fellow at the Brookings Institution. His recent books and monographs include *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms* (NDU Press, 2019; co-editor); *Raging Waters: China, India, Bangladesh, and Brahmaputra River Politics* (Marine Corps University Press, 2018; with Nilanthi Samaranyake and Satu Limaye), *Chinese Perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative: Strategic Rationales, Risks, and Implications*, China Strategic Perspectives 12 (NDU Press, 2017); and *Chinese Military Reforms in the Age of Xi Jinping: Drivers, Challenges, and Implications*, Chinese Strategic Perspectives 10 (NDU Press, 2017). Dr. Wuthnow received an A.B. in Public and International Affairs from Princeton University, an M.Phil. in Modern Chinese Studies from Oxford University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University.

A previous version of this paper was presented at the 2018 CAPS-RAND-NDU conference on the People's Liberation Army.

For helpful comments, the author thanks Dennis Blasko, Kristen Gunness, Lieutenant Colonel Kyle Marcrum, USA, and Phillip C. Saunders. Ian Burns McCaslin provided valuable research assistance.

China Strategic Perspectives Series
Editor, Dr. Phillip C. Saunders

- No. 13 ***Chinese Strategic Support Force: A Force for a New Era***
by John Costello and Joe McReynolds (10/18)
- No. 12 ***Chinese Perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative: Strategic Rationales, Risks, and Implications***
by Joel Wuthnow (09/17)
- No. 11 ***Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003–2016: Trends and Implications***
by Kenneth Allen, Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen (07/17)
- No. 10 ***Chinese Military Reforms in the Age of Xi Jinping: Drivers, Challenges, and Implications***
by Joel Wuthnow and Phillip C. Saunders (03/17)
- No. 9 ***China Moves Out: Stepping Stones Toward a New Maritime Strategy***
by Christopher H. Sharman (03/15)
- No. 8 ***Red China's 'Capitalist Bomb': Inside the Chinese Neutron Bomb Program***
by Jonathan Ray (01/15)
- No. 7 ***"Not an Idea We Need to Shun": Chinese Overseas Basing Requirements in the 21st Century***
by Christopher Yung and Ross Rustici, with Scott Devary and Jenny Lin (10/14)
- No. 6 ***China's Forbearance Has Limits: Chinese Threat and Retaliation Signaling and Its Implications for a Sino-American Military Confrontation***
by Paul H.B. Godwin and Alice Miller (04/13)
- No. 5 ***Managing Sino-U.S. Air and Naval Interactions: Cold War Lessons and New Avenues of Approach***
by Mark E. Redden and Phillip C. Saunders (09/12)
- No. 4 ***Buy, Build, or Steal: China's Quest for Advanced Military Aviation Technologies***
by Phillip C. Saunders and Joshua Wiseman (12/11)
- No. 3 ***China's Out of Area Naval Operations: Case Studies, Trajectories, Obstacles and Potential Solutions***
by Christopher Yung and Ross Rustici, with Isaac Kardon and Joshua Wiseman (12/10)
- No. 2 ***Civil-Military Relations in China: Assessing the PLA's Role in Elite Politics***
by Michael Kiselycznyk and Phillip C. Saunders (08/10)
- No. 1 ***Assessing Chinese Military Transparency***
by Phillip C. Saunders and Michael Kiselycznyk (06/10)

For a complete list of INSS publications, researchers, and staff, visit <http://inss.ndu.edu>

