

中国军事改革：现在与未来（上篇）



中国军队的结构性改革吸引了全世界的注意，同时军事改革也是中国正在进行的、更广泛改革的核心部分。中国正在发生的体制改革规模与其涉及的领域如此广泛，以致研究中国政治的学者和观察家们有时难以判断情况，更难以解释伴随改革而来的各种变化。这份分为上下篇的报告来自第一手资料，以中文原文和英文翻译的形式呈现。旨在通过探究中国军事改革的实质和逻辑，丰富此变化中的研究主题的文献。

中国此次军事改革引起了世界的广泛关注。观察家们普遍认为，这是中华人民共和国成立以来人民解放军历史上规模最大、内容最丰富、涉及面最广、影响最为深远的一次军事改革。此次军事改革，无论在形式上还是在内容上，也无论在理论层面还是在操作层面，都比解放军建军以来历次整编、调整、裁军等行动更具有改革的本质特征。此次军事改革的总体论证、组织实施、进程把控等，都充分体现了以习近平为核心的党中央、中央军委高瞻远瞩、科学务实，要把人民解放军推向历史新高度的战略智慧、果敢行动和使命担当。此次军事改革，必将在中国共产党绝对领导下的人民解放军的历史上留下浓重的一笔。

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一、当前军事改革基本情况

外界普遍认为，此次中国军事改革开始于2015年，因为该年年底解放军成立了陆军领导机构、火箭军和战略支援部队，这当然没错。但实际上自2013年起，新一轮中国国防和军队改革的重大事项，就已经提上了以习近平同志为首的新当选的党和国家领导人的议事议程。

（一）改革的发起

任何一次军事改革，都是由军事组织的最高领导人或领导集体发起的。2012年11月中国共产党第十八次全国代表大会后，以习近平为总书记和核心的党中央，以高超的战略智慧和勇气担当，吹响了“全面深化改革”的号角，担负起了带领全党和全国各族人民实现中华民族伟大复兴中国梦的光荣使命。¹其中，国防和军队改革正是此次全面深化改革中具有重大意义的内容之一。

2013年3月17日，经中国共产党第十八届中央委员会第三次全体会议决定，正式成立了中国共产党中央国家安全委员会，统筹协调涉及国家安全的重大事项和重要工作，完善国家安全体制和国家安全战略，以确保国家安全。“国安委”的创立，实际上也为此次中国国防和军队改革谱写了序曲。

2014年3月5日，习主席主持召开中央军委深化国防和军队改革领导小组成立后的第一次全体会议，并发表重要讲话。讲话中指出，“建设一支听党指挥、能打胜仗、作风优良的人民军队，是党在新形势下的强军目标。”“始终坚持战斗力这个唯一的根本的标准，确保在党和人民需要的时候拉得出、上得去、打得赢。”“长期和平环境对军人是个严峻考验，‘奢靡之始，危亡之渐’，这个古训我们要铭记在心。”习主席还强调，深化国防和军队改革，要把思想和行动统一到党中央和中央军委的决策部署上来，坚持用强军目标审视改革、以强军目标引领改革、围绕强军目标推进改革。习主席的指示精神，为此次军改指明了方向和目标，道明了改革的原因和要求。

中央军委“深化国防和军队改革领导小组”的成立，标志着此次军改有了最高组织领导机构，为必须自上而下进行的军事改革做好了组织准备。该领导小组的主要职责是，对国防和军事改革工作实施集中统一领导，组织搞好改革的总体设计、统筹协调、整体推进、督导落实，确保各项改革工作统一谋划、统一部署、统一推进、统一实施。

（二）改革过程中的几个“亮点”

在习主席担任组长的中央军委深化国防和军队改革领导小组领导下，经过近两年的总体设

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计，对军事科学院、国防大学、各军兵种的教学、科研、训练及基层部队等单位提出的多个建议方案进行了充分的理论分析和模拟论证。同时，在军委统一领导下，围绕深化国防和军队改革问题开展了全军范围的思想动员和理论准备。

2015年9月3日，习主席在抗日战争胜利日阅兵之际，郑重宣布中国人民解放军将裁军30万。2015年11月24日至26日，中央军委改革工作会议在京举行。中共中央总书记、国家主席、中央军委主席、中央军委深化国防和军队改革领导小组组长习近平出席会议并发表了重要讲话。习近平指出，“2020年前在领导管理体制、联合作战指挥体制改革上取得突破性进展，在优化规模结构、完善政策制度、推动军民融合深度发展等方面改革上取得重要成果，努力构建能够打赢信息化战争、有效履行使命任务的中国特色现代军事力量体系，进一步完

善中国特色社会主义军事制度。”这实际上是进一步明确了此次国防和军队改革的基本任务和完成时限。

2015年12月31日，陆军设立领导机构，火箭军、战略支援部队成立。同时，经中央军委主席习近平批准，中央军委印发了《关于深化国防和军队改革的意见》（简称《意见》），进一步明确了此次深化国防和军队改革的指导思想、基本原则、总体目标和实施步骤。《意见》指出，“按照总体目标要求，2015年，重点组织实施领导管理体制、联合作战指挥体制改革；2016年，组织实施军队规模结构和作战力量体系、院校、武警部队改革，基本完成阶段性改革任务；2017年至2020年，对相关领域改革作进一步调整、优化和完善，持续推进各领域改革。”该意见的印发，对全军官兵统一思想、全身心投入改革中起到了不可估量的作用。

2016年2月1日，中国人民解放军战区成立大会在北京隆重举行。中共中央总书记、国家主席、中央军委主席习近平向新成立的“五大战区”授予军旗并发布训令，强调建立东部战区、南部战区、西部战区、北部战区、中部战区，组建战区联合作战指挥机构，是党中央和中央军委着眼实现中国梦强军梦作出的战略决策，是全面实施改革强军战略的标志性举措，是构建我军联合作战体系的历史性进展，对确保我军能打仗、打胜仗，有效维护国家安全，具有重大而深远的意义。训令还指出，战区担负着应对本战略方向安全威胁、维护和平、遏制战争、打赢战争的使命，对维护国家安全战略和军事战略全局具有举足轻重的作用。

2016年12月2日至3日，中央军委军队规模结构和力量编成改革工作会议在京举行。不久，陆军原18个集团军变成13个集团军。

2017年4月18日起，包括陆军、海军、空军、火箭军和战略支援部队以及省军区系统在内的84个全军新军级单位开始“亮相”。

接下来，随着武警、军事院校、训练基地等改革措施的实施，中国人民解放军的新形态开始呈现。（以上内容资料来源：中国央视网、中国军网、新华网、央视新闻。）

（三）已取得的阶段性成果

截至2017年年底，中国此次军事改革取得了阶段性成果和历史性突破。

主要成果之一：把原总部制改为军委所属的多部门制。此次改革，将原来的总参谋部、总政治部、总后勤部、总装备部4个总部，改为7个部（厅）、3个委员会、5个直属机构共15个职能部门，加强了权力约束，打破了过去的利益藩篱。

主要成果之二：原七大军区番号撤销，改为五大战区。其目的之一就是要各军种并重。新组建战区的领导指挥班子成员将来自不同的军兵种，在力量组成上使每一个战区都能相对独立进行战役级作战。与之紧密相关的成果是陆军有了直接的领导机构，其组织结构得到了优化、其基层部队日益合成化；再加上第二炮兵“升格”后的火箭军、新成立的战略支援部队等，将使得这一改革成果为未来的解放军带来深远的影响。

主要成果之三：初步建立起新型军事人才培养、教育、训练体系，即军队院校教育、部队训练实践、军事职业教育“三位一体”的新型军事人才培养体系。新调整组建了军事科学院、国防大学和国防科技大学。全军和武警部队院校由77所调整、整合为43所。

主要成果之四：军民融合成为国家发展战略。习近平主席强调，军民融合深度发展。国防工业和军队战斗力的发展正在成为中国经济发展的又一重要引擎。国防工业处在高科技产业的最前沿，而加快推行军民融合发展战略，既可满足军队建设的需要，也可推动国民经济发展。

主要成果之五：进一步健全完善了有关政策法规制度。包括军官制度、文职人员制度、士官制度、退役军人安置政策和管理机构等等。随着时间的推移，不断健全完善的政策制度，将使现役军人更加保有荣誉感、责任感、积极性和创造性，也将使退役官兵享有更好的再就业、社会福利等的保障。

上述阶段性改革成果虽然不能全部涵盖此次军事改革的全部成果，但它们对军队建设发展所

带来的效益已经开始显现。例如，在贯彻落实习主席“依法治军”指示精神方面，经过此次改革，解放军的军事法制体系正在逐步健全，各军种部队管理正在从以行政命令管理为主向依法行政管理转变；在军事训练方面，仅以空军轰炸机远海远洋训练为例，在训练频次上，从最初的一年四次到现在的一个月多次，在训练机型上，从最初的单一机型，到现在的多机型体系训练，在训练方向上，从最初的飞越巴士海峡、飞越宫古海峡到现在一次性飞越两个海峡。目前，远海远洋训练已经常态化、体系化。²

通过此次军事改革，中国人民解放军形成了“军委管总、战区主战、军种主建”的新格局；建立起了“军委-战区-部队”的联合作战指挥体制和“军委-军种-部队”的部队领导管理体制；正在健全完善贯彻落实“依法治军”的军事法制体系和法规制度；拓展了加速推进军民融合发展的广度和深度；“三位一体”军事教育训练体制正在完善。基层部队向着合成化方向不断发展的同时，解放军新型作战力量的建设也有了新发展。

二、此次军改的几个为什么

（一）为何要进行改革

关于此次中国军事改革的原因，国内外许多媒体都发表了不同视角的分析文章。这些文章从国际形势变化、战争形态演变以及中国人民解放军的时代使命任务变化等方面对中国此次军事改革进行了分析或解释。笔者认为，任何军事改革，都是外因和内因的综合作用结果，但内因才是主导因素。此次中国军事改革的主要原因，除了来自国际政治、经济形势变化等外部因素之外，更重要的是来自解放军的内部因素。这主要体现在体制、结构和政策法规等三个方面。

在2015年11月24至26日的中央军委改革领导小组会议上，习近平指出，要“全面实施改革强军战略，着力解决制约国防和军队建设的体制性障碍、结构性矛盾、政策性问题”。所谓“体制性障碍”，主要是指长期以来制约解放军各军兵种进行联合作战的指挥体制和军种建设

领导管理体制；所谓“结构性矛盾”，主要是指解放军过去以陆军为主体，无论在数量规模上还是在军种比例结构上都不尽合理；而“政策性问题”则主要是指过去的一些政策制度与时代相脱节，存在相关政策制度落后或不健全等问题。因此，此次军事改革首先从解决体制性障碍入手，将“军政”和“军令”分离，建立起“军委-军种-部队”的领导管理体制和“军委-战区-部队”的联合作战指挥体制；与之相应，成立陆军领导机构，裁减非作战成分的单位，使陆海空三军的比例趋于合理，同时，成立火箭军和战略支援部队，打好军种联合作战的基础；与之配套的，是重新修订条令条例，建立完善相关政策制度，既为深化国防和军队改革提供法律支撑，也为实现强军目标提供体制机制和政策制度保障。其目的就是：“通过军事力量体系的时代重塑‘把军队搞得更强大’”。³

（二）为何取消四总部

所谓“四总部”是指原总参谋部、总政治部、总后勤部和总装备部。此次军改之前，解放军的领导管理体制可以简称为“总部”体制。“四总部”集决策、执行、监督职能于一身，既条块分割、又职能交叉，存在总部之间协调不畅等问题。而且，各总部内部也存在机关部门多、级别高等问题。据公开资料显示，原“四总部”下辖的正军级职能部门就多达40多个。⁴为此，此次军改将军委机构重新调整组建，把原来的“四总部”改为军委所属的15个职能部门⁵，成为军委办事机构。这样，既能从组织上保障军委集中领导指挥的落实，又能更好地坚持党对军队的绝对领导；既能起到优化组织结构、提高整体效能的模范作用，又能进一步明确职能、理顺关系。正如原军事科学院中美防务关系研究中心副主任赵小卓研究所解释的那样：把总部制改为多部门制，看似数量增加，但实际上总的机构和人员数量比原来大大减少，更为精干、专业、高效，因此更为科学。⁶通过减少层级、提高效率，实现指挥体制和组织结构的扁平化，才能适应信息化时代战争的严苛要求。⁷

（三）为何将军区变为战区

此次军事改革之前，解放军的军区已经持续存在了半个多世纪。这期间，虽然军区的数量以

及各军区的管辖范围有过几次改变，但军区的军事行政区划本质并没有改变。此次军事改革，将军区变战区，不仅仅是名称上的改变。战区联合作战指挥机构将专司本战略方向的联合战役作战指挥，战区司令员就是战时当然的联合作战司令部司令，而与其来自哪个军种就没有了直接关系和必然联系。正如原国防部发言人杨宇军2016年2月1日下午答记者问时表示的那样，重新调整划设战区，组建战区联合作战指挥机构，是党中央、中央军委和习近平主席着眼实现中国梦、强军梦作出的战略决策，是全面实施改革强军战略的标志性举措，是构建中国军队联合作战体系的历史性进展，对确保中国军队能打仗、打胜仗，有效维护国家安全，具有重大而深远的意义。“战区作为本战略方向的唯一最高联合作战指挥机构，按照平战一体、常态运行、专司主营、精干高效的要求，履行联合作战指挥职能，担负应对本战略方向安全威胁、维护和平、遏制战争、打赢战争的使命。”战区的建设目标是：“坚决贯彻党在新形势下的强军目标，坚决贯彻新形势下军事战略方针，坚决贯彻军委管总、战区主战、军种主建的总原则，建设绝对忠诚、善谋打仗、指挥高效、敢打必胜的联合作战指挥机构。”

（四）为何陆军变动最大

从中国人民解放军的改革史中不难发现，几乎每次调整改革，首当其冲的都是陆军。其实这不难理解，因为在相当程度上，中国人民解放军的历史就是一部辉煌的陆军史。同世界上大多数国家的军队都始建于地面部队的实事一样，中国人民解放军的历史也是从陆军开始的，因而大多数国家的军队改革，在相当程度上都表现为对陆军的改革。正因为如此，海军、空军等其他军兵种的建立与发展，在一定意义上似乎也是军事改革的成果，并通过军事改革，逐步使各军兵种的比例趋于合理，以便更好地适应战争的需要。信息化战争中联合作战的必要前提，是各军兵种的地位相当。因此，中国此次军事改革就是要通过重点调整、优化陆军的组成以及与其他军种的比例关系，从而使过去的以陆军为主体的解放军转变为今天的以陆海空“三军”并重为特征的新型解放军。这就不难理解为何此次军事改革建立了陆军领导机构，而且裁军30万的任务也主要由陆

军承担了。此次军事改革看似对陆军影响最大，但实际上将更有利于陆军的建设与发展。不仅如此，还将对解放军打赢未来信息化战争起到难以估量的作用。

（五）为何要“升格”第二炮兵

此次改革中新成立的火箭军，其前身是“第二炮兵”。第二炮兵是中国人民解放军于20世纪60年代建立的第一支战略导弹部队。周恩来总理亲自将这支部队命名为“第二炮兵”。虽然听起来第二炮兵是解放军序列中的独立兵种，但鉴于其重要的战略地位和作用，一直受中央军委的直接管辖，具有与海军、空军同样的军种地位。1984年10月1日，中国人民解放军第二炮兵在国庆35周年阅兵中首次公开亮相，当大型牵引车载着中国的中、远程和洲际战略导弹缓缓驶过天安门广场时，实际上是向全世界展示了解放军这一“特殊军种”的面貌。此次军事改革，与其说是将第二炮兵“升格”为独立军种——火箭军，不如说是第二炮兵“恢复”了应有的称谓。中国人民解放军火箭军是一支核常兼备的导弹部队，正如习主席在2015年12月31日为火箭军授旗仪式中发表的重要讲话所指出的那样，火箭军是我国战略威慑的核心力量，是我国大国地位的战略支撑，是维护国家安全的重要基石。火箭军全体官兵要把握火箭军的职能定位和使命任务，按照核常兼备、全域慑战的战略要求，增强可信可靠的核威慑和核反击能力，加强中远程精确打击力量建设，增强战略制衡能力，努力建设一支强大的现代化火箭军。⁸按照核武器与常规武器兼备、全领域震慑与作战的战略要求

（六）为何要建立战略支援部队

相比于第二炮兵更名为“火箭军”，应当说，战略支援部队的成立更超乎人们的想象，这是一支世界范围内在名称上前所未闻的部队。按照习主席在授旗仪式后的训词精神，战略支援部队是维护国家安全的新型作战力量，是我军新质作战能力的重要增长点，主要是将战略性、基础性、支撑性都很强的各类保障力量进行功能整合后组建而成的。改革之前，这些力量分布在解放军不同的总部、军种内，容易导致重复建设、功能相像、资源浪费等现象。因此，中国此次军事改革，将原各总部直属的情报、技侦、电子对抗、网络攻防、心理战、通

讯等方面的力量分离出去⁹，将适应未来信息化战争需要的保障力量整合在一起，可以优化资源分配、强化相互支持、提升信息战整体效能。战略支援部队的创立，不仅有利于优化解放军军事力量结构，也将提高未来联合作战的综合保障能力；也反映出中国特色社会主义制度集中力量办大事的鲜明特色。

尾注

1. https://baike.so.com/doc/7635875-7909970.html#refff_7635875-7909970-5 词条：中国共产党中央国家安全委员会
2. 参见：新华每日电讯7版国防和军队改革取得历史性突破，2017. 10. 23
3. 参见：构建中国特色现代军事力量体系，《解放军报》第7版，2018年6月15日。
4. 参见：<http://mil.sohu.com/20160113/n434384880.shtml> 解放军领导指挥体制扁平化43个部门精简为15个
5. 分别是：军委办公厅、军委联合参谋部、军委政治工作部、军委后勤保障部、军委装备发展部、军委训练管理部、军委国防动员部、军委纪律检查委员会、军委政法委员会、军委科学技术委员会、军委战略规划办公室、军委改革和编制办公室、军委国际军事合作办公室、军委审计署、军委机关事务管理总局等7个部（厅）、3个委员会、5个直属机构。
6. 参见：<http://mil.sohu.com/20160113/n434384880.shtml> 解放军领导指挥体制扁平化43个部门精简为15个
7. 参见：<http://mil.sohu.com/20160113/n434384880.shtml> 解放军领导指挥体制扁平化43个部门精简为15个
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9. <https://baike.so.com/doc/23635775-24189206.html> 360百科词条：中国人民解放军战略支援部队

China's Military Reform: Present and Future - Part 1



Changes made to the structure of the Chinese armed forces have occupied much attention the world over, and are a central part of a wider program of reform being carried out within the People Republic of China (PRC). To help contribute to the burgeoning discourse on the subject with material directly from the source, this two-part report, available both in the original Mandarin and in English translation, seeks to explore the substance and logic of China's military reform.

China's military reform has attracted worldwide attention. Observers generally agree that this is the largest, most informative, most extensive, most far-reaching military reform in the history of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) since the founding of the People's Republic of China. This military reform, both in form and in content, as well as in theory and in practice, has more essential features of military reform than the PLA's previous actions of reorganizing, adjusting and disarming since its founding. The general argumentation, organization and implementation of the military reform and the control of the process have all fully demonstrated the far-sighted, scientific and pragmatic attitude of the party central committee and the Central Military Commission (CMC) with Xi Jinping as the core, that is willing to push the PLA to a new height of strategic wisdom, bold action and mission bearing. This military reform will leave a heavy mark on the history of the PLA under the absolute leadership of the communist party of China.

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I. Basic Information on Current Military Reform

It is widely believed that China's ongoing military reform began in 2015 when an army leadership, a Rocket Force and a Strategic Support Force were established in PLA. But in fact, since 2013, a new round of reform in China's defense and military, has been put on the agenda of the newly elected party and state leaders headed by comrade Xi Jinping.

i. Launch of Reform

Any military reform is initiated by the top leaders or leadership of the military organization. After the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in November 2012, the CPC Central Committee, together with Xi Jinping as general secretary and core, took on the responsibilities with superb strategic wisdom and courage, sounded the horn of “comprehensively deepening reform” and took on the glorious mission of leading the whole party and people of all ethnic groups to realize the Chinese dream of great national rejuvenation. Among them, national defense and military reform is one of the important contents of this comprehensive deepening reform.

On March 17, 2013, the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee decided to formally establish the National Security Commission of the Communist Party of China, so as to coordinate major issues and important work concerning national security, improve the national security system and the national security strategy, thereby ensuring national security.¹ The creation of the National Security Committee is actually a prelude to China’s national defense and military reform.

On March 5, 2014, President Xi presided over the first plenary meeting of the CMC leading group on deepening national defense and military reform and delivered an important speech: “building a people’s army that listens to the party’s command, can win battles, and has a good work style is the party’s goal of building a strong army under the new situation”, the speech said. “We will always adhere to the sole and fundamental criterion of combat effectiveness and ensure that, when the party and the people need it, the PLA is able to pull out, go up and win.” “The long-term peaceful environment is a severe test for the military. We should bear in mind the old saying, ‘when extravagance begins, death begins.’” Xi also stressed that to deepen the reform of national defense and armed forces: We should unify our thoughts and actions with the decision-making and deployment of the CPC Central Committee and the CMC; We will review reform with the goal of strengthening the armed forces, guide reform with the goal of strengthening the armed forces, and advance reform around the goal of strengthening

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the armed forces. The guiding spirit of President Xi pointed out the direction and goal of the military reform, and explained the reasons and requirements of the reform.

The establishment of the CMC’s “leading group on deepening national defense and military reform” marks the establishment of the highest organizational leadership for the reform and the organizational preparation for the military reform that must be carried out from the top down. The main responsibilities of the leading group are to exercise centralized and unified leadership in the work of national defense and military reform, to organize the overall design, take care of coordination, overall promotion, supervision and implementation of the reform, and to ensure the unified planning, deployment, promotion and implementation of all reform efforts.

ii. Several “Highlights” in the Reform Process

Under the leadership of the CMC’s leading group on deepening national defense and military reform, headed by President Xi Jinping, after nearly two years of general design, a number of proposals put forward by the Academy of Military Science (AMS), the National Defense University (NDU), the teaching, scientific research, training and grassroots units, have been fully analyzed and simulated. Meanwhile, under the unified leadership of the CMC, around the deepening reform of national defense and the armed forces, the whole army carried out in entire range of ideological mobilization and theoretical preparation.

On September 3, 2015, during the victory day military parade of the war of resistance against Japan, President Xi solemnly announced that the PLA of China would disarm 300,000 troops.

From 24 to 26 of November, 2015, the reform conference of the CMC was held in Beijing. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC central committee, President of the state council, Chairman of the CMC and Head of the CMC’s leading group on deepening national defense and military reform, attended the meeting and delivered an important speech. Xi pointed out that “to the year of 2020, a breakthrough will be made in leadership management system and the joint operational command system reform, and important achievements will be achieved in optimizing the scale structure, perfecting the policy system, promoting civil-military integration depth development, efforts should be made to build a modern military power system with Chinese characteristics that can win the information warfare and effectively fulfill its mission, will further improve the socialist military system with Chinese characteristics.” This in fact further clarifies the basic tasks and deadlines for the reform of national defense and the armed forces.

On December 31, 2015, a leading organization for the Army, the Rocket Force and the Strategic Support Force were established. With the approval of President Xi Jinping, the CMC issued “the opinions on deepening the reform of national defense and the armed forces” (“The Opinions” for short). It further clarified the

guiding ideology, basic principles, overall objectives and implementation steps for deepening the reform of national defense and the armed forces. “The Opinions” points out, that “In accordance with the overall objectives and requirements, the reform of the leadership management system and the joint operational command system will be carried out in 2015. In 2016, the reform of the size and structure of the armed forces, the system of combat forces, the institutions and the armed police will be organized and implemented, and the task of phased reform will be basically completed. From 2017 to 2020, we will further adjust, optimize and improve reforms in relevant areas and continue to push forward reforms in all areas.” The issuance of “The Opinions” has played an inestimable role in unifying the thoughts and actions of all officers and men of the armed forces and devoted themselves to reform.

On February 1, 2016, the conference of founding of the PLA “theatre of operations” held in Beijing. Xi Jinping has awarded military flags and issued instructions to the newly established “five theatre of operations”. He emphasized that, to establish the east, south, west, north and middle theatre of operations, forming a joint operations command in each zone, is the strategic decisions made by CPC central committee and the CMC with a view to realize China’s dream, is the iconic measures for fulfillment the strategy of making armed forces powerful by reform, is a historic progress in the construction of our joint military operation system. It is of great and far-reaching significance to ensure that our army can fight, win and effectively maintain national security. He also says, the theatre of operations bears the mission of coping with security threats, maintaining peace, curbing wars and winning wars in its strategic direction, and plays a vital role in safeguarding national security strategy and the overall military strategy.

On December 3, 2016, the CMC held a meeting in Beijing on the reform of the size and structure of the armed forces. Soon after, the Army turned from 18 army groups into 13 army groups. From April 18, 2017, 84 new military level units of the whole army, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Rocket Force and Strategic Support Force, as well as the provincial military area command system, began “appearance”.

Then, with the implementation of reform measures such as the armed police, military academies and training bases, a new form of the people's liberation army began to emerge.

iii. Stage Results Have Been Achieved

By the end of 2017, China's military reform has achieved phased results and made historic breakthroughs.

Major achievements of the first: The former headquarters system was changed into the multi-department system under the CMC. In this reform, the former four headquarters of the general staff, the general political department, the general logistics department and the general armaments department were replaced with 15 functional departments of seven departments (offices), three committees and five directly affiliated agencies. Thus, the power restraint has strengthened, and the past benefit barrier has broken.

Major achievements of the second: The former seven military regions (MRs) were abolished and replaced with five theatre of operations. One of its aims is to give equal weight to all services. The command and control team for the theatre of operations will come from a variety of services and arms, and the composition of forces allows each theater of operations to conduct its activities relatively independently at the operational level. A closely related result is that the Army has a direct leadership structure, its organizational structure has been optimized, and its grass-roots units have been increasingly integrated. Coupled with the "upgraded" former Second Artillery to the Rocket Force, the newly established strategic support force, and so on, this reform will bring far-reaching impact on the future of the PLA.

Major achievements of the third: A new cultivation, education and training system of military personnel, namely education training system of military academies, unit training practice and military career education "trinity", has been initially established. The AMS, NDU and the University of National Defense Science and Technology were established under the new re-adjustment. The entire army and armed police force

academies were adjusted and integrated into 43 divisions from 77.

Major achievements of the fourth: Civil-military integration has become a national development strategy. President Xi Jinping has stressed the in-depth development of civil-military integration. The development of national defense industry and military combat effectiveness is becoming another important engine of China's economic development. The national defense industry is at the forefront of the high-tech industry, and the accelerated implementation of the civil-military integration development strategy can not only meet the needs of military construction, but also promote national economic development.

Major achievements of the fifth: Relevant policies and regulations have been further improved. This includes the officer system, the civil service system, the non-commissioned officer system, the resettlement policy and the administration for ex-servicemen, etc. As time goes on, the continuous improvement of the policy system will enable the servicemen to retain more sense of honor, responsibility, enthusiasm and creativity, and also enable the ex-servicemen to enjoy better guarantee of re-employment and social welfare.

Although the achievements mentioned above cannot fully cover the achievements of the military reform, the benefits they bring to the construction and development of the military are beginning to show. For example, in the implementation of the "rule of the army in accordance with the law" instructed by Chairman Xi, the PLA's military legal system is being gradually improved through the reform, and the management of various military forces is changing from focusing on the administrative order to the legal administration. In military training, let's take the example of offshore oceangoing training of air force bombers that, on the training frequency, from the initial four times a year to now several times a month; on the training model, from the original single model, to the present more aircraft system training; in the training direction, from the initial flying over Bashi channel and Miyako strait separately, to now flying over two straits at one time. At present, ocean-going training has become normal

and systematic.²

Through this military reform, the PLA has formed a new pattern of “the CMC in charge of the general administration of the armed forces, the theatre of operations in charge of operations, and the services in charge of own construction”; the joint combat command system of “CMC - theatre - force” and the military leadership and management system of “CMC - service - force” have been established; the military legal system and regulations of “running the army according to law” are being improved and implemented; the breadth and depth of the military and civilian integration are being expanded and its development is being accelerated; the “trinity” military education training system is being perfected. With the development of basic-level troops towards the direction of integration, the construction of new type combat forces of the PLA has also made new development.

II. Several “Why” Questions in this Military Reform

i. Why Reform?

Many domestic and foreign media groups have published analysis articles from different perspectives on the reasons for China's military reform. These articles analyzed or explained China's military reform from the changes of international situation, the evolution of war patterns and the changes of PLA's mission in the era. In my opinion, any military reform is the result of the combination of external and internal causes, but internal causes are the leading factors. The main reason for China's military reform is not only external factors, such as international political and economic changes, but also internal factors of the PLA. These internal factors are mainly embodied in the system, structure and policies and regulations.

At a meeting of the CMC's leading group for reform from November 24 to 26, 2015, Xi pointed out that it is necessary to “comprehensively implement the reform strategy of strengthening the armed forces, strive to resolve the problems which restricting national defense and army building, such as systemic disorder, structural contradiction and policy issues.” The so-called

“institutional obstacles” mainly refers to the command system that has long restricted the joint operations of the PLA and its leadership and management system. The so-called “structural contradictions” mainly refers to that the PLA used to be dominated by the army, neither in quantity nor in the proportion structure of services are reasonable. And, the “policy issues” mainly refers to the disconnection between the past policies and the times, and the backward or unsound policies and systems. Therefore, this military reform first starts from the settlement of institutional obstacles, separating the “military administration” and “military order”, and establishing the leadership and management system of the “CMC - service - force” and the joint operational command system of the “CMC - theater - force”. In response, the establishment of the army leadership, the reduction of non-combat components of units, so that the proportion of the armed forces tends to be reasonable, and at the same time, the formation of the Rocket Force and strategic support forces, to lay the foundation for joint military operations; In addition, it is necessary to revise regulations and establish and improve relevant policies and systems, which not only provide legal support for deepening the reform of national defense and the armed forces, but also provide institutional mechanism and policy system guarantee for realizing the goal of strengthening the armed forces. Its purpose is “making the armed forces stronger’ through reinventing of military power systems in new era.”³

ii. Why Was the Four Headquarters Cancelled?

The so-called “four headquarters” means the former general staff department, the former general political department, the former general logistics department and the former general equipment department. Before the military reform, the leadership and management system of the PLA could be shortened to the “headquarters” system. The “four headquarters” integrates decision-making, implementation and supervision functions into one, which is divided into different parts and functions are intersected among the headquarters. Problems such as poor coordination between the headquarters exist. Moreover, there are also problems of multiple departments and higher levels within

the headquarters. According to public information, the functional departments in corps level subordinated and within the former “four headquarters” were more than 40.⁴ For this reason, the CMC’s organs were re-organized in this military reform, and the former “four headquarters” were changed into 15 functional departments directly subordinated the CMC.⁵ In this way, it can not only guarantee the implementation of the CMC’s centralized leadership and command, but also better uphold the party’s absolute leadership over the armed forces. It can not only play an exemplary role in optimizing organizational structure and improving overall efficiency, but also further clarify functions and straighten out relations. As explained by Zhao Xiaozhuo researcher, former deputy director of the Sino-us defense relations research center of AMS, that the change of the headquarters system to a multi-sectoral system seems to increase in number, but in fact the total number of agencies and personnel is much less than before, which is more lean, professional and efficient, and therefore, more scientific.⁶ Only by reducing levels, improving efficiency and flattening the command system and organizational structure can we adapt to the stringent requirements of war in the information age.⁷

iii. Why has the Military Region Turned into the Theatre of Operations?

Before this military reform, the PLA military region (MR) has been in existence for more than half a century. During this period, although the number of military districts and the jurisdiction of each MR had changed several times, the nature of the military administrative division of the MR has not changed. In this military reform, the military region has been transformed into the theatre of operations, therefore, it is not just a name change. The theater of joint operations command will take focus on the commanding of operations in its own strategic direction, and the commander of the theatre of operations is, of course, the commander of the joint operations command in wartime, and it has no direct and inevitable connection with which kind of service who comes from. As the former defense ministry spokesman Yang Yajun on the afternoon of February 1, 2016, said at a regular press briefing, readjust delimited a theatre of operations, set up a joint operations command in it, is the CPC

central committee and CMC and Chairman Xi with a view to realize China’s dream of a strong military power making strategic decisions, is the iconic symbol of measures of comprehensive implementation of the strategy making power stronger through the reform, is a historic progress in building a joint combat system for the Chinese Army. It is of great and far-reaching significance to ensure that the Chinese Army can fight, win and effectively safeguard national security. “The theater of operations, as the sole and highest joint operations command organization in its strategic direction, performs joint operations command functions in accordance with the requirements of “integrating peacetime and war, normal operation, and specialized situations”, undertakes the mission of responding to security threats, maintaining peace, curbing wars and winning wars.” The construction objectives of the theatre of operations: “firmly implement the party’s goal of strengthening the armed forces in the new situation, resolutely implement the military strategy under the new situation, firmly implement the general principles of ‘the CMC in charge of the general administration of the armed forces, the theatre of operations in charge of operations, and the services in charge of own construction’, and build a joint combat command structure that is absolutely loyal, good at fighting, efficient in command and daring to fight and win.”

iv. Why Did the Army Change the Most?

It is not hard to find from the history of reform of the PLA, that almost every adjustment and reform started with the Army. This is understandable, since the history of the PLA is, to a considerable extent, a glorious history of the Army. Like most of the world’s militaries built on the ground, the history of the PLA began in the Army, and thus most of the country’s military reforms have been manifested to a considerable extent in the reform of the Army. Because of this, the establishment and development of other services and arms such as the Navy and Air Force seem to be the result of military reform in a certain sense, and through military reform, the proportion of each service and arms tends to be reasonable gradually, so as to better adapt to the needs of war. The necessary precondition of joint operation in information warfare is the equal status of each service and arms. Therefore, China’s military reform aims to transform the former army-based

PLA into the new type of PLA featuring the same emphasis on the Army, Navy and Air Force through the key adjustment, optimization of the composition of the Army and the proportion of other services. It is not hard to understand why the military reform established the army leadership, and the task to disarm 300,000 troops is mainly undertaken by the Army. This military reform seems to have the greatest impact on the Army, but in fact it will be more beneficial to their construction and development. Moreover, it will play an invaluable role in the PLA's victory in future information-based warfare.

v. Why Upgrade the Second Artillery?

The newly established Rocket Army in this reform, its predecessor is the “Second Artillery”. The Second Artillery was the first strategic missile unit established by the PLA in the 1960s. Former premier Zhou Enlai personally named this unit “Second Artillery”. Although it sounds like the Second Artillery is an independent branch of the PLA, it has been under the direct jurisdiction of the CMC and has the same status as the PLA Navy and the PLA Air Force due to its important strategic position and role. On October 1, 1984, the Second Artillery of the PLA made its first public appearance at the 35th anniversary parade of the National Day. When the large tractor-mounted Chinese medium, long-range and intercontinental strategic missiles slowly passed through Tiananmen Square, they actually showed the whole world the appearance of the PLA as a “special kind of military”. This military reform is not so much to “upgrade” the Second Artillery into an independent service—the Rocket Force, but to “restore” the title it should have. The PLA Rocket Force is a nuclear-capable missile force. As President Xi pointed out in an important speech delivered at the flag ceremony of the PLA Rocket Force on December 31, 2015, the Rocket Force is the core force of China's strategic deterrence, the strategic support of China's great power status and an important cornerstone of national security. All the officers and men of the Rocket Army should grasp the functional orientation and mission of the Rocket Army, strengthen credible and reliable nuclear deterrence and nuclear counterstrike capability, strengthen the construction of medium - and long-range precise strike force, enhance the ability of strategic balance,

and strive to build a powerful modern Rocket Army in accordance with the strategic requirement of both nuclear and conventional weapons are capable of deterrence and combat in all areas.⁸

vi. Why a Strategic Support Force?

Compared with the Second Artillery's renaming of the “Rocket Force”, the Strategic Support Force was more than anyone could have imagined, an unheard-of unit worldwide. In accordance with President Xi's precepts after the flag-laying ceremony, the Strategic Support Force is a new combat force for safeguarding national security and an important growth point of our military's new quality combat capability. It is mainly formed by integrating the functions of strategic, basic and supportive support forces. Before the reform, these forces were distributed in different headquarters and military branches of the PLA, which could easily lead to duplication of construction, similar functions and waste of resources. Therefore, China's military reform has separated the intelligence, technical investigation, electronic confrontation, network attack and defense, psychological warfare, communications and other forces directly under the original headquarters,⁹ integrating the security forces to meet the needs of future information warfare can optimize resource allocation, strengthen mutual support and improve the overall effectiveness of information warfare. The establishment of the strategic support force will not only optimize the structure of the PLA military force, but also improve the comprehensive support capability for future joint operations. It also reflects the distinctive feature of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics that focuses its efforts on major issues.

Endnotes

1. https://baike.so.com/doc/7635875-7909970.html#refff_7635875-7909970-5 Entry: CPC central national security committee (中国共产党中央国家安全委员会)
2. Information source: Xinhua Daily Delegraph 7 version: The national defense and military reform achieved a historic breakthrough, 2017.10.23
3. See also: building a modern military force system with Chinese characteristics, page 7 of PLA daily, June 15, 2018
4. See also: <http://mil.sohu.com/20160113/n434384880.shtml> The PLA's leadership and command system has been flattened, with 43 departments reduced to 15
5. Respectively is: CMC general office, CMC joint staff, CMC political work department, CMC logistics support management department, CMC military equipment development department, CMC military training management department, CMC military defense mobilization department, CMC military commission for discipline inspection commission, CMC committee of political affairs and law, CMC military science and technology commission, CMC military commission strategic planning office, CMC military reform and strategic planning office, CMC international military cooperation office, CMC audit office, CMC general administration of affair.
6. See also: <http://mil.sohu.com/20160113/n434384880.shtml> The PLA's leadership and command system has been flattened, with 43 departments reduced to 15
7. See also: <http://mil.sohu.com/20160113/n434384880.shtml> The PLA's leadership and command system has been flattened, with 43 departments reduced to 15
8. Information resource: <http://military.china.com/important/11132797/20160102/21060707.html>
9. See also: <https://baike.so.com/doc/23635775-24189206.html> Entry: The PLA strategic support force