

Investigations of Chinese Military Officials a Setback to Xi's Taiwan Plan: Experts

The successive incidents involving Xi-appointed generals affect morale within the army and cast a shadow over the plan to annex Taiwan, experts say.

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Adm. Miao Hua (C), China's director of the political affairs department of the Central Military Commission, disembarks his aircraft after arriving at Pyongyang International Airport on October 14, 2019. Kim Won Jin/AFP via

By Cindy Li
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News Analysis

A series of investigations involving senior Chinese military officials may set back Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Xi Jinping's plan to invade Taiwan before 2027, according to experts.

At a press briefing on Nov. 28, the CCP's defense ministry announced that Adm. Miao Hua, the director of the political work department of the Central Military Commission (CMC), is [under investigation](#) on suspicion of "serious violations of discipline."

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On Nov. 27, the Chinese Foreign Ministry [refuted a report](#) by the



Financial Times that the current defense minister, Adm. Dong Jun, is being investigated for corruption. Spokesperson Mao Ning dismissed the claim as "shadow chasing."



China experts believe that the investigation of Miao, once a close ally



of CCP leader Xi Jinping, signifies a sweeping purge within Xi's faction and the undermining of his control over the military. Dong being investigated, seen as being linked to Miao's case, together highlight a setback to Xi's plan for a potential military campaign against Taiwan by 2027, according to Tang Jingyuan, a U.S.-based China affairs commentator.

Miao's Fall Signals Undermining of Xi's Military Control

Before being promoted to the CMC, Miao served as the political commissar of the Chinese Navy from 2014 to 2017. He reportedly crossed paths with Xi in the late 1990s when Xi was the deputy party secretary of the coastal Fujian Province.

One of the CMC's roles is human resources for the military. That means Miao, as head of the political work department, was instrumental in selecting personnel for key positions in the military to strengthen Xi Jinping's authority, Tang told The Epoch Times.

Therefore, Miao being under investigation signals a severe blow to Xi's authority in the military, suggesting a major reshuffling of the Party's power dynamics, Tang said. Xi's allies in the military could face a comprehensive purge, which the CCP often refers to as "cleansing the toxins."

"This means that the 'toxic influence' of Miao Hua and his group will likely be eradicated. Without a doubt, it will result in Xi's military foundation, particularly among mid- to high-ranking officers, being uprooted. This will undoubtedly weaken the combat effectiveness of the Chinese military," he said.

Yao Cheng, a former lieutenant colonel in the Chinese Navy, said that Miao being investigated could also reflect escalating infighting between Xi and CMC Vice Chairman Zhang Youxia.

Zhang, once a close ally of Xi, turned against him due to Xi's actions against Zhang's associates, Yao told NTD Television Network, The Epoch Times' sister media.

The 74-year-old Zhang has spent years watching Xi not only **remove** his mentor, former CCP leader Hu Jintao, from the center of power, but also the **suspected elimination** of former Premier Li Keqiang. As a result, Zhang does not believe that Xi will allow him to retire peacefully, Yao said.

"Therefore, Zhang decided not to retire and chose to confront Xi directly. This is because the senior figures in the central leadership support Zhang, and the military harbors significant discontent with Xi's military reforms and anti-corruption efforts, further bolstering Zhang's position," he said.

“With these two strong backers, Zhang took action against Xi, effectively stripping him of his control over the military.”

Yao also said that the investigation into Dong is unsurprising given Miao’s incident. However, based on his personal relationship with Dong, he doesn’t believe that the possibility of Dong being involved in corruption is high.

“Miao is a CMC member and holds the position of the Political Work Department director. If you want to take him down, you need to substantiate his crimes thoroughly; otherwise, it would be difficult to act against him,” he said. “Therefore, those around Miao will inevitably be investigated, but this does not necessarily mean that Dong is involved in corruption.”

Setback to Xi’s 2027 Taiwan Plan

While it is widely believed that Xi may [attack Taiwan by 2027](#), Yu Tsung-chi, the former dean of the College of Political Warfare at Taiwan’s National Defense University, says that the recent incidents involving CCP military officials set back Xi’s plan to annex the self-ruled island.

The CCP’s use of the Ministry of Defense’s regular press system to announce the Miao case aims to avoid attracting international media attention, Yu said. By framing the investigation as an internal administrative process, the regime seeks to downplay the potential implications of a major corruption scandal, reducing any possible shock or fallout, he told The Epoch Times.



Taiwanese sailors salute the island's flag on the deck of the Panshih supply ship after taking part in annual drills, at the Tsoying naval base in Kaohsiung on Jan. 31, 2018. Mandy Cheng/AFP via Getty Images

In February 2023, CIA Director William Burns warned that Xi had ordered the military to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027, though no decision on the timing had been made.

In mid-October, following Beijing's "Joint Sword-2024B" military exercises encircling Taiwan, Xi visited Fujian Province, emphasizing cross-strait integration and stopping at Dongshan Island, the site of Taiwan's last major counteroffensive against the communist regime in 1953.

Yu, a retired major general, stated that the CCP military operates as a "black box," with all related information shielded from external media scrutiny.

The refusal to acknowledge that Dong is under investigation stems from an awareness of the potential impact on morale within the army, Yu said. This is especially critical given Xi's repeated emphasis on the

need for the CCP military to achieve the capability to forcibly unify Taiwan by 2027. However, the recent incidents involving CCP generals undoubtedly represent a significant setback to his plan, he said.

The successive incidents involving high-ranking generals, handpicked by Xi, reflect poorly on the communist leader, Yu said.

“In other words, Xi finds himself in an embarrassing situation where there is no one left to rely on,” he said.

Fei Chen contributed to this report.

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Cindy Li

Author

Cindy Li is an Australia-based writer for The Epoch Times focusing on China-related topics. Contact Cindy at cindy.li@epochtimes.com.au

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