



## Xi Jinping Promotes Civil-Military Integration, Technological Innovation

**OE Watch Commentary:** China recently held its annual National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing over two weeks in March. This year Xi Jinping took on special significance due to important changes to China's governmental structure. An important theme promoted by senior leaders, including Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping, has been "Civil-Military Integration (军民融合)." As noted in the accompanying excerpted article from *Xinhua*, Xi spoke to military delegates at the NPC in March and made a case for continuing military reforms and improving China's ability to innovate in military technology fields. To do so, Xi argued, China's defense industries and the monopolies they represent must reform, promote the exchange of ideas and receive greater input from the civilian sector.

China's Communist Party (CCP), and by extension the People's Liberation Army, have military and political traditions that emphasize strong connections between the civil and military domains. China's Defense White Papers, its biennial announcement of official military policy, frequently highlight civil-military integration. The 2008 Defense White Paper for example, stated that "China makes it a point to take into consideration the needs of economic and social development and insists on having military and civilian purposes compatible with and beneficial to each other, so as to achieve more social benefits in the use of national defense resources in peacetime."

Xi's speech in March, following his work report at the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, mirrors the pattern of remarks he made, first at the 18th Party Congress in 2012 (where he was appointed General Secretary of the CCP) and then at the NPC that March. As noted in the accompanying excerpted speech from March 2013, Xi called on the Chinese government and civilian industry "to achieve in-depth integration of the use of infrastructure and other key facilities based on demands and led by the government."

Chinese civil-military cooperation is multi-level and spans a wide range of industries, research programs, and infrastructures. Chinese military aircraft practice deploying to, and operating from, designated dual-use airports. Infrastructure projects, particularly in China's less well-developed west, are built with military considerations and long distance deployments are practiced using all available roads and rail to move troops from one side of the country to another. Civilian advances in quantum technology are being used to create encrypted communications for the military. As Xi put it in speech this year, "Civil-Military Integration is beneficial to strengthening China's hidden war potential and national defense strength." Given the recent modification to China's constitution that will allow Xi to extend his tenure beyond 2023, the pattern of military reforms and promotion of civil-military integration can be expected to continue to accelerate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



**Source:** "习近平：扎扎实实推进军民融合深度发展 为实现中国梦强军梦提供强大动力和战略支撑 (Xi Jinping: Resolutely Promote the Deep Development of Military-Civil Integration to Provide Strong Momentum and Strategic Support for Realizing the China Dream and the Strong Military Dream)," *Xinhua*, 12 March 2018. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018lh/2018-03/12/c\\_1122526642.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018lh/2018-03/12/c_1122526642.htm)

*Xi Jinping: "We must pay close attention to the direction of development of military science and technology and weaponry in the world, highlight the coordinated innovation of military-civilian science and technology in key areas... We must strengthen the sharing of ideas, break monopolies, improve the efficient allocation of resources for technological innovation, uncover hidden capacity for innovation in society, and promote lively competition in national defense science and technological innovation."*

**Source:** Xi Jinping, "Build People's Armed Forces That Follow the Party's Commands, Are Able to Win Battles and Have Fine Conduct" (2013) *The Governance of China*, (Beijing: Foreign Language Press 2014), p. 243.

*"We should coordinate the development of our economy and defense capabilities, and combine efforts to make the country prosperous and the military strong. We should further the great integration of military and civilian development, and work to achieve in-depth integration of the use of infrastructure and other key facilities based on demands and led by the government."*