

Breaking | Retirement awaits China's Li Keqiang and Wang Yang as Xi Jinping looks to next generation in unprecedented third term

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- **Communist veterans Li and Wang among those left off the list of the party's Central Committee**
- **Departures leave Xi more room for his choice of team for the next five years and beyond**

[Chinese paramount leader Xi Jinping](#) began his unprecedented third term with a major shake-up at the top, retiring veteran heavyweights including Li Keqiang and Wang Yang.

Immediately after the close of the [Communist Party's 20th national congress](#) on Saturday, state news agency Xinhua announced the members of the new Central Committee, which oversees the party's 97 million members.

Four members of the Politburo Standing Committee - the highest decision-making body in China - are missing from the list, as SCMP reported earlier. Ranked in order of their party hierarchy, they are Premier Li Keqiang, 67 ; National People's Congress chairman Li Zhanshu, 72 ; Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference chairman Wang Yang, 67 ; and Vice-Premier Han Zheng, 68.

This means they will go into full retirement.

The Central Committee, with around 200 full members, reports to the 25-member Politburo, which is headed by the Politburo Standing Committee. Failing to make it to the list means the person will not get any important state or government position.

The reshuffle is bigger than expected. Both Li Keqiang and Wang Yang are one year short of the customary retirement age of 68 and would have stayed, according to tradition.

But as Xi, firmly established as the most powerful political leader since Deng Xiaoping, begins his convention-breaking third term, he understandably wants to build a young team that could support him for the next five years and beyond.

By retiring the four veterans, Xi opens more seats at the top for the promotion of his choice of younger leaders.

The newly minted Central Committee will immediately hold its first full gathering, called the first plenum, on Sunday to formally endorse the list.

Xi will then lead out the members of the new Politburo Standing Committee, which he heads, to meet the press.

Also missing from the Central Committee list are senior diplomat Yang Jiechi and Vice-Premier Liu He.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi, 69, however is among the new Central Committee members suggesting that he will likely take up the Politburo seat vacated by Yang Jiechi, who will retire after the congress.

The announcement on Saturday marks the beginning of a five-yearly reshuffle that will last until the annual legislative sessions in March.

While the meeting this weekend decides the line-up and hierarchy for the party leadership, the legislative sessions will formally unveil candidates for key state and government posts.

More to follow ...

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P.-S.

• South China Morning Post. Published : 1:07pm, 22 Oct, 2022 :
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3196874/retirement-awaits-chinas-li-keqiang-and-wang-yang-xi-jinping-looks-youth-unprecedented-third-term>

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