

MP-IDSA *Commentary*

China Pursues 'National Strategic Integration' for its Centenary Goals

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S*ummary*

China is building a strategic system to integrate all its national strategies and develop strategic capabilities to accelerate its economic and security goals.

Introduction

In early March 2026, Chinese Premier Li Qiang recommended consolidating and enhancing the ‘Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities’ for the Work of the Government in 2026 at the Fourth Session of the 14th National People’s Congress in Beijing. This recommendation is to pursue ‘National Strategic Integration’ to achieve China’s overarching long-term goals across the economy, defence and security. The idea behind ‘integration’ is to make the development process faster, more efficient, and more effective. The process of such ‘integration’ requires creating a strategic system that facilitates sustained cooperation and collaboration among the concerned agencies, resources and forces across the country. This strategy aims to address the complex security challenges facing China and to provide a long-term strategic framework for realising the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.¹

National Strategic Integration, or the Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities, was put forward by Xi Jinping.² It is a system of national strategies, including the 2021–2035 Medium and Long-term Science and Technological Development Plan, the Five-Year Development Plans, Made in China 2025, the Science, Technology and Innovation 2030 Plan, and the National Research and Development Program.³ These initiatives aim to integrate China’s economy, political system, society and defence apparatus.

The National Strategic Integration is the successor to the Military-Civil Fusion (MCF) development strategy launched in the mid-2010s. Compared with MCF, the National Strategic Integration is a broader and bolder effort to unite China’s economic, technological and national security systems to advance larger national objectives.⁴ The Central Military-Civil Fusion Development Commission (CMCFDC) is responsible for the top-level design, overall layout, coordination, promotion, and supervision of the implementation of the National Strategic Integration, in close liaison with central- and local-level agencies.⁵ The CMCFDC and the newly

¹ Zhuang Jiayue, An Shi and Mai Qiang, “[Reinforcing Loop Mechanism between National Strategic Scientific and Technological Forces and Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities](#) (国家战略科技力量与一体化国家战略体系和能力的增强回路机理)”, *Journal of Beijing Institute of Technology*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2026, pp. 92–101.

² “[Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities](#) (一体化国家战略体系和能力)”, Baidu, 2026.

³ He Kun and Du Renhuai, “[Reflections on Restructuring the Discipline of Strategic Studies to Support an Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities](#) (重构战略学学科支撑一体化国家战略体系和能力的思考)”, Chinese Social Sciences Net, 15 January 2024.

⁴ Tai Ming Cheung, “[National Strategic Integration: How China is Building Its Strategic Power](#)”, IGCC & MERICS, October 2023.

⁵ “[Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities](#) (一体化国家战略体系和能力)”, no. 2.

established Central Science and Technology Commission (CSTC) are most likely the principal agencies responsible for and coordinating the implementation of National Strategic Integration.

Earlier, China pursued MCF to advance defence and socio-economic development goals.⁶ The word ‘fusion’ refers to the synthesis of several distinct entities into a unified whole, rendering the resulting entity more valuable or effective than any of its individual components.⁷ China’s MCF strategy is closely linked to the country’s objectives of building a strong economy and military under Xi Jinping’s regime. It aims to dismantle China’s traditional development paradigm in which the military and civilian sectors operate as self-contained, insular and highly monopolistic entities.⁸

National Strategic Integration is said to incorporate MCF's development strategy to achieve key long-term goals. Various terminologies and forms of National Strategic Integration have been used by China since 2016. For the first time, Xi Jinping used the term “Integrated National Strategic System” (一体化国家战略体系 *yitihua guojia zhanlue tixi*) at the headquarters of the former PLA Strategic Support Force in August 2016. Xi Jinping repeated this terminology at the 19th National Congress of the CPC in October 2017. However, it remained obscure until he re-emphasised its significance at the 20th National Congress of the CPC in October 2022. The 20th Party Congress emphasised strengthening the coordinated strategic planning between the military and civilian sectors, ensuring the alignment of policies and institutions, and facilitating the sharing of resources and factors.⁹

At the 14th National People’s Congress in March 2023, Xi Jinping changed this term to “Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities”. In his speech at the 14th NPC meeting, Xi Jinping said

consolidating and enhancing the integrated national strategic system and capabilities constitutes a strategic deployment made by the CPC Central Committee in response to the new circumstance, new tasks, and new requirements facing the endeavour to build a strong country and a strong military, and with a view to better coordinating

⁶ [“The Evolution, Current Status, and Future Outlook of Civil-Military Integration”](#) (军民融合的发展历程、现状与未来展望), Baijiahao, 5 March 2025.

⁷ [“Civil-Military Integration Development”](#) (军民融合发展), Baidu, 2026.

⁸ [“In-Depth Analysis! Strategies for Enhancing the International Competitiveness of the Military-Civil Fusion Industry in 2023”](#) (深度分析！2023 年军民融合行业国际竞争力提升策略), Shangpu Consulting Group, 20 June 2023.

⁹ [“Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities”](#), no. 2.

development and security, as well as coordinating economic construction and national defence construction.¹⁰

The integrated national strategic system and capabilities constitute a higher-tier, cross-domain macro-system, specifically encompassing two distinct components: the “integrated national strategic system”, characterised by cross-domain top-level strategic design and “integrated national strategic capabilities”, characterised by a network of deep, cross-system integration. This mega-system spans multiple layers including strategic decision-making coordination mechanisms, multi-dimensional resource allocation systems, institutional and policy alignment frameworks, and capability integration and sharing networks.¹¹

By integrating heterogeneous resources and capabilities across diverse domains such as the military, government, economy, science and technology, and society, it constructs a complex architectural framework featuring vertical and horizontal linkages and multi-layered nesting, forming a dynamic network that encompasses the entire national strategic landscape. The boundaries of this mega-system are characterised by their inherent fluidity and extensibility, and its structural design endows it with significant capabilities for dynamic adaptation and expansion. Its fundamental objective is to achieve the optimal allocation of resources across all domains and to realise a non-linear enhancement of national strategic capabilities.¹²

The National Strategic Integration was pursued during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2020–2025), and it will be carried forward in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026–2030).¹³ It comprises layers such as national, global, and regional strategies, and centres on the principle of ‘integration’, orchestrating strategic planning, resource allocation, and national defence and security capabilities.¹⁴ Capability building will be in two areas: economic development and national defence and security. The integrated national strategic system will encompass ‘national security strategic system’ and ‘national development strategic system’ with the ultimate objectives of building strategic capabilities in their respective domains.

¹⁰ Fei Shiting, [“Consolidating and Enhancing the Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities—Chairman Xi’s Important Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the PLA and PAP Delegation Sparks Enthusiastic Response”](#), *PLA Daily*, 9 March 2023.

¹¹ Zhuang Jiayue, An Shi and Mai Qiang, [“Reinforcing Loop Mechanism between National Strategic Scientific and Technological Forces and Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities \(国家战略科技力量与一体化国家战略体系和能力的增强回路机理\)”](#), no. 1.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [“Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities \(一体化国家战略体系和能力\)”](#), no. 2.

¹⁴ Zhuang Jiayue, An Shi and Mai Qiang, [“Reinforcing Loop Mechanism between National Strategic Scientific and Technological Forces and Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities”](#), no. 1.

The ‘national security strategic system’ encompasses domains such as politics, military affairs, territorial integrity, economy, culture, society, science and technology, cyberspace, ecology, natural resources, nuclear security, overseas interests, outer space, deep sea, polar region, biosecurity, data security, artificial intelligence, finance, and food security. The ‘national development strategic system’ meanwhile comprises major strategies at the national development level, strategies aimed at strengthening specific sectors, and regional development strategies.¹⁵ It will integrate national defence and military development within the broader framework of economic and social development.¹⁶ These strategic capabilities are indispensable for new tasks under new conditions, including some of Xi Jinping’s proposed goals, such as building a modern socialist country, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and transforming the PLA into a world-class military force by 2049.¹⁷

Building an integrated strategic system means a system free of institutional impediments and barriers.¹⁸ The integrated national strategic capabilities encompass not only the capacity to maintain static resource reserves but also the dynamic capacity to transform those resources into tangible outcomes that fulfil national strategic objectives.

Conclusion

China’s objective behind the ‘National Strategic Integration’ is to build long-term, sustained strategic capabilities to support the CPC in achieving its goal of a prosperous country and a strong army by 2049. The system aims to effectively optimise all resources, efforts and forces to get the best results and outputs for the national economy and national defence and security. The idea is to create more wealth and influence and to secure interests in a relatively short time, with a high guarantee of security both within the country and abroad. However, the system will be highly centralised with a strict top-down hierarchy.

¹⁵ He Kun and Du Renhuai, “[Reflections on Restructuring the Discipline of Strategic Studies to Support an Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities](#) (重构战略学学科支撑一体化国家战略体系和能力的思考)”, no. 3.

¹⁶ “[Integrated National Strategies and Strategic Capabilities](#) (一体化国家战略体系和能力)”, no. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Fei Shiting, “[Consolidating and Enhancing the Integrated National Strategic System and Capabilities—Chairman Xi’s Important Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the PLA and PAP Delegation Sparks Enthusiastic Response](#)”, no. 10.

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