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Establishment of New Internet Leading Group Reported

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According to [news reports](#) that as yet remain to be verified, the CCP Central Committee will establish a “Small Leading Group for Informatization and Internet Information Security”. This Small Group would be [chaired](#) by Xi Jinping personally, with Li Keqiang and the ex-head of the Central Propaganda Department (CPD) Liu Yunshan as vice-directors. Lu Wei, the director of the State Internet Information Office, would be the director of the Small Group’s administrative office.

Small leading groups sit at the top of China’s administrative hierarchies. They provide close connection between the top leadership and the administrative departments that are to implement policy, and allow for coordination across bureaucratic lines. Currently, there are two small groups directly dealing with the Internet: the State Informatization Leading Group (SILG) and the State Network and Information Security Coordination Small Group (SNISCSG). The former was established in [2001](#), has mainly been working under the auspices of MIIT (the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology). It is chaired by the Premier, currently Li Keqiang, who is assisted by Zhang Gaoli and Ma Kai, both vice premiers and economic experts; CPD director Liu Qibao; General Fan Changlong, a vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, and Guo Shengkun, the Minister of Public Security. The Minister of Industry and Information Technology, Miao Wei, heads the SILG’s administrative office. The SNISCSG is more secretive. It was established in 2010 by [expanding the remit](#) of MIIT’s Information Security Coordination Department, and was headed by Li Keqiang, who was Vice-Premier at that time. Its administrative office is run by MIIT vice-minister Yang Xueshan, further staffing details have not been made public. It seems to have been involved in a 2012 [campaign](#) to “[launch focus domain website and information security inspections](#)”. Its membership is not known, but membership lists of similar groups at the local level show list deputy heads of propaganda, secrecy preservation, economy and trade, education, science and technology, public security, finance, information industry, culture, telecommunications and radio and television management departments. To further complicate matters, there is also a [National Information Security Ranking and Protection Coordination Small Group](#), that is headed by Zhang Xinfeng, Vice-Minister of Public Security and Vice-Director of the State Internet Information Office.

If true, this move would indicate a further concentration of power in the hands of Xi Jinping after the recent announcement that he would also chair the Leading Small Group for the Comprehensive Deepening of Reform. This new Leading Small Group would have tremendous power over the control and circulation of information at all levels, from the protection of infrastructure and industrial information networks to the management of social media and microblogs. It is reported that the publication of this move caused the [share prices](#) of information security companies to rise. Currently, corresponding news reports are being censored.