Earthquake at the Top of China: Death Sentences for the Two Former Defense Ministers

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Xi Jinping's axe falls with unprecedented violence on the Chinese military leadership. The military tribunal has issued **harsh sentences against Generals Wei Fenghe** and **Li Shangfu** , both former Defense Ministers, marking the point of no return in the purge campaign shaking the People's Liberation Army.

The Sentences: Maximum Severity and Symbolic Value

The formula chosen by the military judiciary is the death penalty with a two-year suspension of execution. Although in Beijing's legal system this sentence is usually commuted to life imprisonment after the suspension period, the verdict against the two former leaders includes a clause of exceptional rigor. Once commuted, the two generals will have to serve life imprisonment under a strict regime, with no possibility of sentence reduction or parole. **To complete the picture of maximum severity, the court has ordered the total**

confiscation of their personal assets and the perpetual deprivation of political rights for both.

The Protagonists: The Fall of the Generals

The sentences strike two figures who have embodied China's military power in the world for years, albeit with different responsibilities and charges. General **Wei Fenghe**, who led the Ministry of Defense between 2018 and 2023 after being at the helm of the Missile Force, was **found guilty of passive corruption for accepting bribes and improperly interfering in personnel appointments.**

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On the other hand, the position of his successor **Li Shangfu** proved even more serious from a legal standpoint. The former minister, who before his appointment headed the Equipment Department, was convicted not only for accepting bribes but also for offering them. His conviction for both active and passive corruption closes the circle on a career abruptly interrupted after only seven months in office.

The Political Significance: Between Efficiency and Loyalty

Wei was not just a minister, but the man who had led the Missile Force, the heart of China's nuclear deterrent. His conviction suggests that corruption has affected the most sensitive sectors of national security, precisely those destined for strategic confrontation with Western powers. Similarly, the case of Li Shangfu exposes the critical issues in the procurement and technological modernization sector, indicating that **corruption in contracts is no longer**

considered a mere financial crime, but sabotage to the country's military efficiency.

For Xi Jinping, this operation is not just a matter of legality, but a fundamental piece for his political survival. **By targeting generals of such caliber, the Chinese Communist Party aims to eradicate personal power networks that could escape central control.** Compared to previous waves of purges, this phase appears deeper because it targets men in active service in key sectors for power projection over Taiwan. The message sent to the military ranks is unequivocal: Beijing's priority is an armed force that is technologically advanced, but above all ideologically pure and totally submissive to the Central Military Commission.