

## CHAPTER 9

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The Chinese Political System

active events—and actors involved in those events—can we appreciate the dynamic characteristics of the politics of militarism and move toward an understanding of the general behavioral patterns of the militarists in systemic terms. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to synthesize the materials presented in the previous chapters into a coherent interpretation of the system and process of the politics of militarism in the form of macroanalysis.

*Limitations of a Static Analysis*

In our previous discussion of finance (see Chapter 7), the KMT was shown to have been unquestionably superior to most other militarist regimes in the mobilization and rational utilization of physical resources. However, efficient utilization alone was not sufficient; another important variable was scale. In this respect, the KMT was less strong. One can easily think of several regimes that commanded a much larger resource base than the KMT: Chang Tso-lin's Fengtian faction, Sun Ch'uan-fang's five provinces in the Yangtze valley, and possibly even Chang Tsung-ch'ang's Shantung-Chihli territory.

To retain perspective, we must keep in mind that financial reforms were carried out first only in the province of Kwangtung, and then later in Kwangsi. As the KMT's spearhead units moved into enemy territory, the party was not able to swiftly implement a policy of financial integration. In addition, the conditions in these newly conquered territories were so chaotic that occasionally the KMT was forced to rely on the old financial system, which was rife with corruption and inefficiency.

The KMT's financial position improved when its armies gained possession of territories in Chekiang and Kiangsu, especially the city of Shanghai. On the other hand, its expenditures also increased enormously because of stiffer enemy resistance. In the spring of 1927, as military activities intensified, Chiang Kai-shek called for \$20 million a month. Yet when all sources of income were tapped, the KMT government found that it could expect a net annual income of about \$81 million, sufficient to sustain four months of campaigning at the rate of \$20 million a month. Thus, although the KMT's financial reforms aided in the launching of the Northern Expedition at a time when the resources of many other military regimes had been badly depleted through

ONE OF THE primary interests of students of this period is the question of why the KMT succeeded in its Northern Expedition in 1928. From our discussion of organization, recruitment, training, weaponry, and finances, the KMT emerged as the superior force in the Chinese political system. In fact, these are among the reasons most often cited by historians to account for the KMT's final victory over the militarists. If this analysis were sufficient, we would expect to be able to explain the KMT success in 1928 by its clear superiority in some of the attributes previously discussed. Yet, as we will show in a brief examination of the financial and military attributes below, this was not quite the case. It is not enough to make a simple comparison between the KMT, on the one hand, and the militarists, on the other, to explain the reasons behind the KMT's success. It is also necessary to take into account the total political environment and to see what environmental factors helped the KMT.

Thus, we need to analyze Chinese politics in the early Republican era by looking at the total environment, that is, through a systemic view of politics. Our previous analysis of each individual variable or attribute could only provide us with an understanding of the military regimes in their static state. It had little to say about the political process—the interaction among the military factions—and it could not explain the transformation of the political system. Thus it is submitted here that neither the political process nor the causes of political transformation can be adequately understood without an analysis of the politics of militarism in its dynamic form. Only when we study these attributes in terms of

reckless exploitation, waste, and incompetence, the party was not able to fully mobilize the resources of the newly acquired territories to establish an absolute superiority. Therefore, it is dangerous to overemphasize the financial achievements of the KMT and identify them as the dominant factor in the success of the Northern Expedition. The KMT was never in a position of such overwhelming financial superiority as to make the result of the military contest a foregone conclusion.

On the military side, the picture was basically the same; the KMT's qualitative advantages were significantly offset by quantitative considerations.

On the tactical level, there is no doubt that the training program of the KMT forces was far superior to that of the average militarist and produced more highly motivated and skilled soldiers. On the other hand, we must not forget that the KMT's training program was still basically a crash program, producing a large number of officers and men rather hastily. Consequently, there were many minor weaknesses. For instance, during the very first campaign (the East River campaign) Chiang Kai-shek complained that his soldiers tended to waste ammunition, as if to compete with the enemies in a display of firepower rather than to shoot and kill enemies. On the eve of the decisive battle against Sun Ch'uan-fang, in October 1926, he complained that half the soldiers of the crack first and second divisions could not use their rifle sights properly and fired in all directions. Although the KMT armies generally had a much better reputation among the people and usually won their support, they were nevertheless susceptible to behavior characteristics of the old-fashioned armies.<sup>1</sup>

On the strategic level, great credit must be given to the services rendered by the Soviet advisers. They not only helped establish the Whampoa Academy and the military training program in general; they were responsible for introducing the political commissar system into the KMT fighting units and they assumed operational responsibilities in many of the combat-related departments of the KMT military hierarchy. These Soviet officers, with their experience in World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the subsequent civil war, furnished their Chinese trainees with knowledge in tactics, logistics, and organization. Furthermore, they even guided the KMT generals in mapping their strategy.<sup>2</sup> In the sum-

mer of 1925, at the zenith of their influence, over one thousand Soviet advisers were working in China. Within the KMT, Soviet General Blücher assumed the operational leadership of nearly all forces, sometimes issuing directives to the Chinese field commanders.<sup>3</sup>

However, in the fall of 1925, the influence of the Soviet advisers began to decline; during the second eastern expedition, the strategic and operational preparations were largely made by Chinese officers under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. On March 20, 1926, the Soviet advisers suffered another serious setback as the result of the Communist-inspired coup.<sup>4</sup> A few months later, the Northern Expedition was launched over the objection of the Soviet advisers. According to Harley F. MacNair, approximately fifteen Soviet advisers under the direction of General Blücher accompanied the KMT forces when the expedition got under way in July 1926.<sup>5</sup> This is a surprisingly small number of Soviet advisers compared with their previous numbers at peak strength and in view of the increasing need for expert advice in the most important expedition the KMT ever launched. One possible explanation is that by that time the Soviet advisers had already lost their influence and their functions were greatly reduced.\*

With respect to the KMT's combat performance, we must not forget that its preparation for the expedition was hasty, and that

\* On this point, there are conflicting positions. As Garthoff reports, Soviet writers in general insisted that Blücher played a very important role in developing the plans for the Northern Expedition, including supply of provisions, ammunition, clothing, communications, medical care, and combat coordination. F. F. Liu, on the other hand, contends that Blücher's contribution was limited mostly to offering criticism of the Chinese-drawn operation plans. He states, "Blücher seldom formulated or made any attempt to direct the expedition's course himself." (Garthoff, pp. 30-32.) The available evidence seems to support Liu's case. For instance, according to the memoirs of Huang Hsi-d'u, a leading Kwangsi general, after Hunan was taken, a conference was called by Chiang Kai-shek at Changsha in August 1926 to decide the strategy for the second phase of the expedition. Huang did not mention Blücher's name among the participants in the conference. Furthermore, it was Li Tsung-jen's strategy that was finally adopted. Huang Hsi-ch'u, "Chiang Li ti erh tz'u chiu wu ching kuo ch'iang ch'ing," *Ch'un chiu*, no. 235 (April 16, 1967), pp. 9-10. Finally, any claim that Soviet officers occupied strategic advisory positions in the KMT army corps must be doubted. Huang Shao-hung characterized the chief Soviet adviser assigned to the Kwangsi army in 1926 as "simpleminded" and said that he showed no expertise in military affairs and did not make any contribution to the Kwangsi army. Huang Shao-hung, 1: 124-26.

even in the course of fighting its enemies, the party was not entirely free from internal dissension. It was not until the end of 1925 that the remnants of the armies of Ch'en Chiung-min, Liu Cheng-huan, and Yang Hsi-min were effectively annihilated; yet in less than six months the Northern Expedition had been launched. Once the Northern Expedition was under way, continued Communist opposition and interference with its military efforts finally convinced Chiang that the Communists must be purged completely. In April 1927, the rift in the KMT ranks finally burst into the open to become a full-scale civil war within a civil war. The purge of the Communists in Shanghai led to the inevitable split not only between the KMT and the Chinese Communist party but also between the KMT right and the KMT left, and the split seriously undermined the Northern Expedition. In fact, it gave Sun Ch'u-an-fang a respite that nearly brought disaster to the KMT forces.

However, the KMT was less than solid even without the Communists. Although the KMT launched the expedition on the strength of eight army corps, its real strength was considerably less impressive. The Second, Third, Fifth, and Sixth Army Corps consisted of a motley group of provincial armies that were stationed in Kwangtung and did not have great combat strength. The real fighting strength of the KMT consisted of the First, Fourth, and Seventh Army Corps. Yet, of these three crack fighting units, only the First Army Corps was fully trained and commanded by Whampoa officers and cadets. The Fourth Army Corps, mostly Cantonese, was affected by the Whampoa program to a lesser, though still important, extent. And the Seventh Army Corps was built independently by the militarists in Kwangsi.

Numerically speaking, the KMT started the Northern Expedition with decisive inferiority; the total strength the party ordered into combat could not have exceeded 60,000 men and 30,000 rifles. Of course, it is true that after some initial successes by the KMT forces in Hunan and Fukien, many provincial militarists in neighbor. But these new forces could hardly be relied upon to fight the major enemies of the party.

On the other hand, it was a fact that the Whampoa forces (First Army Corps) performed a rather limited role throughout the

course of the Expedition. Much of the fighting during the Expedition was done by the forces of Feng Yü-hsiang, Yen Hsi-shan, Li Tsung-jen, and Li Chi-ch'en. The party's inability to sift these forces before they were incorporated into the National Revolutionary Army created serious problems for the Nationalists' rule in subsequent years.

For our present purpose, the important point is that the Northern Expedition cannot justifiably be presented as a case of the unequivocal military victory of the Whampoa army-building program over the traditional military establishment. It may be true that the contribution made by the Whampoa program was necessary for the victory of the KMT in 1928. The superior fighting ability, the iron-tight discipline, the paintstaking political work, and the dedication to a political ideal helped the party forces to demolish their enemies and to win wide popular support wherever they went. Whenever these forces were pitted against the forces of other militarists, there was no doubt that their success could be attributed to their Whampoa background. But, on the other hand, many other militarists also joined the KMT and contributed to the fighting. Some of them were progressive forces (such as Feng Yü-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan), but others were not qualitatively different from the KMT's enemies. These factors warn us that it would be erroneous to explain the KMT victory in 1928 exclusively in terms of its superiority in military organization or technology. A systemic analysis becomes necessary.

#### *A Systemic Analysis of the Politics of Militarism*

A systemic analysis, basically, involves the study of relationships between a number of variables. To apply such an analysis to Chinese politics is to search for a pattern of interactions among several actors and to specify the conditions under which this pattern may persist or change. Systems analysis lends itself most readily to the use of theoretical models, especially models that stress dynamic interaction patterns.

Of course, the Chinese system was an open historical case, not a closed model. The structural nature of the model inescapably places a severe limitation on its scope; it can take into account only the most salient characteristics in the actors' behavioral patterns and must treat any peculiarities of the individual actors as purely

incidental from the systemic point of view. In the real world, however, the particular characteristics of individual actors must be given special attention, because they explain the divergent ways in which actors behaved within the system and thereby have profound, albeit indirect, systemic implications. This realization cautions us to avoid dogmatism in applying the model and counsels us to examine closely historic incidents and variables that are important for understanding the actual historical system but that may not be covered by the model.

A model serves an essentially heuristic purpose, after all; it is not a mirror image of reality. It is only a conceptual framework superimposed by us upon reality, a research guide that helps us to organize the mass of amorphous historical data into meaningful, coherent, and related categories. We use a model only because it enables us to understand a particular historical phenomenon from a distinctive perspective in a disciplined way. Concrete historical cases seldom conform completely to any model, and we must be careful not to fall into the trap of rigging facts to conform to the postulates of the model.

The Chinese political system of this period more closely resembled an international system than a national system. In several aspects, the Chinese political scene of 1916–28 is actually strikingly similar to an international system.<sup>6</sup>

Structurally, the Chinese system was composed of a number of independent and autonomous actors, the military factions. For practical purposes, these factions constituted the ultimate or “sovereign” political authority structures. Within each structure, decisions were made by a small group of militarists who were gathered around a leader on the basis of lasting personal ties. Within the hard core of each faction, a high degree of solidarity existed. But the relations of the factions toward each other and toward the entire system cannot be characterized by solidarity.

The number of actors was small enough and they interacted intimately enough for their decisions to be keenly felt by others and to have considerable impact upon the whole system. What happened to a particular actor could bring about fundamental changes in the stability of the entire system.

The relationships between factions were not formalized or institutionalized, nor was there any guarantee that these relation-

ships would be durable. On the contrary, the actors’ own behavior determined their relationships to other actors as well as their status in the system. Both were informal and subject to sudden change. In addition, since each actor was the final guardian of its own preservation, its decisions had strategic connotations. The actors could not take their interrelationships or even their very existence for granted. Consequently, the Chinese factions had to employ diplomacy extensively; they attempted to bargain, using persuasion and threats; they tried to utilize alliances to win friends and warn enemies; and finally, they went to war when other means of achieving political objectives failed.

These features render the Chinese system appropriate for analysis as a “balance of power” system. But did the Chinese system operate as a balance-of-power system? Before we attempt to answer this question, we need to clarify briefly what we mean by a balance-of-power system.<sup>7</sup>

Generally speaking, there are two different views regarding the balance-of-power concept. The first, or “natural law,” view maintains that balance will eventually be restored whenever there are several actors in the system, each struggling for the maintenance, and probably the improvement, of security. It implies the presence of an invisible hand that would adjust the balance whenever it is tipped toward one direction or another. The actors themselves do not have to be conscious of this balancing mechanism and are usually concerned with maximizing their immediate interests. The balancing process is automatic and requires no conscious human effort; it is deterministic and inevitable. This interpretation of balance of power is reflected in most traditional international political literature.<sup>8</sup>

The second view allows for parts to be consciously played by the actors. In this approach to the balance-of-power system, at least some actors must agree on the desirability of keeping the system in operation. Whenever they spot a tendency toward imbalance, they will act intelligently to correct the tendency, by diplomacy if possible, by force if necessary. According to this view, it is possible for an actor actively and conscientiously to pursue a balance-of-power policy.<sup>9</sup>

Neither of these views specifies the manner in which the mechanisms of the system function. Therefore, balance of power as tra-

ditionally used is a descriptive term devoid of precise meaning. It does not specify variables. When every situation involving the co-existence of several actors is characterized as a balance-of-power situation, the term fails to distinguish the prominent properties of one power situation from another. It does not allow for the possibility of non-balance-of-power situations, nor does it provide for transformation from one power relationship to another.

The balance-of-power concept can be used profitably in our inquiry only if we can make its definition more rigorous and more operational. In order to do this, we need to utilize a model with explicit and logically tight rules. The applicability of such a model is drastically limited in comparison with the general theories of balance of power. But limitation is precisely its dominant virtue, because it allows us to talk about balance of power in more concrete and precise terms.

The model that is most useful for our purpose is that proposed by Morton A. Kaplan in *System and Process in International Politics*. Kaplan's balance-of-power system is characterized by the existence of a number of actors (divided into two categories—essential and nonessential) and the absence of effective "supranational" institutions. The actors are free and independent agents, primarily concerned with their own preservation and other temporal interests. Aside from unforeseeable parametric changes such as technological breakthroughs or external aggression, the equilibrium of the system is maintained or disrupted by the actors only. The model contains six essential behavioral rules that the actors, or at least a significant number of them, must observe when they interact in order to maintain the equilibrium of the system: (1) Act to increase capabilities but negotiate rather than fight. (2) Fight rather than pass up an opportunity to increase capabilities. (3) Stop fighting rather than eliminate an essential national actor. (4) Act to oppose any coalition or single actor that tends to assume a position of predominance with respect to the rest of the system. (5) Act to constrain actors who subscribe to supranational organizing principles. (6) Permit defeated or constrained essential national actors to reenter the system as acceptable role partners or act to bring some previously unessential actor within the essential actor classification. Treat all essential actors as acceptable role partners.<sup>10</sup>

These rules are couched in strategic terms and carry imperative implications. There is an inner equilibrium among these rules, which constitute the minimum requirements for the maintenance of a balance-of-power system. The rules are interdependent; the violation of one will lead to the violation of another, and may eventually undermine the system as a whole. Equilibrium must also be maintained between essential rules and other variables of the system as well as between the system and its environment or setting. Disruption of equilibrium in any of these areas may cause the system to undergo fundamental changes in its characteristic behavior and transform it into another system.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Kaplan's model allows for the possibility that the system may break down and political behavior may take other forms. The specification of the essential rules and other variables not only permits a more succinct analysis of the system itself, but also provides us with a basis on which to achieve some level of predictive power with reference to conditions under which the system will change its nature i.e. transformation rules.

Furthermore, its six essential rules suggest that the model places more emphasis on the political process of attaining balance than on the point at which perfect balance exists. In this way, the model is dynamic instead of static. It arranges the political actors' behavior on a continuum ranging from balance to imbalance, rather than dichotomizing it into either balance or imbalance. Similarly, conflicts and their resolution by violence are not viewed as anomalies but as an integral part of the balancing process itself. Thus the occurrence of wars as a means of redressing balance can be viewed as a sign of the adaptability of the system.

It needs to be reemphasized here that the choosing of the Kaplan model does not mean that we are committed to viewing the Chinese case as a perfect historical balance-of-power situation; we are simply interested in using the model to specify a number of conditions conducive to stability in such a situation, and to demonstrate how the differences between the historical case and the model account for the instability of the former. The utility of the model

extends only as far as it explains historical data meaningfully. Obviously, the true historical actors did not conduct their behavior in order to satisfy the essential requirements of any intellectual model. We are faced with the problem of how to determine

the extent to which the actors actually understood these conditions of stability. Apparently the stability of any system will be enhanced if most actors understand the system, although how much understanding is necessary for the maintenance of stability may vary from one historical case to another. In the Chinese case, it must be pointed out that the actors shared the national belief that the unification of the country was beyond ideological dispute. But this fact should not lead us to dismiss the balance-of-power model on the ground that the Chinese system represented a "terminal" system. It must be remembered that while national unification had long been a powerful political force throughout China's long history, there had also been prolonged periods of division. The "Six Dynasties" period, for example, lasted so long that it constituted a historical epoch by itself. Therefore, while it is true to say that Chinese political actors always had unification as a goal, it is more pertinent to examine how they tried to achieve that goal. Although the Chinese militarists of the early twentieth century all envisaged the end of the system, each of them envisaged this end on his own terms. The terms guided their political behavior, which in turn determined why the system lasted only as long as it did and how it became transformed.

In our application of the model to the Chinese system, the military factions are defined as the political actors. These actors are divided into the two categories—essential and nonessential actors—on the basis of their capabilities, as discussed in the previous chapters (organizational, military, and economic); the more powerful factions are treated as essential actors, and the less powerful as non-essential actors.

In the following sections, the Chinese militarist system has been divided into three phases: 1916–20, 1920–24, and 1924–28. Each phase exhibited a distinct behavioral pattern and was separated from the next phase by a major event that significantly altered that pattern. In dealing with each phase, we will first discuss how its behavioral pattern developed and then suggest certain points of general theoretical interest.

#### *The First Phase: 1916–1920*

The important political events of the period after the death of Yüan Shih-k'ai that led to the emergence of the military factions have already been described in Chapters 2 and 3 and need not be

repeated. Here we shall discuss the important characteristics of this formative phase of the militarist system.

First, the atomization of the country almost immediately gave rise to a pattern of limited local reintegration. Although the small militarists cherished their newly acquired authority and autonomy, the more powerful militarists (especially the provincial military governors) were unhappy to see their territorial domains fragmented and their privileges infringed upon. They were determined to reclaim their authority and to consolidate their control over provincial internal affairs, even if they had to use force.

The task of internal consolidation was a formidable one, and in most cases consumed nearly all the militarists' energy. The few who were capable of making inroads into other provinces limited their activities to their most immediate neighbors. Tang Chiyyao had some success in extending his control over Kweichow and part of Szechwan but was eventually driven back to Yunnan. Only Chang Tso-lin was able to entrench himself in a large area, the whole of Manchuria.

Second, most militarists possessed meager capabilities in this early phase of the system. An infantry division, roughly equal to about fifteen thousand men, was a highly respectable military instrument even in 1918–19. The whole fight at Hunan was dominated by Wu P'ei-fu's 3rd Division. Other northern military units that boasted of divisional strength and that looked formidable also took part in the Hunan campaign, but their incompetence was exposed as soon as they came into contact with the shabbily clad, ill-fed, and poorly equipped Hunanese troops.

Thus, this was a phase of high intraregional but low interregional activities. The militarists generally lacked both the energy and the capabilities to interact with each other. Without interaction, there was no cause for conflict. Therefore, this period was marked by the absence of large-scale hostilities. The militarists were more concerned with their internal affairs than with affairs affecting the system (country) as a whole. Though they sometimes expressed opinions on national issues, they were seldom able to go any further.

The campaign launched by Tuan against Hunan might seem to contradict this analysis. Actually, however, Tuan's activities are best explained by these two factors. Tuan did not have a personal military machine even as late as the end of 1917; he was able to

dominate politics on the national level precisely because no other militarists were powerful enough to intervene.

Furthermore, the Hunan campaign was not really a great exception to the absence of large-scale conflict that otherwise characterized the phase. In terms of both scale and intensity, the battles fought in Hunan were probably as limited as those within Szechwan and along the Kwangtung-Fukien borders. All of them demonstrated the meager resources of the participants. But the Hunan campaign did have political significance. It was the painful experience acquired through the execution of the campaign that prompted Tuan to seek outside assistance to establish an independent and personal military force.

Tuan's political ambition and the many manifestations of this ambition alarmed other militarists. It was the reaction to Tuan's aggressive policy that accelerated the formation of centers of counterforce. The Hunan campaign presented the militarists with a pressing need to organize themselves into more cohesive groups and ushered the militarist system into its second phase, in which several groups of militarists decided to act together over a fairly long period of time.

#### *The Second Phase 1920-1924*

When the system entered its second phase in 1920, the actors had already assumed definite shape. By the first half of 1920, the distribution of their power was approximately as follows:

Fengtien	Heilungkiang, Kirin
Anhwei	Northern Chihli (including Peking), Shantung, Jehol, Suiyuan, Shensi, Anhwei, Chekiang, Fukien
Chihli	Southern Chihli, Honan, Kiangsu, Hupeh
KMT	Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Yunnan, Kweichow
Szechwan	Szechwan
Hunan	Hunan
Shansi	Shansi

Of these factors, the first three, Fengtien, Anhwei, and Chihli, were definitely in the essential actor category. In terms of territorial size and aggregate strength, the KMT was surely on equal footing with any of the first three actors; however, its internal divisions had immobilized it during this period, and it did not yet belong in the essential actor category.

The Anhwei-Chihli war of 1920 marked the first large-scale con-

flict. It also marked the first time that two actors (Chihli and Fengtien) had entered into an alliance to block what in their view was a hegemonic actor (Anhwei). Thus events with a system-wide dimension now took place. The various militarists had by now established themselves in their territories firmly enough to begin looking outward and to become concerned with the overall distribution of power within the system.

Although the scale of hostilities was limited, the defeat of Anhwei greatly reduced its capabilities. It lost control of the central government and with the dissolution of the Anfu Club it also lost control of the parliament. The Northwestern Frontier Army was totally destroyed. Anhwei also lost an enormous territory; of the eight provinces it had controlled or influenced at the peak of its power, only Chekiang and Fukien remained firmly in its camp. As an actor, Anhwei was greatly diminished and gradually began to play the role of a nonessential actor.

The two victors divided the spoils. A new cabinet was formed with a premier acceptable to both factions (Chin Yün-p'eng was related to Chang Tso-lin by marriage and was Wu P'ei-fu's most respected teacher and early patron). Fengtien acquired Jehol, Chahar, and Suiyuan, while Chihli gained Shantung, Shensi, Honan, and Anhwei.

By the end of 1921, the relationship between Chihli and Fengtien had gradually deteriorated. However, there was still one field, national politics, in which they had smooth cooperation. Up to this time the Chin Yün-p'eng cabinet had enjoyed the blessing of both factions. Since Chin's appointment reflected the desire of both actors to be conciliatory toward each other in dividing the spoils of the Peking government, he was careful to assume a neutral attitude and acted on important issues only after securing concurrence from both.

However, almost since its formation the cabinet had been in financial jeopardy. The finances of the government deteriorated, and in November 1921, clerks in the Ministry of Education and the Peking judiciary stopped working because the government had not paid their salaries.<sup>12</sup> The situation apparently called for some fundamental solution. Chang Tso-lin seized this opportunity and maneuvered to have his own choice, Liang Shih-i, named to form the new cabinet (December 1, 1921).

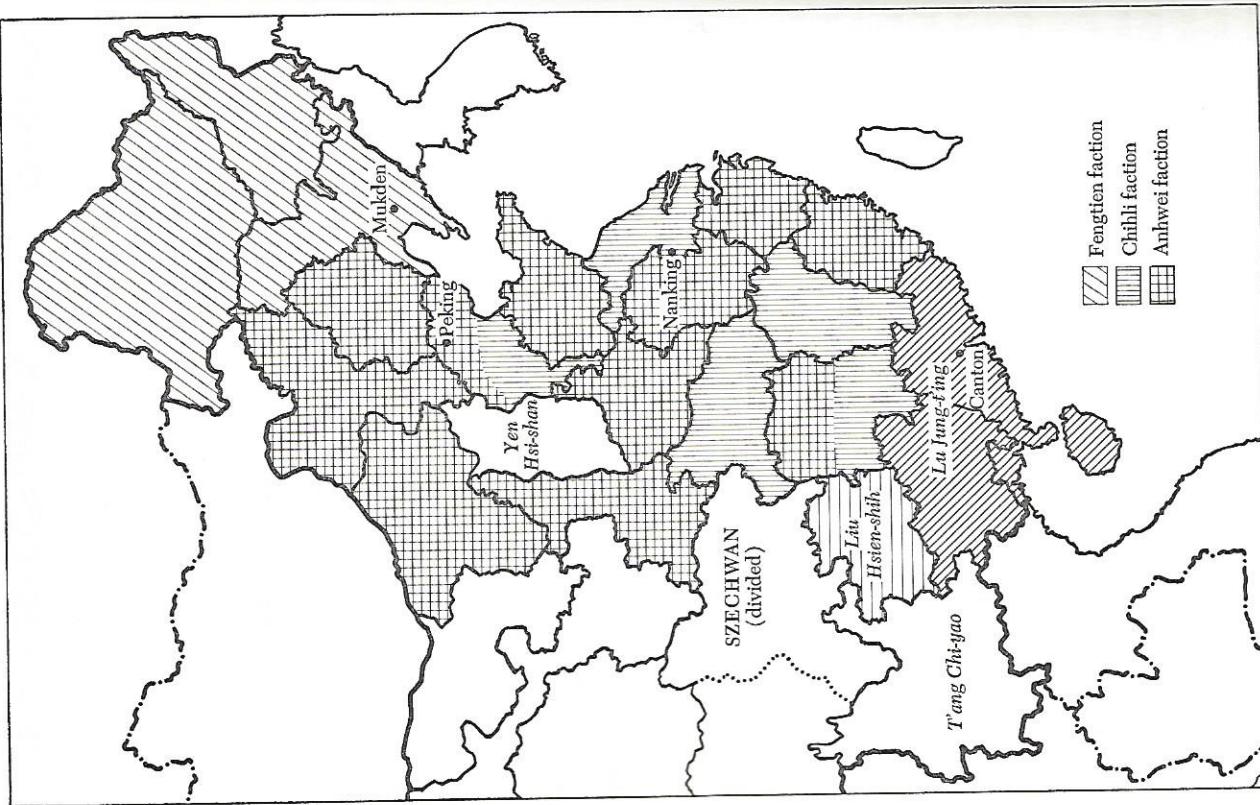
Fengtien's choice had never had Chihli's full support, but what

angered Chihli most and drove it to challenge the new cabinet's authority was the government's failure to pay the military expenses previously promised to Wu.<sup>13</sup> Immediately, on January 5, 1922, Wu issued a circular telegram opposing the Liang cabinet and charging it with treason. A supporting chorus of protests came from the eight military governors in the Chihli camp. Faced with this stiff opposition, Liang took sick leave on the 25th, requesting his foreign minister to act in his absence.

But Wu was not satisfied with the removal of Liang; in February he again attacked the cabinet, charging the Minister of Finance with embezzlement. Chang Tso-lin now had no reason to doubt that Wu was trying to topple the entire cabinet supported by Fengtien. During the previous two years Wu had been very reticent about national politics. His sudden outburst, coming after his troops had undergone a long period of intensive training, could not but be an ominous sign. Considered in conjunction with Chihli's greatly increased power, Wu's recent behavior could easily be taken by Fengtien as a prelude to an attempt to pursue a hegemonic policy, to dominate national politics, and to carry out a policy of national unification by force.

In order to counter the threat from Chihli, Fengtien sent emissaries to Kwangtung in February 1922 to seek cooperation from Sun Yat-sen. The KMT agreed to launch its own drive against Kiangsi. Next, Fengtien attempted to induce the Anhwei remnants in Chekiang and Fukien to join it to make a tripartite alliance.<sup>14</sup> On the last day of March, Chang Tso-lin announced that his 27th Division would be transported from the Fengtien area to the vicinity of Peking to "bolster" the defense of the capital. He apparently felt strong because of the new allies he had won and was determined to exact some major concessions from Chihli. In the first half of April, Ts'ao Yin, the younger brother (both Ts'ao brothers were related to Chang by marriage), twice journeyed to Fengtien to seek a peaceful solution. But Chang would not budge unless the Liang cabinet was restored and Wu and other militarists stopped meddling in national politics. This was much more than Chihli was prepared to concede, and the negotiations soon broke off. On April 25, Chihli made a formal denunciation of Chang Tso-lin, and four days later war broke out.

In several respects, the first Chihli-Fengtien war of 1922 dif-



Distribution of factional power in China, 1920,  
prior to the Chihli-Anhwei War

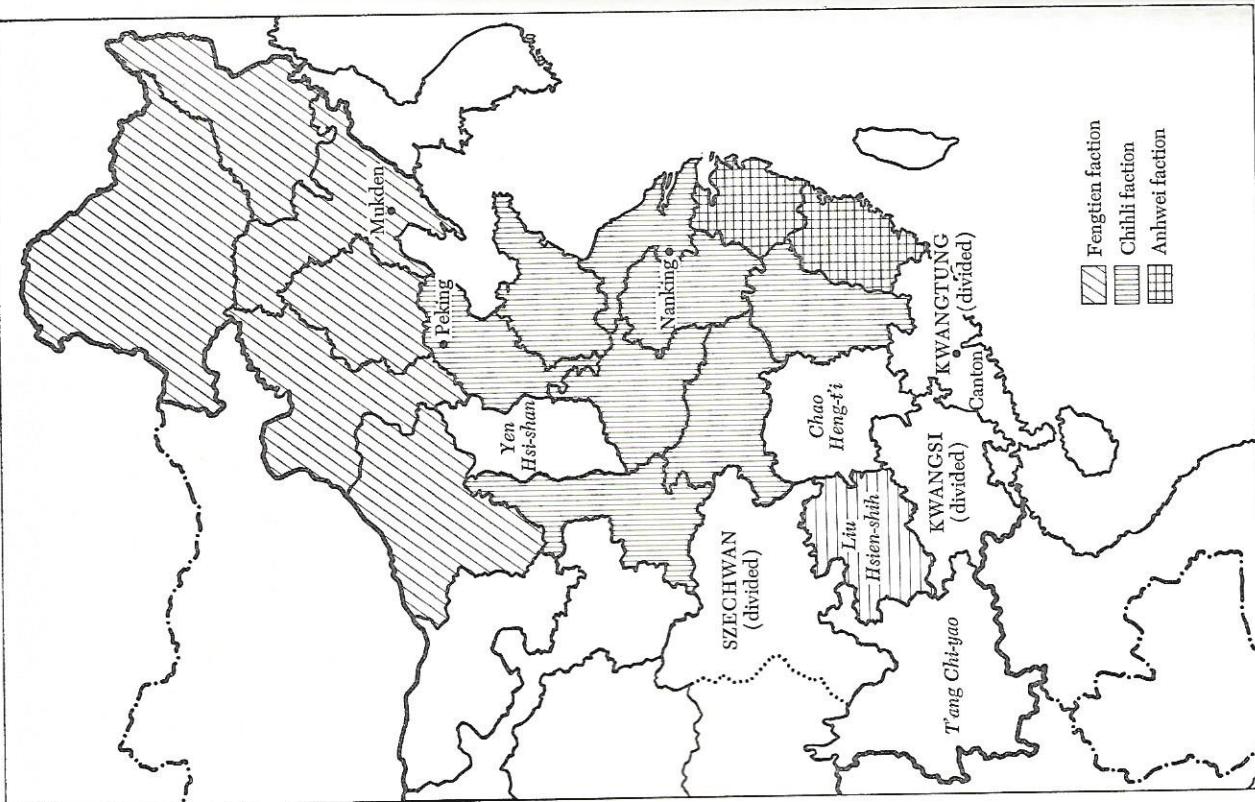
fered markedly from the Anhwei-Chihli war of 1920. Substantially larger numbers of troops engaged in actual combat. It was estimated that at least 100,000 soldiers from each side were involved in active fighting. Defections were less frequent and casualties were high.<sup>15</sup>

The combat zone was considerably enlarged too. Fighting spread to nearly the entire border area between the warring factions. The concentration of troops on such a grand scale and with such speed and orderliness could not have been accomplished in 1920. After a week of fierce fighting, Fengtien was defeated and driven beyond the Great Wall. Although the inferiority of the Fengtien military establishment was the primary reason for its defeat, another reason was the failure of the tripartite alliance to materialize. Sun's inability to fulfill his promise, in turn, made it inadvisable for Chekiang to take unilateral action, since it was surrounded by Chihli militarists on three sides.

The victory was a boost for Chihli in general and for Wu in particular. The provinces of Jehol, Chahar, and Suiyuan were added to Chihli's territory. The revolt of Honan was quickly smashed, bringing that province closer to the faction than before. Now Chihli was the supreme military power in the system. Fengtien could do little for the time being except nurse its wounds. The KMT was as weak as ever; the Anhwei remnants were only too happy that they escaped unscathed from the war and did not dare to stir up any more trouble. The three other nonessential actors were all anxious for Chihli to leave them alone.

If the Chihli militarists had shown any caution before 1922 about interfering with national politics, they did not need to worry now. Ten days after the victory, several junior Chihli militarists proposed to restore Li Yüan-hung to the presidency and to reconvene the parliament of 1917 to elect a vice-president. After another four days T'sao, Wu, and a train of Chihli dignitaries sent a joint telegram to all the provinces requesting them to express their position on the proposal.<sup>16</sup> The message was too clear to miss. On June 2, President Hsü duly resigned and left the capital. In less than a week, Li was back in office under the aegis of Chihli power. Thereafter, the composition of the cabinets was dictated by Chihli, and their policies followed its orders closely.

By January 1923, however, Chihli was no longer satisfied with



Distribution of factional power in China, 1922,  
on the eve of the First Chihli-Fengtien War

merely controlling the cabinet. T'sao K'un was now intent on taking the presidency for himself and spent a large sum of money to bribe the parliamentary members. In the next few months, Li's tenure suddenly became a point of heated debate. On June 6, several hundred army officers and policemen surrounded the presidential mansion to demand payment of their long overdue salaries. On the 9th, Peking policemen started a general strike. Three days later, the Inspector General of the Army, Feng Yü-hsiang, and the Commander of the Peking Garrison, Wang Huai-ch'ing, resigned and declared that they would no longer be responsible for maintaining order in the capital. Li, finally forced to conclude that he was no longer wanted, fled to Tientsin.<sup>17</sup> After a period of caretaker government, T'sao K'un was duly elected and inaugurated as president in October.

The whole episode aroused a great furor in the country, since this was the first time since Yüan Shih-k'ai's era that the members of parliament were openly paid for their votes. Fengtien, the KMT, and Anhwei issued separate statements opposing the illegally elected president. But the war between Chihli and its opponents that was so widely anticipated failed to materialize for almost another year. Several factors may have accounted for this delay.

First, since the end of the 1922 war there were indications that a rift was slowly developing between two rival cliques within Chihli. The Tientsin-Pao-tung clique was responsible for engineering Li's ouster and T'sao's election. The Loyang clique, centered around Wu P'ei-fu, was not opposed in principle to T'sao's seeking the presidency but was convinced that the first thing to do was to unify the country. Their differences on these priorities created a serious strain on the internal cohesion of the faction.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, after the election, T'sao handled Chihli's relations with other factions with great caution, probably to gain time to smooth over the internal division and to placate Wu in particular.

Second, Chihli was making some progress in Fukien and might not have wanted to push the pace of its expansion too fast. In March 1923, Sun Ch'u-an-fang and Chou Yin-jen were sent to seize Fukien from Anhwei. They were met by strong resistance and had to fight their way into the province. Understandably, Chihli did not want to make enemies on more than one front.

Third, from Chihli's point of view, the most dangerous challenge to its power would come only from Fengtien. The steady improve-

ment of the Fengtien army after 1922 obviously caused Chihli grave concern. Between August and October of 1923, Chihli sent several emissaries to try to persuade Fengtien to renounce its autonomy and to rejoin the government.<sup>19</sup> And when Fengtien issued a stern denunciation on October 31 against T'sao's presidency and threatened to form a separate government, Chihli conveniently ignored it. These events suggest that Chihli realized it had more urgent business to attend to and was extremely careful not to get into direct confrontation with Fengtien at that time.

Despite its bold words, Fengtien was equally cautious. Although its military program was geared to a final confrontation with Chihli, at the end of 1923 that program had been in execution for barely over a year. However much Fengtien would have liked to aid Anhwei in Fukien, its army had not been sufficiently overhauled to meet the test. Furthermore, if Fengtien moved against Chihli, it could not expect any help from the KMT, which was occupied throughout 1923 with fighting southern militarists on its own home ground. The party itself was also undergoing a thorough reorganization. These two trains of events made the KMT unable to turn its attention to its external relations with other actors. Thus, Fengtien, with no possibility of forging a second tripartite alliance with the same actors, decided to bide its time and delay the final showdown.

Although war did not break out immediately, the tension was at best only temporarily subdued. Chihli's policy of dominating the central government and seeking to expand its territorial domain was bound to lead to a collision with the other essential actors. A year after the inauguration of T'sao, the objective situation had changed substantially. Fengtien had gained one more year to train its troops. The KMT had founded its own military academy, and Sun Yat-sen was again planning for a northern expedition. Although the military academy had not produced a significant number of soldiers, and Sun's plan to march north was to prove yet another futile effort, his determination might have been a great encouragement to Fengtien. On the other hand, Chihli had now firmly established its control over Fukien and was in a much more comfortable position to deal with Fengtien. Therefore, all three actors were in an expectant mood. What was needed was an explosive issue.

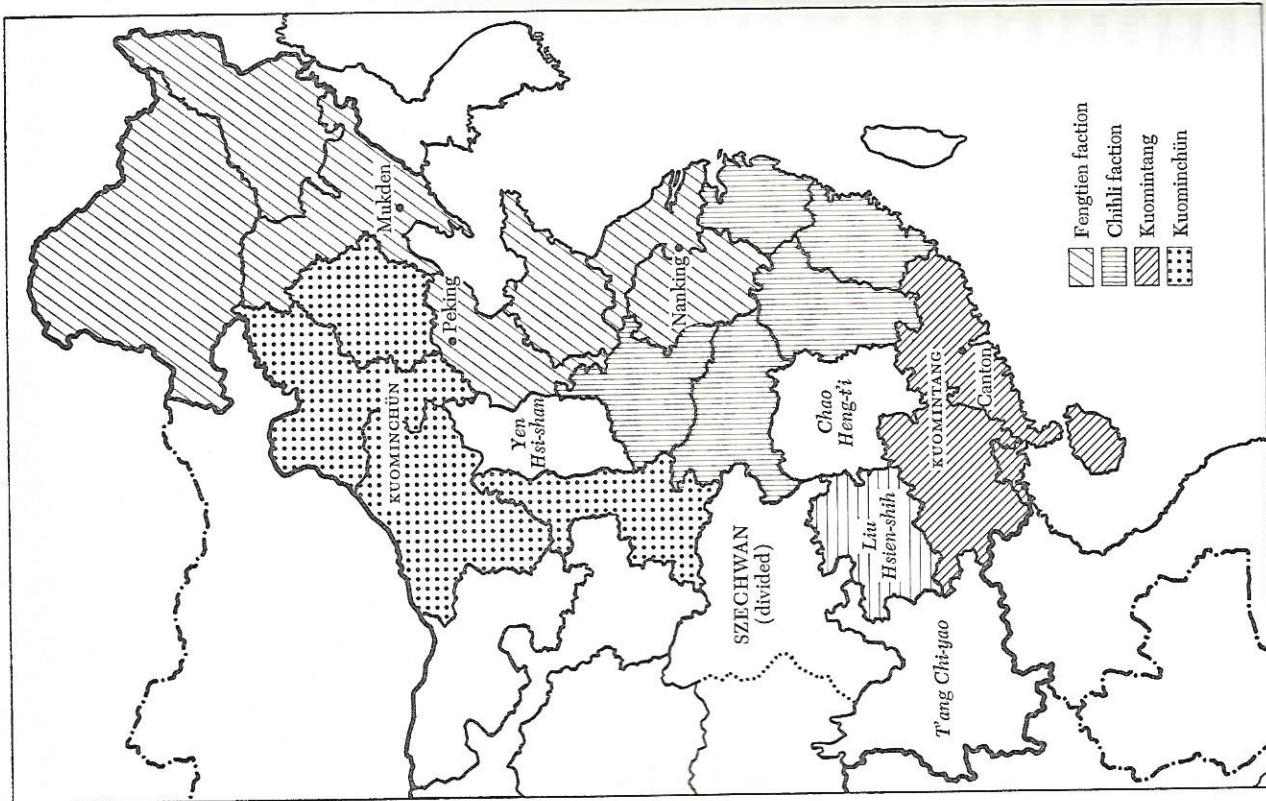
Precisely such an issue was provided by Chekiang. When Sun

Ch'uan-fang invaded Fukien, the defeated Anhwei troops retreated into neighboring Chekiang and were incorporated into the latter's command system.<sup>20</sup> This move considerably strengthened its position against the southern provinces of the Chihli faction. In August 1924, Kiangsu, Kiangsi, Anhwei, and Fukien (now a member of the Chihli faction), delivered an ultimatum to Chekiang demanding the disbanding of these troops. Chekiang refused, and war broke out on September 1.

In retrospect, it is difficult to understand how Chekiang dared to defy the superior power of Chihli, unless it had secured Fengtien's pledge of assistance. In any event, on September 5, Chang Tso-lin announced that his army would support Chekiang. On the same day, Sun Yat-sen announced that he would lead a northern expedition in a matter of days. On September 17, Chihli set up the command structure to wage war against Fengtien. By October 13, the Chihli-Anhwei war had ended with the total defeat of Anhwei, and Chekiang was conquered by Sun Ch'u-an-fang. In the north, Chihli and Fengtien were locked in fierce combat. Then suddenly, on October 23, news came that Feng Yü-hsiang of Chihli had clandestinely returned from the front, occupied the capital, and taken over the central government. This shattered the morale of the Chihli troops. Within days, their front was broken and the whole army was routed. Wu P'ei-fu made a desperate attempt to rescue the capital, but failed and fled to the south with a few thousand soldiers. On November 3, hostilities ceased on all fronts.<sup>21</sup> The period of Chihli's domination was formally ended, although the faction still retained a large territory in the Yangtze valley.

With the defeat of Chihli, the second phase of the system was brought to a conclusion. As we noted earlier, the beginning of this phase marked the move toward a balance-of-power system. A comparison of some of the characteristics of this phase with the rules of the Kaplan model will reveal the similarities between them.

The Chinese actors followed the first rule (*Act to increase capabilities but negotiate rather than fight*) very closely. The increase in the total number of soldiers, the intensification of the fighting, the mounting casualties, and the expansion of the conflict zones, as well as the ever larger number of troops marshaled by the chief antagonists, all pointed to the fact that the war-making machinery of the actors was being refined constantly. The training of the



Distribution of factional power in China, 1924,  
at the conclusion of the Second Chihli-Fengtien War

War Participation Army of Anhwei, the training program of Chihli in Loyang, and the reform of the Fengtien army between 1922 and 1924 are specific examples of the great effort the factions put into their military establishment. The actors' primary interest in the competitive increase of capabilities was not to achieve parity with other actors, however, but to gain a margin of superiority. Yet the Chinese militarists did not resort to war the moment the balance was disturbed. During a crisis, the actors involved always demonstrated a willingness to negotiate for a peaceful settlement. Thus all three major wars were preceded by a period of tension during which the main antagonists or some third party tried to resolve the points of conflict at a conference table. Only after negotiation failed did the parties go to war. In 1920, the refusal of Anhwei to relinquish its control over the War Participation Army was the direct cause of war. In 1922, Fengtien was determined to retain the Liang Shih-i cabinet because this appeared to be the only way to compensate for its relative disadvantage in territorial expansion in comparison with Chihli. When both actors stood their ground, war broke out. In 1924, Anhwei (Chekiang) was unwilling to disband a part of its army and Fengtien was unwilling to see another aggrandizement of Chihli's power at the expense of Anhwei. Again the consequence was war. In every one of these instances, the actors refused to forgo an opportunity to increase capabilities and chose to fight.

The actors apparently did not feel that they should stop fighting rather than eliminate an essential national actor, as shown by the diminution and eventual elimination of Anhwei as an essential actor. However, the weakening of Anhwei coincided with the gradual strengthening of the KMT, which helped maintain the flexibility of alignment among the essential actors.

In three specific instances, the Chinese actors proved their opposition to the hegemonic actor by the formation of coalitions: Anhwei in 1920 and Chihli in both 1922 and 1924. The status quo actors were able to enter into an alliance quickly and to oppose the hegemonic actor. In 1920 the alliance included Fengtien and Chihli, in 1922 and 1924 the alliance included Fengtien, Anhwei, and the KMT. These actors were individually weaker than, and more or less the intended victims of, the hegemonic actors. Therefore, in every instance there was a defensive alliance of the weak against the strong.

Several factors made the observance of this rule possible in the Chinese system. First of all, the internal structure of the actors was conducive to action rather than inaction, which greatly simplified alignment policies. Since a faction's decision-making body was composed of a very small core of individuals of similar perspective, it was easy for it to recognize its common interests and to act accordingly.

Second, the existence of a special "subculture" with a network of intricate personal relationships and a set of commonly shared values greatly improved mutual understanding among them. Every militarist was an acceptable ally. Because the actors were concerned with the requirements of self-interest and not with persons, they were able to view the power developments within the system without passion and to make and unmake alliances in accordance with short-term interests to counter specific and immediate threats from hegemonic actors. Thus, although Anhwei had been Fengtien's enemy in 1920, neither of them found any difficulty in working together against Chihli in 1922 and 1924.

Still another factor that enhanced the flexibility of alignment was the absence of ideologically committed actors. The actors did not set out to regulate the activities of the system according to some preconceived blueprint, and, in fact, even the KMT's repeated efforts to portray itself as a distinct ideological actor aroused little alarm among the northern militarists. It must be remembered that the reorganization of the KMT came only after 1923–24; during a great part of this second phase, the KMT acted no differently than its northern counterparts. At one time or another, it had formed or attempted to form alliances with virtually every essential actor in the system, in spite of ideological opposition. The militarists were by instinct and by training pragmatic politicians. They themselves were masters at exploiting the propaganda value of whatever principles might benefit their personal cause, and they found it hard to believe that others might behave differently. This belief, which was periodically confirmed and encouraged by the KMT's alignment preferences, helped to maintain the atmosphere of mutual acceptability of all actors in matters of alignment.

Yet readiness to work with any actor in the system for short-term purposes was a necessary but not a sufficient condition. All actors needed adequate and quick information to help recognize a change in power distribution in the system, correctly interpret other ac-

tors' deeds and motives, identify the hegemonic actor, and take countervailing measures as quickly as possible.

In the Chinese system, information was improved by two factors. First, the makeup of the groups of militarists was quite stable and constant. As time went on, these men came to know more about each other's strengths and weaknesses, personal styles, and military strategies. As long as the same personalities continued to interact with each other, a certain degree of efficiency in information accumulation and retrieval and of policy consistency could be expected. Second, the actors made conscientious efforts to establish channels of communication among themselves as well as within their own domain. Exchanges of emissaries or special envoys, third parties, and occasional summit meetings were utilized to collect information. Consequently, the chance of misjudgment resulting from mistaken or unobtainable information about the other actors was minimized.\*

Of course, the availability of information did not necessarily guarantee that accurate judgments would be made. It did mean that most militarists, especially the more important ones, were unlikely to feel constrained in the process of their decision making by lack of information and that they were then provided with a basis for assessing the situation realistically and taking responsive action. As the history of the second phase shows, none of the major wars was brought about by mutual misunderstanding or insufficient information; rather, the wars were the outcome of cool-headed deliberation and negotiation.

The fact that three major wars took place within five years bears testimony to how effective the balancing mechanism of the Chinese system was. The second phase was, therefore, actually a period of dynamic equilibrium.

The nonessential actors, on the other hand, demonstrated the

\* The Chinese militarists seem to have been very poor at keeping secrets. Many subordinates were ready to leak top secrets for cash or for the sake of friendship. The telegraphic service was also notoriously ineffective in guarding information. Furthermore, there were newspaper reporters in large cities to observe troop movements, important visits, and other indications of tension. Consequently, most wars were preceded by days of forecasts and rumors in the papers. Even the supposedly ultrasecret plot of Feng Yu-hsing to overthrow the Chihli government in Peking was reported in the papers several days before it was carried out.

greatest reluctance to participate in the system's regulatory process during this phase. Because of the wide discrepancy in capabilities between the essential and the nonessential actors, the latter were always fearful that their active participation in the system might jeopardize their security. It was not accidental that the rise of Chihli's power coincided with the beginning of the "movement for provincial constitutionalism" or "federalism." In their desperate attempt to remain within the system, the nonessential actors turned to the exploitation of latent regional sentiments as a shield. This entire movement, however, was a hoax, a scheme adopted to meet temporary defense needs. The staunchest advocates of this movement, Hunan and Szechwan, did not hesitate to encroach upon other provinces' rights to self-government once they felt adequately strong to do so. Furthermore, this movement was the most convenient instrument for the ruling militarists in a faction to perpetuate their power. Without exception, the movement was sponsored by the militarists in power. After the installation of a constitutional government, the same people remained in power, now sanctioned by a fictitious "election." Provincial constitutionalism was thus exploited not only to protect the militarists from outside pressure but also to enhance their claim to legitimacy internally.

Behind this realistic shield, many of the nonessential actors declined to take an active part in the regulatory process of the system and shifted the main burden to the shoulders of the essential actors. This undoubtedly constituted a strain on the system. But the strain was not yet serious in this particular phase because of the essential actors' awareness of their regulatory role.

The KMT was not opposed as an actor with supranational organizing principles because, as we noted earlier, the KMT could not yet be taken seriously in this role. In addition, the KMT's internal weakness made it unnecessary for the other actors to take immediate action against it. From the point of view of maintaining the militarist system, it would have been ideal had some preventive action been taken against the KMT's reorganization program, for in the long run that program was to have enormous repercussions on the system. However, at this time the task was not yet urgent, and the neglect of other actors to do so did not constitute an immediate threat to the balance of the system.

The actors partially failed to permit a defeated essential actor

to revive its status by eliminating Anhwei. However, since the elimination of Anhwei came at the conclusion of this phase, it did not affect the operation of the system. The elimination of this one essential actor was accompanied at this time by the ascendency of two other actors to essential-actor status. The rise of the KMT and the Kuominchün resulted from a blending of chance with their own efforts rather than from any actions by the other actors. Nonetheless, their presence did much to mitigate the potential threat to the system posed by the violation of this rule.

### *The Third Phase: 1924–1928*

The system entered a new phase with the conclusion of the 1924 war, which had drastically changed the scene in China. Chihli had lost a large army, as well as the presidency. Most important, it had lost a vast territory, including Suiyuan, Jehol, Chahar, Chihli, Shantung, Honan, Chekiang, and Fukien. The imprisonment of Ts'ao K'un and the near-total defeat of Wu Pei-fu left the faction temporarily leaderless.

The Kuominchün emerged as a new actor. Feng Yü-hsiang and his co-conspirators of the 1924 coup all had previously been Chihli generals. The Kuominchün was given a free hand in the areas along the Peking–Hankow and Peking–Suiyuan railways. It occupied part of Chihli, Honan, Shensi, Kansu, Jehol, Suiyuan, and Chahar as a reward for its contribution in the war.

The lion's share of the spoils went to Fengtien. It acquired the areas along the Peking–Tientsin–Pukow railway as well as a part of Chihli (including the military governorship of the province), Shantung, and Anhwei to prepare for an eventual thrust into the Yangtze area. The defeat of Chihli made Fengtien the strongest actor in the system; its army of 200,000 men was the best equipped in the country.

Although the division of territories was intended to allow the victors to expand in different directions, trouble began almost immediately after the war ended. Despite the fact that Tientsin had been taken by Kuominchün, Fengtien troops marched into the city, pressured the pro-Kuominchün military governor to resign, and disbanded his troops.<sup>22</sup> On November 24, 1924, another 10,000 Fengtien soldiers were sent to occupy Peking jointly with the Kuominchün. On the same day, Feng Yü-hsiang announced his

intention of resigning from the command of the Kuominchün to travel abroad, apparently because of mounting pressure from Fengtien. His resignation was refused by the regent government that had been formed after the war by mutual agreement between Fengtien and the Kuominchün and was headed by Tuan Chi-i-jiu, now a powerless political figurehead. Thereupon, Feng went to Kalgan to assume his long-ignored office as the Tupan of Northwestern Defense.

There was little doubt that the Kuominchün had bent over backward to avoid conflict with Fengtien. Its army was still small in comparison with that of Fengtien, and it had suddenly acquired a territory larger than it could manage. Therefore, the Kuominchün needed time both to expand its army and to consolidate its territory. For the next year, Feng contented himself with developing the resources of the northwest and turning it into a powerful territorial base. During this period Feng's army swelled into a formidable force of over 100,000 men. He also began to receive Soviet military aid and to have closer contact with the KMT in the south. Other Kuominchün units were busy expanding too. Hu Chin-yi's force reached 250,000 men and Sun Yo's reached 30,000 men in a single year.<sup>23</sup>

Fengtien was occupied with more or less the same types of problems. It took time for the faction to establish itself in the newly acquired provinces. In addition, the provinces still under Chihli's control were stronger and richer than the Kuominchün territory at the beginning of 1925, and they were the logical target of Fengtien's next expansionist move. In December 1924, the regent government ordered the removal of the Chihli military governor from Kiangsu. In early January 1925, Fengtien troops took possession of Nanking. This precipitated a war between Fengtien and Chihli's Chi-i Hsieh-yüan. By the end of the month, Chi-i had been defeated and Kiangsu became a part of Fengtien's territorial domain.

The struggle between Fengtien and Chihli was far from concluded. In the peace treaty, both actors had pledged to respect Shanghai's status as a demilitarized zone. In June Fengtien took advantage of the labor strike in Shanghai to move its troops into the city, thus violating the treaty. In the next three months, Fengtien appointed three of its generals to be military governors—Chang Tsung-ch'ang in Shantung, Chiang Teng-hsien in Anhwei,

and Yang Yü-t'ing in Kiangsu. Since these three provinces lay on the main thoroughfare that connected the capital with the Yangtze valley, the Peking-Tientsin-Pukow railway, Chihli could not but view the Fengtien move as a prelude to further expansion policy in the south. On October 10, 1925, the Chihli militarist in Chekiang, Sun Ch'uan-fang, launched a surprise attack on the Fengtien force in Kiangsu, and in two weeks forced all Fengtien troops in Kiangsu and Anhwei to evacuate to Shantung, thus reclaiming the two provinces for Chihli.

In the meantime, Fengtien also got into trouble with the Kuominchün. Even as Fengtien troops were headed north, the Kuominchün started moving eastward toward Chihli. Although a new crisis was brewing, both sides appeared amenable to negotiation, and subsequently an agreement was reached whereby Paotung was returned to the Kuominchün in addition to the section of the Peking-Hankow railway in Chihli that had been lost to Fengtien not long before. The agreement was honored, and for a while it seemed that the crisis had subsided. Then suddenly on November 31, 1925, came news of the revolt of Kuo Sung-ling, a powerful Fengtien general. Evidence that later became accessible showed that Kuo had planned his revolt with Feng's full knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Feng's willingness to talk peace was clearly a tactical move to deceive Fengtien. As soon as Kuo's army marched north to attack the Fengtien home base, the Kuominchün marched east to attack other Fengtien units in Chihli province. For the next two or three weeks the war went well for Kuo and the Kuominchün also gained some ground in Chihli. Then the tide turned against Kuo, and in a matter of days at the end of the year, Kuo's force was totally annihilated and he was killed. The Kuominchün was left alone in the field. As a gesture to soften Fengtien's anger and to pave the way toward peace, Feng again offered to retire from politics. Shortly afterward, he went to the Soviet Union.

At about this time, another unexpected turn of events was taking place in a different quarter. During the time of the Chihli-Fengtien war in the autumn of 1925, Wu P'ei-fu was making plans to march north from Hupeh to attack Fengtien's rear. In the early part of December, some Chihli units were actually sent to Shantung province and attacked the Fengtien force in coordination with the Kuominchün. But Feng's conspiracy with Kuo angered Wu P'ei-fu

more than Fengtien's hegemonic policy. Announcing that he would "teach the traitors a lesson," Wu suddenly decided to switch sides. A rapprochement was quickly reached between Fengtien and Chihli in January 1926, by which they agreed to wage war jointly against the Kuominchün. From this point on, until the very end of the system in 1928, the Kuominchün was almost continuously at war with one or both of these actors.

At this point, the KMT leaders apparently felt strong enough to make another effort to unify the nation. On June 6, 1926, in the midst of heavy fighting in the north, the KMT formally appointed Chiang Kai-shek commander in chief of the Nationalist Revolutionary Army. The strategy of the KMT was to "attack Wu P'ei-fu, appease Sun Ch'uan-fang, and ignore Chang Tso-lin." Therefore, its first step was to attack Wu's stronghold in Wuhan. At this time, Wu was preoccupied with the offensive against the Kuominchün forces at the Nankow Pass and thought the KMT attack on his rear could easily be repulsed. The other Chihli militarist, Sun Chuan-fang, preferred observing and would not come to the rescue of his fellow Chihli militarists. By the time Wu took Nankow and returned to the south, the KMT forces had already penetrated deep into Wu's territory and laid siege to the city of Wuch'ang. Moreover, a new alliance was forged between the KMT and the Kuominchün, which received a KMT commission in September 1926.

As soon as Wu P'ei-fu's downfall was imminent, the KMT turned its strength against Sun Ch'uan-fang. In the provinces of Kiangsi, Chekiang, and Kiangsu, the KMT forces met stiff resistance from Sun's army. Furthermore, the party's internal schism in the summer of 1927 delayed progress on the battlefield. Thus, it was not until August 1927 that Sun's power was finally crushed.

In the north, the Kuominchün had never ceased fighting Fengtien. After a brief stay in the Soviet Union, Feng Yü-hsiang came back just in time to give his men the leadership they desperately needed after the Nankow campaign. After a brief period of regroupment and rest in the northwest, he started marching his troops eastward through Kansu and Shensi. In the summer of 1927, the Kuominchün was deep in Honan and was pushing Fengtien troops farther north.<sup>25</sup> In April 1927 Shansi formally joined the KMT and actively participated in the war against Fengtien. (The

other two nonessential actors, Hunan and Szechwan, had joined the KMT much earlier.) This marked the first and only time that Shansi participated in the regulatory process of the system.

In the following year, the Fengtien army and some remnants from Chihi were locked in fierce battle with the allied forces of the KMT, Kuominchün, and Shansi on the plains of northern China. By the spring of 1928 the Fengtien defense perimeter in Chihi was showing signs of crumbling. On June 3, 1928, Chang Tso-lin decided to abandon North China and started back to Manchuria. On the following day, his special train was blown up by high explosives, and Chang was killed instantly. On June 8, Shansi contingents took possession of Peking. For practical purposes, the war was over. On December 7, 1928, the new leader of Fengtien, Chang Hsiueh-liang, announced that he was relinquishing the faction's autonomous status and was returning all administrative and military authority to the Nationalist government (now located in Nanking). After twelve tumultuous years, the Chinese militarist system thus came to an end.

During the third phase, the Chinese militarists continued to act to increase their capabilities. The dynamic equilibrium of the second phase had not created a sense of complacency among the participants; on the contrary, it reinforced their belief that only force would prevail. The phenomenal expansion of the Kuominchün between 1924 and 1925 serves as a good example. In the south, the KMT also spared no effort in expanding its army.

The utility of negotiation in resolving conflicts was undermined by the emergence of the KMT as an essential actor. Now, in the third phase of the system, the KMT developed a fixed policy, and it was capable of implementing that policy. This made the KMT less amenable to negotiate at the expense of its broader policy goals. However, the KMT used negotiation extensively in order to exploit the latent cleavages between northern militarists and their southern subordinates. Many timely defections and surrenders by provincial militarists in Hunan, Kiangsi, Fukien, and Chekiang were the results of hard bargaining with the KMT agents. Unlike northern militarists, who were more prepared to accept compromise and the status quo, the KMT tried to negotiate from a position of strength. Peaceful coexistence was not the objective of its negotiation—terms of surrender or collaboration were the objectives.

However, in the earlier part of the phase, when some conflicts still concerned the northern militarists only, such as the Fengtien-Chihi conflicts in the Yangtze valley and the Fengtien-Kuomin-chün conflicts in Chihi, negotiations were still used to prevent war, and they generally succeeded in at least delaying the outbreak of war for a considerable period of time.

During this phase, the inclination to fight rather than miss an opportunity to increase capabilities was obvious. The two Fengtien-Chihi wars, the Fengtien-Kuomin-chün war, and even the KMT-Fengtien war were all examples of this aspect of balance-of-power behavior.

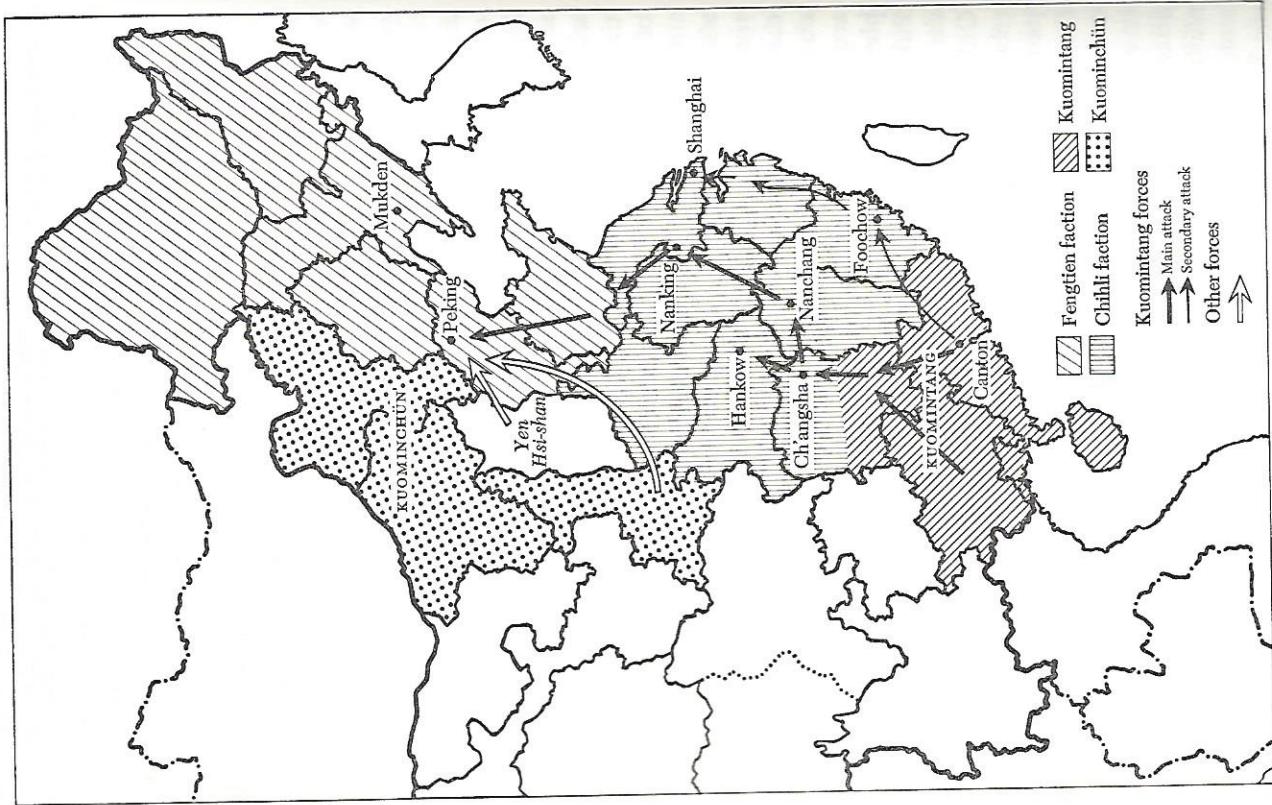
However, there was less of an inclination to spare essential actors from elimination than there had been in the previous phase. In the north, Fengtien and Chihi waged war against the Kuomin-chün relentlessly, with the avowed purpose of eliminating that actor. In the south, the KMT launched its Northern Expedition with the determination that all other actors in the system, essential and nonessential, should be eliminated. There was no question of stopping short of the realization of this policy goal.

Opposition to coalitions or hegemonic actors was completely abandoned in this phase. In the two Fengtien-Chihi conflicts in 1925, Chihi had to face Fengtien alone, the main reason being that the Kuomin-chün, the actor most qualified to render assistance, was preoccupied with managing the vast territories it had just acquired. Thus, for a period of about one year, there occurred a phenomenon of parallel expansion: Fengtien along the Tientsin-Pukow railway to the Yangtze valley, and the Kuomin-chün along the Peking-Suiyuan railway into the northwestern part of China. Only minor incidents took place between these two actors; their relations on the whole remained cordial, both actors avoiding major clashes with each other because there was much to be done in their respective areas. In a sense, there was a race between them, each attempting to conquer as much territory as possible within its own sphere of influence while respecting the right of the other actor to do the same. To reciprocate for the Kuomin-chün's stand-offishness in the Fengtien-Chihi conflicts, Fengtien adopted the same attitude with regard to the military campaigns conducted by the Kuomin-chün in Honan, Shensi, and Kansu. It is difficult to decide which of these two actors was hegemonic—it is likely that both tried to be. But the fact remains that the Kuomin-chün was

far weaker than Fengtien and had much to lose by neglecting the general trend toward imbalance in the system.

But the Kuominchün's neglect of its responsibility constituted only half of the problem. Equally important was the attitude of Chihli. Would Chihli have wanted to ally with the Kuominchün if the latter had offered to do so? The answer is no. The history of this phase shows that as soon as Fengtien and the Kuominchün reached a saturation point in their expansionist policies, they came into conflict with each other. At this time, Wu P'ei-fu's position was still to march north and attack Fengtien. Then came the revolt of Kuo Sung-jin and the outbreak of Fengtien-Kuominchün war in the north. At this juncture, Wu changed his position, reached an understanding with Chang Tso-lin and turned to attack the Kuominchün, which had attempted to win his cooperation. The Kuominchün released T'sao K'un from house arrest, deposed Tuan Ch'i-jui as regent, and invited Wu to express his opinion on how to form a new national government. Yet Wu was unmoved by these goodwill gestures. This incident bore special significance because it was the first time in the Chinese system that an aggressive alliance was concluded. The hegemonic actor no longer stood alone. On the contrary, the weaker actor was forced to stand alone and fight two enemies. This was a serious departure from the balance-of-power model and nearly brought about the decimation of the Kuominchün.

This incident also revealed the limited utility of information. As in the previous period, the flow of information (among the northern militarists at least) was not impaired, but the injection of personality factors into the operation of the system was new. Intense personal hatred of treachery and doubledealing had made some actors view others as unacceptable allies. The vindictiveness of Wu P'ei-fu finally drove the Kuominchün into the arms of the KMT and precipitated the evolution of two permanent alliances: the KMT and Kuominchün against Fengtien and Chihli. The gradual transition of the Kuominchün into an ideological actor made this alliance pattern all the more irrevocable. Flexibility of alignment, which was so essential to the balancing of the system, was now destroyed. At this point, the struggle for power had become more and more a struggle between different personalities and different kinds of sociopolitical orders. The KMT and the Kuomin-



Northern Expedition, 1926-1928

chün viewed "warlord" rule as fundamentally feudalistic, as an anachronism not to be tolerated in the age of nationalism and modernization. Fengtien and Chihli viewed the KMT and the Kuominchün as "reds" and destroyers of traditional values. They no longer desired to keep the system going, because they no longer had a common frame of reference within the system. A balance-of-power system thus became impossible.

The realization of the impossibility of coexistence with the KMT was perceived by the other militarists too late. Several factors contributed to the militarists' self-deception about the KMT, the first being the lateness of the KMT's rise to substantial power. The northern militarists ignored the KMT for quite some time, partly because it had been a weak actor. This record of weakness proved to be an asset to the KMT in the sense that it gave the northern factors a sense of false security. In addition, geographical barriers protected it from easy access from the north and, as a consequence, the northern militarists turned their attention to more urgent business, i.e. against each other. Their complacency caused them to fail to revise their estimation of KMT strength. Even after being furnished with information about the KMT's force-building efforts, they still refused to be alarmed. The fact that Wu P'ei-fu chose to stay in the northern battlefield against the Kuominchün while his home base was being attacked by the KMT was partly a reflection of Wu's low opinion of the KMT troops. While the KMT was fully engaged in Hupeh, Sun Ch'u-an-fang simply stood on the sidelines and watched his fellow Chihlians being routed. It can be argued that even while the KMT was making progress in its Northern Expedition, there was still much evidence to lend credence to the northern militarists' low opinion of its capabilities. For one thing, the KMT had within its ranks an assortment of local militarists who were a liability rather than an asset to the Expedition. In addition, although the party had been reorganized, it was not free of factional strife and the coalition between the KMT and the CCP proved to be less solid than it looked. Even in the midst of victory, the KMT revealed its internal weaknesses. The factional feud between Nanking and Wuhan nearly split the party asunder; for a while, it raised serious doubts that the KMT force was capable of holding the line of defense at all, not to mention advancing. Another critical element that contributed to the northerners'

misconceptions about the KMT was its previous record of flexible alignment policies. That record mitigated the militarists' suspicion about its ideological intransigence and led them to believe that the KMT was, after all, not fundamentally different from themselves.

Thus, the KMT's record of weakness succeeded in conditioning the northern militarists to entertain a highly distorted view of the KMT. That view remained unchanged even after the dominant power within the KMT had shifted from the local militarists to party functionaries and a new crop of military leaders. Therefore, when the northern militarists were finally compelled to confront the KMT, they failed to devise new approaches to cope with the new threat.

Even toward the close of the phase, the northern militarists could not escape the KMT trap of "divide and conquer." The KMT strategy of splitting the Chihli forces was rewarded because Sun Ch'u-an-fang believed that either the KMT force would be defeated by Wu P'ei-fu or, if Wu was defeated, the KMT would be satisfied with territorial gains and would be willing to negotiate. And it was not until Sun Ch'u-an-fang had been severely mauled that Fengtien began to be concerned with the growing KMT threat and to take steps toward military cooperation with Sun. By that time it was too late. In this sense, the fact that those actors subscribing to supranational organizing principles were not constrained was decisive in the destruction of the system.

In addition, the KMT's adherence to "supranational (suprafaction) organizing principles" not only made the actors' alignment pattern more rigid but also expanded the number of participants in the political process to an unprecedented extent. The KMT did this through playing the role of champion of Chinese nationalism and anti-imperialism. Both these themes had been present in Chinese politics for some time, but the nonideological militarists were never totally committed to them. In contrast, the KMT not only engaged more heavily in nationalistic and anti-imperialistic propaganda; it also was able to act more aggressively by virtue of its superior ideological and organizational weapons. Consequently, the KMT (with the CCP) quickly established its leadership position in the Nationalist movement. It helped organize labor unions, encouraged a militant attitude in bargaining with foreign capital,

ists, gave material assistance to workers on strike, and organized boycotts of foreign goods.

These concrete demonstrations of the KMT's dedication to nationalism enabled it to mobilize a large reserve of hitherto untapped human resources against both foreign enemies and militarists. The injection of the power of the people into the political system confused and threatened the rule of the militarists from within and below, and the militarists lacked both the intellectual sophistication to understand it and the physical force to subdue it. In time, the mounting popular support made a significant contribution to the KMT's political ambition. The most dramatic example occurred in Shanghai, where the people openly rebelled against the ruling militarist. In other areas, the people achieved valuable results by spreading rumors, obstructing communications, paralyzing the economy, or simply by passive noncooperation with the militarists. Hence, the rise of the KMT as an essential actor was significantly aided by the response of a hitherto apathetic people to its ideological agitation.

Little need be said about the question of permitting defeated national actors to reenter the system in this phase. Had the northern militarists won the war, the existing system might have been preserved a while longer. But this was not possible when the KMT was victorious. The KMT had set out to destroy the system not only to satisfy its ambition for power but also—and more important—to fulfill its ideological mission. The KMT's victory thus also spelled doom to the system.

#### *Conclusion*

It seems appropriate at the end of this work to try to explain why the Chinese militarist system lasted so short a time. In addition to the new factors introduced in the third phase, there were several other factors inherent in the very structure of the Chinese system that I believe hastened the end of the system.

Foremost was the common aspiration (and expectation) that the nation should eventually be unified. This national aspiration made the militarists acutely aware of the transient character of their regimes and made them feel an intrinsic insecurity. None of them had any illusions about the possibility of perpetuating the status quo; some form of unification would have to occur. Consequently,

what concerned them most was to ensure that the form of unification that occurred was not inimical to their personal interests. Better still, they desired to unify the country under their own control. Thus, whenever one faction became stronger than the others, it was only natural for it to try to gain a position of predominance in the system as the logical first step toward national unification. Although the central government had long been defunct, the hegemonic actor was always anxious to control it, since this control would enormously enhance the actor's prestige and strengthen its claims to be the sole ruler of the nation.

Thus, it was quite logical for Tuan Chi'jui to become the first militarist to espouse the policy of unification by force, when his suddenly increased capabilities gave him a superior position in the system. He was defeated, but his aspiration was inherited by Chihli in 1922 and Fengtien in 1924. The role of the deviant essential actor became a constant feature of the Chinese system, although the holder of that role changed from time to time. It is true that occasional deviance in the behavior of one or more actors in a balance-of-power system is not entirely unexpected or inconsistent with equilibrium. If other actors are able to follow the rules suggested by the model, such deviance can be checked and the stability of the system maintained. But the Chinese system offered an extreme case, because it was never free from the threat of deviance by an essential actor, usually the most powerful one. This was especially true as the system moved into the third phase, in which the pace of activities among the actors in general accelerated, with one crisis following on the heels of another. Thus, the effects of continuous dysfunctional tension placed the Chinese system under more strain than a balance-of-power system can normally tolerate.

The common expectation of eventual national unification had the further consequence of removing the actors' incentive to keep other actors in the system. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that it enhanced the actors' desire to destroy the other actors and to monopolize the system.

The fact that every essential actor had this propensity to eliminate the other actors as soon as it felt capable of doing so directs our attention to the relationship between the number of actors and the general stability of the system. And here lies one of the most important causes of the system's instability. At no time were

there more than three essential actors. In the first phase, the actors were gradually coming into being; they were still only loosely organized by the end of that phase. The essential actors of that phase were Anhwei, Chihi, and Fengtien. In the second phase, Chihi and Fengtien were unquestionably essential actors. Anhwei probably was still an essential actor, although it was greatly reduced in strength. In the third phase, Fengtien and Chihi still stood at the head of the list. The Kuominchün was strong for a while, but it was much weakened after the Nankow defeat. The KMT came fully into the picture only in 1925-26.

Thus the stability of the system was primarily predicated upon the ability and willingness of the two weaker essential actors to combine against the stronger one. Because of the fact that in a conflict situation an essential actor could expect to obtain support from only one other essential actor, any action that might be interpreted as leading to the increase of one actor's capabilities to the detriment of others was a cause for grave concern. Such a system placed a premium on promptness of counteractions; delay or moderation might be very costly or even disastrous to an actor because of the serious limitation on potential allies. If the actor did not move quickly enough to combine with the only other available essential actor to oppose the third, it might find itself opposed by an alliance of the other two. Given the roughly equal capabilities of the three actors in the Chinese system, the outcome of an alliance of two against one would be a foregone conclusion.

From a superficial, arithmetic point of view, it would seem that the system had a good prospect of enduring because at any time there were more actors interested in preserving the system than in destroying it. At a given time there was only one actor harboring hegemonic aspirations to upset the balance. The two weaker essential actors were, at least temporarily, in favor of the status quo, and nearly all nonessential actors strongly favored the status quo because they wanted to avoid being overrun by the hegemonic essential actor. But the numerical majority was an unreal one, for the nonessential actors were by no means anxious to assume their share of responsibility. In fact, the Chinese system can be divided into two subsystems. In one subsystem, composed of the essential actors, much interaction took place across the actors' boundaries. In the other subsystem, involving the nonessential actors, relatively

little interaction took place. Whereas the essential actors were understandably eager to interact with the nonessential actors, either to conquer them or to obtain their assistance, the nonessential actors deliberately tried to give the others a wide berth. The low level of participation of the nonessential actors in the regulatory process meant that for practical purposes the Chinese system was built on the support of the small number of essential actors. Within the subsystem of action among the three essential actors, one might have expected that in any conflict between two essential actors, the third uncommitted essential actor would play the role of the "balancer" in the system. In the Chinese system, however, the role of balancer was highly untenable. Hypothetically, a balancer should possess certain qualifications. Its territory should be geographically removed from the core area of potential hostilities and relatively immune from attack. It should not be subject to the direct and immediate impact of boundary changes of other actors, but should be primarily concerned with the overall balance among them. It should possess a highly mobile and compact military force capable of achieving quick offensive victory but unfit for long-term occupation of alien territory. Such an actor would always be an attractive potential ally for others, while its nonaggressive nature would allay their fear. In addition, it should have easy access to the area of potential danger and have secure supply lines. The desirability of these qualifications was shown by Great Britain in the nineteenth century.

In the Chinese system, however, all essential actors were land-based, and they often had intermingled territories. Geographical deachment was impossible. Contiguity created border problems that drew actors into disputes, sometimes against their own wishes. Although nearly all essential actors possessed a portion of China's coastline, none of them successfully developed a naval force that would allow it to intervene in a noncontiguous area. In addition, the three-actor system itself placed a heavy burden on the method of "balancing." Since the number of potential allies was restricted, a decision had to be made prior to attack. If one actor played the observer, the other two would be left in suspense. Such an act would be viewed as opportunistic and dangerous by both antagonists and hence intolerable. Both antagonists had an active interest in pressuring the third actor to clarify its position.

Furthermore, it is doubtful that any actor would have been willing to play the role of "balancer" consistently even if it had been possible. Voluntary retreat after balance had been restored was difficult in several ways. First, the balancer would be confronted with a continuous need for balancing, which required never-failing vigilance in a system with so few actors. Second, the balancer had to forgo any chance to augment its own capabilities at the expense of the defeated actor. In contrast, the possible gains from joining an alliance with another essential actor were more concrete and substantial, since such an alliance stood a very good chance of winning. Under these circumstances, the chances were that an actor would rather be a partner than a balancer.

A still further factor that discouraged any actor from playing the role of the balancer in a three-actor system was that the balancer had a very short life span. The only force that could conceivably stop the winner of a conflict from eliminating the defeated actor was the active intervention of the balancer. To do so, however, was only to fight for a losing cause. An attempt to revive a defeated actor would only drag the balancer into a new war against the winner. While the outcome of the new war might go either way, one thing was certain—the balancer had failed in its balancing.

These factors caused the actors to prefer compensation (in territory or other resources) as the formula of settlement between victorious actors after a war. The merit of this formula was that it enabled the actors to base their security on increases in their own capabilities rather than to depend on a balancer's impartiality. The defect was that it entailed almost insuperable difficulties in objectively assessing the value of the capabilities of the defeated actor and agreeing on a fair distribution to the victors. The wars of 1920 and 1924 both ended in the partitioning of the defeated territories by the actors in the winning alliance. Despite the effort to split the spoils as evenly as possible, sharp clashes of interest immediately followed, which led to new antagonism between the victors.

In the Chinese system, the sole foundation of an actor's power and legitimacy was the physical force it commanded. If that force was destroyed, the territory previously under the actor's influence would suddenly become a power vacuum. This phenomenon both restricted the policy alternatives available to the victors and en-

couraged their ambitions. The defeated essential actor could not regain its previous status without active assistance from the victors. The victors thus could either show self-restraint and rely for security on the highly unstable three-actor balance-of-power system or follow a policy of self-expansion by compensation, which promised sizable immediate gains, and rely for their security on their own capabilities. The militarists' choice was obvious.

Our examination of these factors has shed some light on the brief duration of the Chinese system. Although at one time or another the system exhibited certain characteristics analogous to a balance-of-power system, the system was always under pressure to deviate from this and move toward a unified nation-state system. As long as the actors' capabilities were generally low and as long as the hegemonic actor or actors were in the minority, the militarist system might have survived. But increases in all the actors' capabilities, the rise of ideological actors, the widening of the gulf between information and reality, and finally the superiority of the hegemonic actors over the status quo actors (when all the non-essential actors joined the hegemonic drive) converged to create strains greater than the Chinese system was capable of sustaining. The system then quickly broke down.

A final word should be said about the aftermath of the system. The fact that this study stops at 1928 in no way implies that the politics of militarism terminated in that year. In fact, militarism remained a dominant feature of Chinese politics for a long time afterward. As the Northern Expedition proceeded, the KMT was compelled to absorb en bloc many militarists into its organization. Because of negotiations involved with their joining the KMT, they managed quite successfully to retain their own military power. Consequently, militarism continued as an important aspect of the Nationalist government between 1928 and 1949. And yet it would be an error to view militarism under Nationalist rule as a mere extension of early Republican militarism. While it is true that Nationalist militarism cannot be adequately understood without prior knowledge of early Republican militarism, it is doubtful to this author whether these two types of militarism can be profitably analyzed within the same theoretical construct. This is the case because the power relationships and operational code that guided militarist politics before 1928 were significantly altered after that

date. While it is out of the scope of the present study to discuss the political system of the Nationalist era, some crucial differences can be suggested.

First, the composition of the military elite and the geographical distribution of power had shifted dramatically. During the early Republican period, the Peiyang group reigned supreme. The Northern Expedition effectively demolished the forces under Chih-li and Anhwei commands. Although the Fengtien forces were successfully withdrawn to Manchuria with only minor losses, they were dealt a shattering blow by the surprise Japanese invasion in 1931. Of all northern militarists, only Yen Hsi-shan and Feng Yu-hsiang remained politically active.

In contrast, the Northern Expedition actually aided many southern militarists in expanding their geographical control and political power. Not only did the Kwangsi and Kwantung groups become major political actors; even Hunan and Szechwan militarists made significant political gains. Thus, in rough terms, the political center stage had shifted from the northern plains to the Yangtze valley. This is shown by the fact that all major politico-military struggles between 1928 and 1937, with the exception of the 1930–31 war of the central plains, had their main battlefields south of the Yangtze River. The emergence of a Communist movement of armed struggle only further increased the strategic importance of South China.

Second, the pattern of confrontation during the early Republican period was quite flexible. Any of the essential actors could be, and in fact were, challenged militarily whenever pursuing a hegemonic policy. The dynamics of the balance-of-power system created a musical-chairs effect whereby the essential actors took turns being the target of a coalition of militarists. After 1928, the pattern of confrontation became virtually fixed. Each military crisis pitted the party army of Chiang Kai-shek against a coalition of militarists.

To meet these chronic challenges, Chiang Kai-shek devoted more effort than had any previous Peiyang militarist to training his forces to perfection. During this process, military modernization proceeded far more quickly than it had in the previous period.

Third, during the early Republican period, the militarist groups remained fairly stable structurally over time. It was analytically possible to identify the hard core of the various military factions.

Contrary to popular belief, the main threat to the organizational viability of these military factions was not frequent defections by leading members. Defections were certainly a recurrent problem during the formative stage of the factions (1916–20), when most militarists were engaged in a search for their factional identities. Once factional lines were drawn, however, they remained quite firm. After 1920, the only major case of defection occurred in 1924 when Feng Yu-hsiang turned against Chihli. Rather, the major threat to the military factions was the failure to impose strict discipline and to implement serious training programs, both failures being the direct result of the leading militarists' own professional inadequacies. Therefore, as we discussed in the main body of this book, while defections by minor subordinates certainly occurred throughout the entire period, crucial military tests were failed because the main units exhibited little propensity to fight hard. Characteristically, the commanders of these units lost power with their faction; they were not rewarded by the victor, as should have been the case with defection.

The complexion of military confrontation changed drastically during the Nationalist era, and this was nowhere more visible than in the number of defections by leading militarists that occurred during the midst of fighting. There was not a single civil war between 1928 and 1937 that did not produce a defection of major proportions. This leads us to the conclusion that the sources of solidarity of militarist groups and their operational norms had changed.

This new "game" was further convoluted by the intrusion of the Japanese army in China after 1931, and particularly after 1937, when a full-scale national war was initiated. For most militarists, the strategic calculations were rendered infinitely more complicated by the need to cope with two exacting tasks simultaneously: to work for the preservation of one's politico-military power within China vis-à-vis other contenders in the context of waging a successful war of national resistance against a foreign enemy.

The above observations are offered as possible lines along which one might extend the inquiry into militarism in modern Chinese politics into another time frame. Further research to explore in depth these suggested connections and contrasts would be a challenging and inviting task.

## Appendices

## APPENDIX A

## Political and Military Leaders, 1916-1928

<i>Heads of State</i>		
Official title	Name	Tenure in office
President	Yüan Shih-k'ai	March 1912-June 1916
President	Li Yüan-hung	June 1916-July 1917
Acting President	Feng Kuo-chang	July 1917-Oct. 1918
President	Hsü Shih-ch'ang	Oct. 1918-June 1922
President	Li Yüan-hung	June 1922-June 1923
Regent (chief executive)	Ts'ao K'un	Oct. 1923-Nov. 1924
Ta-yüan-shuai	Tuan Chi-jui	Nov. 1924-April 1926
	Chang Tso-lin	June 1927-June 1928

<i>Prime Ministers and the Tenure of Their Cabinets</i>		
Name	Tenure	Name
Tuan Ch'i-jui	April 22, 1916-June 29, 1916	Wang Ch'ung-hui
Tuan Ch'i-jui	June 29, 1916-May 22, 1917	Wang Ta-hsich
Li Ching-hsi	June 24, 1917-July 1, 1917	Chang Shao-tseng
Tuan Ch'i-jui	July 1, 1917-Nov. 22, 1917	Sun Pao-ch'i
Wang Shih-chen	Nov. 30, 1917-Feb. 20, 1918	Yen Hui-ch'ing
Tuan Ch'i-jui	March 23, 1918-Oct. 10, 1918	Huang Fu
Ts'ien Nun-hsün	Dec. 20, 1918-June 13, 1919	Tuan Ch'i-jui
Chin Yün-p'eng	Nov. 5, 1919-July 2, 1920	Hsü Shih-yin
Chin Yün-p'eng	Aug. 9, 1920-May 10, 1921	Chia Teh-yao
Chin Yün-p'eng	May 10, 1921-Dec. 18, 1921	Yen Hui-ch'ing
Liang Shih-i	Dec. 24, 1921-May 5, 1922	Ku Wei-chüan
Yen Hui-ch'ing	June 11, 1922-Aug. 5, 1922	P'an Fu
T'ang Shao-i	Aug. 5, 1922-Sept. 19, 1922	