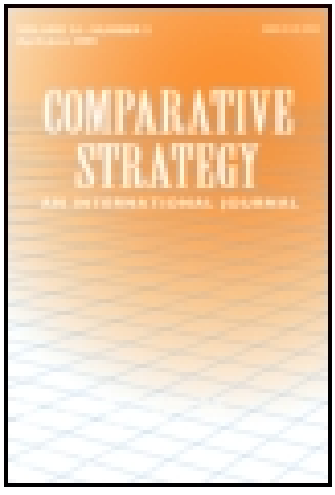

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Civil—Military relations in the people's republic of China

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Civil–Military Relations in the People's Republic of China

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Abstract Confusion in the West regarding the exact nature of civil–military relations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) could lead to significant problems for decision-makers. Unlike the United States, there is a great deal of movement between civil and military offices in the PRC. Due to this fluid situation, it is difficult to anticipate an individual's behavior simply by discovering his or her position in the bureaucracy. "Where you sit," so far as the PRC is concerned, is not "where you stand."

I. Introduction

It has often been assumed that civil–military relations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) reflect in a rough way the military/political separation one finds in Western nations. The contention between discrete "military" and "party" factions is often seen to define the power configuration in Beijing. Indeed, this perspective is given considerable support from Mao Zedong's classic statement of the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese military. "Political power," Mao said in 1938, "grows out of the barrel of a gun . . .

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the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the party."[1]

As a normative prescription for civilian control of the military, Mao's statement sets forth a philosophy with which few will disagree. Yet as a description of the actual configuration of civil–military relations in the People's Republic of China, the statement is misleading. And in setting forth only two possibilities for civil–military interaction—i.e., that either the Party will control the military or the military will control the Party—Mao's phraseology improperly excludes other possibilities.

This paper argues that because many Chinese Communist leaders have held high-ranking positions in both military and nonmilitary institutions and due to the simultaneous membership of virtually all high-ranking military leaders in the CCP as well as the traditional involvement of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in many areas of society that Western analysts tend to consider the proper sphere of civil institutions, it is inaccurate to posit a clear-cut distinction between civil and military institutions in the PRC. Civil–military relations in China are best characterized not in terms of the politics of confrontation between the two institutions, as Mao Zedong's statement implies, but as a process of coalition politics among factions within each that cut across institutional lines.

II. Organization and Staffing of Civil and Military Institutions in the PRC

The particular manner in which the Chinese military grew and developed in relation to the CCP and, later, to the state apparatus, has rendered the boundaries among them quite porous.

One factor contributing to this porosity is the existence of a substantial number of members of the Chinese elite who have held high-ranking positions in both military and nonmilitary institutions. A high percentage of the early leaders of the CCP had had little or no formal military education. Indeed, many Chinese Communist leaders were at first skeptical that a formal military organization was needed. Young revolutionaries tended to associate standing armies with the taint of warlordism. They also

believed that to rely on formally constituted armies would downgrade the role of the spontaneous uprising of the masses in bringing about a Marxist revolution. Following the failure of several uprisings, none distinguished by a very high degree of spontaneity, there was a reappraisal of the value of military expertise. The Red Army, as it was then called, was founded in 1927.

Military expertise was at first in short supply. Chu De[2] and Ye Jianying, two of the ten men who were later honored with the title of marshal, had attended Yunnan Military Academy. Three others, Lin Biao, Lo Ruiqing, and Xu Xiangqian, attended the Whampoa Military Academy which had been established with Soviet help to provide officers for the Kuomintang (KMT) and CCP. The military was not necessarily a first choice of career for many who eventually came to believe that military training was the best way to further the cause of revolution. Xu Xiangqian, for example, attended normal school; after graduation, he became a primary school teacher in his native Shanxi province.

He Long began his military career as a successful juvenile delinquent. Joining a bandit group at age thirteen, he proved a talented opium smuggler and at one point, before allying with the CCP, ruled western Hunan province. Liu Bocheng served with a regional army in Sichuan prior to his conversion to communism. Peng Dehuai, orphaned as a child, had virtually no formal education of any sort and joined the army of his native Hunan province while scarcely a teenager. Marshal Chen Yi, a graduate of Beijing University's College of Law and Commerce, later participated in a work-study program in France and served as an ironworker there. Nie Rongzhen, of wealthy peasant background, had studied engineering in France and natural science in Belgium, though he later briefly attended the Red Army University in Moscow.

A larger number of other CCP leaders with distinguished military careers acquired their expertise on the job or, at best, were given short courses at the "Resist Japan" military academy in Yanan. General Yang Yong, for example, received his first military training after joining a guerrilla band in Hunan, and Feng Baizhu, a CCP organizer in his native Hainan Island, received

such training after being ordered by his Party superiors to organize a Peasants' Self-Defense Army.

Before the liberation from the Japanese, political and military power in communist-held areas were closely fused and leaders, whether they had had prior military training or not, had responsibilities for a wide variety of military, political, and economic duties. This fusion of political and economic power also characterized the immediate post-liberation period. From 1949 through 1952, the country was divided into six Military Administrative Regions, many of whose leading members held high ranks in both Party and army. With the conversion of Military Administrative Committees to Administrative Committees in 1952, and their complete abolition two years later, many former military leaders assumed leading positions in Party and state organs. First Party Secretaries with military experience were, and still seem to be, particularly esteemed in border areas or in other parts of the country where the Party feels there is resistance to its rule.

In certain cases, the same person has held simultaneously the position of First Party Secretary, military region or military district commander, and First Political Commissar of the military region or district. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, this was true of Ulanhu in Inner Mongolia, of Zhang Guohua in Tibet, and of Wang Enmao in Xinjiang. All three held the rank of general, although their post-1949 duties included, and continued to include, many other nonmilitary responsibilities. Ulanhu, for example, served as head of the Nationalities Affairs Committee of the State Council and, after his post-Cultural Revolution rehabilitation, became the head of the Party Central Committee's United Front Work Department. Wang served on the credentials committees of several Party congresses, on delegations relevant to animal husbandry, and in other, similar capacities. Zhang carried out equally varied responsibilities.

There has also been a certain amount of alternation between military and civilian careers. Perhaps the prime exemplar of this is Wei Guoqing, whose pre-1949 military career was followed by selection for the governorship and First Party Secretary position in Guangxi province. Wei later became First Party Secretary in

neighboring Guangdong province; shortly after Deng Xiaoping's second rehabilitation, Wei relinquished his First Party Secretary position to become head of the General Political Department (GPD) of the PLA. Interestingly, his successor, Yu Qiuli, also returned to military service after an absence of many years.[3]

While such alternation between military and civilian duties is not the norm, similar career patterns have occurred often enough, and at a high enough level, to mute the distinctions between the military and civilian leaderships.

A second factor contributing to the porosity of boundaries between the military and the Party is the membership of virtually all high-ranking Chinese military leaders in the CCP. Indeed, given the highly political role that has traditionally been accorded the Chinese Communist army and hence the need for absolute loyalty to the Party's wishes, it would be surprising if this overlap in memberships between Party and army were *not* the case. Mao's statement, quoted above, that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun is followed by a seldom quoted paragraph that is germane:

> Yet, having guns, we can create Party organizations, as witness the powerful Party organizations which the Eighth Route Army has created in northern China. We can also create cadres, create schools, create culture, create mass movements. Everything in Yanan has been created by having guns. All things grow out of the barrel of a gun. According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the chief component of state power.[4]

The Red Army, later to be renamed the PLA, was established as the military arm of the Party and conceived of as internal to the Party rather than as an entity separate from and competing with the CCP. When the army was founded in 1927, the Party had suffered a series of disastrous defeats and seemed to be on the verge of extinction. The newly-formed army and the re-formed Party developed symbiotically and it is probable that the Party would not have succeeded to the extent it did had it not had this sort of relationship with the military.

In addition to nearly all high-ranking military leaders being members of the CCP, the organizational intertwining of Party

and military is further ensured by the Party network within the military. Party committees exist at army, division, and regimental levels; battalions and companies have Party "branches" that serve the same function. The leaders of these groups are typically political commissars. They countersign military orders and are responsible for personnel matters, morale, and discipline.[5]

This system is supervised by the leading military organ within the Party, the Central Committee's Military Commission. It is typically composed of between six and fourteen members, all with extensive military experience, and exercises its responsibilities for Party work in the military through its political arm, the General Political Department of the PLA. The question may be asked whether the Military Commission is the instrument of the Party within the PLA or the instrument of the PLA within the Party. In fact, due to the virtually complete overlap of its personnel, it is able to perform both functions.

The PLA has progressively smaller percentages of Party members in its lower ranks. However, the military has been granted a higher quota of Party memberships than any other segment of Chinese society,[6] probably in order to further ensure its loyalty to the CCP. One's opportunities for social mobility are considerably enhanced by joining the Party: better job prospects, faster promotions, and easier access to travel permits are among the benefits accruing to Party membership. Hence, young people often join the PLA to increase their chances of joining the Party and, if successful, may stay in the PLA because Party membership betters their chances of rising within the military hierarchy. The result is a situation in which the overlap between Party and army memberships at the lower end of the PLA hierarchy, although not as complete as it is at the higher end, is nonetheless greater than at the grassroots level in other segments of Chinese society.

A third factor contributing to the porosity of the boundaries between Party and army in China is the involvement of the military in a broad range of social and economic programs that would in the West be regarded as the responsibilities of civilian organizations. Mao Zedong's statement on the usefulness of the

army in creating Party organizations, cadres, schools, and mass movements, quoted above, gives some idea of the many tasks performed by the military during the Chinese civil war. The army was, and continues to be, expected to be as self-sufficient as possible. In the years prior to 1949, self-sufficiency was construed to include soldiers' responsibility for raising their own food, building their own barracks, and even knitting and mending their own socks.

During the early years of the PRC, military units played important roles in the various agrarian reform and mass mobilization movements, set up state farms, dug irrigation ditches, repaired farm machinery, established and managed factories and other industrial enterprises, and helped to restore the nation's rail system. In remote areas, PLA work teams carried out propaganda functions, including performing economic tasks and cultural activities designed to win the loyalties of the local people, and conducted investigations on such topics as terrain and natural resources.

As the CCP's rule became more firmly established, some of the PLA's earlier tasks were no longer necessary and others were partially or wholly relinquished to other, nonmilitary, organizations. Still, the PLA remains firmly enmeshed in many nonmilitary spheres of Chinese life. One of the more salient of these is the PRC's railway system. Due to the indifferent condition of many of China's roads, particularly those in outlying areas, and to shortages of serviceable trucks, the army relies heavily on the nation's rail network for troop transfer and logistical support. However, the PLA's connections with the nation's railroads go far beyond military transport requirements. Twelve divisions, probably over 100,000 people, are estimated to belong to the Railway Engineering Corps,[7] which surveys and builds new rail lines, maintains existing tracks, and is responsible for the security of the country's rail net.

There is considerable overlap between the duties of the PLA's Railway Engineering Corps and the State Council's Ministry of Railways. In fact, prior to the Cultural Revolution the same individual headed both organizations, presumably in order to minimize the friction between the two, although the division of

responsibility is unclear. One source speculates that the ministry is primarily concerned with operating the rail system and producing rolling stock, while the military builds and maintains the track.[8]

The PLA also remains active in constructing civilian housing, factories, and hospitals. It continues to maintain its own farms, and to aid civilian agriculture at harvest times. The PLA is also on call for emergency duties in times of floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. In the spring of 1983, the army completed a major construction project to divert the waters of the Luan River to the city of Tianjin. The diversion tunnel, said to be the largest in China, is expected to alleviate Tianjin's chronic water shortage.[9]

The lean military budgets of the past few years have resulted in substantial unused capacity in military defense industries, and many of the PLA's factories have been converted to the production of consumer goods for the civilian sector. These include items as diverse as washing machines, television sets, and underwear; their net worth may be estimated at upwards of forty percent of the production of the defense industry.[10]

The military also exercises considerable influence over the nation's cultural life. The cultural affairs division of the PLA's General Political Department includes artists, dance troupes, poets, novelists, playwrights, and movie producers. Their works are not confined to military audiences, but are commonly available to readers and theatergoers throughout China. For example, *Bitter Love,* a controversial play about an intellectual's unrequited love for his country, was written by a PLA cultural worker, as was a widely publicized series of poems that attacked corruption at the higher levels of the military.

With the PLA so heavily involved in so many sectors of Chinese society, it is scarcely surprising that the army leadership feels entitled to express opinions on policy-making in areas that would be considered taboo in the West. If, for example, the PRC leadership is contemplating a loosening of censorship over literature and the arts, its decision will affect not just the country's writers and artists as individuals, but the output of the PLA's

cultural affairs division as well, and the content of the division's output will in turn have repercussions for the morale of the troops and the moral and ethical standards of society at large.

The net result of these structural and developmental factors on the PRC's civil and military institutions has been

- the emergence of an elite group, many of whose members are skilled in both civil and military roles.
- the existence of a military leadership whose members are simultaneously Party members, many of whose memberships in the Party predate their military careers.
- a military whose responsibilities cross other functional areas of society and who therefore has a legitimate interest in the proper functioning of these areas, as indeed members of these areas have a legitimate interest in the proper functioning of the PLA.

III. Civil–Military Coalitions

The effect of the interaction of the factors outlined above has been a blurring of distinctions between civil and military functions which often makes it difficult to distinguish one from another. The same writer, in articles that appeared in the same magazine eight weeks apart, described Deng Xiaoping first as "one of the oldest surviving veterans" of the PLA whose "primacy in the military hierarchy is not questioned today,"[11] and later, as the probable victim of "a bloodless coup backed by the People's Liberation Army."[12] Similarly, Wei Guoqing has been described as both an army man and a civilian.[13] In truth, each is both, as are many other members of the PRC elite.

To say that the boundaries between civil and military spheres are indistinct is not to say that no boundaries exist between the two. However interlocking their hierarchies may be at the top, the overlap between Party and military can never be complete. The complexity of the tasks of government necessitates a division of labor among various governing institutions, and some degree of institutional autonomy is inherent in this division of

labor. Certainly the PLA has its own corporate interests, involving such matters as its budget, the morale of its troops, and the status of the PLA both within China and in international opinion.

But, given the factors discussed above, it would be erroneous to cast these interests in terms of the Party versus the gun. Although political power may well grow out of the barrel of a gun, the barrel of the gun is neither exclusively military nor exclusively Party, but a hybrid of the two. This hybrid nature also characterizes the identity of the institution that controls the barrel of the gun. If, for example, a high-ranking military officer who is simultaneously a member of the Party's Politburo takes a strong stand against a certain agricultural policy, is he doing so as a representative of the military—in which case perhaps the gun is attempting to control the Party—or as a Party member who happens to be wearing a uniform—in which case the gun is not attempting to control the Party. In many cases, there are apt to be a mixture of motives. The speaker may perceive the agricultural policy he objects to as doing harm to the corporate interests of the PLA as well as running counter to established Party doctrine. Alternatively, he may perceive military interests and ideological purity as running counter to each other and have reached his decision through weighing what he perceives as the greater good against the lesser evil—i.e., the policy will do more harm to the ideological fabric of society than it will help the interests of the PLA.

In theory, the question of divided loyalties should not exist. The primacy of the Party is undisputed, and its position as supreme arbiter is unquestioned. Yet in reality one does not have a united Party. The official press, in what have become rather ritualized pleas for unity in the Party, frequently rails against leftism, rightism, the "whatever" faction, the "wind" faction, and the like. Differences of opinion have existed, and continue to exist, on a wide variety of issues, including such matters as the correct application of Marxist-Leninist theory to the Chinese context, the proper evaluation of Mao Zedong's contributions to the Chinese state, the optimum allocation of budgetary resources among competing sectors, the right degree of censorship that should be exercised over literature and art, and so forth.

All of these have implications for the military, as well as for many other institutions of society. And, as we have seen, a military leader cannot simply be assumed to favor necessarily what might seem to benefit the short-term corporate interests of the military. In noncommunist societies, a cut in the defense budget would be almost certain to be opposed by military leaders. But a situation such as China's, where military leaders are in essence Party members in uniform, may produce groups that will accept reduced defense budgets with minimal resistance because they believe that it is more important to increase the supply of consumer goods in society, or because they are convinced that it will be difficult to increase the nation's defense capabilities until the country's economic foundation has been improved first. They may be opposed by other groups within and outside the military who are equally convinced that the threat of invasion or national humiliation is great enough for defense budgets to be maintained or increased even at the expense of reducing the supply of consumer goods or the level of investment in the country's infrastructure.

Each of these groups within the military has a kindred group outside the military. The final decision on a policy issue thus becomes a matter of bargaining and coalition formation among factions that encompass the Party within the military as well as the military within the Party—and, no doubt, groups from other functional hierarchies such as economists, provincial administrators, and the like. Since the military's particular corporate specialization—a near-monopoly on the legitimate use of force—is of obvious value, Party members who have a military specialization are well represented in these coalitions. However, because the factors that cause disunity in the Party are mirrored in the military, one cannot assume that a large number of military officers in high Party positions means the dominance of the military.

This gives us a new way to analyze the civil–military relations of the PRC. For example, a leading American newspaper columnist, noting that in October 1982 twelve of the twenty-five members of the Party Politburo were "generals or men with close ties to China's Red Army," concluded that Deng's preeminence in

the PRC was "mortgaged to the military."[14] An alternative, and more accurate, explanation is that Deng has his faction within the PLA who tends to support his policies. He seeks to maintain the loyalties of this group while enlarging it at the expense of other military people and people who are members of other functional hierarchies, who do not support his policies. Deng's rivals may be assumed to be engaged in the same sort of machinations.

IV. Civil–Military Relations: Ideologues versus Professionalists

Despite Mao Zedong's words about the need for the Party to control the gun, neither he nor the left-wing ideologues in general have argued that the army should be taken out of politics. Indeed, Mao's vision was of a profoundly political military, and one which was loyal specifically to his goals. In several instances, Mao called on the army to support him personally, rather than to support a consistent ideological position, on domestic political issues. For example, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, he enjoined the PLA to "support the left," while in August of 1968, as the Cultural Revolution was winding down, Mao ordered the army into the universities to do what amounted to suppressing the left. Not all groups within the military supported these goals with equal loyalty and enthusiasm. Hence Mao utilized the Lin Biao faction of the military in the mid-1960s, when it seemed to back his goals, and allowed it to expand its power.

By 1971, when Lin's faction seemed to become too powerful and perhaps less loyal, Mao either ordered the arrest of Lin and others in his faction or acquiesced when others succeeded in doing so. Mao's reassignment of seven out of a total of eleven military region commanders in late 1973 may be seen in the same light: when Lin's faction in the military was severely weakened two years before, other factions not particularly loyal to Maoist goals became relatively stronger and had to be brought into line through a transfer of commands that removed them from the provinces that had provided them with a political base of power.

That the left-wing ideologues do not favor separating the army

from politics is scarcely surprising. What may seem more unusual is that CCP leaders whom foreign analysts usually classify as military professionalists[15]—that is, those people who have been most closely associated with training the army, arming it with more technologically advanced equipment, and introducing new strategic concepts—have been quite outspoken on domestic matters that have little direct relationship to the military per se. For example, Marshal Peng Dehuai, who took over as defense minister at the end of the Korean War and is credited with professionalizing the PLA and upgrading its weapons, was also the man who publicly criticized Mao Zedong when the Great Leap Forward that Mao had backed caused massive economic and social upheavals which endangered the lives of millions of people. Clearly this is not professionalism in Samuel Huntington's sense of the word—that is, an armed force that operates within its sphere of military competence, takes orders from a civilian leadership that is clearly differentiated from the military, and makes very little effort to influence the civilian leadership on matters that do not directly affect the military.[16]

While professionalists and ideologues have shown few differences on the matter of the military's role in politics, other issues have differentiated the two categories. Ideologues have typically given more weight to political, as opposed to technological, factors in military training, have stressed the primacy of people over weapons, and are likely to place more value on the lessons of the People's War than professionalists. It would, however, be erroneous to assume, as some have done, that there is a very clear line dividing one group definitively and for all time from the other. In fact, the weight of evidence indicates that there is a continuous spectrum of opinion on how the military should be organized and trained, and that individuals, and presumably the groups they belong to, can and do change their positions on the spectrum according to changing circumstances. One example is Lin Biao, who is generally categorized as an extreme left-wing ideologue and opponent of any sort of professionalism in the PLA. Lin got this reputation partly because he was believed to have commanded the Chinese Communist army during its early "human waves" tactics period in the Korean War, and partly

because of the radical ideological policies he became associated with during the Cultural Revolution, including espousal of slogans such as "politics are more important than weapons [in warfare]" and "put politics in command."

Yet there is another side to Lin Biao. When Marshal Peng Dehuai was dismissed as Defense Minister in 1959, following his criticism of Mao, Lin assumed the position. His job was far from easy. The devastating effects of the failure of the Great Leap Forward had taken their toll on the military. Among other problems, supplies were short and morale dangerously low.[17] There were few resources available to Lin for the rebuilding effort; the period from 1959 through 1961 is generally referred to as "the three lean years," in recognition of the hardships that characterized it. Yet by 1962 the PLA had been put back together well enough to be able to win a decisive victory against India. This was achieved by organizing and training the troops and strengthening the logistics system, and not by emphasizing people's war or guerrilla tactics.[18]

Also, in the period immediately following the Cultural Revolution, when Lin was not only Defense Minister but Mao Zedong's designated heir as well, the military budget rose at a higher rate than at any other time in the Chinese Communist era.[19] The increments were used to purchase more tanks, planes, and other war materiel, and the PLA underwent rigorous training. Lin's movement away from the sloganeering of the Cultural Revolution toward a position that more closely approaches professionalist views, along with his late 1950s shift away from tactics he had espoused during the Korean War, did not escape the notice of his enemies. After his fall from power, the official media described him as "left in appearance but right in essence," implying that the shifts he had made indicated long-standing ideological convictions that Lin had concealed for opportunistic reasons.

What is more likely, however, is that Lin's apparent about-face of the late 1950s was caused by a combination of the parlous state of the military and the economy, the deterioration of Sino–Soviet relations, and India's threatening posture with regard to the disputed Sino–Indian border. His later move from ideologue

to professionalist was almost certainly occasioned by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The invasion, and subsequent enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, wherein the USSR claimed it had the right to intervene in any state whose socialist system was endangered, had obvious applications to the PRC. Hence, Lin Biao was reacting to perceived changes in the external environment when he chose to emphasize technological and organizational elements in building up the military.

A more recent example concerns movement in the other direction, that is, of a group of high-ranking military officers moving from the professionalist to the ideological side of the spectrum. Deng Xiaoping, after his 1976 purge by leftists, took refuge in Guangdong province, where he is believed to have been protected by three high-ranking leaders with ties to that province—Ye Jianying, who was born there and is a favorite "native son," Xu Shiyou, who was at that time commander of the Canton Military Region, and Wei Guoqing, who was First Party Secretary of Guangdong as well as First Political Commissioner of the Canton Military Region. Ye, Xu, and Wei were instrumental in Deng's rehabilitation in 1977. Since Deng Xiaoping is an unabashed proponent of professionalist views, and since during the Cultural Revolution each of these three had been accused in varying degrees of being anti-leftist, it seemed reasonable to classify them as professionalists. Yet, within three years of his rehabilitation, Deng had come into conflict with all of them, the issue being his perception of their leftist views.

For example, at a PLA work conference held in mid-1978, Deng's outspokenly professionalist remarks on the need for reorganization, better discipline, military management, and attention to logistics work[20] were followed immediately by a speech by Ye Jianying noting that revolutionary political work was "the army's lifeblood" and stating flatly that "wholehearted service to the people is the sole purpose of our army."[21] Ye pointedly absented himself from several other meetings at which Deng and his supporters were well represented, and was conspicuously missing from the group of leaders who reviewed their nation's first large-scale combined military operations exercise in September 1981.[22] A journal, *Shidai de Baogao* (Report of the

Times), which was subordinate to the General Political Department (GPD) of the PLA, headed by Wei Guoqing, criticized several of Deng's policies in a manner which, like Ye's activities, could indeed be construed as leftist. And in August 1982, on the eve of the Twelfth Party Congress, the army newspaper *Jiefangjun Bao* (Liberation Army Daily), which is also subordinate to the GPD, openly objected to Deng's liberalization of censorship over literature and art.[23]

The movement of Ye,[24] Xu, and Wei from pro-Deng and pro-professionalist to anti-Deng and pro-ideological positions is again traceable to changing circumstances. Many of the reforms propounded by Deng seemed to them, and to others around them, both within the military and without, detrimental to the ethical and ideological health of Chinese society in general, and inimicable to the best interests of the PLA in particular. Deng's agricultural policies, which provided material incentives for peasants to produce more, were perceived as detrimental to the society as a whole because they run counter to Marxist-Leninist ideology and, since they make it more profitable for peasants to stay in the countryside than to join the army, and to the PLA specifically. Deng's efforts to demythologize Mao Zedong were seen as liable to provoke a crisis of confidence among the people, as the man who had been portrayed to them for so long as an infallible leader was revealed to have made serious mistakes. Within the military, this crisis of confidence would, it was feared, be reflected in weakened devotion to duty and lax discipline. The liberalization of censorship over literature and art was perceived as deleterious to the moral standards of all Chinese. But the thought of soldiers being able to read critiques of corruption within the military, or to sing love songs rather than revolutionary hymns, was considered particularly deleterious to discipline and morale.

Resistance to Deng's reforms clustered around several other issue areas. The matter of improving China's economy and its military capabilities through importing foreign technology became a source of some controversy. Its opponents, who would have preferred that China develop its own advanced technology, feared that imports would render the PRC dependent on other

countries, that the level of technology imported would be inappropriate to China's capacity to absorb it, and that other, less desirable foreign influences would accompany foreign technology into the PRC.

Yet another area of controversy centered around the degree and kind of modifications to be made in military doctrine and strategy, with those whose sympathies lie on the ideological side of the spectrum arguing for the basic validity of the tenets of People's War while professionalists called for more far-reaching changes in doctrine and strategy. Other Dengist reforms, such as those involving several successive years of reductions in the size of the PLA's budget and the involuntary demobilization of significant numbers of persons within the military, aroused the opposition of groups who were not necessarily either ideologues or professionalists, but who were motivated primarily by simple self-interest.

Deng's methods of dealing with his opposition varied. He compromised on the issues of Mao's legacy and on the liberalization of literature and art. But at the same time, he moved to expand the size of his faction within the military and to weaken those groups opposing him. During the first two months of 1980, Deng replaced eight of the eleven military region commanders, including his former supporter, Xu Shiyou. Subsequently, he named a new Defense Minister. The post had been vacant for some months, perhaps due to opposition from some of the military region commanders who were removed.

While this tactic seemed to work in the short run, opposition to Deng's military policies continued. During the fall of 1982, four of the eleven military region commanders were again either dismissed or transferred, and other replacements took place at the levels below them.[25] Yet another Defense Minister was named. Apparently, then, the extensive transfers and purges of leading military personnel in early 1980 had not achieved their goals.

Also at this time, Wei Guoqing was removed as head of the GPD, and the GPD itself was reorganized. *Jiefangjun Bao* and *Shidai de Baogao,* whose articles critical of Deng's policies precipitated Wei's downfall, also underwent personnel changes,

with *Shidai de Baogao* being completely removed from the jurisdiction of the GPD.[26] Although there have been persistent, if unsubstantiated, reports over a period of time that Deng has been trying to force the resignation of Ye Jianying,[27] he has not obtained it. In February 1983, Ye did announce his decision not to continue as chairperson of the National People's Congress;[28] however, he retains his much more important posts on the Standing Committee of the Politburo and as vice-chairperson of the Military Commission. Ye's continued presence may be less a sign of Deng's inability to unseat him than of Deng's decision to let nature take its course: Ye is eighty-six years old and in failing health.

Certain moves taken recently indicate that Deng, possibly dissatisfied with his efforts to enlarge his faction within the military at the expense of other factions, may be contemplating separating the army from Party and government and giving it a role that is more closely restricted to the defense of the country from external attack. In September 1982 the clandestine and anti-Deng *Ba Yi* ("August 1," which is celebrated as Army Day in the PRC) Radio reported that Deng had set regulations limiting the proportion of Party members in army companies and ending the requirement of having at least one Party member in a squad.[29] And the new state constitution passed in December 1982 emphasizes that PLA delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC) are a separate group elected by the armed forces rather than by the people at large. Official sources have hinted at a reduction of the proportion of military representation in the NPC.[30]

In January 1983, the Party Central Committee announced the formation of an armed police force to assume the responsibility for internal security duties in the PRC. Placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Security, it was to "enforce the rules and regulations of the PLA, use the standards and supplies of the PLA, and enjoy the same treatment as the PLA."[31] Almost simultaneously, the PLA was withdrawn from internal security duties in Beijing and other large cities.[32]

One must be careful to avoid overinterpreting this information. The army remains heavily involved in the civilian economy,

and in many basically civilian tasks such as afforestation drives and sanitation campaigns.[33] The PLA's self-sufficiency in food production is still a goal.[34] There have been no obvious moves to separate Party leadership from military leadership at the top of their hierarchies. But, if carried further and over a prolonged period of time, the separation of Party from army, like the separation of Party from state already announced by Deng as a goal and partially effected, could have serious consequences for the future of civil–military relations in China. With less direct interest in the proper functioning of other hierarchies, and they in turn having less direct interest in the functioning of the PLA, and the army's sphere of particular corporate interests thereby enlarged, the military may come into conflict with Party and state in a manner which heretofore would have been unlikely if not impossible.

V. Conclusions

Due to historical and developmental patterns associated with the growth of military and civil institutions in China, military and civil activities are closely intertwined. Although the military has corporate interests which to some extent set it apart from the Party, there is considerable overlap between the two. Hence, when there are cleavages within the leadership over policy, they are intra-Party factional divisions that resonate across institutional lines into the military and other functional hierarchies rather than cleavages between the Party and the military.[35] In such a situation, it becomes impossible for *the* Party to be overthrown by *the* military, and the often-heard boast that no communist regime has ever been overthrown by its military becomes less an impressive claim for civilian supremacy under communist systems than a truism that follows from the structural overlap between the two institutions: the distinction between Party and gun has lost much of its relevance.

Recently steps have been taken in the PRC to separate the army from politics and reduce the number of Party members in the army. Should these steps be carried further, Party and army functions may become more sharply differentiated. To the extent

that boundaries between Party and military assume clear distinctions, the possibility that confrontation between the two institutions will replace coalition formation between factions within each will be enhanced.

This analysis of civil–military relations in China has several implications for U.S. policy-makers. First, it is clearly erroneous to assume, as has frequently been done in the past, that the power configuration in Beijing can be classified into discrete "military" and "Party" factions, when in actuality there are several factions within the Party, each containing members of the military.

Second, because of this structural configuration, a coup d'etat by the military is virtually impossible. Whatever policy options chosen by the United States in its relations with the PRC, neither Deng Xiaoping nor any other Chinese leader is apt to be removed by an army takeover.

Third, policy-makers should be cautious in identifying members of the military as "professionals" or "ideologues" and assuming that their behavior patterns can be predicted on the basis of these identifications. While individuals do often exhibit traits that allow them to be so classified, there is some fluidity within the categories, and military leaders have moved from one group to another according to time, circumstance, and perception of external threat.

Fourth, U.S. policy-makers should bear in mind that "professional" and "ideologue" have different meanings in the Chinese context than in the American. Despite the steps that Deng has taken to reduce the military's role in certain spheres of domestic society, their influence in other areas, such as literature and art, shows no signs of diminishing and, in yet others, notably the civilian economy, the military's role has become still larger in recent years. America's policy-makers should therefore be cognizant that the PRC's present policies favoring professionalization will *not,* in all probability, produce a military that is professional in Samuel Huntington's sense of the term. The future Chinese military may become more bureaucratic rather than more professional, as we in the West use the word.

Notes

1. Mao Zedong, "Problems of War and Strategy," November 1938, in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong,* Vol. II (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), p. 224.
2. Information on the early backgrounds of Chinese Communist leaders mentioned in this section may be found in *Chinese Communist Who's Who,* 2 vols. (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1970), and *Who's Who in Communist China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Union Research Institute, 1966).
3. See the biography of Yu Qiuli published by Beijing, Xinhua (XH), March 1981 in U.S. Department of Commerce, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service,* China (FBIS-CHI), 3 March 1980, p. L/12.
4. Mao, vol. II, pp. 224–225.
5. Harvey Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System,* 2nd edition (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), p. 6.
6. Fox Butterfield, *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York: New York Times Books, 1982), p. 297.
7. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1981–82* (London, 1982).
8. Nelsen, op. cit., p. 70.
9. Beijing, XH, 8 April 1983, in FBIS-CHI, 11 April 1983, p. K/2.
10. See, e.g., Beijing, *Zhongguo Xinwen She,* 12 February 1982, in FBIS-CHI, 16 February 1983, p. K/7; Beijing Radio, 4 December 1981, in FBIS-CHI, 7 December 1981, p. P/3.
11. David Bonavia, "No Talking In the Ranks," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER), 18 December 1981, p. 26.
12. David Bonavia, "Deng Being Given a Back Seat," FEER, 12 February 1982, p. 12.
13. FEER, 18 December 1981, p. 26; Nelsen, op. cit., p. 225.
14. William Safire, "China After Deng," *New York Times,* 28 October 1982, p. 29.
15. The term generally used is "professionals" rather than "professionalists." I have employed the latter term to distinguish the Chinese variant from the sort of military professionalism described by Samuel Huntington.
16. See Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 80–97.
17. See J. Chester Cheng, ed., *The Politics of the Chinese Army: A Translation of the Bulletin of Activities of the People's Liberation*

Army (Stanford, CA: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1966), passim.

18. See Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), pp. 309–444, for an account of the PLA's performance in the border war.

19. With the exception of a one-year budget increment during 1979 to cover the costs. See John Starkey, "China Says It Will Increase Military Spending Twenty Percent," *The Washington Post,* 30 June 1979, p. 16; National Foreign Assessment Center, *Chinese Defense Spending 1965–1979* (Springfield, Va.: National Technical Information Service, 1980).

20. Beijing, XH, 5 June 1978, in FBIS-CHI, 6 June 1978, pp. E/1-E/10.

21. Beijing, XH, 4 June 1978, in FBIS-CHI, 5 June 1978, pp. E/12-E/21; quotes from p. E/13.

22. For a list of names of those attending the exercises, see Beijing, XH, 26 September 1981, p. K/1.

23. See Lo Ping, "Deng Xiaoping Removes Top Leftist In Army," *Cheng Ming,* Hong Kong, 1 November 1982, in U.S. Department of Commerce, *Joint Publications Research Service* (JPRS) 82291, 22 November 1982, pp. 72–81.

24. Perhaps in unconscious realization of this shift, Harlan Jencks describes Ye as a "professional" and "pure expert" on p. 29 of his book, and as a politically active "old warrior" on p. 258. See Jencks, *From Muskets to Missiles* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982).

25. David Chen, "Major Reshuffle in People's Army," *South China Morning Post,* Hong Kong, 6 November 1982, p. 1.

26. *Wen Wei Pao,* Hong Kong, 14 November 1982, in FBIS-CHI, 15 November 1982, p. W/4.

27. *Ching Pao* (The Mirror), Hong Kong, 10 March 1980, in FBIS-CHI, 20 March 1980, p. U/1.

28. "China Confirms Ye Jianying Will Quit," *New York Times,* 24 February 1983, p. 7.

29. *Ba Yi* Radio, 17 September 1982, in JPRS 81955, 8 October 1982, pp. 68–69.

30. Hong Kong, AFP, 30 August 1982, quoting then-Politburo member Peng Chong, in FBIS-CHI, 30 August 1982, p. K/5.

31. *Ming Pao,* Hong Kong, 29 January 1983, in FBIS-CHI, 2 February 1983, p. W/2.

32. Beijing, XH, 1 February 1983, in FBIS-CHI, 2 February 1983, p. K/1.

33. Beijing, XH, 24 June 1982, in FBIS-CHI, 27 June 1983, p. R/3.

34. Beijing, XH, 19 January 1982, in FBIS-CHI, 20 January 1982, p. K/21.

35. A similar observation is made by Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande in "The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil–Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," *The American Political Science Review* (December 1982), p. 780.