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The "Command and Control" Philosophy of the Communist Party of China

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ABSTRACT

China's central political authorities have constructed a system which is designed to enable them to exert their personal influence and control over each level of every organization in the country -- both civil and military. The Communist Party of China (CPC) is represented at all levels of each and every organization, including the People's Liberation Army (PLA). These Party entities are intended to both provide oversight and to ensure that Party policies, directives and orders are obeyed. This penchant for political control, which may have its roots in China's imperial past, appears to have been reinforced by the early developmental path chosen by the Party's leadership. Current attempts aimed at maintaining political control of its resources, especially the military, are embodied in the formal system of "Political Work." In the PLA, this system of political control results in the involvement of political organs in day-to-day military matters to an extent unheard of in the West. Further work is needed in order to understand, more fully, both the system of "Political Work" and its contributions to the overall military (and civil) command and control philosophy of the Communist Party of China.

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The Command and Control Philosophy of the Communist Party of China

Summary

The modern Chinese bureaucratic system has its roots in the imperial, political framework of the Qin Dynasty. The Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), while based on the Soviet communist model, remain uniquely Chinese with their guiding principle: "the party commands the gun."

The CPC is ubiquitous, pervading every unit of organization in the PRC. Its ultimate authority appears to reside in the Politburo's Standing Committee with the Party's General Secretary (currently Jiang Zemin) as its leader. The organizational structure suggests that the CPC exercises command of the PLA through the Central Military Commission (CMC) and the General Staff Department. Control is exercised through the General Political Department, the Military Party Committee System and the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. This system of political control permeates the PLA (including the China's strategic nuclear force, the 2nd Artillery Corps) from the top down to the individual soldier.

While the Chinese Party-State has exhibited remarkable resilience, it is now besieged by a slow, but steady erosion of its authority. In reviewing the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen "incident," there are those who conclude that during the days leading up to the Army's intervention, the CPC's political and military command and control structure may not have functioned smoothly. A sound understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese leadership's approach to both national-level and local command and control will be crucial to any attempt to assess the Party command structure's ability to withstand future crisis situations.

Introduction

The subject of this investigation is the command and control philosophy of the Communist Party of China (CPC). While this philosophy appears to be universal in scope, we are primarily interested in the means by which it is imposed upon the armed forces of the People's Republic of China (PRC). In this paper, we have adopted the following broad definition of command and control: **Command** includes the establishment of policies and procedures and the determination of strategies while **Control** means the direction of operations, the employment of resources and the assurance that military (political) objectives will be carried out.¹ Command and control systems may include: organizational command structures, data processing and communication systems, and the facilities and personnel employed by these structures. The focus of this work is the organizational structure which has been put into place by the CPC for exercising its version of national-

¹ USAF historian Arthur K. Marmor as cited in an unpublished USAF Air University Research Study.

level and local command and control. As we will show below, the CPC, in building its command and control structure, has added an extra dimension -- one which is not evidenced in Western concepts.

This paper reports on the results of a survey of the available literature, both Western and Chinese, relating to the Communist Party of China and its command relationship with the Chinese armed forces. It briefly examines the Party's history, the Party's control organs, and the system of "Political Work" in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA includes: the ground forces, the air forces, the Navy, and the Second Artillery Corps (China's strategic nuclear force).

Since its inception in October of 1949, the PRC has been the subject of almost continuous inquiry within the Western academic community. While early investigations into CPC and PLA activities were hampered by difficulties in obtaining meaningful information, more recent (post-1978) efforts have been greatly facilitated by improved access to both Chinese Party and government officials and Chinese documentary sources. However, in spite of almost five decades of study, it appears that there are at least two aspects of the Chinese state which remain ill-understood. The first comprises the inner workings of China's Communist Party [1] and the second being the Chinese People's Liberation Army [2]. Because of the sensitivity of these topics, Chinese sources are unwilling to discuss them. Since the basic operations of the CPC do not parallel better-known communist regimes, such as the former USSR, they may be difficult for those in the West to understand. Studies of the PLA [3-7] have shown it to be unique among the military forces of the world, differing markedly from the military organizations of other Communist states as well. Given China's growing international stature, the ever-increasing level of Sino-Western commercial activity and the potential for internal political change resulting from the PRC's transition from a planned to a market-driven economic system [8, 9], it is becoming increasingly important for the West to gain a sound understanding of the CPC and its basic mechanisms for exercising "command and control" of its resources² -- in particular, its system for control of the military.

Preliminary results argue that political control is fundamental to party-military relations in the PRC. Careful study of the political commissar system, military party committee structure, and the military discipline inspection apparatus and their interactions with the PLA's operational command structure will provide useful insights into the CPC's military command and control philosophy. It is further suggested that investigation into the formal system of "Political Work" may reveal valuable information relating to the underpinnings of the overall military (and civil) command and control structure of the CPC.

Imperial Foundations

The modern Chinese bureaucratic system has its roots in the past. The Qin dynasty, which began its rule in 221 B.C., initiated an imperial structure which provided the political

² Resources include: the army, the government, educational institutions, state-owned enterprises, and the population at large.

framework for the Chinese state which persists today. This imperial structure emphasized state government based on ideological commitment, authoritarian personal leadership at the apex, and a system of nationwide governing bureaucracies. A basic assumption was that because the government set the moral framework for the entire society, its influence should be pervasive across society. [10]

The administrative structure of the imperial Chinese state continued to evolve during the dynastic period. Based on conservative Confucianism, it emphasized the hierarchy of political and social spheres--the "correct" formulations in all relationships and the accepted Confucian ideal that all power flowed from superior to subordinate [11]. These imperial bureaucratic structures eventually included: specialized functional units, formal lines of communications and reporting obligations, a highly organized hierarchy of authority, and a censorate system which monitored compliance with bureaucratic rules and regulations.³ Imperial China's legacy to her modern age is a governmental system having both a history of strong , personal rule from the top and an extensive bureaucracy which implements and enforces Central policies, directives and orders. This imperial system provided a foundation for the rise of the CPC.

Chinese Communist Party History

*"Because they could not hear each other they made gongs and drums;
because they could not see each other they made pennants and flags.
Gongs, drums, pennants, and flags are the means to unify the men's ears
and eyes. When the men have been unified the courageous will not be able
to advance alone, the fearful will not be able to retreat alone."
-Sun-Tzu, 6th century BC*

The Communist Party of China (CPC) arose from the flames of the student-led May Fourth movement of 1919. Students protested against the Paris Peace Conference decision to award German properties in China to Japan, which sparked a nationwide response. Radical young intellectuals, impressed with the withdrawal of Russia from World War I in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution, began to push for the replacement of traditional Confucianism by more modern concepts which they believed to reside in Marxist writings [12]. The doctrines of Leninism, which analyzed imperialism as the highest form of capitalism, supported the intellectuals' contention that a new system must take power in China. With Soviet financial and military aid and advice on revolutionary tactics, the newly formed Communist Party of China held its first congress in Shanghai in July 1921.

By 1947, the CPC had a set of principles and practices by which government operations were carried out. The qualities most stressed by the CPC included: decentralized rule among local leaders with operational flexibility; an unifying ideology to encourage loyalty to the Party line among cadres and their leaders; a preference for strong leaders who could

³ The imperial censorate system bears a striking resemblance to the modern Discipline Inspection apparatus.

bear a diversity of responsibilities rather than specialists; and an effective leadership through close ties between officials and the general population [13]. These principles, though not achieved entirely, reflected the attitudes of the peasant cadres who emerged victorious in 1949. This victory over the Guomindang (the Nationalists) heralded the third overthrow of China's political system since 1911 and ushered in the present centralized communist system [13].

The political and military systems in modern China, while based on the Soviet communist model, remain uniquely Chinese. The CPC is distinctive due in large part to the particular rural, military path chosen by party leaders. From the fifty CPC members who met at the first congress in 1921 to the five million members who met for the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the party acquired "outlooks, capabilities, and practices that deeply affected its exercise of power after 1949 [14]." The rural ethos (faith in the capability of victory by will and strategy) of the peasant revolution against the Guomindang gave a particular, non-Marxist color to the CPC. The mobilization of poorly educated peasant cadres, with strong personal and political commitment to the Party, produced the most efficient way for the CPC to stimulate change--the political campaign through guided mass action.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the CPC was the unification of the vast Chinese country which had degenerated into anarchy and incessant conflict. The Party's best tool in 1949 was the army which they saw as not only a security tool, but also as a political tool. This partnership left the party and the army deeply intertwined, making the military a firm part of domestic politics.

This history is a major part of what makes the command and control systems of the PRC unique. During the civil war years (1945-1949), the Communist troops, with cooperation from the local peasant population, took control of the country incrementally. The army acted not only as a fighting force but also provided the organizational impetus for establishing local agricultural and industrial infrastructures. These, in turn, provided much needed support to the remaining troops. As the Communists gained political control, the army and local governments became one. The already established infrastructures, which managed the areas of conquest during the war, were kept intact. Official and/or Party leadership personnel were then transferred in. Occasionally, leaders were retired from the army and reassigned by the Party to their same posts under a different title [6-7].

The apparent ease with which the Chinese Communists unified their nation belies the tremendous obstacles they faced in 1949. However, the culmination of their effort was the proclamation of a new constitution in 1954 symbolizing the unity of the people under the leadership of the Party using the template of Stalin's socialist system in the USSR. "With all of the trials it has endured over the years, the Party has emerged as a permanent institution in the country. It is everywhere, penetrates everything, and keeps its mind on its chief task: maintaining the national integrity of the country [13]." The mythos in the CPC's ideology highlighted the close partnership not only of party and army, but also of party leaders and the masses. This relationship between leaders and members, combined

with the belief that personal will and strategy achieve goals, became the background on which the CPC built their unified state.

In the PRC, the state is the Party's functionary, and the military is the Party's tool for maintaining the system's integrity. China, rather than a federal republic, is a "Party State" where the influence of the Party is ubiquitous across geographical space, societal space, and political space. The stark differences between Western-style government and that of the Chinese Communist's often add an additional layer of difficulty to the study of modern China. The American system is that of a federal republic of states based in a strong democratic tradition. The process of national government, while related, is separate from state and local governments. Governance depends upon democratic elections rather than, as in China, by appointment through an often incestuous power elite. The U.S. military apparatus operates on its own cognizance within federal guidelines, whereas the Chinese state and military operate under the direct control of the Communist Party.

The Chinese Communist State's Political System

"In theory, the system of Chinese leadership was separated into party, government, and military bureaucracies, but in fact these were a single political bureaucracy divided into functional systems (vertical 'branches') and geographic localities (horizontal 'areas')."
[15]

The Chinese Communist political system manages, operates and controls an organizational structure consisting of three great arms: the Party, the Government, and the Army [16]. The Party pervades every unit of organization in the PRC. Each government organ, military unit, school and state enterprise has, within its administrative structure, a Party Committee. These Party Committees report, ultimately, to the Central Committee of the CPC [17]. At the Party's center, the leading bodies are: the National Party Congress, the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Standing Committee of the Politburo. The Party Congress⁴ elects the membership of the Party's Central Committee and the Central Committee, in turn, elects the members of the Politburo, the Standing Committee of the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Party's General Secretary [18].

The Politburo of the Central Committee is generally considered to be the command base of the Party. However, the real power appears to reside in the Politburo's Standing Committee. The membership of the standing Committee currently numbers seven. The Party's General Secretary (currently Jiang Zemin) presides over the Standing Committee's unannounced weekly meetings and is the formal head of the Secretariat, an element which provides staff support to both the Politburo and the Central Committee.

These Central Party organs exert formal authority over the Chinese Government -- government entities acting as agents for the Party. The Party's control over the government is grounded in its sole authority to appoint and promote government officials.

⁴ The rules governing delegates to the National Party Congress and their selection/election are determined by the Central Committee [18].

The Party leadership sets policy, oversees the workings of the government and manages the political and ideological indoctrination of government cadres [19]. The Military Affairs Commission⁵ of the Party's Central Committee is the locus of supreme military decision making in the PRC. Centralized Party command and control of the PLA is embodied in this party organ [2-7]. Details of the interactions between the Military Affairs Commission, the Central Committee, the Politburo and its Standing Committee have not been revealed.

The leading body of the Chinese "government" is the State Council. The State Council, according to the State Constitution, reports to the National People's Congress--China's nominal "legislature." Its membership includes: the Premier, Vice-Premiers, State Councilors and the Ministers in charge of the State Council's subordinate commissions and ministries [20].

The full organizational extent of the Party, State and military apparatus is vastly more complicated than indicated in this brief summary. While the organizational and operational details remain unknown, this much is certain: *China's central political authorities have constructed a system which is designed to enable them to exert their personal influence and control over each level of every organization in the country--both civil and military.*

Political Control In the PLA⁶

"...our principle is that the Party commands the gun."
-Mao Zedong, 1929

Given that China is a Party-State, it follows logically that the military serves to guarantee the position of the party. In late 1929, Mao Zedong stated, "Our principle is that the party commands the gun and the gun shall never be allowed to control the Party [21]." This has been a guiding principle in Party-military relations since that time. The PLA has always been highly politicized and closely associated with the CPC. In spite of decades of study, the relationship between the Party and the PLA is still a mystery. As we will show below, at least three Party control mechanisms exist within this relationship. They are designed to ensure both the loyalty of the military and their adherence to orders and directives. While these mechanisms appear to operate under distinctly separate chains of command, their functions seem to overlap, in a way which reinforces the Party's control capabilities.

Unlike the military in the former Soviet Union, which was responsible to the Ministry of Defense (a state organ), the armed forces of the Peoples' Republic of China are directly

⁵ The Military Affairs Commission is also known as the Military Commission and the Central Military Commission.

⁶ For an account of the evolution of political controls see: Cheng, Hsiao-Shih, *Party-Military Relations in the PRC and Taiwan: Paradoxes in Control*, Westview, Boulder, Co. 1990.

subordinate to the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the Communist Party of China.⁷ In the case of the former Soviet Union, the senior military leadership authority resided in the General Staff. In contrast, the senior leadership of the PLA is divided among three General Headquarters Departments. These senior elements are known as: (1) the General Staff Department, which embodies the operational command structure; (2) the General Logistics Department, which is responsible for, among other things supply and finances; and (3) the General Political Department, the role of which is not fully understood. The structure of the PLA's senior command is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: SENIOR COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE PLA.

This division of responsibilities appears to be replicated down-echelon in the PLA's command structure. Elements of each of the three General Headquarters departments are present at each command level. In addition, each General Headquarters department maintains its own lines of organizational command with its field units [6, 7]. This replication is shown schematically in Figure 2.

⁷ Note: While the membership of the CMC includes high ranking military officers, it should be recognized that the commission is not a military organization but an organ of the CPC's Central Committee.

Figure 2: REPLICATION OF THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS STRUCTURE AT SUBORDINATE COMMAND LEVELS.

This organizational arrangement strongly suggests that the CPC exercises command of the PLA through the CMC and the General Staff Department. How then does the "Party control the gun?" Available evidence indicates that Party control of the military is comprised of a three-pronged system. The three elements of political control are: the General Political Department through its departments and commissars, the military Party Committee system and Central Discipline Inspection apparatus. This system of "Political Control" permeates the PLA from the top down to the individual soldier, and will be discussed below.

The General Political Department

The General Political Department (GPD) appears to have its roots in the aftermath of the Nanchang Uprising (August 1927). After the resulting split in the Guomindang-Communist front, the Communists were free to begin developing their own military and political structures. At the conclusion of the Long March in 1935, the Party's Military Affairs Commission began setting up staff elements tasked with the execution of wide-ranging political, educational and propaganda programs. During the civil war with the

Nationalist forces (1945-1949), the Military Commission's political staff was further developed as a counterpart to the General Staff. The GPD remains today as one of the three General Headquarters Departments of the PLA [6, 7, 22].

In the past, the GPD exerted considerable influence over policies and developments in the PLA [5, 22]. The stature of the GPD appears to have waned during the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). However, it began to re-appear in military press reporting in the early 1970's [22]. During the subsequent period of PLA modernization, it was argued that political influence over the PLA and the role of the GPD would gradually diminish [6, 23]. However, since the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989, there has been a resurgence of political and ideological indoctrination activity aimed at strengthening Party control over the PLA. The GPD is a key player in this campaign. [24, 25].

Within the GPD's organizational structure is an hierarchy of political commissars and political departments. (Below regimental levels the political leadership is provided by political education officers and political instructors). At each level, the political commissar is co-equal with the military commander [4-7, 24-25]. The political commissars are not simply party ideologues, but are officers with military training who report through a separate chain of command to the GPD. Their status relative to the military commander is evidenced by the fact that they must countersign all military orders. Interestingly, it appears that "political" orders do not require the signature of the military commander. This concept of "dual command" is quite foreign to Western thought and, since the 1940's, has been absent from the Soviet system. The operational roles played by the GPD, its political commissars and its subordinate political elements in today's PLA are not understood.

The Party Committee System

One of the many responsibilities of the political commissars is directing the daily work of military Party Committees [7, 24-25]. While the members of the Party Committees are elected at PLA Party Congresses, the "work" of these committees appears, in theory, to be independent of the military commanders, political commissars and the political departments. The Party Committees, which exercise "collective leadership" over military units, are in a separate chain of command, one which reports directly to the CPC's Central Committee. These Party organizations, present at every level of command, provide yet another means for direct Party supervision and control of activities within the PLA. Little is known about the relationship between the Party Committees and the organizations of the GPD. Even less is known about the details of "collective leadership" as practiced by the Party Committee System within the PLA. It does appear, however, that the Party Committee system is an integral part of the CPC's mechanism for ensuring compliance with orders and directives issued by the Party authorities. While operational details are not known, Chinese documentary sources indicate that the Party's control organs are

responsible for much more than ideological training and political indoctrination. These sources indicate that in the Chinese context, use of the word "political" denotes responsibilities far exceeding those which ordinarily come to mind in the West.

An indication of the breadth of the responsibilities which have been bestowed upon the political organizations in the PLA may be found in the *Bulletin of Activities* [26]. Twenty-nine issues of this classified Chinese military journal, published by the General Political Department, were made available to the academic community in the early 1960s by the US Government. The "*Bulletin*," although dated, provides some interesting insights into the internal workings of the PLA circa 1961. Articles in the "*Bulletin*" indicate that the responsibilities of the PLA's political organs included not only ideological matters [27], but extended to operational planning [28]. In addition, the General Political Department performed studies of military security and promulgated regulations in the name of the Central authorities regarding the protection of military secrets. Party committees at all levels were "urged" to enforce these regulations [29]. Political departments also had responsibilities for evaluating the overall performance of military units [30].

The Discipline Inspection System

There is, in addition to the GPD Political Commissar/Political Department structure and the Party Committee system, a third means for exerting Party control over the PLA: the Discipline Inspection Committee system. These organizations, which report to the CPC's Central Commission on Discipline Inspection, are separate and distinct from the Party Committee system.⁸ Chinese sources indicate that the Discipline Inspection Committee system monitors not only the activities of the PLA's Party Committees but the performance of the GPD's political commissars as well [24]. Because there has been little meaningful public discussion of their responsibilities, further study of the activities of the discipline inspection apparatus in the PLA is clearly warranted.

Recent analysis has indicated that because organizations and relationships are not discussed in public, many Chinese themselves are only vaguely aware of the linkages between the Party and the visible formal bureaucracy [15]. However, other investigators have indicated that such things as "collective responsibility," government intrusion into the details of the daily lives of China's population and political involvement in the military hierarchy date to the dynastic period [31-32]. It may be that there is a culturally-based⁹ predisposition toward tolerance of the Party's pervasive monitoring and control activities and its "collective" leadership style.

⁸ These Discipline Inspection Committees are also separate and distinct from the Discipline Inspection Department of the GPD.

⁹ For an interesting review of the literature on the influence of culture on state behavior and the potential utility of "Strategic Culture" as an analytical tool, see Alastair Iain Johnston's article, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," in the Spring 1995 issue of *International Security*.

The System of "Political Work"

"Political work is the lifeblood of our army."

-*Liberation Army Daily*, August 1978

As indicated in the previous sections, the CPC exerts its authority and control at every level of organization, both state and the military. Within the PLA, the Political Commissar system and the Political Departments of the GPD, the Party Committee system under the Central Committee and the CPC's Discipline Inspection Committee system form three separate and distinct chains of command which parallel, and are entwined with, each and every level of the PLA's operational command structure. These administrative systems are responsible for exercising the system of "Political Work" within the PLA. The organization (based on Chinese publications) of the system of "Political Work" is shown in Figure 3 [24].

FIGURE 3: STRUCTURE OF THE PLA'S SYSTEM OF "POLITICAL WORK".

The formal system of military Political Work, which has been in existence since at least 1932 [33], persists today. The "Rules and Regulations for Political Work of the People's Liberation Army" were again revised and reissued in mid-May 1995 [34]. Only those portions of the regulations deemed particularly useful for supporting the PLA's current "grassroots army building" campaign were published in the *Liberation Army Daily* on 31 May 1995 [34].

In its 28 May 1995 announcement of the new regulations, the official Chinese Press reported: "Over the past sixty years or so since the army was founded, our army has promulgated ten sets of 'Regulations on Political Work of the PLA' one after another [35]." However, only those from 1954 [36], 1963 [22], 1978 [37] and 1991 [38] have been publicly acknowledged. A classified (Secret) edition of political work regulations, intended for use by PLA officers, was reportedly published in late 1990 [24].

As will be seen below, the regulations on "Political Work" in the PLA indicate that the political commissars, political departments and party committees are involved in day-to-day military matters in a manner which far exceeds the indications offered in the *"Bulletin"*. Unfortunately, there has been very little public discussion of the activities of the third arm of the "Political Work" system--the Discipline Inspection Committees. However, "Discipline Inspection Committees of the Party at Various Levels" are identified in the table of contents of the May 1995 Regulations [34].

The Regulations

To the best of our knowledge, the only complete examples of Political Work Regulations available in the West are those from 1932, 1939, and 1963. Copies of these documents, which were restricted to internal use only, were made available to the academic community by the US government in 1967 [33]. These documents, though dated, clearly show that the political commissars, political departments, and party committees have wide-ranging responsibilities. Their duties include management and oversight of indoctrination (ideological work), troop morale, personnel records, cultural and athletic activities, military security, troop discipline, monitoring personal behavior and adherence to orders and directives, military and technical training, and planning of combat operations.

It should be noted that while all of these functions are essential to the successful operation of any army, it is intriguing that these responsibilities have been assigned to the PLA's political organs. It is significant that the GPD is responsible for maintaining personnel records. This allows the central political authorities considerable opportunity to influence the career paths of the members of the PLA officer corps. Members of factions exhibiting "politically correct" behavior may be properly "rewarded", while those who do not, are penalized - yet, another mechanism for exerting "political control".

Commissars, who share formal command responsibility, were subordinate not to their respective military commanders but to both military and political authorities at the next "higher level." This apparently ensured some independence for the commissars thus strengthening political control over the operational commanders. The regulations also stated that in order to be valid, military orders required the signature of the political commissar along with that of the commander.

Comparison of the three sets of regulations show that the changes, in the main, reflected the evolution of China's Military, i.e. addition of chapters on Air Force and Naval units. However, the 1963 Regulations directed individual Party Committees to establish "Party Control Committees." Their duties were to monitor for breaches of discipline and other infractions of the rules. In serious cases, these organs were authorized to bypass the local chain of command and, if necessary, communicate directly with the Party's Central Committee. It appears that a mechanism which allowed for **direct** involvement of the Center in local military unit affairs has been in place for over thirty years.

Political Work Today

Although specific military units are never mentioned in the publicly released versions of the Regulations and generally unidentified in the official press, the Second Artillery Corps (China's strategic nuclear force) has openly subscribed to the system of Political Work. In March of 1990, General Li Xuge (then Second Artillery commander) authored a lengthy article in *Jiefangjun bao* (Liberation Army Daily) which expressed the need for further political and ideological work in order to ensure that the troops of the Second Artillery Corps are "always qualified politically [39]." Since then, the Second Artillery has reported on successes not only in ideological matters but has also cited improvements in the area of technical competence as well [40]. Additional reporting on political work in the strategic missile forces appeared in mid-1995. *Jiefangjun bao* published an article which described a Second Artillery program aimed at training members of its political organs in guided missile skills and operational techniques [41]. This effort was reportedly instituted as a result of a 1993 CMC inspection of an unidentified Second Artillery base. The article stated that: "The situation whereby political cadres 'could not intervene in, express opinions on or do the essentials of work' in drills and [missile] firings has fundamentally been changed and political work has acquired more specific objectives and become more effective."

Unlike a May 1995, editorial on the importance of political work in the PLA [42], which was laced with references to "Marxist-Leninist, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping Thought," the July 1995 article on the Second Artillery was unusually clear and lacking in ideological rhetoric.¹⁰ Whether current public discussion of political work activities in the strategic missile forces is related to the PLA's current "Army Building" campaign [43-45] or the recent re-emphasis on "Opportunistic Education" [46] in the PLA cannot be presently ascertained.¹¹ Army-building and other ideological campaigns aside, the existence of an effort aimed at training political cadres in the operational details of strategic missile launches is further evidence that the PLA's political organizations are involved in much more than sloganeering and ideological cheerleading. However, the

¹⁰ In general, reporting on political work in the PLA tends to be long on ideology and short on substance.

¹¹ "Opportunistic Education" [indoctrination], the practice of "seizing opportunities in line with changes in situations, missions and the thinking of our officers and men, and to conduct anytime and anywhere indoctrination aimed at certain specific situations and issues," is claimed to be a "fine tradition" in the program of ideological and political work in the PLA [46].

precise objectives of "Political Work" in the Second Artillery (or other PLA organizations) remain, for the present, unknown.

Conclusion

The CPC has gone to extraordinary lengths in an attempt to ensure its control over the military. Chinese documentary sources and previous analyses have demonstrated that the Party Committee members and the Political Commissars are involved to a surprising degree in what would be easily considered purely military activities. This level of political involvement is totally without parallel in the West. Additional, and as yet ill-understood, roles are filled by the Central Discipline Inspection Commission's organs also present at each level of military command. Previous analysis also concluded that the Political Commissars and Party Committees may play a significant role in the PLA's command and control structure [7]. Work published in 1991 clearly shows that the Commissars and Party Committees constitute, along with the Discipline Inspection Committees, the Party's mechanism for control over the military--the system of "Political Work" [24].

Past investigative efforts aimed at understanding the inner workings of both the CPC and the PLA have been forced to rely mainly on carefully worded *Xinhua* (New China News Agency) dispatches and articles in *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) and *Jiefangjun bao*. This official information has been supplemented by occasional "gifts" such as the "Bulletin" and the "Regulations on Political Work." However, since the early 1990s Beijing has been loosening its grip on archival materials including that related to the military [47]. Given the availability of this "new" information, we would suggest that further study of the system of "Political Work"--both civil and military-- is in order.

Continued study of the CPC's political control structure is of more than passing academic interest. While the Chinese Party-State has exhibited remarkable resilience in surviving the chaos of the Cultural Revolution [48], the Party, and its leadership may be embarking on the most stressful period of its history. Besieged by a slow, but steady erosion of its authority [8] and what some outside observers have characterized as the threat of national disintegration brought on by tendencies toward regionalism [9, 48-50], the Party has responded with a continuing call for defending the Center's authority [51-54]. Relations between the Center and the Regions have been deemed important enough to receive specific mention in the publicly-released proposal for the ninth five-year plan [55, 56]. Others, after reviewing the aftermath of the Tiananmen "incident," have concluded that during the days leading up to the Army's intervention, the CPC's political and military command and control structure did not function smoothly [57, 58].

In the face of both the potential for social and political instability [8-9, 59] and the above-mentioned analyses which have indicated that the Party's command structure faltered under conditions of internal political stress, both the business/economic and the international security communities have a vested interest in gaining an understanding of the CPC's structure and mechanisms for control of its resources. Sound understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese leadership's approach to both national-

level and local command and control will be crucial to any attempt to assess the Party command structure's ability to withstand future crisis situations.

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