THE CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY IN THE REFORM ERA, 1985-2010

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the way that the single-party state has renovated the political identity of the armed forces in the reform era of the People's Republic of China (PRC). It argues that the Chinese Communist Party succeeded in doing so and therefore was able to use the national military as a prop of continued single-party rule.

Engaging with theories of civil-military relations, this study challenges the dominant view of military professionalism according to which an armed force must be separate from politics to become truly professional. I show that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) professionalization process, triggered by the establishment of the National Defense University in 1985, was completed by 2010, when the National Mobilization Law was issued. It provided the PLA with clear responsibility, esprit de corps, and area of expertise, these three core components of professionalism being put under firm regulatory control. This process, however, was not isolated from the political developments under way in the PRC during the same period. Instead, the ruling party turned the military into an active agent of its 'spiritual civilization' policy by tying it more closely to local governments, by giving it the duty to teach civic education to university students and the wider population, and by committing an increasing number of troops and other PLA resources to the United Nations peacekeeping program.

This work is based on an extensive reading of the untranslated literature published, mainly, by the PLA itself, to account for the way that it adapted its tradition of 'political work' (the system of indoctrination and human resource management linking it to the ruling party) to the requirements of military professionalism. I completed this account with about 60 interviews with Chinese serving and retired military personnel, foreign military attachés, and students with experience of military training in Chinese universities.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMS	Academy of Military Science
CMC	Central Military Commission
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
GLD	PLA's General Logistics Department
GMD	Guomindang
GPD	PLA's General Political Department
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MOOTW	Military Operations Other than War
MPA	Main Political Administration of the Soviet Red Army
MR	Military Region
NDL	National Defense Law
NDU	China's National Defense University
NPC	National People's Congress
ONUC	Opération des Nations Unies au Congo
PAP	People's Armed Police
PKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operation
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
UNAMIC	UN Advance Mission in Cambodia
UNAMID	African Union/UN hybrid operation in Darfur
UNFICYP	UN peacekeeping Force In Cyprus
UNIKOM	UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission
UNMIS	UN Mission in the Sudan
UNOCI	UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNPKO	UN Peace Keeping Operations
MINURCA	UN Mission in the Central African Republic
MINURCAT	Mission des Nations Unies en République CentrAfricaine et au Tchad
MINURSO	UN Referendum for Western Sahara
NDU	National Defense University
ONUMOZ	UN Operation in Mozambique
PAP	People's Armed Police
UNFICYP	UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNMIBH	UN Mission In Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMOGIP	UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNOMSIL	UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAG	UN Transitional Authority Group (Namibia)
UNTAET	UN Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNTSO	UN Truce Supervision Organization (Palestine)
UNIKOM	UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission

INTRODUCTION

Whilst it is acknowledged that since the onset of the reform era in 1978[1] the People's Republic of China (PRC) has broadly succeeded in establishing a market economy, there is less consensus among observers about how much the Chinese party-state has adapted to address the dramatic social changes that have accompanied economic reforms. This dissertation proposes to explore and explain the military's role in this adaptation process and the modalities of its support for continued one-party rule since the beginning of the reform era. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to play a decisive role in ensuring the persistence of the regime, in tandem with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This has been the case throughout the different periods of radical change in contemporary China: from 'continuous revolution' under Mao Zedong (1949-1976), through 'modernization' under Deng Xiaoping (1978-1989), to the Jiang Zemin era (1989-2002) and the 'harmonious society' of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiaobao (2002-2012).

The PRC's capacity to overcome crises while remaining under one-party rule has called into question the relevance of democratization theory[2], commonly assumed in the 1980-90s to be universally valid. Indeed, the Chinese party-state has found ways of coping with even the most strident demands for change, including the 1989 democracy

[1] Following the third plenary session of the eleventh committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

[2] The groundbreaking work by Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market, Political Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, specifically emphasizes the effects of economic liberalization on political transformation.

movement. It has held fast in the face of the emergence of a new global order in which former East-European communist regimes have become more or less imperfect democracies. As a result, in recent years, social scientists have turned away from democratization theory in favor of a paradigm of authoritarian resilience to explain the political system of the PRC[3]. They point to the Chinese regime's remarkable institutional capacity to confront and overcome political challenges, both international and domestic. They emphasize the forces of continuity in contemporary Chinese patterns of governance and the effects of path-dependency in constraining China's potential for a rapid transition to democracy.

The authoritarian resilience approach emphasizes the causal mechanisms that help to explain the durability of authoritarian states. In China, at the beginning of the contemporary reform era (1980s), political reformers such as Premier Zhao Ziyang pushed for a separation between the government and the party within the PRC's Leninist state[4]. This distinction gradually allowed various organs of the state such as the legislature and the judiciary, to follow distinct technical and administrative procedures in their operations rather than being entirely subservient to and dependent upon party policy. In this process, the PLA, like the legislative bodies and courts, also gained greater functional and professional autonomy. Under Mao (1949-1976), a symbiotic relationship between civil and military leaders had framed the distribution of political power. Since 1977, through training and specialized education, the Chinese military has become a far more professional body of officers and a strategic fighting force. This

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3 Most prominently Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience", in *Journal of Democracy*, volume 14, number 1, January 2003, 6-17; Elizabeth Perry, "Studying Chinese Politics: farewell to revolution?", *China journal*, volume 57, 2007; and Yang Dali, *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China*, Stanford University Press, 2004.

4 By Leninist state, I mean a state using democratic centralism as its principle of government.

gradual change has commonly been referred to in terms of the 'professionalization' of the Chinese military.

At the same time, when placed under stress, the Chinese party-state has fallen back on its military: not merely as a means of last resort to coerce popular compliance with its rule, but also as the bedrock of the regime. This, I will show, has been the result of an intimate connection, continuously maintained, between the party-state and its army, most significantly expressed in what is known as PLA 'political work' - the army's mission to educate soldiers to act as the active agents of the Chinese people as well as their symbolic representatives.

From this perspective, I contend that scholarship on the authoritarian resilience of the Chinese party-state has failed to take sufficient account of the continuities between Maoist and post-Maoist eras, particularly with respect to the PLA, and especially PLA 'political work'. My research attempts to fill this gap, focusing on the PLA's role in politics during the transition from Maoist revolutionary class-struggle to contemporary modernizing authoritarianism. I start my period of study in the year 1985, when the foundation of the National Defense University, centralizing officers training, laid the ground for military professionalization. I consider that the process of military professionalization in China was completed with the promulgation of the National Mobilization Law in 2010, which expounds the duties and prerogatives of the PLA within the PRC. The linchpin in my argument is the continuing responsibility of the PLA to perform 'political work', even as it was undeniably also in the throes of the professionalizing process. The following research question will be central to my exploration: *how has the maintenance of PLA political work, concurrent with military professionalization, contributed to the Chinese party-state's 'authoritarian resilience' in 1985-2010?*

This introductory chapter sets out a review of the literature with which I engage; an outline of my argument, and; the methodology and sources I used, as well as; an outline of the chapters that follow this introduction.

Literature review

In the existing literature on military professionalization, 'professionalism' and military involvement in politics have been defined as mutually exclusive. This is a theoretical argument which requires some scrutiny. Several theories have been advanced to account for the impact of military organization on the character of the state.

This literature review commences by outlining Samuel Huntington's influencial theory of 'military professionalization as democratization'. As I show, it has influenced a number of scholars who write on contemporary Asian and Chinese civil-military relations. Second, the specialist literature on the PLA agrees that the Chinese military has become professional, but disagrees on the political implications of this process. Third, the 'authoritarian resilience' school of thought sees military alignment with the global norms of professionalization as a strategy on the part of the modernizing party-state to preserve its monopoly on political power. I conclude the literature review by arguing that the approach best suited to understanding Chinese civil-military relations is to consider them in the context of a revolutionary state founded by armed struggle and of the legacy of that historical origin.

The democratic teleology

The core assumption of this dissertation is that the Leninist state established by the CCP's military victory in 1949 still exists in 2010. To explain the role that the military has played in sustaining single-party rule, I question the usefulness of the dominant framework in the literature on civil-military relations which is normative, and assumes democracy to be the most legitimate form of government. 'Military professionalism' has long been part of a debate about democratization. A theory of professionalism was first proposed by Huntington in 1957[5]. Muthiah Alagappa recently took up this proposition to explain political development in Asia[6] and David Shambaugh has applied it specifically to China[7]. The crux of the argument remains the same: it claims that the increased specialization of military skills creates a military domain, separate from the rest of the business of the state.

In 1941, sociologist Harold Lasswell defined the military as the section of society devoted to "the management of violence"[8]. Following Lasswell, Huntington formulated an influential 'Professionalism theory'. In 1957, Huntington postulated that the state removed the military from politics by providing it with a specific sphere of activity. He argued that, to become professional, a military corps needed "objective civilian control." This model of civil-military relations subordinates the military to the state defined as a separate sovereign political power, which Huntington identifies as a democratic state[9]. It

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5 Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, *the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, 80-98.

6 Muthiah Alagappa ed., *Coercion and Governance*, *the Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

7 David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems and Prospects*, chapter 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

8 Harold Lasswell, "The garrison State", *The American Journal of Sociology*, 46, no. 4, January 1941, 455-68.

9 Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, *the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge:

is a strategy of the sovereign authority to keep the armed forces in check while allowing them to improve: "objective civilian control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state"[10]. Huntington argues that a military establishment and a government are fully functional only if they focus on their respective objects, and thereby makes the development of democracy a condition for the military's capacity to perform. Huntington is largely responsible for a democratic bias dominant in the literature on civil-military relations, which tends to assume that electoral representation is the only true expression of political representation.

In his comparison of civil-military relations in contemporary Asian states, Muthiah Alagappa follows Huntington's Professionalism theory: Alagappa assumes that the military's function, coercion, potentially impinges upon the sovereign authority's legitimacy. As he writes, "The coercive asset of the military only becomes important in the context of a civilian government that suffers legitimacy problems and relies increasingly on state coercion to address the challenges confronting it."[11] In this framework, the military and political powers play a zero-sum game in which a state's legitimacy is inversely related to the use it makes of the military to govern. Emphasizing change, Alagappa adopts a futuristic approach where "[a]lthough the "ultimate" form of government in the PRC is difficult to predict, it will almost certainly have to be more participatory with greater differentiation between the party, the state, and the military. In this context, the already weakened symbiotic relationship between the CCP and the PLA is likely to alter."[12] The use of the future tense is typical of Huntington's followers, more intent on forecasting the advent of democracy than on observing the political

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Harvard University Press, 1957, 80-98.

[10] Ibid., chapter IV.

[11] Muthiah Alagappa ed., *Coercion and Governance*, *the Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, Stanford University Press, 2001, 59.

[12] Ibid.

dynamics attendent to military professionalization in non-democratic contexts.

In 2006, Andrew Scobell argued that "civilian control of the military in the PRC is weakly institutionalized" because, as of 2005, Hu Jintao was the only non-military member of the eleven-strong Central Military Commission[13]. This statement, and the author's broader contention that "[f]or at least two decades creeping *guojiahua* (statification or nationalization) has affected civil-military relations. This has meant the gradual process of transforming the PLA from a purely party-army into more of a party-state military"[14] are difficult to understand, as the PLA has been under the control of the party-state continuously since 1949. They should be put in the light of the essay's conclusion, which states: "although creeping *guojiahua* may prove difficult in the short- and mid-terms, in the long run it may augur well for political change in China, notably in the prospects of democratization." [15] Scobell implicitly endorses Huntington's Professionalism theory that requires the control of a democratic state to be able to focus on its own area of expertise. Such an approach does not consider how a professional armed force might play the role of supporter for the regime.

While all the scholars cited above claim that military organization can channel the relationship between a state and its society productively, they also consider domestic use of the armed forces as a threat to the sovereign's authority. This proposition has no explanatory force for China where political legitimacy is not determined by electoral representation but rather by "the government's capacity to sustain stability and social order", as Vivienne Shue has argued[16].

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[13] Andrew Scobell, "China's evolving civil-military relations", in Nan Li ed., *Chinese Civil-military Relations*, 25-39.
[14] Ibid., 30.
[15] Ibid., 35.
[16] Vivienne Shue, "Legitimacy Crisis in China", in Peter H. Gries and Rosen Stanley eds., *State and Society in 21st Century China*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, 41.

Specialist literature on the PLA

The specialist literature on the PLA is unanimous in recognizing that the PLA has professionalized. I start my period of study in the year 1985, when the foundation of the National Defense University, centralizing officers training, laid the ground for military professionalization. The same year, the party-state started implementing Defense Education, a policy committing the PLA to a range of pedagogical activities in the wider society. While these two events would be irreconcible in Professionalism theory, a number of scholars writing on the PLA have investigated the way the PLA has professionalized without the PRC democratizing. A pioneer scholar of the PLA, Ellis Joffe characterized military professionalization in the Chinese context in terms of a "red vs. expert" paradox combining professionalism with party control, even before the Cultural Revolution brought this paradox to its apex, in 1965[17]. Maintaining a consistent and compelling line of argument for half a century, Joffe argued that the PLA asserted a professional identity as early as the 1950s, despite continuous involvement in domestic politics. He demonstrated the PLA's sustained concern with professionalism by describing a series of modernization objectives set by the establishment, ranging from force routinization (1950s) to weapons procurement (1970s)[18] to strategic overhaul (mid-1980s)[19]. Through the pursuit of these specialized goals, the Chinese military gradually asserted its corporate identity.

My research builds on this conclusion. Similarly, James Mulvenon argues against Professionalism theory which asserts that civilian control by a single-party hampers professionalization. Noting that the Chinese military has professionalized while

[17] Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: professionalism and political control in the Chinese officer corps, 1949-1964*, 1965.
[18] Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army after Mao*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987.
[19] http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF145/CF145.chap3.pdf.

remaining under party domination, Mulvenon describes the PLA's subordination to the party as a model of "conditional compliance"[20], in which the CCP buys the military's allegiance through resource allocation. Furthermore, he shows that the party-state encouraged the PLA to help regulate China's economy: "after 1949, the Chinese army was called upon to participate extensively in the economy"[21]. This was not a relinquishing of authority on the part of the PRC, but rather a devolution of authority, through which the PLA promoted the ruling party's economic reforms. Mulvenon also paid attention to the impact of ideology on military doctrine[22]. Despite this effort, the integration of political work into professionalized military training has been overlooked, if not dismissed, by the majority of observers[23].

A helpful approach to overcome the dichotomy between military specialization and the influence of a ruling political power on a country's armed forces is Alastair Iain Johnston's notion of "cultural realism." This political scientist argues that military strategy reflects a state's political ideals and its conception of the "role of force in human affairs[24]". This he refers to as "strategic culture." Focusing on China's *Seven Military Classics*, Johnston reveals that conflict under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) was determined by two coexisting paradigms accounting for the government's use of the military to achieve security: on the one hand, a conception of conflict as an aberration and on the other hand a preference for offensive strategies. To explain the coexistence

[20] James Mulvenon, "China: conditional compliance" in Alagappa Muthiah ed., *Coercion and Governance, the Declining Role of the Military in Asia*, Stanford University press, 2001, 317-335.

[21] James Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: the Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998*, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001.

[22] James Mulvenon, "Chairman Hu and the PLA's 'New Historic Missions'", *China Leadership Monitor*, 2009, no. 27, 1-11.

[23] In Roy Kamphausen, Scobell Andrew and Tanner Travis ed., *The People in the PLA, Recruitment, Training and Education in China's Military*, Strategic Studies Institute, 2008, 16, Andrew Scobell asserts: "Courses on Marxist thought seem to be of particular irrelevance."

[24] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism, Strategic culture and grand strategy in Chinese history*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3rd ed. 1998, 51.

of these two apparently contradictory paradigms, Johnston emphasizes the importance of myths and symbols in civil-military relations. These notions will be crucial in my study of the contemporary Chinese military.

Authoritarian resilience

My study places the evolution of Chinese civil-military relations in the reform era in a broader framework of single-party rule's authoritarian resilience. The literature on authoritarian resilience is primarily concerned with explaining the durability of one-party rule. Unlike the dominant scholarship on non-democratic regimes[25], the authoritarian resilience approach assesses the strength of these regimes rather than their weaknesses. It focuses on the adaptation of authoritarian regimes and their governance mechanisms in response to popular demands. A resilient authoritarian regime is one which is able to mobilize social change for regime preservation. The main representatives of this school writing on China are Andrew Nathan[26] and Elizabeth Perry[27]. They argue that the ruling party has granted functional autonomy to state institutions, including the legislature and the military, in order to preserve the regime. Military specialization has provided the PLA with a corporate identity.

Noting the key role which the military played in the Chinese revolution, Perry rightly claims that the legacy of the PRC's revolutionary identity has not been properly assessed[28]. Quoting historian Chen Yung-Fa[29], she shows that the CCP derived methods

[25] One of the most recent attempts to provide a theoretical framework for civil-military relations in non-democratic regimes is Ayesha Siddiqa, *Military inc., Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, London: Pluto, 2007; cf. p. 30, in particular.
[26] Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience", in *Journal of Democracy*, volume 14, number 1, January 2003.
[27] Elizabeth Perry, "Studying Chinese Politics: farewell to revolution?", *China journal*, volume 57, 2007.
[28] Ibid.

of government from the PLA's early experience in conquering territory on behalf of the party[30]. However, she does not explain how the PLA integrated its revolutionary origin into more autonomous modes of functioning after Mao. The revolutionary legacy has not prevented the Chinese military from professionalizing, as the PLA has increased its capacity to "manage violence", according to analysts[31]. At the same time, because professionalism entails the continuous updating of techniques of warfare, the military are prone to experimentation with management innovations which are potentially transferable to party organization.

Nathan notes in passing that despite professionalization, the army in China remains a "party army"[32] and claims that modernization has had the purpose of reinforcing the party's grip on political power. To understand how increased institutionalization can actually be part of a political agenda that goes beyond the mere removal of the military from politics, the so-called 'Science and Technology' school of thought affords some insights. Brian Rappert, Brian Balmer and John Stone claim that in recent years "the military has become increasingly integrated and coordinated with other political institutions."[33] In China, such institutional integration has been simultaneous with military professionalization, unlike the situation in the West where the former followed the latter. This suggests that in China, the military's acquisition of professional expertise has given it credentials to be a political player at home.

My research builds on Perry's paradigm of the revolution as the driving political

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[29] Chen Yung-Fa, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945,* University of California Press, 1986.

[30] Elizabeth Perry, "Studying Chinese Politics: farewell to revolution?", *China journal*, vol. 57, 2007, 14.

[31] James Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Chinese Senior Officer Corps, Trends and Implications*, RAND, 1997, 71.

[32] Nathan Andrew, "Authoritarian resilience", in *Journal of Democracy*, volume 14, number 1, January 2003, 12.

[33] Brian Rappert, Balmer Brian and John Stone, "Science, technology and the military: priorities, preoccupations and possibilities", in Hackett Edward ed., *The Handbook of Science and technology Studies*, MIT press, 2008, 731.

strength sustaining authoritarian resilience in China. The use of ideology to govern is a key feature of the revolutionary state. My emphasis on ideology in studying the role that the professionalizing military has played in supporting CCP rule through crises refers to Vivienne Shue's argument that the maintenance of state authority requires a logic of legitimation[34]. My working hypothesis is that the professionalized PLA has provided such a logic through ideological support to the regime, as it promotes the image of a modernized Chinese nation. I must end this literature review with a caveat. Although the military crackdown at Tiananmen square in 1989 marked a watershed in the history of the PRC, it does not appear as such in my thesis. This is not because I want to underplay the significance of the event, but rather because the party's ideology and policies, which are the main object of this dissertation, have made every effort to erase it from public discourse[35].

Main hypothesis: the paradigm of the revolution

Clearly, investigating the process through which the PLA has professionalized while providing support to single-party rule contributes to the literature. The main obstacle to studying these issues has been an indeterminate time frame, leading most authors to focus on predicting the future of Chinese civil-military relations rather than examining its history. Following most writing on the PLA professionalization process[36], I see this process to be driven by an effort on the part of the state to bring the military

[34] Vivienne Shue, "Legitimacy Crisis in China?", in Peter H. Gries and Rosen Stanley eds., *State and society in 21st century China: crisis*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

[35] For a compelling discussion of how succesful the party has been in this respect, see Perry Link, "June Fourth, Memory and ethics", in Jean-Philippe Béja ed., *The Impact of China's 1989 Tiananmen Massacre*, 2011, 13-32.

[36] David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems and Prospects*, chapter 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002; Andrew Scobell, "China's evolving civil-military relations", in Nan Li ed., *Chinese civil-military Relations*, 2006, 25-39.

under regulatory control. By contrast with these authors, however, I consider that the process of military professionalization in China was completed with the promulgation of the National Mobilization Law in 2010 (cf. chapter III), which expounds the duties and prerogatives of the PLA within the PRC. I propose to draw comparisons with patterns of civilian control of the armed forces in regimes that, similarly to the PRC, claim to have a legitimacy based on the political revolution they accomplished. Indeed, the main hypothesis of this research is that the party-state has used the paradigm of the revolution as a legitimacy-provider to require sustained support of the armed forces.

The revolutionary origin

Socialist revolution, first in the Soviet Union and then in China, required new modes of social organization, including military organization. The PLA's General Political Department (GPD), the military headquarters in charge of party control, was modelled upon the Soviet Main Political Administration (MPA) of the Soviet Red Army. Functionally, the Chinese GPD and the Soviet MPA were indeed very similar. During the Russian Civil War, the Soviet Party used this military party organ to promote agitation in the ranks and to co-opt the White Russian officers into serving in the new Red Army. Timothy Colton has shown that the responsibility of the political commissars under the MPA gradually diversified from political indoctrination and control to administrative and executive functions[37]. This variety of tasks had one common purpose: to ensure the political loyalty of officers and soldiers to the communist party. It was called political work.

[37] Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders and Civilian Authority*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.

In China, military service was not so much associated with an old regime as with political disaggregation. The image of soldiering had been tarnished by over a decade of military separatism and warlordism following the First World War. Cheng Hsiao-shi provides the best description of warlord armies in 1916-1928 China:

> Most warlord armies were chaotic in organization, administration and line of command, corrupt in financial affairs, incompetent in leadership, lax in discipline and hated by the people. […] In such armies, the commander did not command; rather, he had to bargain and compromise with his subordinates in making major decisions, or he had to risk defection or mutiny. The officers and the rank and file were cemented together by common interest. […] While soldiering was a career to the officers, it was a job for a new recruit. During this period, poor men who abandoned their families and homes to become soldiers were like prostitutes.[38]

Against this backdrop of total alienation of the armed forces from society, political work in the PLA was a truly revolutionary institution in the sense that it turned the existing relationship between soldiering and the political ideal upside down. Rather than co-opt the old elite like in the Soviet Union, party penetration into the military aimed at using the PLA to produce a new elite from scratch. Committed to improving the status of the rank and file, Chinese military leaders developed an ambiguous relationship toward the Soviet model where the political commissar was subordinated to the commander. You Ji has emphasized the reticence that the first Chinese Minister of Defense and father of PLA modernization Peng Dehuai expressed toward the "dogmatism" inherent in blindly following the Soviet model in the 1950s[39]. As Peng was transforming the Chinese guerilla force into a standing military, he continuously called for a "revolutionization" of the force, i. e. the maintenance of egalitarian relationships between officers and soldiers, in opposition to the more rigid Soviet military chain of

[38] Cheng Hsiao-Shih, *Party-Military Relations in the PRC and Taiwan, Paradoxes of Control*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.

[39] You Ji, "The Soviet Model and the breakdown of the military alliance", in Thomas Bernstein and Hua-Yu Li eds., *China learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-present*, 2010, 131-150.

command. In China, the key lay in using the administrative structure of political work - political commissars and party committees (see chapter I) – to enforce socialist principles in the military in order to transform it into a model for society.

Comparison with communist or post-communist regimes such as the former Soviet Union[40], Vietnam or North Korea no longer offers much insight into the role that military political work plays in sustaining single-party rule. Indeed, it is hard to discern commonalities in post-communist countries. The point of divergence between the PLA and the Red Army was the Great Purge that struck the latter in the 1930s. Colton shows how the Communist Party of the Soviet Union used its secret police against military officers, be they commanding officers or political commissars – a repudiation of which there is no similar instance in China. In 1992, the North Korean constitution was amended to put the National Defense Commission on a par with the Central People's Committee[41]. This established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a full-blown military regime where the government is *de facto* under the control of the generals[42]. Finally, the history of the Vietnamese People's Army has been shaped by the war against the French colonizer. Against this comparative backdrop, the question remains: what was a revolutionary regime and what can a revolutionary regime be today?

The particularity of Chinese single-party rule lies in the conflation of the communist revolution and a national revolution. After the revolution had been made, its legacy would be taught to officers, so that they serve the new regime.

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[40] Amos Perlmutter and William Leogrande, "The party in uniform", *The American political science Review*, vol. 76, 1982.
[41] Bong-uk Chong, *North Korea: the Land that never changes*, Seoul: Naewoe press, 1995, 31.
[42] Bruce E. Bechtol, *Defiant failed State, the North Korean threat to international security*, Potomac books, 2010.

Civil-military relations in the light of a revolutionary heritage

The complexity of the revolutionary claim in contemporary China is that during the 16th party congress in 2002, Jiang Zemin proclaimed that the party had become a ruling party, from its former status as a revolutionary party. French political scientist Jean-Francois Bayart has argued that twentieth-century post-revolutionary regimes are best understood in terms of the "situation thermidorienne", i.e. with reference to the 1793 episode in French history when the revolutionary government turned authoritarian to stay in power[43]. According to him, revolutionary regimes such as the PRC or the Islamic Republic of Iran use the historical episode of the revolution as a political asset that they exploit to ensure regime survival. This argument needs to be nuanced, however, if applied to contemporary Chinese history.

In the French revolutionary wars (1792-1802)[44] and the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945), the French and Chinese revolutionaries made claims to universality. In a crucial difference, however, the CCP had an army before it founded a state, and the priority for the Chinese revolutionaries was to establish military organization. A new military cemented by the values of the Republic came out of the French revolution, but it was not embedded, as was the PLA, in revolutionary methods of organization. The modes of commitment of the new regimes to the population were also different: whereas French royalty acknowledged élite interest via the *cahiers de doléances*, the Chinese communists mobilized the peasantry by providing means of control, through the "mass

[43] Jean-François Bayart, *Le Concept de situation thermidorienne*, Question de recherche, 2008.

[44] Whereas Anglo-Saxon historiography labels the 1792-1802 wars Napoleonic wars, in French historiography they are conceived of as revolutionary wars waged by the new-born Republic against the European monarchical order.

line"[45]. In 1789 France, the Third Estate allied with members of the clergy to serve as representatives of the people. They founded the Republic by a constitutional agreement, the *serment du jeu de paume*. The need for the "people in arms" to defend their revolutionary state against a monarchical international order in 1792 could well have been a historical contingency. In contrast, armed conflict was a condition necessary to the communist victory, which led to the foundation of the new China in 1949.

Military victory also played a foundational role for the Islamic Republic of Iran and for Israel, maintaining the armed forces at the center of state identity. An overview of modernization in Israel and Iran may therefore provide insights into the way that the PLA has consolidated and established its own revolutionary heritage. The PRC, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel were all established in the twentieth century by a head of state who considered that the military's adherence to the moral cause of the revolution was essential for the survival of the new regime: in 1938, Mao explained that military political work was the "life line" of the PLA; in 1948, Ben Gurion united Israel's various paramilitary armed forces into the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) upon the establishment of the state of Israel by the Zionist movement [46]; and in 1979 Khomeini founded the IRGC as "the Guardians of the revolution". The PLA, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the IDF are all endowed with ideological mandates described in official texts and debates[47], making them active representatives of their nations, rather than simple safeguards. Although Iran and Israel describe

[45] Roy Bin Wong, C*hina Transformed, Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, 258.

[46] Ben Gurion defined Zionism as a "continuous revolution, lasting for generations, carried out not by government seizure, but by gradual, progressive empowerment gathering momentum", Ben-Gurion archives, speeches, September 9, 1944, as quoted by Amir Bar-or in Constantine P. Danopoulos, *Civil-Military Relations, Nation-Building and National Identity*, 2004.

[47] In China, the first official guidelines governing military political work were promulgated in 1929.

themselves as democracies whereas China is a single-party state, differences in political regimes have not been significant in terms of civilian control over the military.

In Iran, the revolution was at the center of the debate about the legitimacy of the new regime; it became a political asset conferring popular support and institutional legitimacy when the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution was ratified in 1979. The military managed to capture and cultivate a discourse over the national revolution, setting the terms of a debate which attracted other, less successful political organizations: "In the realm of paramilitary groups, the IRGC was not without its fair share of competitors in enforcing revolutionary ideals, particularly from the *komitehs* (committees). These were freelance bands of local Islamists who arrogated to themselves the power of justice and administration (…). Another variant of these local-level organizations were the "revolutionary tribunals" that operated *de facto* courts around the country."[48] The IRGC used the frontline role it played in the war with Iraq to claim the dominant role in the national revolution.

A feature common to Chinese and Israeli civil-military relations is the central role of ideology in defining the mandates of the political and the military sphere[49]. In the first two decades of the state of Israel (1948-68), although the political system was democratic, civil-military relations were overseen by one single dominant party, the socialist party Mapai[50]. Then the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) had a structure very similar to the PLA's General Political Department (GPD): the Servicemen's Department, which served as a channel between the Mapai party and the military as it ensured recruitment and controlled promotion. This department defined the military's

[48] Frederic Wherey, Jerrold D. Green, Nichiporuk Brian, Nader Alireza, *The Rise of the Pasdaran*, 2009, RAND, 23.
[49] Dan Horowitz and Lissak Moshe, *Trouble in Utopia,* 1989, State University of New York Press, 106.
[50] Ben Gurion's political party which dominated Israeli politics until its merger into the Israeli Labor Party in 1968.

esprit de corps. "One recruitment method employed by Mapai in the fifties and sixties was providing such personal services as assistance in housing, employment, health, welfare and education to party members and supporters. The Servicemen's Department used the same methods with servicemen."[51] In the Chinese context, these welfare functions, which I shall describe in subsequent chapters, are all provided by the PLA GPD. The difference between the IDF and the PLA is that Mapai kept the existence of the Israeli Servicemen's Department secret whereas the GPD is one of the four headquarters of the PLA.

Social scientist Amos Perlmutter proposed a model of the "professional revolutionary soldier"[52] based on the Chinese and Israeli experiences of the army founding new states in the twentieth century. In this model, the military "is anticorporate and represents no social class"[53]. Rather than posing a threat to civilian authority, the professional revolutionary soldier embodies the egalitarian political ideal which legitimizes the new state: socialism in the PRC and Zionism in Israel. "The army has no independent role or *raison d'être* of its own[54]." Contrary to the assumptions of Professionalism theory, rather than impeding military professionalization, this revolutionary political identity has in fact promoted it by strengthening the soldier's sense of responsibility toward the state. "The revolutionary soldier derives his corporate orientation, not from his professional function, but from the symbiotic relationship between the soldier and the regime."[55] In other words, revolutionary armies have a stake in the consolidation of the regime they help bring to power. The PLA shows that a country's military can become professional under single-party control.

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[51] Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Ballots*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 66.
[52] Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in modern Times: on Professionals, praetorians and revolutionary soldiers*, Yale university press, 1977.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., chapter VIII.
[55] Ibid., 207.

Research question and arguments

In the PRC, the military is perhaps the last state institution where the vanguard principle remains vibrant and operational: there, the revolution [革命化, *geminghua*] is still upheld as the principle driving modernization. The military's abiding presence in the revolution preserves the capacity for social structuring that Perry defines as one of the main features of Mao's revolutionary state. As introduced on page three, my research question is therefore: *how has the maintenance of PLA political work, concurrent with military professionalization, contributed to authoritarian resilience (1985-2010)?*

Contrary to the predictions of scholars writing under the influence of Huntington's Professionalism theory, the process of military professionalization has not led to China's democratization. First, I need to establish a correlative relationship between political work and military professionalization. Second, I need to show how the adaptation of political work to military professionalization has sustained single-party rule.

How has party penetration into the armed forces accommodated PLA professionalization?

The first account of PLA political work [政治工作, *zhengzhi gongzuo*] in English was published in 1971 by Ying-Mao Kau *et al.*[56] The authors describe how the CCP used the PLA as "a multi-functional instrument" to establish the new state. In their description, the party infiltrated the military for two reasons. On the one hand, political

[56] Ying-Mao Kau, Paul Chancellor, Philip E. Ginsburg and Pierre M. Perrolle, *The Political Work System of The Chinese Communist Military, Analysis And Documents,* East Asia Language Center, Brown University, 1971.

commissars fulfiled a military role within the command system as the executive officers in charge of discipline and welfare. Military political work was instituted after the party congress convened in Gutian (Fujian province) in 1929. While defining political education of the troops as the condition necessary to the success of the revolution[57], the Gutian conference's resolution (1930) also restricted voting in the army to cadres who served as representatives of the soldiers. This representative process served as the basis for a system of political commissars, which was established with the General Political Department in 1932. In their description of the political work system before the Cultural Revolution, Ying-Mao Kau *et al.* located the specificity of this mode of party control of the armed forces in "the front committee."

On the other hand, military party committees mobilized the PLA for the development of "virgin lands, capital construction, engineering projects, manpower training, literacy campaigns and farm work"[58] in peacetime. Written during the Cultural Revolution, this book relates the commitment of the PLA to implementing CCP projects to the technique of mass mobilization, abandoned after Mao.

PLA political work encompasses the protean range of activities falling under the PLA's GPD [总政治部, *zong zhengzhi bu*]. I understand PLA political work to be ensured by cadres (*zhengzhi ganbu*) belonging to the internal political structure of the PLA. It must be understood in terms of two poles of activity: 'inward' and 'outward'. In the strict sense, PLA political work is 'inward' and serves to implement party policy within the military institution. While the PLA political cadres' responsibility is at once pedagogical and organizational, their prerogatives are precisely circumscribed within the military chain of command.

[57] Ibid., 32.
[58] Ibid.

'Outward' political work refers to the PLA GPD's activities outside of the boundaries of the military sphere. The party set in place the institution of 'mutual support' [双拥工作], referring to the coordination between local governments and military district commands to ensure PLA integration in the life of the civilian community where the troops are stationed. Within this framework, the military, among other activities, provided poverty alleviation in the most deprived parts of the country and disaster relief. Finally, since 1984, the military has also been teaching a course of theoretical and physical military instruction referred to as 'defense education' in civilian universities[59].

The leadership's decision to send troops to suppress what was fundamentally a peaceful protest in Beijing in 1989 was a test for the party's structure of control over the armed forces. David Shambaugh used Huntington's Professionalism theory as an implicit template to argue that some commanders' refusal to use force meant that party control over the military was eroding[60]. This scholar articulates the dominant view that Tiananmen was a mere parenthesis in the PLA professionalization process entailing independence of the military from the party[61]. Similarly, Paul Godwin has used the notion of a Praetorian Guard to characterize the pattern of military high-level appointments in China after the crackdown at Tiananmen in 1989[62]. The problem with Godwin's framework is that it implies that the CCP's political power can be encroached upon by other interest groups, whereas it is actually a monopolistic single party-state. Furthermore, defining the PLA as a Praetorian Guard does not account for a political

[59] Hu 2008.

[60] David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military, Progress, Problems and Prospects*, University of California Press, 2002, 31: "By 1997-98, however, symbiosis had faded".

[61] In David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military, Progress, Problems and Prospects*, University of California Press, 2002, he clearly follows the assumption of Huntington's Professionalism Theory according to which military professionalization requires objective civilian control.

[62] Paul H. B. Godwin, "Party-military Relations", in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar eds., *The Paradox of China's post-Mao Reforms*, Harvard University Press, 1999, 77-99.

identity of the military that would promote both military professionalism and single-party rule.

Actually, 'political work' was institutionalized in the PLA in 1977, as part of the effort to professionalize the education of rank-and-file soldiers. This fact is particularly striking: as professionalization entailed the decision to cut personnel by one million men in 1984, there was clearly an opportunity at this time to eradicate the PLA political department's hierarchy of cadres parallel to the military chain of command, rather than to institutionalize it. Yet instead of disappearing like other forms of party penetration in society, such as the *danwei*[63], political work has been integrated in the professionalized military curriculum. The ruling-party has provided servicemen with a political education and then deployed them within Chinese society at large. As a result, the PLA as an institution has gained the status of representative of the state. For example, the PLA promoted the party's nationwide reforms, particularly market liberalization, by producing consumer goods in the 1990s. Hence I propose to examine PLA political work 1) as a discipline within the curriculum for military study and education and; 2) as the institutional bond linking the PLA and local governments in providing welfare as well as military training in civilian universities and participation in public events [双拥工作].

My thesis will consider how the GPD has dealt with responsibility (chapter I), corporateness (chapter II) and expertise (chapter III), the three dimensions of professionalization. Although I contest Huntington's Professionalism theory according to which a professional military needs the control of a democratic state, I take seriously the three elements he deems constitutive of the military as a profession. First,

[63] The basic unit of social organization under party control at the level of the work-unit, providing social welfare and monitoring workers.

Huntington defines the expertise of a professional military as "the management of violence."[64] Officers are dedicated to their craft, which does not prepare them for political decision-making. Second, the military has a responsibility toward society. Like the teaching, medical and legal professions, the value of the military profession lies in its role as a social cornerstone. This is what distinguishes a profession from other occupations. Whereas physicians and teachers serve individual persons, military officers protect society as represented by the state. Third, corporatism is the self-sustaining identity of a professional military separating it from its environment. Huntington presents discipline and respect for the hierarchy as the values constituting the officers corps.

There is no equivalent in Chinese for the idea designated by the word 'profession.' Instead, high-level officers use terms such as "occupation [生涯]"[65] or "line of business [业务]"[66] to refer to their career and the PLA newspapers call "vocation" [取业][67] the servicemen's completion of a course of training. These terms convey a sense of purpose related to a corporate entity. The relationship of the military corps to the state in communist China however, is also linked to the ideology of socialism and its transformations over time.

[64] Huntington uses Harold Lasswell's definition of military expertise. Cf Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State, the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Harvard University Press, 1957, 11.
[65] Liu 2007, 30: "在我的革命生涯中，这是一段难以忘怀的日子。"
[66] Qiu 2008, 3.
[67] 姚有志，"军队政治教育的主旋律 – 国防教育"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 3, 8: "革命军人的取业是姓'军'的，世界观也应以'军'的标准来要求." Also see *Navy* 1992, no. 3, 28.

What kind of support has the professionalized PLA provided to the party-state?

Chinese observers concur that while the functioning and capabilities of the PLA have been renewed in the 1980s, the civil-military connection embodied in political work provides continuity between the revolutionary army and the professionalized PLA[68]. The educational discipline of political work designed for soldiers includes a course in military history and civics, as well as expositions of the party's role in army-building and the military's role in the history of China's nation-building. Through political work, the soldier becomes a "revolutionary soldier [革命军人]"[69]. The educational content of political work correlates military professionalization and consolidation of CCP rule. Political cadres do not only give lectures in ideological indoctrination, they also exercise surveillance over the officers and rank-and-file. The purpose is to monitor the process of professionalization and to prevent the PLA from becoming independent of the party as its corporate identity grows.

Military units at the level of brigade and above have a political bureau which is run by the PLA's GPD. The four headquarters of the PLA also have a political bureau each. For example, the PLA's General Logistics Department [总后勤部, *zong houqin bu*] has political bureaus at each level of its activities. Thus the GPD actually acts as a network integrating the PLA into a whole.

The ruling party has needed the professional PLA to implement its political agenda, rather than using it as a mere Praetorian guard. Subordination of military reform to the party line is not only a sign of strong civilian control, but also of the

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68 August 27th, 2009 author's interview with Niu Zhongjun [牛仲君], associate Professor at the China Foreign Affairs University.

69 姚有志，"军队政治教育的主旋律 – 国防教育", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 3, 8.

importance of the PLA for the new party ideology stressing social stability[70]. This is evident in the way in which the CCP has built up a domestic security apparatus, under the aegis of the Ministry of National Security. Symptomatic of a growing concern about security on the part of the ruling party, the Ministry of State Security and the People's Armed Police (PAP) were established in 1983. The PAP reports to both the State Council and the Central Military Commission (CMC[71]). This subordination makes it an integral part of the PRC's armed forces and as such it participates in political work.

Along with this role in domestic security, PLA political work in the reform era has also had a wider educational purpose. Contrary to the expectations of Professionalism theory, the PLA's enhanced combat capacity has not isolated it from society. Instead, as noted above, the party has emphasized the PLA's identity as a classless revolutionary force with a presence and activities in the wider society, encouraging its cooperation with the civilian authorities at the local level of government and imposing compulsory military instruction on all university students. Rather than instituting universal military service[72], the Chinese government has chosen to send servicemen to civilian universities, ensuring the integration of military education in a civilian context.

Political work is also a specialized career track within the military. By integrating political work into the military curriculum, the Chinese party-state presents the army corps as a key elite of the nation, on the same level as the party elite. Middle-rank

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70 Cf Deng Xiaoping's 1980 speech on "Implement the policy of readjustment, ensure stability and unity": "To ensure stability and unity, I suggest that state organizations adopt appropriate laws and decrees calling for mediation in order to avoid strikes by workers or students", in Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works (19750-1982)*, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1984, 352.

71 There are both a government CMC and a party CMC, but the former is widely considered as a mascarade as it is actually staffed by the same people as the latter. In this paper, "CMC" systematically refers to the party Central Military Commission.

72 Similarly, in France in 1998, President Chirac transformed the former compulsory military service into the requirement for all young adults to attend just one day of military induction.

servicemen can thus opt to train at one of the two PLA political colleges established in Nanjing and Xi'an in 1977, and eventually at the National Defense University in Beijing. Their subsequent role is to convey the changes in party ideology relevant to military modernization, from "Seeking truth from facts" (Deng Xiaoping) to "The Three Represents" (Jiang Zemin), to "Scientific development" (Hu Jintao). In this way, specially trained political officers translate the party line defining the national development strategy into policies specific to military modernization.

In the 1980s, the military's discourse of the nation revolved around the idea of *guojiahua* [国家化, "unification of the state"]. Referring to the evolution of China's ideologically-driven political regime toward a more procedural type of governance, *guojiahua*[73] is a norm for regulating reform. Hence *guojiahua* refers to the role of military reform in the overall modernization of the Chinese state. For necessities of translation, I adopt the term "state-consolidation" to render the meaning of *guojiahua*. *Guojiahua* is not in opposition to Marxism-Leninism, but rather integrates the Maoist legacy into a dynamic of authoritarian resilience. In the 2000s, the development of the military discourse at the higher echelons of the PLA GPD converged with a renewal of party ideology culminating with Hu Jintao's program of "scientific development"[74]. In short, military professionalization has served to consolidate the regime rather than paving the way to democracy, as Professionalism theory had predicted.

[73] *Guojiahua* was first coined by Andrew Scobell in Nan Li (ed.), *Chinese Civil-Military Relations: the Transformation of the PLA*, London: Routledge, 2006.
[74] 科学发展观, *kexue fazhan guan.*

Methodology and sources

The dissertation is based on heuristic research[75] using a historical methodology. As explained above, I endeavor to explain why military professionalization has not been associated with democratization in China. The main contribution of the thesis is to demonstrate the linkages between military professionalization and PLA political work, two phenomena which previous scholarship has largely deemed incompatible.

• To support my arguments about civilian control, I employ the congruence method[76]. My working hypothesis is that the PRC has shown a capacity for ideological renewal and hence for sustained momentum as a revolutionary state. Whereas Professionalism theory predicted that the subjective civilian control of the party would turn the army into a Praetorian guard, the professionalized PLA remains an ideological vanguard, in which professionalization is conceived in terms of "excellence" [优化, *youhua*], including ideological excellence.

I use four major kinds of sources. First, I exploit the histories of PLA political work, issued by the PLA publishing houses. A major component of professionalization is the centralization of officer training (cf. chapter I). Therefore examining the way that the leading academies convey political work is key to tracing the adaptation of this aspect of the training to the development of a professional military career. Both the National Defense University and the Academy of Military Science have publishing houses (respectively National Defence University Press [国防大学出版社, *guofang daxue*

[75] George Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005, 75.
[76] Ibid., 191 – 204.

chubanshe] and Military Science Press [军事科学出版社]). Publications from these institutions suggest that military political work has helped sustain a Marxist-Leninist framework for rule.

Second, I supplement this account of the organizational function of political work with 1) 24 interviews with (former) political officers and foreign military attachés in Beijing; 2) textbooks for PLA political cadres, which essentially consist in case studies of their work. Members of the Chinese armed forces are not allowed to speak to foreigners in a formal setting[77], therefore I had to rely on informal networks as well as official introductions from the French embassy[78], as well as Professors from Nanjing University, Tsinghua University, and Nankai University to organize interviews[79]. The interviews were semi-structured.

Finally, my main sources for testing the pertinence of my argument about civilian control is the *Political Work Periodical* [政工导刊，*Zhenggong dao kan*], the newspaper on PLA political work published by the PLA Xi'an political college, and *China's Military Law*. The content analysis of 1987-2004 issues of these newspapers, focusing on 'political work', were key in my argument.

• To examine the outward dimension of PLA political work, the PLA's cooperation with local governments and its involvement in higher education will serve as case studies. In the realm of local governance, I look at the institution of 'mutual support' [双拥工作]. First, I study transfers between localities and garrisons. Second, I

[77] David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China", *The China Quarterly* 127, 1991, 527-568.
[78] I owe thanks to Lieutenant Nadia Piercy, military attaché for the air force at the French embassy in Beijing in 2009-2012.
[79] I particularly thank 黄健荣, Professor of public administration at Nanjing University. The Professors affiliated to the other universities mentioned wished to remain anonymous.

focus on the role that stationed troops play in the provision of infrastructure and welfare at the provincial level[80]. I also study the activity of People's Armed Forces Departments during the SARS epidemic in 2003.

In the realm of higher education, practical [军训, *junxun*] and theoretical [军事理论, *junshi lilun*] military classes were introduced in the undergraduate civilian universities' curriculum in 1984. On the basis of government yearbooks, I will describe the enactment (1984) and amendment (2001) of the laws establishing these courses. Then I will present the syllabus of the theoretical class as it is taught at Tsinghua, Beida and Nanjing Universities, three prestigious institutions of higher education in China.

Finally, I conduct 29 in-depth interviews with students who have attended these classes at top-level universities all over the country, from Xiamen to Wuhan to Guangzhou, to Tsinghua. I select a sample of highly educated students (young people who are now graduate students and have been exposed to foreign students) to get an understanding of how the young generation, who is destined for elite positions within Chinese society, perceives PLA political work.

• To explore the role of the PLA in the provision of ideological support for the party, I first compare the emergence of new policy ideas in internal party journals such as *Qiushi* [求是] with internal military journals (国防, *guofang* and 政工导刊, *Zhenggong daokan*). Second, I will also look at the statements of higher PLA officers speaking from their official positions, either within the military institution or in the public media. To put this discourse in perspective, I will compare publications openly available in

[80] In this respect, official records for three specific provinces were available at the National Library of China: Shandong ["山东双拥"], Jiangxi ["军民鱼水情"] and Yunnan ["双拥潮涌"].

bookstores and libraries in China with classified books[81] on political work available in Taiwan. This comparison should help clarify the consistency of PLA inward political work (educating soldiers and preparing them for combat) with PLA outward political work in wider society. If the discourse is consistent, then that suggests that the CCP relies heavily on the military institution's prestige to maintain the one-party regime.

Note on primary sources

Newspapers

The bulk of my research is based on the various newspapers published by the PLA itself: *The Political Work Periodical* [政治导刊], *The Journal of the Nanjing Political College* [南京政治学院学报], *National Defense* [国防], *China's Military Law*, *Seaman* [水兵], *Life at the Frontier* [边防生活]，*The Northern Chinese Militia* [华北民兵] and *The Northeastern Militia* [东北民兵]. *The Political Work Periodical* and *The Journal of the Nanjing Political College* provide an excellent description of the content and methods of military political work. *National Defense*, *Seaman* and *Life at the Frontier* give real examples of the way that the party uses the political education taught in the PLA to promote its policies. In addition to party journals such as 求是 (*Qiushi*), 红旗文稿 (*Hongqi wengao*) and *The Guangming Daily* [光明日报], these produce the 'official' view of the way that political work has evolved in the reform era. As my interest is in the transfers of ideology between party and military institutions, this restriction to officialdom should not pose a problem.

Both high-level figures and anonymous soldiers reporting experiences to their

[81] 内部 (*neibu*, for internal military use).

troops' political bureaus used party and military newspapers to discuss state ideology and shape slogans. Military newspapers were the main vehicle for the party to transmit policy to the troops but also a forum for discussion where servicemen expressed their views. The CMC had published the flagship *PLA Daily* steadily since 1956. Bottom-up critiques of party leadership had been a central part of military political work since the Mao era, as archives dating from before the Cultural Revolution show. Then, the GPD published a *Bulletin of Activities* addressed to political commissars. It relayed the latest CMC directives and gave advice about how to deal with archetypical situations of servicemen's discontent. For example, in the 1961 issue of the GPD's *Bulletin of Activities*, a political commissar reported on the low morale of his troops as follows: "problems center around the following four issues: food, rural life, the difference between urban and rural life and between workers and farmers, and market supply. The soldier Tung Fang-Hui said: 'Chairman Mao lives in Peking. Does he know about rural life?"[82] Even though the GPD considered the gathering of such testimonies as one of its key responsibilities, the issue of disclosure was sensitive. In 1961, the GPD restricted its *Bulletin* to internal circulation only, until it was finally closed down during the Cultural Revolution.

Nevertheless, Deng Xiaoping himself emphasized the role of these newspapers as signalling devices in the process of the formulation of the party line[83]. At the level of Military Region (MR), political departments also issued their own newspapers. *The Northeastern Militia* for Shenyang began publication in 1958[84] but all the other regional periodicals dedicated to the militia date from the late 1980s or after. The Lanzhou MR launched *Defense in Yunnan* [云南国防], in 1988. *The Life of the Militia* [民兵生活] for

[82] The London-Cornell project, *Chinese People's Liberation Army General Political Department*, 24.
[83] Deng 2007, 171. The example he takes is *The Guangming Daily*.
[84] Cf. *The Northeast Reserve Force*, 2003, no. 3, table of contents.

Guangzhou published its first issue in 1987 and *The Northern Chinese Militia* [华北民兵] for Beijing and *Life at the Frontier* [边防生活] for Lanzhou started in 2000. In addition to regional diversity, the advantage of PLA internal newspapers issued by the GPD is that they present the under-documented perspective of mid-ranking officers.

Gazeteers and other official publications

During the long time that I spent reading these newspapers at the Universities Services Center (USC) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, I was fortunate enough to have been granted access to the primary sampling units of the stratified random sample of China that was the basis for the "China survey" conducted collaboratively between Texas A&M University and Peking University. These 75 local gazeteers, which can be considered to be representatives of China as a whole, provided an invaluable record of institutional life at the county level, from 1949 to the late 1990s. I used this data to check the chronology of programs and institutions. It proved most useful as a record of the integration of stationed troops in civilian life at the local level and I am ever thankful to Professor Pierre Landry for sharing them with me.

The proliferation of Chinese literature on PLA political work is a challenge. I rely on electronic databases of archives and journals, as well as books published by the PLA. As PLA analyst Evan E. Medeiros has noted[85], some publishing houses such as Military Science Press [军事科学院出版社] are more representative of the Chinese military institution than others like PLA Press [解放军出版社]. I confirm this assertion, because the Academy of Military Science indeed publishes a set of designated authors,

[85] Evan E. Medeiros, "Undressing the Dragon", in James Mulvenon, *A Poverty of Riches, New Challenges*, RAND, 2003.

such as 姜思毅, as opposed to anonymous texts. I focus on authors trained in the PLA political department who are cited within the "military political work" literature and base this research on Chinese-language open sources available in libraries and specialized bookstores (such as the PLA bookstore in Beijing) in China.

I was able to read a limited number of books published for internal military circulation [内部], which provide additional detail about the PLA professionalization process. When I started on this project, one of my aims was to see whether the PLA had two different discourses, one that would be directed at a wider Chinese audience and one directed at military personnel only. Today I can confidently say that there is no such dichotomy, contrary to the conventional view. Thus one of the main conclusions of this thesis is that the PLA's discourse is consistent across audiences. Classified sources provide more details and different formulations, but nothing that contradicts publicly available sources.

Other relevant documents include White Papers published every two years since 1998, military laws[86] and regulations, and newspaper articles. I will examine China's new military strategy and officers' biographies of prominent military figures who were proponents of professionalization such as Liu Huaqing. Finally, my analysis will consider speeches from political leaders, most notably Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, and Chinese Ministers of Defence.

[86] 中华人民共和国法律通典, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo falu tongdian*.

Chapter outlines

PART I: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL WORK IN CHINESE MILITARY PROFESSIONALIZATION

The political education of soldiers is a key component of military professionalization in China. The first part of the research explains the purpose and methods of political work in the internal organization of the PLA. While chapter 1 is indeterminate in time, chapters 2 and 3 trace processes of military professionalization that developed during the Deng and Jiang eras, respectively.

Chapter 1: The nature of the military's responsibility in the People's Republic of China

Chapter 1 examines the meaning and modalities of 'military political work' in the PRC. I contest the use of Professionalism theory as formulated by Huntington and his followers to account for PLA modernization. Political work has been part of military professionalization in China; the purpose of the PLA's political training at the grassroots level has been to increase the soldier's combat capacity by raising his political awareness. It is part of a theory of political power dominated by the dictatorship of the proletariat entailing a centralization of command correlated with the dissemination of party committees at each level of the military chain of command.

Chapter 2: The 'revolution' in military training

This chapter considers the historical role of PLA political work, in adapting party

policy to military modernization, since 1987. First, I examine the contributions of the two most prominent analysts of civil-military relations: officers Liu Jingsong 刘精松[87] and Wang Zhangcun 王长存[88]. I show that political work has incorporated ideological changes into the soldiers' and the military political cadres' education. Thus it provides the Chinese military with *esprit de corps*. Relying on internal journals, I examine how the party has dealt with the ideological crisis that befell the troops in the 1980s. I show that the GPD fulfils a set of functions essential to the military establishment.

Chapter 3: Professionalizing the PLA

Chapter 3 shows that during the reform era, the party has used political education to establish a legal system in the military. Far from signalling the decline of political work, bringing the PLA under regulatory control has strengthened the function of military political cadres. Three new laws in particular, the National defence Law (1997), the National defense education Law (2001) and the Mobilization law (2010) consolidate the party's leadership over the armed forces. In this chapter, I clarify the content of these three laws and their drafting process. At the same time, the GPD has also adapted to changing patterns of warfare and played a prominent role in the PLA's new focus on psychological warfare.

87 Liu Jingsong 刘精松 's main book is 刘精松, "军事实践与思考", *Junshi shijian yu sikao*, 2nd ed. 2009.
88 Wang 2004.

PART II: THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AND 'SPIRITUAL CIVILIZATION'

The second part of the dissertation emphasizes the complexity of political work to show that it is not only a tool of the party but it also, and more importantly, contributes to the building of a civic spirit in tune with the latest 'civilisation' [文明, *wenming*] party campaign. I call these outreach activities performed by the PLA outward political work. Aiming to bolster popular support for the armed forces and the party, they take place at the local level of government, in universities, and at the international level. In each of these realms, PLA external political work differs in content and methods.

Chapter 4: Military 'mass work'

Chapter 4 presents the institution of 'mutual support' which links garrisons to the local government where they are stationed, by bringing them into local governance. Based at the county level, this cooperation includes the local governments' responsibility to provide employment to retired servicemen; the PLA political work geared at the militia; and military assistance to engineering development projects at the local level. Given that I hypothesize that PLA political work is an essential component in national unification (*guojiahua*, 国家化), the analysis of strategies for coping with regional variation is key.

Chapter 5: Defense (and) education

Students train physically for three weeks, under coaches who are in fact young soldiers. Then, for one term of study, they attend courses in military history and strategy, taught by more senior servicemen, usually retirees. The aim of the interviews which I carried out to support this chapter is to elucidate popular perceptions of the Chinese military: whether as a force for coercion or as representing and serving the people *via* political work.

Chapter 6: PLA deployed: the logics of Chinese peacekeeping

The last chapter of the thesis, chapter 6, is dedicated to the PRC peacekeeping policy since it voted in favor of a Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) at the United Nations for the first time, in 1981. Seeking to show a rationale behind China's U-turn from complete rejection to proactive involvement in PKOs, I study the Chinese discourse accounting for it. I argue that through PKOs, the PLA projects the image of China in the position of a major actor in international conflict resolution. I will mostly rely on a comparison between the outward discourse that military leaders deploy in documents such as the defense White Papers and the one that they direct inward, at the soldiers.

This dissertation builds on one particular branch of the 'authoritarian resilience' school of thought, that is Elizabeth Perry's emphasis on the long-term assessment of the Chinese revolutionary heritage, to try to outline a new understanding of civil-military relations in contemporary China. The fundamental idea of this research is that

Huntington's dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" models of civilian control of the military which has dominated the literature for over half a century does not do justice to the manner in which the single-party state relies on the PLA for institutional and ideological support. Instead, I present a mosaic of ways in which the party has put the national military forward in its domestic and even international politics to boost the CCP's contribution to national prestige. These are systematically presented as revolutionary ways because they have endowed the PLA with a social responsibility at the same time as they have promoted its professionalization.

CHAPTER I: THE MILITARY'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The system of party control over the armed forces has been crucial to the resilience of the Chinese party-state in the reform era. After the Cultural Revolution, this system, known as 'military political work', has served to strengthen the original connection between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) that had been key in the communist victory in 1949. 'Military political work' (henceforth referred to as 'political work') subsumes the array of activities conducted by the PLA's General Political Department (GPD), which was founded in 1932. These range from theoretical research on party control over the armed forces, to the elaboration of a historical narrative of the Chinese revolution, and to the management of the PLA's human resources. 'Political work' subordinates the Chinese military to the ideal of the revolution, which the party represents. Consequently, rather than focusing on the development of a self-contained officer corps, efforts to modernize the PLA have served to strengthen the doctrine and organization of the troops that subordinates them to the party.

To answer my overarching research question "*how has the maintenance of PLA political work concurrent with military professionalization contributed to the Chinese party-state's 'authoritarian resilience'?*", I need to define the nature of the PLA's responsibility toward the state. In this chapter, I will propose a preliminary definition along three lines. First, this responsibility derives from the military's involvement in the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s state-building process. Second, I will describe the doctrine which, utilizing

Marxist-Leninist ideology as elaborated by Mao Zedong and subsequent leaders, constitutes the military as a prop for single-party rule. In this doctrine, the party defines national defence as the expression of national unity linking the army to the party. Finally, I explain how the PLA's responsibility to uphold the socialist ideal is conveyed to individual servicemen through a range of inclusive practices that structure the armed forces into a top level and a grassroots level.

This chapter argues that the party has turned the experience of armed struggle, central to the foundation and institutionalization of the PRC, into a set of values used as an ethos in the national armed forces. The GPD at once ensures party control over the PLA and defines its responsibility toward the state. Thus it endorses the requirement listed in Professionalism theory, according to which a professional military ensures the functioning of society. I further discuss the historical legacy, the ideology, and the military organization of political work, to show how civil-military relations in the PRC have been determined by the ideal of the revolution, and how the PLA has, in consequence, continued to develop as a revolutionary army.

The historical role of the army in the Chinese revolutionary state

Mao's ideology emphasized "continuous revolution" and political work scholars have upheld the direct leadership of the CCP over the PLA in its name. Indeed, the Chinese military's involvement in the revolution was essential to its identity as an institution. The PLA was born as a revolutionary force in 1927, during the civil war between the communists and the nationalists. The communist guerrilla movement

became the Chinese national army through a complex historical process, which scholars have characterized as "not […] linear"[1] or as composed of "trends and counter-trends"[2]. As I will describe below, three historical legacies continue to define the responsibility of the PLA: first, the imprint on the PRC of the civil war which brought the communists to power; second, a partnership between the party and the military in state-building and; third, the symbolic importance that the Chinese soldier acquired in the communist discourse of the nation throughout the PRC's years of state-building (1949-1977).

The cradle of the civil war

In *The Legacy of the Civil War*, American poet Robert Penn Warren wrote, with reference to the American experience, that: "a civil war is, we may say, the prototype of all war, for in the persons of fellow citizens who happen to be the enemy we meet again, with the old ambivalence of love and hate and with all the old guilts, the blood brothers of our childhood."[3] There is indeed a strong ambivalence in the way that the PLA reflected on the civil war in which it was born. PLA literature emphasizes the common roots of the nationalist and communist revolutions, synthesized as "the great revolution" [大革命][4], conflating Sun Yat-Sen's nationalist revolution (1911) and Mao's proletarian revolution. In 1924, the nationalist leader Jiang Jieshi founded the Whampoa military academy, providing the Guomindang and the CCP with common military training even

[1] Thomas Bickford, "Trends in Education and Training, 1924-2007: from Whampoa to Nanjing polytechnic", in Roy Kamphausen, Scobell Andrew and Tanner Travis (eds.), *The "People" in the PLA, Recruitment, Training, and Education in China*, Strategic Studies Institute, 2008, 39.

[2] Ellis Joffe, "The military and China's new politics", available online at "http://www.randproject.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF145/CF145.chap3.pdf".

[3] Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War, Meditations on the Centennial*, New York: Vintage books, 1961, 83.

[4] Li 1998.

before the united front. Zhou Enlai was deputy director of the academy's political education department[5].

Mao appropriated the political work model that Jiang Jieshi had used for officer training at Whampoa and made it a trademark of Red Army organization. This gave rise to two practices: 1) the set-up of soldiers' committees and 2) a collective leadership, or dual command of the troops. Dual command was the major Chinese innovation as compared with Soviet party control. Thus in the early 1930s, the Red Army of Workers and Peasants was commanded by both Zhu De (commander-in-chief) and Zhou Enlai (political commissar). As the red bases expanded throughout the country, Mao Zedong assessed the superiority of the Red Army over Guomindang troops: "The newly captured soldiers in particular feel that our army and the Guomindang Army are worlds apart. They feel spiritually liberated, even though material conditions in the Red army are not equal to those in the White army. The very soldiers who had no courage in the White army yesterday are very brave in the Red army today; such is the effect of democracy. The Red army is like a furnace in which all captured soldiers are transmuted the moment they come over. In China the army needs democracy as much as the people do."[6]

During the social and political instability of the civil war (1927-1937) and the war of resistance against Japan (1937-1945), the CCP used its army to engage the peasantry in the revolution. Comparing patterns of mobilization in the communist and nationalist camps during the civil war, historian Hans Van de Ven shows that both sides depicted the military as a unifying force, to counter the disaggregating effect of warlordism. As he

[5] James Lin, "Soviet Internationalism, Chinese nationalism and early Kuomintang struggles: the origin of political indoctrination at Whampoa military academy, 1924-1926", *Berkeley Student Journal of Asian Studies*, 2010, 3.

[6] Mao Zedong, "The struggle in the Chingkang mountains", 1928, in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung*, Foreign languages press, 2nd ed. 1966, 31.

describes communist army-building in 1930, "no officer class bound together by a single esprit de corps and unified bureaucratic mechanisms of control, promotion, and rotation existed. The troops themselves came from disparate backgrounds and were characterized by strong local and personal bonds. Moreover, to survive, the party had to embed itself into the army, as the army would continue to roam around under constant threat." [7] The party set up committees within the PLA, headed by a political commissar[8]. These party committees provided soldiers with political lessons and started implementing land reform in 1940, to commit the population to the defence of China as a nation.

Civil war in 1947-1949 provided the Communists with an opportunity to develop the political experiments they had only tried out in the Southern province of Jiangxi in the 1930s. During the 1947-1949 civil war, military leader Lin Biao was in charge of both distributing land and transforming the guerilla force into a standing army. The communists used their land reform program to ensure massive army recruitment among the poor and middle peasants. For them, as Jonathan Adelman has shown, the army became both the only steady employer and a political hope in the context of the civil war and national destruction [9]. By contrast, the nationalists sought support among the politically unreliable urban commercial class and the battered rural landed elites.

The opposition of communist China to the Guomindang continued after the civil war, as the nationalist movement retreated to Taiwan. Historian Li Xiaobing suggests that the war became a pretext for the new communist government to eliminate

[7] Hans Van de Ven, "New States of war: communist and nationalist warfare and state building (1928-1934)", in Van de Ven Hans (ed.), *Warfare in Chinese History*, Brill, Leiden, 2000, 350.

[8] Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, were first political commissars in the field armies during these twenty years (1927-1949) of war.

[9] Jonathan Adelman, *The Revolutionary Armies: the historical development of the Soviet and Chinese People's Liberation Armies*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980.

the remaining GMD forces in the name of the revolution through "the campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries. The criteria of punishable crimes and sentences became clearer and noticeably harsher against former GMD officers and soldiers.[10]" During the first offshore island crisis (1954), Zhou Enlai called for the "liberation of Taiwan". When the second crisis broke out four years later, air strikes were again accompanied by a mass campaign entitled "Liberation of Taiwan" on the mainland[11]. Implying that the revolution was not yet complete, this slogan essentially linked the revolutionary nature of the Chinese army to the ongoing civil war. The existence of a competitor Chinese state gave the PLA, which had fought the Guomindang armies, a communist identity. Systematic American military protection of Taiwan has pushed the PRC to define its military stance *vis-à-vis* Taiwan in terms of the defence of Chinese sovereignty. Today, the island of Kinmen, the battlefield during both crises, is part of Fujian province but remains outside the purview of Beijing[12], and the Taiwan issue is still unresolved.

The army and state-building

In *Making Revolution*, Chen Yung-Fa argued that the PLA became the base for the fledgling communist state's bureaucracy during the war of resistance against Japan (1937-45): "With its own independent army, the New Fourth Army, organized and dispatched to the Japanese front with the aid of GMD funds and under GMD auspices, the Party occupied strategic areas and appointed administrative officers from the *ch'u* up

10 Ibid., 89-90.
11 Larry Wortzel, "China's modern conflicts since 1949", in Graff and Higham (eds.), *A military History of China*, Boulder: Westview, 2002.
12 Barthelemy Courmont, "Kinmen: la ligne de front", in *Le Monde chinois*, été 2009.

to the regional level."[13] Subsequently, most members of the Politburo standing committee were military officers. Monte Bullard showed that civilian and military positions were often held concurrently at the middle level, characterizing Chinese civil-military relations in 1960-1984 as an "interlocking directorate"[14]. Mao Zedong and the other Chinese leaders during these times dressed in military garb – presenting themselves as military heroes. In turn, military leaders took positions in the party, as Defence Minister Peng Dehuai's criticism of the Great Leap Forward[15] at the Lushan conference in 1959 illustrates.

Maintaining the identity of the PLA as the army of the Chinese people has been critical to defining the PRC as a revolutionary state. During the civil war, the Korean War (1950-1953) and the second Indochina war (1965-1975), Chinese engagement was consistently in defense of the communist cause, providing the PLA with commensurate symbolic weight. At the same time, by 1955, Peng Dehuai had put the PLA firmly on the professionalization track by developing a centralized command and logistics, formalizing conscription and phasing out the militia. However, the "Everyone a soldier" campaign, coinciding with the peak of the commune movement in 1958, reversed this professionalization process. "Everyone a soldier" established the common soldier as the epitome of socialist conduct by making not only peasants, but also officers serve as privates for a month every year, to learn from the soldier[16]. Thus party-army relations did not merely consist in unilateral party control, but party campaigns also served to strengthen the unity of the party with the army from the bottom up.

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[13] Chen Yung-Fa, *Making Revolution, the Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China: 1937-1945*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, 499.

[14] Monte R. Bullard, *China's Political-Military Evolution: the Party and the Military in the PRC, 1960-1984*, Boulder: Westview, 1985, 41.

[15] Mao's industrial plan (1957-1961) at the origin of the largest man-made famine in history.

[16] Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China, from Revolution through reform*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 2nd ed. 2004.

The PLA as a whole was a force of moderation in times of inner-party conflict[17]. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Mao and other leaders used the military to buffer the escalation of radicalism. The PLA was the only state institution that Premier Zhou Enlai prevented Mao's radical wife Jiang Qing from attacking. Officers were asked to set up revolutionary committees[18] that would restore order *danwei* by *danwei*, replacing the 'mass organizations' that were causing havoc. In 1966, the supreme party leader Mao Zedong mobilized the armed forces *against* the party apparatus, bringing officers into the central political leadership. As a result, by 1970, they formed three quarters of the Central Committee membership[19]. The divisions in the civilian leadership were reflected in the PLA, and the military's response was not univocal when revolutionary committees took over local governments in 1967. Some officers refused to sit on these committees. When a regional command supported the local Maoist faction, as in Shanxi province, it was not necessarily unanimous. Ellis Joffe argues that at that time "when political controls in the PLA were largely inactive, it was professionalism and its basic values – such as discipline, commitment to national unity and identity of interests – that constituted a countervailing force to tendencies which could have endangered China's unity."[20] Indeed, the appointment of Wei Guoqing, one of the few members of the ninth CCP central committee not purged during the Cultural Revolution, to head the PLA GPD in 1977, ensured continuity.

The authority crisis between the military and the party at Tiananmen in 1989 was not structurally different from the tensions between elites during the Cultural Revolution. It reflected conflict between the military and the party, but more

17 Yue Zhongqiang, *Jundui zhengzhi gongzuo xue*, 2008, 98.
18 Jurgen Domes, "The role of the military in the formation of revolutionary committees 1967-68", *China Quarterly*, no. 44, 1970, 112-145.
19 Jurgen Domes, *China after the Cultural Revolution*, London: C. Hurst, 1976.
20 Ellis Joffe, "Party-army relations in China: retrospect and prospect", in Shambaugh (ed.), *China's military in transition*, 1997, 40.

importantly, conflicts within both the military and the party. According to June Teufel Dreyer, the root of the crisis was the transition from Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin, the first leader without military credentials to be appointed both CCP General Secretary and chairman of the Central Military Commission[21]. In 1989, the year of his appointment, the party leadership was divided into conservatives led by Deng and liberals such as Zhao Ziyang. On the army side, officers such as Marshal Nie Rongzhen and General Xu Qinxian resisted the order to use force against demonstrators, in opposition to Marshal Yang Baibing. After the crackdown, Deng Xiaoping put Yang Baibing in charge of the PLA GPD, where he purged lower-level dissident officers. In 1992, it was clear that Yang Baibing had been using this anti-dissident propaganda effort in the military following Tiananmen to serve his personal political ambition. Deng had to dismiss him to prevent a coup against his successor Jiang Zemin[22]. This political elimination resembled that of Defence Minister Lin Biao in 1971, who also had taken the lead of the PLA GPD after the Cultural Revolution.

The evolution of the military institution, in terms of organization and staff, influenced the style of decision-making in the PRC apparatus under Mao. Evan Feigenbaum has characterized the role of army-building as "developmental"[23] throughout the state-building period of the PRC (1947-1966). He notes that senior military leaders made the case for prioritizing the domestic production of strategic weapons, on the basis of positive knock-on effects for overall national development, a policy he terms "technonationalism"[24]. Marshal Nie Rongzhen, in particular, emphasized potential transfers of technologies from the military to the civilian sector to

[21] June Teufel Dreyer, "Recent developments in the Chinese Military", in David A. Graff and Higham Robin, *A Military History of China*, Westview, 2002.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Evan Feigenbaum, "Soldiers, weapons and China's development strategy: the Mao era military in China's institutional debate", in *The China Quarterly*, no. 158, 1999, 285-313.
[24] Ibid., 297.

promote the upgrade of military equipment. Feigenbaum further argues that the military's focus on research and development forced the government's bureaucracy to be more flexible and inclusive. National defence and the need for strategic weaponry kept the military comparatively safe from ideological criticism. As a result, by the end of the 1960s, the PLA was sufficiently integrated in the PRC's institutional set-up and had enough leverage to experiment with institutional innovations linking bureaucracies in the armed forces with civilian research centers and posting technical experts in administrative positions, a model which would later be emulated in the civilian public sector.

The soldier in CCP propaganda

As the People's Republic of China was building up (1949-1976), although cadres from the military such as Zhu De, Lin Biao, Tao Zhu[25], Chen Boda, Li Xiannian and Ye Jianying held high positions in the state structure, the PRC never became a military government. Instead, a subtle interplay of power entwined party and army. This interdependence shaped the Chinese polity under Mao along two main lines. First, it informed the official discourse of the nation: the ruling party held the army up as a source of civic value, as the 1960s slogan, "Learn from the PLA in political and ideological work", illustrates. Second, the overlapping of civil and military positions, together with ideological and organizational debates about the PLA, became central in the national political agenda. I shall consider these two aspects in turn.

The PLA's role as founder of the nation is ensconced in the narrative about the

[25] Secretary of the Guangdong provincial committee and commander of the Guangzhou military region in the 1960s.

first communists, notably through the central place of the Long March initiated by Zhou Enlai in 1934. Lin Biao, Peng Dehuai, Zhang Guotao, Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, who would become the leaders of the PRC, led communist troops across 6,000 miles of the motherland, on foot. From the consequence of shattering defeat, the march became an epical victory. For Andrew Scobell, it was the fount of political unification, conferring legitimacy upon China's future elite and providing the Chinese people with a model of mass organization and hard work[26]. The Long March consecrated a direct link between physical exertion and intimate bonding between the people and the land. It represents territorial integration as the revolutionary soldier represents social integration.

The revolutionary soldier even came to have a name: Lei Feng [雷锋]. A veritable emanation of the communist party, the orphan Lei Feng died by accident while directing a military truck. Most likely, Lei Feng never existed and his diary, testifying devotion to Chairman Mao, was fabricated[27]. Minister of Defence Lin Biao nevertheless made him the centre of a mass campaign called "Learn from comrade Lei Feng"[28] in 1963. The campaign was directed at youth, but actually exhorted the whole of society to emulate socialist behaviour. Thus Lei Feng was an idealized figure, alongside the model worker and the model woman. His story resurfaced in the party's discourse in 1973[29] and again in 1993. Even though he was always represented as a soldier in arms, Lei Feng was never brought to the forefront as a representative of military power. His appearance in political campaigns was rather the sign of the political

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26 Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of military Force*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 47.

27 J. Domes, in *China after the Cultural Revolution*, *Politics between two party congresses*, C. Hurst, 1975, suggests Lin Biao as the instigator.

28 John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, London: Oxford University press, 1967, 253.

29 That is two years after Lin Biao's death, which shows the resilience of the Lei Feng myth, surviving his presumed instigator.

leadership moving left.

The model soldier is the image of Chinese nationalism. Lei Feng synthesized the traits that Benedict Anderson recognizes as core elements of nationalist imaginings[30]: the presence of death in the youth's tragic destiny; the wide diffusion of his image *via* industrially printed propaganda posters; and finally his plain features, those of an abstract 'everyman' with which all members of the community could identify. His value was not exemplified in glorious feats of war, but in stalwart loyalty and hard work. In Louise Edwards' words, Lei Feng's short life is characterized by "a distinct dearth of a military heroism derived from wartime action."[31] More than a representation of military prowess, Lei Feng embodies devotion to the public interest. His example constitutes the PLA as an intermediary between the CCP and the people.

The PLA not only synthesized all social classes in the "revolutionary soldier", it also generated the political elite. This paradox reflects the role that the PLA occupied during the revolutionary period up to the Cultural Revolution. The army constituted a reliable group guaranteeing the integrity of fundamental state institutions. At the same time, it also provided the ruling party with a basis of popular support. Until Jiang Zemin became national Chairman in 1989, the top positions of the Chinese political leadership were held by military leaders: PLA service provided political legitimacy. Scholarship has shown that Mao usurped Zhu De's role of founder of the Red Army of Workers and Peasants to buttress his political credentials[32]. Military feats thus equated public service, as reflected in the tripartite structure of the PRC putting the Central Military

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[30] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, 3rd ed. 2006, chapter II: "cultural roots", 9-36.

[31] Louise Edwards, "Military celebrity in China: the evolution of 'Heroic and model servicemen", in Louise Edwards and Jeffreys Elaine, *Celebrity in China*, 2010, 29.

[32] William Wei, "'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun': Mao and the Red Army", in David A. Graff and Higham Robin (eds.), *A military History of China*, Boulder, 2002, 231; Hu Chi-Hsi, *L'Armée rouge et l'ascension de Mao*, 1982.

Commission at the top of the state, on equal footing with the highest party organ and the executive, up to this day.

State Council of the People's Republic of China	Politburo	Central Military Commission (CMC)

Today, it can even be argued that elite-level military positions seem to follow dynastic power transfers, as Yu Shiping 于石坪[33] argued in his generational study of the most prominent PLA leaders, whom he calls "princelings."

The main transmission belt linking the ruling party and PLA training is nonetheless to be found in the culture of political work – the political education of the soldiers. Its main function – to unify the military – was a requirement of the revolution, which has persisted to this day. Today, the position of PLA political cadre [政治干部, *zhengzhi ganbu*] embodies this legacy. As Qiu Keren notes, "[for the military], the political struggle consists in being aware and ready, particularly in a complex international environment, to protect the country's interest"[34]. "The country's interest" is defined by the party ideology, which PLA political cadres convey to the troops, and is shaped by the interpenetration of the military and politics.

To conclude, the formative period of the PRC (1927-77) left two imprints on the PLA, which established its responsibility. First, the PRC was born out of a civil war which the CCP won because it had the organizational capacity necessary to integrate the nationalists' political claims into the ideology of the new Leninist state; this conflated military victory with the foundation of a new nation. Second, by relying on the

[33] Yu 2010.
[34] Qiu 2008, 116.

military establishment to provide the political elite, the new China established itself in stark contrast to the traditional Chinese opposition between armed force and legitimate political power[35]. Devolving responsibility for values and the legitimacy of the single-party state to the figure of the soldier overthrew the traditional perception of armed force as the illegitimate power of the warlord.

The doctrine of political work [政工科学]

Why do soldiers fight? In China, this question preoccupies cadres belonging to the military, under the auspices of the PLA GPD, rather than civilian scholars. It has become the object of 'political work', a field of military science[36] distinct from military thought [军事思想] which is concerned with military history, strategy and tactics. While classes of military thought teach China's *Seven Military Classics*, political work teaches Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and Jiang Zemin's Three Represents. Political work scholars define the purpose of their discipline of study as to increase the troops' combat motivation by subordinating the military ethos to the cause of the communist revolution. Political work in the troops comprises 'ideological political work' [思想政治工作] and 'organizational political work' [组织政治工作]. The ideological component consists mainly in political indoctrination classes, or 'propaganda' [宣部], a word which also means "to publicize". This education, however, is not conceived as a way to enrol soldiers in the party. Rather, it aims to provide the troops with a purpose, to maintain national unity, and to instill values to fight for. Organizational political work refers to the penetration of the party in the armed forces, in tandem with the PLA GPD.

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35 Timothy Brook, *Quelling the People*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2nd ed. 1998, 9.
36 Cf. the charts in Ding 1996, 11 and 13.

The following section focuses on ideological political work. It explains the key role that ideology plays in the training of Chinese servicemen. First, I will present its content, which emphasizes the current function of the military as the guarantor of national unity. Second, I will explain how this doctrine was integrated into the military's professionalized curriculum.

Ideological political work: a theory of national unity

Vivienne Shue has shown that Deng Xiaoping derived the single-party's claim to power from its status as guarantor of social "stability"[37]. She situates this claim in historical continuity with late imperial Chinese statecraft when the rulers claimed legitimacy based on their ability to provide peace and order. She explains that in the twenty-first century, the production of moral values is at the center of the party's "logic of legitimation"[38], by interpreting Deng Xiaoping's call to "seek truth from facts" as a moral interpretation of modern scientific rationalism. As she puts it, "scientific knowledge is figured as morally sound"[39] because it is defined as the origin of truth. The CCP uses communist ideology to express and convey the moral values it upholds. Anne-Marie Brady emphasized the interest that Jiang Zemin took in the party's provision of political norms when he took over the CCP General Secretariat in 1989: "Unlike his predecessor Zhao Ziyang, Jiang attended all annual national propaganda meetings."[40]

The party's indoctrination program for servicemen focuses on the moral values of the communist revolution. The authoritative political work summa published by the

[37] Vivienne Shue, "Legitimacy crisis in China?", in Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (eds.), *State and Society in 21st century China*, Routledge, 2004, 29.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.

Academy of Military Science [军事科学院] (AMS) in 1997 explains the demands of revolutionary virtues as follows: "The nature of the Chinese military requires a strong commitment of revolutionary servicemen. The prerequisite is self-sacrifice. In wartime, revolutionary soldiers do not fear to shed blood to win the battle; in peacetime, they must have the courage to give up their own interest and the interest of their family to consolidate the motherland and ensure a peaceful life for the people."[41] In this book, author Jiang Siyi illustrates the value of providing soldiers with a firm ideology by arguing that the victory in the Korean War was due to its being presented to the Chinese troops as a war against imperialism. He advocates inculcating the CCP's political ideology to each individual soldier in order to unify the thinking of servicemen, a condition necessary to constitute a unified force.

The CCP has defined military defence as the responsibility to safeguard national unity. Ideological indoctrination equips servicemen with an official discourse of the nation where the proletariat is the protagonist. The military's responsibility for national unity is enunciated as *junshi guojiahua* [军事国家化]. This phrase has been mistranslated in the Western literature as "nationalization of the military" (i.e. increased subordination of the armed forces to the state as opposed to the party)[42] whereas in fact it refers to the PLA's continuous involvement in nation-building. The phrase *guojiahua* [国家化] is different from the nationwide party policy defined as 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' [中国特色社会主义][43]. Instead of focusing on the Sinic [中国] identity and the adaptation it requires from the universal Marxist theory of government,

[41] Jiang 2005, 137.

[42] David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military, Progress, Problems and Prospects*, University of California Press, 2002, chapter II and Andrew Scobell, "China's evolving civil-military relations: creeping guojiahua", in Li Nan (ed.), *Chinese civil-military relations*, 2006.

[43] Cheng 2009.

guojiahua refers to the military's participation in the national political process. 国 means "country" and 家 means "family". As the national community is conceived as an extension of the family, the military has a duty to support that community.

Ideological classes teach Chinese officers and soldiers that the military is subordinated to the party. Scholars trained at the Nanjing PLA political college and the Xi'an PLA political college define the CCP as the leader of the armed forces rather than as a political power in need of protection. Laws, essays and textbooks of military political work designate the relationship between the party and the army as: "the party's absolute leadership over the military [党对军事的绝对领导][44]." This establishes the party as the highest commanding body outside of the military. In consequence, party ideology cements PLA *esprit de corps*. The spokesperson for political work at the leading National Defense University, Yue Zhongqiang 岳忠强, explains that "the troops' political work is a synthetic branch of learning with a strong practical component whose object is man, man's thinking."[45] Using psychology, ethics, sociology and even aesthetics, political work provides a common set of values to servicemen to sustain their dedication to the revolution.

In the framework of Marxist teleology, the military's duty to safeguard national unity undergoes historical development. Rather than linear progress, modernization is a continuous effort of self-assessment against the yardstick of the first generation of communist military and political leaders. Yue Zhongqiang explains that "Marxism has not yet been realized in China where social conditions have changed tremendously. Nonetheless the fundamental principles of Marxism are not a matter of the past […]

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44 Yue Zhongqiang, *Jundui zhengzhi gongzuo xue*, National Defence University Press, Beijing, 3rd ed. 2008, 124－131.

45 Ibid., 87.

and continue to direct military political work."[46] National unity is not forged as an immutable identity, but rather through a movement in which reference to the party fosters change. This is the reason why the PLA publishes so many histories of the party's penetration into the armed forces: to each phase in PRC history, the CCP has provided the PLA with a specific line of conduct. Nan Li showed that the *PLA Daily* provided a platform for CCP-affiliated officers to advocate the substitution of "national interests" for "class and partisan interests" in 1988[47].

'Political work' is a Marxist narrative explaining China's long history of overlap between military service and public service[48]. PLA officers are taught that history was made through class struggle, following two principles: first, the synthesis of contradictions, leading to social unity, and second, historical materialism, according to which technological progress determines the development of society. The purpose of political work is to explain [思想，"ideology"] and use [组织，"organization"] both principles in the context of national defence, to increase combat capacity. Concerning the use of ideology in military training, Professor Qiu Keren 裘克人 writes that "the work performed by each serviceman is part of an organic whole, and if one does not understand the overall situation, which is the way to victory, then one will move blindly in an operation, and lose one's way."[49] The "overall situation" is the party ideology. Even if its content reflects party policy, military political work primarily serves military modernization, as it focuses on combat readiness.

Democratic centralism postulates that only members of the communist party

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46 Ibid., 77-78.

47 Nan Li, *From Revolutionary Internationalism to conservative Nationalism*, The United States Institute of Peace, 2001, 18.

48 Yitzhak Shichor, "Military-civilian integration in China: legacy and policy", in Constantine P. Danopoulos ed., *Civil-Military Relations, Nation-Building And National Identity*, London: Praeger, 2004, 83-106.

49 Qiu 2008, 6.

have a right to vote for national representatives. This fundamental principle of single-party rule determines the understanding that political actors in China have of 'democracy.' The current party leadership claims to practice democracy as defined by Mao after the eighth party congress moved "from revolution to construction" in 1957[50]. Steve Tsang shows that as a procedure increasing the institutionalization of party norms, democratic centralism has maintained the CCP in power[51]. In political work, democratic centralism is achieved through party committees (see below). On a broader level, it also accounts for the party's "absolute leadership over the armed forces." Indeed, party committees at all levels of the military chain of command function to provide the feedback necessary for the party to make informed decisions. Democratic centralism is a tool to synthesize and ultimately unify thinking in the armed forces.

The doctrine of political work establishes a tradition of civil-military relations characterized as the "fine tradition.[52]" This phrase indicates that the PLA's responsibility is moral as well as political.

Institutionalization

Military professionalization, focused on human resources, consists in two major processes: first the centralization and specialization of the military curriculum and; second, the establishment of a regulatory control over the armed forces. While I will consider the second aspect in chapter 3, here I will investigate how the first step in military professionalization – curriculum specialization - was combined with political

50 Cheng 2009, 112.
51 Steve Tsang, "Consultative Leninism: China's new political Framework?", The University of Nottingham China Policy Institute Discussion Paper 58, March 2010.
52 Yue, *Sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo xue*, 362-364.

work to enhance the revolutionary identity of the soldier.

Ideological indoctrination was integrated into the PLA's professionalized military training. A major step in the PLA professionalization process was the opening of the National Defence University (NDU) and the transition from eleven military regions to seven in 1985. Under the Central Military Commission (CMC), the NDU centralized officers training for the first time, like Saint Cyr in France, established by Napoleon in 1802, and Sandhurst in the UK. Interestingly, the NDU presents its own history as part of the national epic, dating the foundation of the university from 1927 instead of 1985. This rewriting of the story of the academy establishes the importance of the PLA's institutional history within the field of ideological indoctrination. According to NDU researcher Pei Huailiang 裴怀亮, the training conducted at the academy grew out of the communist experience of armed struggle in Jiangxi province, in a section of the troops headed by Lu Chi who had studied at the Whampoa military academy[53].

The production and dissemination of ideological indoctrination in the armed forces adapted to the centralization of training required of a professionalizing PLA. Before the NDU was founded in 1985, the PLA already had a leading research institute, the Academy of Military Science (AMS), established by Marshall Ye Jianying in 1958[54]. The NDU and the AMS have a political commissar and a political work research department, which began providing political work programs at Master's level in 1985 and at PhD level in 1987[55]. They also have publishing houses promoting historical and theoretical research on the PLA. In immediate response to Deng Xiaoping's critical appraisal of the quality of the troops in his 1977 speech, "The Army Should Attach

[53] Pei 2007, 2.
[54] 王幸生，"春华秋实任重道远 — 军事科学院 40 周年侧记"，*Guofang*, 1998, no. 3, 3.
[55] Qiu 2008, 196.

Strategic Importance to Education and Training"[56], the PLA created the Nanjing and Xi'an PLA political colleges. The overall trend has been to reduce the number of academies and to merge existing ones (the number of military academies has decreased from 253 in 1955 to 63 today, facilitating curriculum standardization). The Nanjing and Xi'an PLA political colleges, however, resulted from the division of the former PLA Beijing political college, with Nanjing specializing in military political theory and Xi'an specializing in military law[57]. In 2002, PLA political work was further institutionalized with the opening of a research institute for military political work at the AMS[58]. Chinese military representatives have even begun to brief foreign military attachés about political work[59].

Contemporary teachers of political work recall that their field of study did not become an academic discipline before 1978[60]. Today, the main authors are Liu Jingsong 刘精松，Wang Zhangcun 王长存，Yue Zhongqiang and Qiu Keren. The trajectory of these scholars demonstrates the institutional proximity between political activism and the advent of political work as an academic discipline. Born in 1933, Liu Jingsong joined the Communist Party's Youth League in 1950 and the PLA in 1951[61]. He became a member of the CCP central committee in 1985. He was commander of the Shenyang military region in 1985-92 and of the Lanzhou military region in 1992-97, before being appointed as head of the AMS in 1997-99[62]. Qiu Keren was born in 1934. He joined the party in 1949 and the PLA in 1951. As recognition of the decades he spent teaching political work at the PLA Nanjing Political College, he became an

[56] Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 1, Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1982, 75.
[57] Author's interview with an anonymous Professor of philosophy at the Nanjing PLA Political College, October 31st, 2009.
[58] "军队政工研究所在军科成立", *PLA daily* [解放军报], September 29th, 2002.
[59] *Xinhua*, October 9th, 2002, as quoted in the CIA Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).
[60] Qiu 2008, 1.
[61] Liu Jingsong 2009.
[62] Malcolm Lamb, *Directory of Officials and Organizations in China*, M. E. Sharpe, 3rd ed. 2003, 1721.

advisor to the State Council. Born in 1946, Yue Zhongqiang started teaching in a children's middle school in his hometown Langzhong (Sichuan province) before becoming professor at the Naval Academy and then at the Central Party School; today he is the head of the AMS' political work committee. Wang Zhangcun was born in 1947. He joined the PLA in 1968, the year when he graduated in Chinese at Beida. In 1991, the Organization department of the CCP's central committee recognized his achievements in ideological political work[63]. These four trajectories straddle the divide between civilian and military high offices as party and government authorities recognize their research in military political work to be contributions to the public interest and reflections of the national saga.

When he was commander of the Shenyang MR in 1985, Liu Jingsong listed four aspects of modernized military training. According to him, training now needed to be continuous[64], it needed to use heroic models, it had to establish the PLA's "fine tradition" and it had to consider the long term. While the first and last theme can be considered as classic concerns of military modernization, the second and third themes were matters of indoctrination. As regards the third theme, the construction of the PLA's "fine tradition", Liu argued that military political education should focus on establishing and teaching the lessons of the historical period from the early 1920s to the communist conquest of power in 1949. He described this period as one of great suffering for the Chinese people: "in the study and development of the red Army's fine tradition, the most important is to study the revolutionary ideal of the generation who preceded the revolution. Under circumstances of difficulties and hardship, they were able to sustain the struggle, advancing wave upon wave, fighting a bloody battle where they

[63] Wang 2004 (1st ed. 2002).
[64] 刘精松，"努力学习科技知识 着力提高领导水平", 1985, in Liu Jingsong 2009.

were undefeated."[65] Liu Jingsong defined the revolution as the "east wind" [东风], that is the driving force sustaining the troops' moral attitude.

One last major figure of political work in the PLA is Liu Yuan 刘源. The son of former PRC President Liu Shaoqi, Liu Yuan had a political career in Henan before enrolling in the military in 1991. Since then, he has served as political commissar in different places before becoming political commissar of the PLA's General Logistics Department (GLD) in 2003. In 2005, Liu was appointed head political commissar of the AMS. In an aggressive anti-corruption campaign, Liu managed to sack GLD deputy head Gu Junshan for economic crimes in 2012[66]. In 2008, Liu Yuan published an overview of the party's leadership over the armed forces in 1978-2008. In his systematic examination of the various slogans defining the PLA's responsibility (most notably "national security", "the people's army", and "modernization, regularization and revolutionization"), Liu Yuan constantly recalls the role of the party in the foundation and development of the armed forces. Through various historical episodes from the communist revolution to the wars in Korea and Vietnam, the author presents the PLA as a socially transformative force[67].

At the grassroots level, the emphasis in the training of political commissars is not so much on theoretical achievements as on knowledge of the military bureaucracy, the other key aspect of PLA political work, described in the following section. To facilitate a unified management of human resources, geographic mobility is encouraged. Provincial military academies have political departments providing a two-year course designed to turn soldiers [战士] into cadres [干部]. One former political commissar I interviewed

[65] Liu Jingsong，"学习发扬红军的优良传统", 1985, in ibid., 9-10.
[66] Ursula Gauthier, "Chine: un tigre de papier?", *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 19 juillet 2012, 44-47.
[67] Liu 2008.

was trained at the Wuhan college of logistics for high-ranking officers [武汉高级军事后勤学院] in Hubei province, but worked all his life in Jiangsu province, for the Nanjing military region[68]. Another interviewee[69] began his military career by majoring in communications at the PLA Information Engineering College[70] in his native province of Henan. Upon graduation in 1993, he was hired as a political commissar in the PLA General Staff Department in Beijing.

In short, political work is the CCP's method of control over the military. It is a doctrine derived from the military's study and elaboration of Marxism, that identifies the military ethos with the party ideology and formulates the mission of the armed forces as the defence of national unity. This responsibility is different from "the management of violence" which, following Lasswell, remains the definition of reference in the Western theory of civil-military relations. In the ideological indoctrination classes that they receive as part of their professional training, Chinese servicemen learn that their responsibility is to serve the cause of socialism.

This ideology recalls the achievements of the early Chinese revolutionaries and calls for similar acts of collective will, in new historical circumstances, i.e. in a peaceful and economically liberalized China. Hence the PLA's institutional identity lies in the emulation and repetition of the idealized past of the revolution. The Chinese frame their military education by placing contemporary challenges to the revolution in a long historical line of challenges bravely overcome in the past. Incidentally, this tradition of

[68] Author's interview with an anonymous retired political cadre who worked in the Nanjing military region, September 6th, 2009.

[69] Author's interview with an anonymous retired political cadre who worked at the General Staff Department in 1993-2002, February 9th, 2011.

[70] In 1999, this academy combined with the Surveying and Mapping College and the Electronic Technology College to for the Information Engineering University.

'looking backward' to a revolutionary origin for inspiration establishes a military ethos not unlike those of Saint Cyr and West Point. This ethos has positive content and specific historical references; it is not, *pace* Huntington, simply a tool for the management of intrinsic, inevitable violence.

Military political work in practice

The following section presents the way that the party penetrates the armed forces. It will show that political work is not only a means for the party to maintain control over the armed forces through propaganda, but is an integral part of the military establishment, under the GPD which manages human resources in the PLA. Political practices serve to structure the military establishment. Rather than having single political representation like other socio-economic organisations, the military has two political representatives per unit: a party leader and a political commissar. The party leader is in charge of political control and the political commissar, usually an officer trained in political work, is responsible for political education. The dual character of the military political structure reveals the complexity of the military's involvement in politics: at the same time as the party keeps the PLA in check, it needs the figure of the revolutionary soldier.

As the following section will focus on the role of political work in military organization, it is necessary to recall the echelons of the PLA chain of command:

Leadership	集团军群	Front army group
［领导层］	集团军	Army

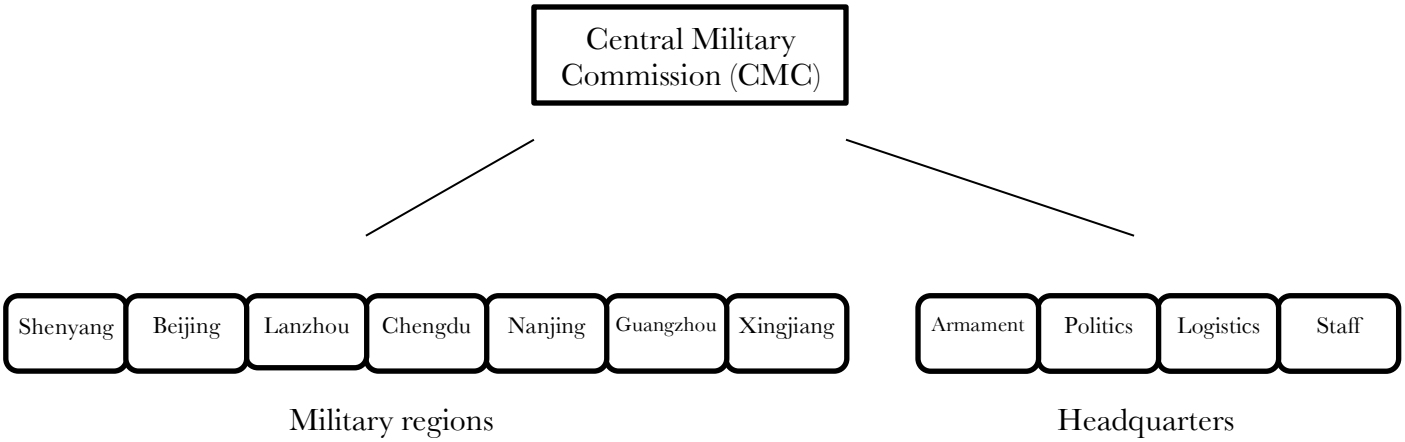
［战役］	军	Corps	
	师	Division	
	旅	Brigade[71]	
Grassroots ［基本层］	团	Regiment	
	营	Battalion	3 infantry companies and one artillery.
［战术］	连	Company	3 platoons living and eating together.
	排	Platoon	3 sections together, i. e. 30 people altogether.
	班	Section/squad to use	10 people divided into 3 cells. Learn weapons.

The head: the central PLA General Political Department (GPD) [总政治部]

The Chinese supreme military command is the Central Military Commission (CMC). There are two emanations of the CMC, one body under party control and a second structure under the government - usually chaired by the same person. The CMC has direct command and control over eleven organizations with equal "grade 1" in the chain of command: the seven military regions and the four General Departments, or

[71] The rank of the brigade disappeared and was reintroduced in 1985.

headquarters.



The PLA General Political Department (GPD) oversees a system of political bureaus attached to each military unit. The first of the four headquarters to be created, in 1932, the GPD is responsible for the political indoctrination [宣部] of soldiers, the implementation of directives issued by the CMC, and the organization of disciplinary committees [检察院][72]. The GPD connects the PLA to the party, while remaining independent from the party apparatus. Throughout the military chain of command, political departments (in each military unit from the rank of brigade upward) and political bureaus (in each military unit from the rank of regiment downward) report to the GPD[73]. From the outset, leadership political organs (political departments) are differentiated from lower-level political bureaus, setting the stage for a hierarchized functioning of the GPD.

The GPD director, i.e. the political commissar for the entire PLA, is appointed for five years. Three figures succeeded each other in the lead-up to the Tiananmen

[72] Author's interview with an anonymous cadre working at the GPD, November 14th, 2010.
[73] Li 2005, 3.

crisis: Wei Guoqing (in 1977-1982), Yu Qiuli (1982-1987) and Yang Baibing (1987-1992)[74]. Wei Guoqing had a strong Southern identity, having served in his home province Guangxi both as senior party official (1961), and as first political commissar for the provincial military district (1964-1975). Yu Qiuli, on the other hand, came to the head of the GPD after a brilliant career in the central government, including as a member of the Politburo, Minister of the petroleum industry and vice-president of China. Born in 1920, Yang Baibing started a career in his native province of Sichuan, where he served as top political commissar of the Chengdu military region; proponent of the hard line during the Tiananmen crisis, Yang Baibing was dismissed by Deng Xiaoping in 1992 who suspected him of having allied with his brother Yang Shangkun to take over the civilian leadership.

The GPD operates on two levels. First, it applies central party directives to the three other headquarters. This military political work [军事政治工作] consists in conveying party policy to officers, i.e. the ideology defining CCP rule (there have been four since 1949: Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, Jiang Zemin's Three Represents and Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook). This overarching responsibility puts the GPD on a different footing from the three other general departments, even though they are all "grade 1" organizations. The GPD infiltrates the other three general Departments, given that each of them (Staff, Armament and Logistics) is flanked by a political department which reports to the GPD.

The second level of activity of the GPD is the troop level [军队政治工作]. This includes sub-categories of political work for servicemen: "organization (*zuzhi*),

[74] Malcolm Lamb, *Directory of Officials and organizations in China*, M. E. Sharpe, 3rd ed. 2003, 675.

cadre/personnel, propaganda, security, discipline inspection, culture, and liaison."[75] All these activities are conducted among the troops under the leadership of the political commissar (see below) who is in charge of everything that is not related to military operations per se, in other words, the life of the community of soldiers, their political education and the military bureaucracy. Each of these areas is handled by a sub-department, for example the propaganda bureau of the GPD [总政宣传部], the organization bureau [组织部］, cadres' bureau [干部部]，security bureau [保卫部]，cultural bureau [文化部]，liaison bureau [联合部] and discipline inspection committees [军事检察院][76]. The GPD is also responsible for the reserve troops' political training, personnel organization and welfare, in ways similar to those for active-duty troops. Liaison with local governments is ensured by the reserve troops' political bureaus under the GPD.

The GPD oversees not only the system of political commissars but also the cultural activity of the troops and its judicial system. It is responsible for fostering cultural activity within the troops, and for promoting the cultural role of the PLA in Chinese society at large. Thus the GPD is in charge of three large cultural organizations: the PLA museum in Beijing, the August 1st movie studio and the newspaper *PLA Daily*[77]. The audience of all three institutions is the civilian population as much as, if not more than the soldiers and the officers' corps. The GPD also includes a Justice Bureau, staffed by military judges. "The GPD administers both infractions of military law and regulation and infractions of internal party regulation, meting out

[75] Kenneth Allen, "Introduction to the PLA's administrative and operational structure", in James Mulvenon and Andrew Yang (eds.), *The People's Liberation Army as Organization*, 42.
[76] Author's online interview with an anonymous cadre working at the GPD, November 14th, 2010.
[77] Ibid.

separate punishments.[78]"

Political control of the PLA is exercised from within the PLA itself, by the GPD. Lieberthal compellingly argued that "civilian party committees (…) are not allowed to penetrate the PLA itself"[79] and yet the GPD, one of the four headquarters under supreme military command, is entirely dedicated to implementing party policy. Hence the GPD proved to be a pillar not only of party rule, but of the Chinese state itself when the Cultural Revolution tore the national bureaucracy apart. The work of the political commissars under the GPD does not merely consist in surveillance however, political work at the grassroots fulfils a proper military function.

Military political work at the grassroots: the political commissar

Two traditions of civilian control over the military have shaped the political commissar position, which nonetheless is distinct from both of them. The first legacy is Chinese in origin: the institution of the imperial *jianjun* [监军] in which "emperors sent supervisor[s] to the front to watch the commanders from behind[80]". Unlike the emperors, Mao consistently looked to military leaders for support, allying with warlord Zhu De in opposition to the party central committee in the 1930s[81]. You Ji argues that rather than a unified channel of party control, political commissars served as a proxy for infighting between different factions of the communist party in the early 1930s.

The second inspiration was the Soviet system of political commissars. Soviet

[78] Larry Wortzel, "The general political department and the evolution of the political commissar system", in James Mulvenon and Yang Andrew, *The People's Liberation Army as Organization*, 237.
[79] Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: from Revolution through reform*, 2nd ed. 2004, 230.
[80] You Ji, "Sorting out the myths about political commissars", in Li Nan (ed.), *Chinese civil-military relations, transformation*, 2006, 91.
[81] William Whitson, *The Chinese high Command*, Praeger, 1973, chapter I: "The central military elite."

influence suggests that political commissars are envoys of the communist party tasked with monitoring the troops' political reliability. David Shambaugh has shown that the difference between Soviet and Chinese political commissars was the Chinese institution of the "unified command system", integrating the political commissar into the military decision-making process[82]. He explains that in China, "the commissar at all levels holds equal status to the military commander."[83] This dual command is disseminated down the military chain of command, as each level of the hierarchy is staffed with a political commissar or a political instructor.

The persistence of the institution of the political commissar has created perplexity on the part of Western proponents of military modernization[84]. They think that: 1) the function interferes with the duty of the military officer and thus creates a hindrance to his work and 2) the enforcement of party ideology on soldiers is an outdated requirement that impedes military professionalization.[85] Yet, "there is a theory of political work for the troops to carry out in every kind of task. For example: political work theory for military training, wartime operations, logistics, weapons procurement, education in the academies, scientific experiments, defence construction and in the line of duty, disaster-relief and anti-terrorism." [86] Thus the function of the political commissar cannot be reduced to political indoctrination and I will show that the political commissar plays two key roles in the PLA: first he coordinates the organization and second, he has the final say in strategic decision-making in the course of an

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82 David Shambaugh, "The political work system in the people's liberation Army", in *China Quarterly* 127, 1991, 537.

83 Ibid., 548.

84 Two author's interview sessions with three anonymous Western military attachés in Beijing made this clear. The first was on October 21st, 2010 and the second on November 8th, 2010.

85 It is significant to note that the latter criticism actually predates the reform era, as shown in Alexander George's study on the Korean war. Cf. Alexander George, *The Chinese Communist Army in Action*, 1967, 75-81.

86 Yue Zhongqiang，军队政治工作学, 2008, 4.

operation.

In charge of troop morale, political commissars ensure that human casualties are kept to the strict minimum in the conduct of an operation[87]. Portrayed as the "the heart of the unit,"[88] the political commissar conducts day-to-day political training of the troops [军队政治工作]. The political commissar position exists only at the divisional rank and above. Therefore the lowest rank for a political commissar is lieutenant, which is high in the chain of command[89]. At levels below the brigade (squad, platoon, company and battalion), the functions of the political commissar are performed by regular soldiers who are political instructors in addition to their own duties. This hierarchical division at the divisional rank shows how the political track is embedded in the military hierarchy. While the political commissar is an officer-level position in the chain of command, political work is an easily accessible path to promotion since it can be carried out by any soldier at the lower levels[90].

The Chinese political commissar is a coordinator. In a speech in 1948, PLA Marshal Chen Yi[91] claimed that the role of the political commissar is defined by two relationships: first, with the commander and second, with the party committee. Chen Yi portrays him as a decision-maker, committed to a process of listening and synthesis. He ensures that officers and soldiers express concerns.[92] Then, even though he is one member among others in the party committee at the different levels[93] of the military

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87 September 15th, 2009, author's interview with Loïc Frouard, military attaché at the French embassy in Beijing.

88 September 6th, 2009 author's interview with a former political commissar in the Nanjing military region in 1976-2000: "政治委员一个单位只有一个。这个人就是这个单位的核心."

89 September 15th, 2009, author's interview with Colonel Loïc Frouard, military attaché at the French embassy in Beijing.

90 The second conclusion is confirmed by my August 2010 interview with 曾志平 who rose from the rank of private.

91 Chen 1996.

92 Yue Zhongqiang (ed.)，军队政治工作学, 2008 3rd ed., 19.

93 单位.

hierarchy, when there is divergence of views, he has the final say, with his problem-solving function exercised at the end of a consultation process. Indeed, Chen Yi's speech emphasizes procedural problems, of different sorts. First, will there be a conflict between the commander, the political commissar and the party secretary? The second issue concerns authority: how can the political commissar's word be accepted as legitimate? Policy is made by the party committee. The party committee is the locus of democratic centralism, where soldiers are encouraged to speak out. But after the committee meeting is over, no discussion is allowed. The priority of the committee is to "reach a consensus."[94] The condition for formulating the correct plan [意见] to mobilize the whole combat unit is to have given soldiers the opportunity to voice opinions. Then, the political commissar implements the decision taken by his unit's party committee.

Thus, the political commissar is a point of convergence and reference between centrally-devised party policy and military practice at each level of the PLA. From the start, the function of political commissar was a military post. A political commissar unfamiliar with military practice would not be able to perform such a function. The political commissar/instructor ensures security, morale, welfare of the troops and human resources, all functions typically incumbent upon the commanding officer in Western armies. He also ensures political education, whose purpose is to foster morale and increase combat readiness. This political education conveys the revolutionary identity of the PLA. It is possible to see an analogy with the civic education provided in today's most professional militaries today, such as the American and Australian militaries[95]. In both cases, political education conveys the establishment's values and informs the military *esprit de corps*. During interviews, Chinese servicemen often

[94] "求得意见一直" in Chen Yi's speech.
[95] November 8th, 2010 author's interview with anonymous Western military attachés in Beijing.

compared the role of the political commissar with the one played by the chaplain in Western armies, a comparison echoed in the literature[96]. To accurately gauge the morale of the troops, however, political commissars proactively bring soldiers and officers into participating in a series of practices that shape their life in common.

PLA Party branches and the practice of 'democracy' in the troops

According to official descriptions, servicemen engage in two participatory practices: political and economic democracy[97]. Political democracy is a fundamental but abstract principle proclaiming equality between officers and soldiers in the barracks. It considers all servicemen, whatever their rank and whether they are party members or not, as potential representatives of the PLA at the National People's Congress[98]. This provides a first indication about "democracy" in China: it is not the right to vote, but the opportunity to become a representative of the corps at the National Assembly. 'Political democracy' characterizes servicemen as Chinese citizens. This means that they have the potential to represent the military establishment at central-government level.

Economic democracy is a more pragmatic practice that serves to regulate material life in the barracks. Up until 1998, the PLA was engaged in commercial ventures such as sideline agriculture and manufacturing in the 1980s and 1990s. Then, 'economic democracy' covered all matters related to these economic activities of the PLA. With the divestiture of military commerce in 1998, economic democracy has lost some of its prerogatives and deals mostly with the everyday welfare of the troops: topics of economic democracy now concern soldiers' salaries and menus.

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[96] Dale Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars and Chaplains, civil-military relations*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.
[97] *Junshi Cihai* 1999, 177.
[98] Author's interview with a PLA officer based in Hunan, March 9th, 2010.

"Military democracy" is a prerogative of officers joining party committees. Party committees "comprise from five to nine men. Normally these are the secretary and deputy secretary, an organization's member, a member of propaganda, a member of the youth league and a member of the discipline committee. […] The party committee discusses the party's guiding policies, each unit's construction plan and the ideological state of officers and soldiers."[99] The power to cast a vote is a privilege restricted to those officers representing their unit. Division-level officers, who are all party members, vote for the party committee members who are the decision-makers and supervisors of the troops. The members of party committees discuss and set the political commissar's assignments and organize the election of party representatives. They are officers from the troops, rather than civilian cadres. Indeed, all officers and cadres in the troops are CCP members: only regular soldiers are not required to be party members. Nevertheless, party presence is so entrenched in the army that it is common for volunteer soldiers to become party members during their two years of service and to remain active party members when they become civilians again[100].

Party committees are the leadership organs in the troops. This means that they make policy, according to the general directives received from the center. They replicate the party's principle of democratic centralism, or collective leadership. Xu Jiaming 许家明 highlights the military function that the party committees[101] carry out as strategic decision-makers. Part of the party committees' mission is called 'scientific' policy-making, referring to the promotion of technological upgrade; most recently, scientific policy-making has referred to the adjustment to the current structure of command and

[99] Gao 2008, 60.

[100] November 6th, 2010, author's interview with 贾拿, an undergraduate student at Tsinghua University who volunteered to do her military service.

[101] Xu Jia 2008, 12.

control as C4I: Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and (military) Intelligence.

There is no overriding culture of democracy within the troops. To different aspects of the servicemen's lives corresponds a different practice of democracy. Political democracy establishes the principle of equality of representation at the National Assembly for all servicemen. Economic democracy encourages soldiers to discuss the quality of their life under the aegis of their political commissar. Under military democracy, officers bring their professioal experience to the party committee to reach a common decision. This hierarchical system of representation exemplifies democratic centralism in the military. The three different practices of democracy in the PLA create a universal community of officers and soldiers (political democracy) while assigning hierarchical roles to soldiers (economic democracy) and officers who make strategic decisions (military democracy).

The CCP has designed a complex array of political practices in the PLA, all inspired by the communist mass-line. Political participation and representation exist down to the lowest level (squad) of military organization but party membership is a prerequisite only for leadership positions in the military hierarchy. The military command bifurcates into commander and political commissar, and a sophisticated overlap of functions also disaggregates the political function vertically into political commissars and political instructors and horizontally into political commissars and party committees. “Democracy” in the troops distributes authority while the party committee retains decision-making power. This network of distributed authority constitutes the organizational side of military political work [组织政治工作]. Political commissars,

political instructors and all military personnel reporting to the GPD are referred to as 'political cadres', the protagonists of this dissertation.

Conclusion

The responsibility of Chinese servicemen, inculcated to them through ideological indoctrination, is to serve the socialist ideology as realized in CCP rule. This ideology was born during the CCP's armed struggle which led the party to power in 1949. The responsibility of the People's Liberation Army to safeguard the official practice of the Chinese socialist ideology then consolidated into a doctrine subject to constant updating. The PLA's General Political Department conveys the doctrine to training servicemen and uses it as a criterion for their advancement.

Through the PLA's GPD, the ruling CCP has an active relationship of interdependence with the national army, where socialism is used as a galvanizing ideology and as a method to organize the military's human resources. This situation does not fit into the Western classic civil-military relations theory where the military is passively subordinated to the government. Indeed, in the traditional framework set up by Huntington[102], both entities work independently and the military is the arm of the civilian political authorities, which carry out the function of the "brain." In China however, the ruling communist party has fostered the transmission of a military ethos whose values originate in the armed struggle leading to the establishment of the single-party state. The system of political commissars ensures horizontal communication in the troops, while the establishment of party committees at each hierarchical level focuses

[102] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957.

leadership throughout the chain of command.

The dual supremacy of the party over the military's doctrine and over its organization turns servicemen into active representatives of the party among the people. The GPD elaborates and transmits to servicemen the specific nature of the PLA's responsibility toward the Chinese state. The protean institution of military political work has consecrated the revolutionary tradition from which the PLA was born during the civil war, by curricular emphasis on the epic history of the profession. Military political work perpetuates the revolutionary identity of the military by encouraging experimentation at the lowest level of regiment while concentrating decision-making power within party committees. This mission to "revolutionize" the national army is problematic: how can a revolution become a tradition? The next chapter will consider how the GPD managed to instil the historical legacy of the communist revolution to a new generation of recruits whose responsibility was to defend a Chinese society much changed by the country's economic liberalization.

CHAPTER II: 'THE REVOLUTION' IN MILITARY TRAINING: FROM LEGACY TO LEGEND

"When asked how they found the courage to accomplish meritorious service in war, comrades typically give two sources of inspiration. The first is the stories of such heroic battles as the Great Snow mountain ranges. […] The second is the wartime history of their own unit."[1]

In *Quelling the People*, historian Timothy Brook argues that the soldiers who cracked down on the students demonstrating at Tiananmen Square in 1989 were not trained for the task: they were unprepared militarily and they were unsure where their allegiance lay. The ideological state of Chinese troops in the lead-up to the Tiananmen crisis however remains undocumented. This chapter contends that contrary to their withdrawal from civilian society, party organs were actually rather concerned with ideological questions in the military, and especially with setting the legacy of the Chinese political and cultural revolution right. This chapter shows that the General Political Department (GPD) was dealing with a deep ideological crisis within the troops when the Tiananmen demonstration broke out. But rather than ignoring this crisis, political commissars monitored it closely, paving the way for the party to absorb it.

How did the PLA political system handle the years of transition from 1978 to

[1] Jiang 1995, 250.

1989? This chapter examines the "corporateness" requirement of the theory of professionalism. It is divided into three sections. In the first section, I focus on the ideological crisis that befell the troops in the 1980s, describing the consequences of the Cultural Revolution for the military's *esprit de corps*. The second section lays out the party's response: the GPD used new media both to update the role of political commissars in the troops and to reconnect the military corps to Chinese society. The last section examines how the party strengthened its presence in the troops after 1989, using different techniques at the leadership and grassroots level.

The army served as a laboratory for an ideology emphasizing the values inherited from the revolutionary wars. Today, the servicemen's political indoctrination remains focused on Marxist historical materialism, laying the ground for ethics and for the study of the party's history. In lieu of a Long March, servicemen now take exams testing their political awareness, which they need to pass to be promoted.

I rely on internal military periodicals, mostly the journals published by the Xi'an PLA political college, entitled *Political Work Periodical* [政治导刊], and by the Nanjing PLA political college, called *The Journal of the Nanjing political college* [南京政治学院学报], both published from 1987 to 2010. These sources, previously untapped, give insights into the way that the GPD adapted its political education to the new social conditions of liberalizing China. Political work in the reform era has turned the legacy of the revolution, which seemed disconnected from the new generation of servicemen, into a legend. Essentially, this chapter will show that no Praetorian guard, the professionalized army of China today must remain a vanguard in political representation.

The ideological crisis in the 1980s

In his biography of Deng Xiaoping, social scientist Ezra Vogel emphasizes the importance that Deng attached to military reform when he returned to power in 1975: "Deng did not mince words as he spelled out what was wrong with the military. The PLA had become overextended as it took on civilian functions during the Cultural Revolution. In addition, many officials had become 'bloated, disorganized, arrogant, extravagant and lazy.'"[2] I argue that corruption was threatening to dissolve military units, as negative testimonies from servicemen pointed to the failure of political work to ensure a corporate identity for the PLA in the 1980s.

The consequences of the Cultural Revolution

In his account of the role of the PLA in provincial revolutionary committees during the Cultural Revolution, Jurgen Domes drew the following conclusion: as the Maoist faction of the party had tried to use the military as a Praetorian guard, the military had gained regional power. Thus ideological conflict at the central level had caused a dislocation of the national military[3].

Military leaders themselves deplored the widespread lack of cohesion and moral values. For example, in 1984, the head of the PLA ground force academy in Shijiazhuang (Hebei province) Wang Zhangcun 王长存 wrote an article in the *PLA Daily*, arguing for the expression of criticism in the troops, to tackle disunity among them. Describing the military as a sick body needing treatment, he urged troop leaders

[2] Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011, 97.

[3] Jurgen Domes, "The Role of the military in the formation of revolutionary committees 1967-1968", *The China Quarterly* 44, 1970, 112-145.

first to distinguish the different problems that needed tackling[4]. Officer Wang described the spread of vanity, carelessness and a lack of scruples in military units. According to him, servicemen and women were forgetting the moral values at the root of the communist revolution. He concluded his article as follows: "During the decade of disturbance due to the Cultural Revolution, the party's tradition of criticism and self-criticism was destroyed. As a result, today people like saying 'yes, sir' more than using 'bitter medicine'."

In January 1987, the Central Military Commission promulgated a piece of legislation, entitled *The Decision on Military Political Work in the New Era* (hereafter *The Decision*), calling for a "revolutionization" of the troops. This text allowed PLA academies to focus the ideological debate on the legacy of the Cultural Revolution. In military newspapers, lower-level political commissars wondered whether political indoctrination was still relevant after the abuses of the Cultural Revolution and the distrust created by the Gang of Four. In 1991, the Academy of Military Science (AMS) published *A Seventy-year History of the PLA's political Work*[5]. The collective work, edited by Jiang Siyi 姜思毅, traces the genesis of the Cultural Revolution to the political activism of the Gang of Four. The volume vilifies the movement unequivocally, describing it as a ten-year crisis, which adversely affected military political work. At the same time, the book portrays Lin Biao, the head of the GPD, as the most destructive figure of the Cultural Revolution.

According to this official analysis, the crisis was structural: if intra-military political activism had thrown the PLA into disarray, why then even continue to maintain the GPD? A number of military leaders addressed this important question.

[4] 王长存，*PLA Daily*, May 26th, 1984.
[5] Jiang 1995.

Hong Xuezhi 洪学智, a hero of the Chinese civil war and the Korean war, wrote in his autobiography:

> I could not make sense of the 'cultural revolution.' The party had led the revolution from the beginning and during the war it had raised troops following the principle that 'the party commands the gun.' In peacetime, everything was achieved under the leadership of the central party Committee and the party committees at every level. How could this 'cultural revolution' do without party leadership? How could it be 'a revolution outside of the party'? Furthermore, President Mao had said that over 95 percent of the cadres were good. So how could the 'cultural revolution' overthrow all of the old party cadres? Despite giving it much thought, I remained perplexed about the way that old cadres were labeled as 'capitalist roaders.'[6]

Hong Xuezhi was one of the "old cadres" persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. His connection with Minister of Defense Peng Dehuai had caused his demotion from head of the PLA General Logistics Department (GLD) as early as 1960. In 1980, however, Hong Xuezhi took up this post again and in 1985, he concurrently became political commissar of the GLD. His analysis of the Cultural Revolution traces the origin of the political catastrophe to its disconnection from party leadership. Thus, party leadership remained the necessary and sufficient condition of socialism. The AMS blamed Lin Biao of using the GPD for his personal political ambition. Nonetheless, it determined that it was from the GPD that the party's authority would need to be restored.

The revolution dims

Another reason for the ideological crisis amongst the troops was generational change. The function of political education was now to convey the legacy of the

[6] Hong 2007, 592.

revolution to a generation of servicemen and women who had never taken part in the revolution. In 1987, the director of the GPD's propaganda bureau Shao Huaze 邵华泽 explained the demographic renewal of the troops: "the average age among PLA army leaders is 47 years old. It means that if they enrolled when they were 18, […] they became cadres at the age of 22, after four years of training. […] Young cadres have knowledge, culture and vitality but lack battlefield experience and do not have an intimate knowledge of the traditional relationship between the party and the army. Furthermore, since these cadres enrolled, the PLA has been under a 'leftist' adverse influence."[7] Shao explained that the PLA was no longer facing immediately dangerous contingencies, therefore it could attend to restructuring the force [军队建设]. Given that most servicemen were born just before the PRC was founded, his argument went, they needed to be taught the revolutionary values at the foundation of the Republic. According to Shao Huaze, the content of political education at the leadership level of army [集团军] had to be renovated to suit a younger audience. The principle of "revolutionization", upheld by *The Decision*, referred to the inculcation of the values of the revolution to a generation of servicemen who had not experienced it in the flesh but benefited from a training that the previous generation had not had.

Meanwhile, the PLA had lost social prestige, leading to a disconnect between the revolutionary virtues taught in PLA ideological indoctrination and the new values upheld in Chinese society in the 1980s. In the context of a liberalizing economy offering many opportunities to make fast money, soldiering was no longer an attractive occupation. In 1987, deputy-head of the GPD Guo Linxiang 郭林祥 bluntly pointed to the poor living conditions in the barracks: "people serving in the military get the worst

[7] 邵华泽, "'关于新时期军队政治工作的决定'的几个特点", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, no. 1, 3.

of it,"[8] he lamented. Pleading for a stronger moral education of the troops, Guo Linxiang got to the heart of the definition of the PLA's corporate identity. If the PLA lost touch with the evolution of Chinese society, it would stop attracting able recruits and cease being an army representative of its people, it will stop being the people's army. In Guo Linxiang's words, "the PLA is an army of a new kind, steeled by the long period of revolutionary war, which does not only have the high political consciousness of the proletariat, but is also morally accomplished." Ten years into Deng Xiaoping's policy of reform and opening, AMS scholars had an equally grim diagnosis: "what hinders political work in the troops is not so much inappropriate goals as confusion and ideological ossification in the minds of men."[9] The new task of the GPD was to define the place of the PLA in a society that was transforming at a very fast pace.

Guo Linxiang explains that to represent the people does not mean to be the same as the people. Quite the contrary, "as an armed fighting force, the Chinese military must possess a stronger sense of discipline than other organizations and mass groupings so that any order can be carried out. It must also have a higher moral requirement because discipline and morality complement each other. Morality without strict discipline will seem weak in a man responsible for punishing violations of discipline. Disciplined behavior without a fine morality is prone to losing the pledge to morality and justice."[10] The practice of arbitrating between right and wrong that the PLA acquired during the revolutionary war, Guo thought, would henceforth have to be inculcated through a "servicemen's morality course" required in all military academies. Two professors from the Xi'an PLA Political College, Zhang Jingbo 张敬波 and Yu

[8] "当兵吃亏". Cf. 郭林祥，"应当加强军人道德建设", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 1, 4-5.
[9] 杨家祺，初阶级段与政治工作, *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 5, 6-14.
[10] 郭林祥，"应当加强军人道德建设", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 1, 4-5.

Zhengshan [俞正山] established the curriculum for this class in 1987, the same year that Guo publicly deplored the rough living conditions in the barracks. The course conveyed the notion that servicemen are more in touch with revolutionary virtues. In Guo's eyes, this moral education would place the PLA in a position to lead the rest of the population toward communism.

A couple of months before the students' protests in Tiananmen Square, the PLA political bureaus reported significant changes in the mentalities of new recruits. In February 1989, the Lanzhou Military Region (MR) political bureau published a critical overview of the psychology of its troops based on a sample of five hundred servicemen[11]. The purpose of the survey was to redefine the targets, function and content of political work. The results showed that while the social origin of newly-recruited soldiers had not changed substantially, their ideas had: the motivation for active duty "was no longer unadulterated service to the nation." Rather, recruits now had an individualist interest in serving in the military where they acquired transferable skills[12]. The survey also revealed that now political work was only one among many channels for moral education; indeed, a result of the opening-up of Chinese society was the emergence and growing influence of the media and of outside social relationships on servicemen. Finally, the central role of model soldiers within political education was considered to be still valid, but required adaptation to the various levels of the troops. The Lanzhou MR political bureau concluded that "the content of existing ideological political work needs to be rationally pruned, combined, reinforced in some places and decreased in others as is suitable to increase daily political work and emphasize the teaching of policy, with the idea that traditional political work and political theory are just one of the many aspects

[11] 兰州军区政治部政研室，"再认识：思想政治工作的改进", *Political Work Periodical*, 1989, no. 2, 4-6.
[12] Ibid., 4.

of political work."[13] As the very existence of the survey shows, the canon of revolutionary virtues was no longer assumed to be understood by the troops in the late 1980s.

Circumscribing the crisis

In line with Wang Zhangcun's early request that the military revives the tradition of criticism inherent to the 'mass line,' the PLA GPD ensured the circulation of a series of internal newspapers to serve as regulatory and signaling devices to the party. In 1987, ten years after the PLA political colleges were established in Nanjing and Xi'an, they started issuing their own periodicals. *The Journal of the Nanjing Political College* [南京政治学院学报], primarily served as a moderator of high-level ideological debates. The complete omission of the Sino-Vietnam war that ran through the 1980s suggests that political indoctrination remained a theoretical discipline. This purely academic journal worked, for example, to define the role of political education among the troops as a process of "soul-engineering"[14]. Its main columns were "political work research" comprising articles by the major scholars in the discipline, such as Liu Jingsong and Yao Youzhi 姚有志, of the AMS political research center, and "teaching and studying in academies." By contrast, *The Political Work Periodical* [政治导刊], edited by the Xi'an PLA Political College, reported on the reception of political education within military units. The striking feature of the latter journal is the wide range of contributors who, for the most part, were unknown political cadres from the grassroots. For example, in 1987, a cadre from the PLA's 'decoration engineering company' offered a new definition of

[13] Ibid., 6.
[14] 徐一朋，"让科学管理出'灵魂工程师'", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, no. 1-2, 48-51.

political work in the troops as "pushing men's zeal to the limit."[15] The cadres in charge of indoctrination reported a low level of morale in the troops.

Indeed, the program of political education amongst the troops, which aimed at ensuring high troop morale, unified thinking, and troops' adherence to party leadership, was in crisis. Lower-level political commissars also decried a loss of cohesion among the troops in the late 1980s. In *The Journal of the Nanjing Political College*, a researcher from the college's department of politics and economics compared the PRC's single-party rule with multiparty systems[16]. For the most part, political cadres however focused their interpretation of the crisis on the indistinctness of the line of thinking that they were to convey to servicemen. In January 1989, Zhang Juze 张菊泽, from the political bureau of the Shenyang MR, listed a series of prejudices obstructing the conduct of efficient ideological indoctrination among the troops. According to him, servicemen and women thought that they had to have a "high", "pure", "undivided" and "unchanging" line of thinking to be considered as politically accomplished, but ideological accomplishment had become a much more complex and flexible point of view in the context of a socialist market economy[17]. Another diagnosis was the political cadres' inability to see the problems in the first place[18].

Yet the manner in which the GPD presented the crisis within the boundaries of the PLA's internal press reveals the resilience of the military political structure. In fact, under Deng Xiaoping's chairmanship of the Central Military Commission (CMC) from 1981 to 1989, military newspapers were a laboratory for renovating the party-military link broken during the Cultural Revolution. Rather than bearing the personal signature

[15] 郑明智，"人的潜能力最佳激励", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 1, 6-9.
[16] 马进，为什么在中国不能实行"多党政治", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, no. 1-2, 41-44.
[17] 张菊泽，"变革思维方式提高思想政治工作有效性", *Political Work Periodical*, 1989, no.1, 4-5.
[18] 徐一朋，"让科学管理出'灵魂工程师'", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, no. 1-2, 48-51.

of the national leader, party ideology was a collective craft. For example, the slogan "to seek truth from facts", emblematic of the political-economic reforms he launched after Mao, is widely attributed to Deng Xiaoping. Yet, Deng himself made no claim to ownership: "at first", he writes in his memoirs, "I did not pay attention to the phrase 'to seek truth from facts'.[19]" The phrase, which became his signature, had appeared in a party newspaper before taking hold of the ideological debate. Military newspapers served as a feedback mechanism to inform higher authorities of the extent of the crisis under way. Another way that the GPD gathered feedback was through all-army conferences on political work. GPD head Wei Guoqing convened one in 1982. His successor Yu Qiuli held another one in May 1987 to convey the content of *The Decision* to political commissars. Rather than calling in question the role of ideology in raising morale, they argued that officers and soldiers were not receiving enough political training.

Liberalism vs. revolution

Military cadres provided a commentary of *The Decision*. In 1988, Director of the GPD's propaganda bureau Shao Huaze 邵华泽 focused his yearly address to the PLA Nanjing Political College on *The Decision*. Challenging the contemporary use of the canonical notion of "class struggle", he condemned the amplification of that theme to all aspects of political life in the 1960s. According to him, "since the third plenum of the eleventh party committee [in 1978 …], to take class struggle as the guiding principle

[19] Deng 2007, 171.

[纲] is no longer relevant."[20] Thus, he endorsed the servicemen's conviction that class warfare was no longer an ideal. The risk was that the new generation of officers and soldiers would adopt a line of thinking that rejected the party's revolutionary origin.

The ideology spreading in the PLA was held to be corrupted by officers who had fallen under the influence of 'liberalism', the main competing ideology threatening the CCP's leadership over the armed forces. The GPD assigned regional PLA political bureaus to report the comprehension that servicemen now had of the canon of revolutionary virtues, of which the values of 'enduring hardship' [吃苦] and 'arduous preparation for combat' [艰苦备斗] had traditionally formed the core. In 1987, the propaganda bureau of Heilongjiang's provincial military command conducted an investigation about the notion of 'struggle' on a sample of 361 soldiers. When asked "what is an arduous struggle?", 127 of them replied "a hard struggle is a frugal, hard-working and thrifty lifestyle." [21] The emphasis on "lifestyle" appears to indicate that soldiers were more concerned with social standing than professional values.

Indeed, soldiers now chose civilian figures rather than military heroes, as role models. In the Heilongjiang survey, servicemen were also asked to rate inspirational figures. Zhang Haidi received the highest rating, followed by Lei Feng, Xu Liang 徐良, Ding Hongjun 丁红军 and Bao Qingyu [包庆玉]. Zhang Haidi, however, is not a member of the PLA. Born in 1955, Zhang Haidi is a paraplegic woman who overcame the distress of her condition by intense self-study of politics, literature, foreign languages and medical science. In 1983, the CCP had exalted her as an example of communism

[20] 邵华泽，"关于部队政治教育的改革", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1988, no. 1, 3.
[21] 张矛，"艰苦奋斗教育的社会心理学断想", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 2, 7-8.

serving as a resource for common people[22].

In an article he published in 1987, the head political commissar of the Armored Force Academy for commanding Officers Shi Cuiyan 石翠岩 acknowledged the individualism that had emerged in officers' mentalities[23]. The idea however, was not to throw out the baby with the bath water: Shi Cuiyan recommended a new definition of the purpose of ideological indoctrination focused on the notions of "service and commitment". In his view, political education had lost touch with servicemen's concerns which had entirely changed with China's transition to a liberalized economy. Yet it was the responsibility of political commissars to explain "the relationship between private property and public ownership. Even though these issues do not arise within the troops themselves, they have an effect on the ideals of cadres and servicemen and therefore political work needs to address them." The larger role of political commissars was, thus, to reconnect officers and soldiers to Chinese society. Their tactic to deal with the moral crisis threatening the troops was to maintain the Marxist reading as guidance. Thus in 1988, the political commissar of a brigade in the Jinan MR explained: "China is still in the early stage of socialism. […] Because this stage is a relatively protracted historical phase, the existence and development of a commodity economy strengthens the pragmatic notion of material interest and value."[24] Recognizing that the country's economic reforms caused a moral crisis, the cadre took a long-term view to resolve the issue.

In the 1980s, military newspapers reported a serious ideological crisis in the troops, as servicemen felt increasingly disconnected both from the virtues upheld by the

[22] http://chineseposters.net/themes/zhanghaidi.php.
[23] 石翠岩，"服务和保证作用的新课题", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 3, 9.
[24] 昌世军，"用'初级阶段'理论指导思想政治教育"， *Political Work Periodical*, 1988, no. 1, 6.

PLA during the civil war and from the values structuring contemporary Chinese society. Using the results of surveys conducted by political commissars working among the troops, the GPD's newspapers disseminated the rather negative experience of political education that different military units were acquiring. As political commissars realized the extent of the doubt pervading both the rank and file and the officer corps, the canon of virtues elaborated with reference to the revolutionary period preceding the foundation of the PRC became an object of debate at the highest level of the GPD. In the late 1980s, surveys focused on servicemen's perceptions of revolutionary values such as 'hardship' and 'struggle' revealed that while the terms used to name these virtues remained the same, their meaning changed with the social conditions of reform China. This is the difference between 'the revolution' [革命] performed by the founding generational of PLA officers and the process of 'revolutionization' [革命化] devolved to PLA political cadres, in charge of ensuring the connection between the PLA and the party following the crisis of the Cultural Revolution.

The end result to be pursued was that of stability. The guiding assumption was that the party's leadership over the armed forces would be ensured as long as the CCP remained the source of a canon of professional values that is operational in the lives of servicemen, however different those values may be from those which predominated in Chinese life in the 1940s and 1950s.

The party's response

In response to this crisis of authority, the party-state experimented with new ways to sustain the political identity of the military as the people's army in the new

historical conditions of post-Mao China. First, the GPD updated the role of political commissars in the troops and as a result, political work research started using the language of management and performance in assessing troops' morale. Second, the party launched a propaganda offensive in the PLA, using new media. Third, a new series of heroic figures held up as exemplars reconnected servicemen with the liberalized Chinese society.

On the ground: performance management

The Lanzhou survey mentioned above (p. 6) was one of many GPD inquiries, which advocated the rejuvenation of political work. Another example is an investigation [考查] conducted by a local PLA political bureau on a 30-odd sample of servicemen in 1990[25]. This investigation compared two generations of officers, interviewing sixteen of them who had joined the PLA before 1977 and the same number who joined after 1982. The political bureau thus intended to outline social portraits of servicemen and to see the effects of the Chinese socio-economic reforms on new recruits. The results were worrisome: the younger generation appeared to be less qualified for their position, less attached to their family and less dedicated to their profession. The explicit conclusion of the report was that the body of the troops was in dire need of political education. The results of both the Lanzhou survey and this smaller survey suggested that political work could no longer rely on indoctrination only, since Chinese society at large functioned more and more without any ideological guideline. In reporting the failure of traditional political indoctrination, political bureaus were already exhibiting the use of a new

[25] 李克勤, "严酷的现实 严峻的任务", *Political Work Periodical*, 1990, no. 2, 13-14.

methodology, paving the way for the work of the political commissar in the PLA today.

The job of political commissar now included the conduct of 'investigations' [考查], designed to check how party policy is received and how the troops react to specific topics. These investigations are of two kinds. A first kind of survey, similar to Western public opinion surveys, targets individual respondents [调查]. Some questionnaires, such as the one used in the Heilongjiang survey quoted earlier, are multiple-choice[26] and others are open-ended[27]. In 1988, a political cadre in charge of designing an investigation required that questionnaires spell out their objectives to the interviewees[28]. This, he explained, was necessary because servicemen had lost confidence in political education after the abusive practices of the Cultural Revolution; the purpose of investigations today was no longer to label people but to map out the sociological background of the troops. A second survey method, called 'open investigation', involves collective interviews where representatives selected by the troops' political cadres discuss topic such as ideology [思想政治] and the revolution[29], like a focus group. Clearly the political cadre's job is to report on the way that servicemen's ideas evolve.

In 1997, the AMS published a summa on the discipline of military political work. In this edited volume, entitled *The Discipline of Military Political Work*, PLA scholar Zhao Yiping 赵一平 provides a detailed description of the new content of political education. Indoctrination classes appear as only one of seven methods to impart political education to servicemen[30]. In addition to teaching these courses, political cadres were now required to pursue research to engage personally with the theory they taught; keep up

[26] Xu Guo 2008, 20.
[27] 张矛，"艰苦奋斗教育的社会心理学断想"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 2, 7-8.
[28] 赵一成，"调查问卷设计的一些心理问题", *Political Work Periodical*, 1988, no. 3.
[29] Xu Guo 2008, 13.
[30] Jiang 2005, 164-166.

with the periodical publications of the GPD (the GPD allocated a special fund for each military unit to subscribe to the newspapers it issued monthly or bimonthly[31]); conduct the investigations described in the previous paragraph; encourage servicemen to give presentations; use audiovisual media to illustrate abstract theory and; create an atmosphere using radio broadcasts and posters. Political cadres also have the 'human resources' responsibility to provide adequate pay and proper care, stimulating the unit by distinguishing outstanding servicemen [骨干] who become assistants in political work investigations and lectures[32]. Thus they perform the crucial function of structuring the military unit to sustain morale.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the focus of political work shifted from the content of ideological indoctrination to the outcome observed in servicemen's behavior. In 1999-2000, the Beijing MR organized a two-year training program for regiment-level political commissars. The result was new teaching material published by the NDU in 2003, instructing political commissars to act as socialist leaders above reproach.[33] The author of the textbook, Li Hezhong 李和忠, portrays the political commissar as an actor performing to produce an effect on the soldiers. He emphasizes the style that political commissars should adopt to embody endurance: "the leader sets the example by exhibiting endurance of hardship and hiding comfort."[34] The political commissar resorts to theatrical devices to project the illusion of mastery when the solution of a problem escapes him. He should play the role of an arbitrator in the daily life of the unit: "take a concrete situation and reason on the matter at hand, making clear where the right and

[31] "中国军法"要订阅到连 — 总政治部通知要求全军和武警部队认真做好报刊订阅， *Zhongguo Junfa*, 2001, no. 6, 17.
[32] Xu Guo 2008, 13.
[33] Li 2005.
[34] Ibid., p. 28: "要带头，要吃苦在前，享受在后。"

wrong lie to help officers and soldiers learn in the process."[35] To fulfill this function, he monitors the servicemen's community during training and meal times.

In the 2000s, the language of performance pervaded the PLA, including political work. The AMS took a leaf out of American management theories such as those of Robert S. Kaplan, a distinguished Professor at the Harvard Business School[36]. In 2009, the institute designated "human resources […] as the prior resource."[37] Under the influence of the New Public Management school of thought, Officer Liu Ruowei 刘若唯, of the People's Armed Police in Tianjin, wrote a research paper on "the performance measurement index system for ideological political work" in the PLA. The study required that political commissars report on their work's results. Liu Ruowei designed an index including the time that political cadres spend on ideological education and the topics they address, but also the level of comprehension that they have of their subject matter and the way that they resolve problems. As for the function of ideology per se, the most recent analysis (2011) from the Nanjing PLA Political College presents it as a way to regulate personal relationship within the military unit[38].

The new forms of military propaganda

By contrast with the way that officers processed the legacy of the Cultural Revolution, the effect of the repression at Tiananmen Square on troop morale does not appear in the records of the military political organs available. Inevitably, the popularity of the PLA took a blow with the crack down and the party's strategy to handle the

[35] Xu Guo 2008, 38: "抓住一件具体事情，就事论理，辩明是非，帮助官兵从中受到教育."
[36] Yu 2009, 63.
[37] Ibid., 113.
[38] Lin 2011.

situation was to emphasize and diversify military propaganda. The number of military journals multiplied. At the central level, the AMS launched the monthly magazine *National Defense* [国防][39] in 1990 and in 1993, the CMC created the bimonthly journal *China's Military Law* [中国军法] to report on progress in the new development of the legal system within the PLA[40].

The GPD also launched an editorial effort to narrate the experiences of the military officers who had participated in the "war of Liberation" and subsequent conflicts, such as the Korean war (1950-3), the Chinese invasion of Tibet (1950) and the Sino-Indian war (1962). The avowed purpose of this publishing effort was to create a pantheon of military figures. These biographies of higher- and mid-ranking officers such as Wei Tongtai 韦统泰[41] and Zhong Qiwu 重其武[42] were more often than not written by political commissars. In the case of autobiographies, they were always written in close association with the party and the political establishment at large. Typical of this genre is the book *The General Headquarters of the Volunteer Forces* ["在志愿军总部"], written by Du Ping 杜平 to relate his experience as head of the GPD during the Korean war. In 2008, his daughter wrote a biography of Du Ping where she explains that her father received direct encouragement from PRC President Yang Shangkun to complete his book[43].

A major feature of the moral crisis in the troops outlined above was a feeling of disconnect between the soldiers and the society they meant to protect. To remedy this problem, the party promoted the production of artistic works aggrandizing the national

[39] 春基伟，"把国防教育普及而深入地开展下去"，*Guofang*, 1991, no. 1, 4-7.
[40] "坚持办刊方针提高编辑质量", *Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 1, 4-5.
[41] Dai 2011.
[42] Zhang 2007.
[43] Kun 2008, 207.

military. A first example is the book *The Great China Earthquake* published by PLA journalist Qian Gang in 1986[44]. *The Great China Earthquake* is an in-depth piece of reporting on the earthquake that shook the town of Tangshan (Hebei province) in 1976. Directly involved in the rescue operation as a PLA officer, Qian Gang provides a very emotional account of the disaster which claimed a quarter of a million lives. After the resounding success of his book, Qian Gang became the editor in chief of the *PLA Daily*[45]. The rare decision of the party to translate *The Great China Earthquake* into English three years after the original publication signaled the new role of military journalism to propagandize PLA activities and more generally publicize the PLA's viewpoint on current affairs to the Chinese population and beyond.

In 1986, a movie produced by the Guangxi film studio also celebrated the PLA. Chen Kaige's second movie[46], *The Big Parade*, is recognized today as the epitome of the "military sublime", an esthetical category designed by Haiyan Lee and deemed typical of CCP propaganda[47]. This analysis, articulated with the hindsight of the many military parades since 1984 that culminated in the 2009 show, was not so obvious at the time. Indeed, censors delayed its showing for one year, despite the acclaimed success that Chen Kaige had received for his director's debut *Yellow Earth* two years before. Chinese censors even withdrew it from the Cannes festival in 1987. The reasons for the withdrawal surely had to do with Chen Kaige's ambivalence. In an interview, he said: "I wanted to pose the question: can the individual survive amid the rushing floodlike power of the collective, or will he be swept away and destroyed? My conclusion is that he will

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[44] Qian Gang, *The Great China Earthquake*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989.

[45] Interestingly, Qian Gang has left the PLA to become a researcher at the center for journalism of the liberal University of Hong Kong, where he writes on micro-blogging.

[46] A leading figure of the fifth generation of Chinese cinema, Director Chen Kaige made the widely acclaimed *Farewell my Concubine* in 1993.

[47] Haiyan Lee, "The Charisma of power and the military sublime in Tiananmen square", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, volume 70, no. 2, May 2011, 397-424.

be destroyed.[48]" When the movie came out, *The New York Times* reviewer explained that the director's original ending, expressing his skepticism about the military as symbol of the body politic, was struck altogether: "In the end, there is no parade, just a few silhouetted individuals cast against a murky sunset. Both the army and the censors were appalled; they ordered that the film end with a majestic, nationalistic parade.[49]"

Despite the risks of directors going out of track, the GPD embraced the motion picture as a new media for military propaganda, both in and out of the PLA. In 1979, Marshall Ye Jianying personally ratified the establishment of a TV report on the military[50]. This gave impetus to develop a new craze for PLA televised journalism. In 1980, a military group was set up in the central TV station, bringing together active duty servicemen from the seven military regions[51]. In 1985, the CMC devolved to the localities the production of military televised propaganda and military programs were broadcasted on Liaoning TV station, Tianjin TV station and Hebei TV station that year. But it was not before the late 1980s that military television started broadcasting substantive monographs, such as *The People's Army* [人民子弟兵], a documentary on the PLA's large-scale fire rescue operation in Daxing-Anling (Heilongjiang province) aired in 1987, just a few months after the disaster. Thus the epic of the national military fighting the forces of nature in protection of the people, which Qian Gang had created in print, was developing on the TV screen.

In the twenty-first century, the televised branch of military propaganda focused on producing fiction rather than documentary reportage. The most successful show of

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[48] Michael Berry, *Speaking in images: interviews with contemporary Chinese filmmakers*, New York: Columbia Press, 2005, 91.

[49] Edward A. Gargan, "China's cultural crackdown", accessible at: www.nytimes.com/1987/07/12/magazine/china-s-cultural-crackdown.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm

[50] Huang 2009, 5.

[51] Ibid., 37.

this kind is *Burning Passion* [激情燃烧的岁月]. Broadcast in 2001, *Burning Passion* tells the story of PLA officer Shi Guangrong 石光荣. Starting with the Chinese civil war, the program follows three generations of Shi Guangrong's family to draw a picture of the PRC's "new China" through the lens of the military. Throughout the fifty-odd episodes, a direct connection is deployed between the weaving of family links, service in the PLA and loyalty to the motherland, where each of these three societies are like Russian dolls giving meaning to each other.

New heroes

Political work maintained its tradition of cultivating the memory of heroic figures. Under Mao, soldier Lei Feng was promoted alongside other proletarian characters, such as the model worker. These figures transformed 'the common' [普通] into sublime examples of the realization of potential with which all young people could identify. Social Scientist Louise Edwards has shown that the party kept on using servicemen in nationwide campaigns promoting morality after 1989[52]. According to her, the main difference between Mao-era military heroes and post-Tiananmen military celebrities is that in the 1990s, the party distinguished officers rather than soldiers, confirming the party's determination to produce the image of a professionalized PLA. Here, I will contend that new exemplars set as models for military personnel worked toward social cohesion rather than stratification.

In 1987, the CMC, the CCP central bureau and the State Council held a conference on heroes [英雄模范代表会以] to assert the relevance of national figures as

[52] Louise Edwards and Elaine Jeffreys (eds.), *Celebrity in China*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 38.

a pedagogical means in the troops. In the 1990s, Long March participants were still celebrated in the troops long after they had retired from the PLA[53]. The air force, in particular, contributed to rejuvenate the military pantheon. In March 1989, the air force established its own publishing house, Blue Sky Press [蓝天出版社]，which issued training material not only for the air force, but for the PLA as a whole. Soon, the metaphor of the sky and star became a favored image to celebrate martial valor. In the fall of 2009, the PLA Air Force organized celebrations for the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation[54].

The representation of women in the PLA was key in the GPD's effort to reconnect servicemen to Chinese society. The PLA has long told stories of female heroism. During the Great Leap Forward, female soldiers represented liberated women. In 1958, *The PLA Daily* reported on the achievements of Du Shu, Ouyang Yurong and Dong Xuemei, three women who were introduced into the military through the Song and Dance Troupe of the air force political department[55]. At first considered as subalterns by the air force's head mechanic, they nevertheless became model soldiers. The skills that they used were the ones traditionally attributed to the second sex: mending clothes and washing, along with robust initiative to make up for a lack of experience and physical strength.

In the 1990s, the representation of women in the PLA no longer portrayed them with traditional female attributes. Their stories, focused on their emancipation, became vignettes illustrating China's liberation. Thus, the life of Li Zhen exemplified the opportunity that women now had to climb the social ladder. An article published in *National Defense* in 1991 praised her as the first female officer to gain the rank of major

[53] Zong 2009, 60.
[54] November 10th, 2009, author's interview with Nadia Piercy.
[55] 杨苏，"三个女机械兵", *PLA Daily*, 1958.

general in 1955; thanks to this achievement, "Li Zhen's name was known to every household", the article claimed[56]. In 1995, the same journal published the story of "the first woman soldier who rose "against English imperialists" in 1925[57]. In this article, liberated women contributed to the liberation of China from warlords and colonialists, in an epic where subaltern subjects won over all oppressive powers.

According to the political technique of rewarding patriotic behaviour described in chapter one, the local party committee distinguishes subsections of the community for their devotion to the troops. Just like women held prime of place in propaganda stories told about the professionalizing PLA, female figures are here again at the forefront of strengthening the ties between the civilian population and the garrison. A new figure was the "military aunty." The first record of a "military aunty" dates from 1993, when servicemen's spouses were honoured in the Beijing MR for contributing to the welfare of their husbands' unit[58]. Their role was the traditional one of the housewife. The figure of the "military aunty" did not change over the years. In Pingshan county, in Hebei province, in 2000, the party committee organized an event called "good military aunties, soldiers who are good mothers.[59]" On this occasion, it was not only servicemen's wives but also random women from the county who had helped the stationed units, who played the role of "good mothers." In 2001, *The Political Work Periodical* used the motherly devotion of Han Shunjun, an inspirational civilian who served the rank and file, to ease the military restrictions on physical appearance. Portrayed as "a simple, traditional, ordinary and great country woman"[60], Han Shunjun entertained a motherly relationship to troops number 66132, in the Beijing MR, since

[56] 徐京跃，*Guofang*, 1991, no. 3, 8 sq.
[57] *Guofang*, 1995, no. 3.
[58] *PLA Daily*, April 12th, 1993.
[59] Quan 2000, 294.
[60] 刘桥良，"18 载拥军毫发间", *Political Work Periodical*, 2001, no. 5.

1982. It started when she noticed that the soldiers' hair was so long that it fell in their eyes, because their unit did not have a barber. Volunteering to act as a hairdresser for the unit, she did so for eighteen years, gradually bringing her children in to help as well. Short hair is perhaps the most distinctive feature of military personnel[61]. By designating a mother-like figure to perform the haircut, the GPD projected motherly love on the military institution itself.

The most interesting female soldier celebrated by the PLA today is called Jia Na 贾娜 and is twenty-seven years old, as of 2013. Jia Na is a completely new figure: military glory no longer requires self-effacement but is rather contingent upon achievements in civilian life. This broadens the definition of the revolutionary soldier. Jia Na was born in Shanxi province in 1986, the daughter of a single mother working as a self-employed, small-scale entrepreneur, *getihu* [个体户] in Chinese. After she finished high school, Jia Na was admitted to study journalism at Tsinghua university, one of the two most prestigious universities in the country. Despite her mother's disapproval, Jia Na postponed the start of her undergraduate studies to do the voluntary two-year military service. Only after her military service did she start to study for her first degree at Tsinghua. There, she joined the CCP. She plans to go back to the PLA after graduation[62].

Jia Na's trajectory stands out because against all odds, she personally chose to join the PLA before getting a degree and then return to the PLA to become an officer. *The PLA Daily* celebrated this life choice in several articles following her unusual trajectory straddling prestigious civilian universities, the party and the PLA[63]. In these

[61] Cf. You Ji, "The Soviet model and the breakdown of the military alliance" in *China Learns from the Soviet Union*, 135.
[62] Author's interview with Jia Na, 2010.
[63] 程荣，"光荣在这里传承", *PLA Daily*, 2007.

stories portraying the coming of age of the child of a liberalized China, the emphasis is put on the legacy that she keeps alive. "Glory [光荣]" is no longer a purely military virtue but reflects the glow of the elite position that the young woman gained by learning the ropes in the PLA, at Tsinghua and in the CCP. China's liberalized society, which appeared as a threat to military esprit de corps in the 1980s, is now integrated into the military curriculum. Indeed, in the article that *The PLA Daily* published when Jia Na started her military service, the journalist calls her "the soldier from Tsinghua.[64]"

In reaction to the anxiety servicemen expressed in the sociological surveys it conducted in the troops, the GPD refashioned the role of the political commissar into an executive officer responsible for the welfare of the troops. At the same time, the GPD launched a propaganda offensive to reconnect officers and soldiers to a fast-liberalizing society. Relying on the aesthetic potential of the military corps, it promoted the production of national epics with the PLA as protagonist. Blatantly absent from these productions was the conflict with Vietnam, where the PLA had active troops until 1989, as well as the military intervention at Tiananmen Square in June 1989. The new heroes upheld in GPD media embodied the military's integration in China's society rather than martial bravery.

Organizational political work and the problem of leadership

In the first section of this chapter (p. 4), I showed that *The Decision on Military Political Work*'s chief concern was the political education of the new generation of

[64] "清华大学学生贾娜携笔从戎", *PLA Daily*, December 2007.

recruits, after one million servicemen had been demobilized in 1985. *The Decision* called for a 'revolutionization' of military personnel, which meant two things: first, to maintain a high turnover to instill fresh blood into the PLA and second, to cultivate these recruits' active support of party policy during their time in the military. In other words, the GPD's new task to 'revolutionize' the troops aimed to constitute a professional fighting force representative of the party.

The values of the revolution were conveyed to servicemen not only through ideological education, but also through a series of participatory practices in the troops. The GPD runs the PLA bureaucracy to ensure that the staff works as a corporation, extending its modes of hierarchy and control to all military-run structures, be they stationed regiments, factories, hospitals or universities. This section considers the final problem that political commissars faced in their task to 'revolutionize' the troops. This problem, which I call the problem of leadership, rests in the following puzzle: the CCP's egalitarian ideology seemed at odds with the hierarchical structure of the military establishment which subordinates the troops to commanders.

Leadership level: maintaining party control over the decision-making process

As part of an effort to redefine the objectives of PLA political colleges, Xu Yipeng 徐一朋, researcher at the center for military teaching and research, called for a change of focus after *The Decision* was issued in 1987. In his words, the GPD should "change the idea of 'grassroots first and upper levels afterwards' into 'leadership first.' Just like in the troops, the political college must follow the motto 'in ruling the military, first rule the officers.' As cadres' authority decreases each level down, officers' behavior

set the standard for the school."[65] The role of officers as exemplars was even more crucial in active units.

By increasingly relying on mass media, the GPD was creating high expectations among recruits who had seen movies glorifying military heroism such as "Battle at Shangganling Mountain" [上甘岭] or "Lei Feng". Political commissars reported that the transition to barracks life was a shock, as "the troop leader relies on bribery to get things done, using connections to make progress, and men wine and dine and flatter each other.[66]" Troop leaders had to keep up with the image that movies propagated of them. This entailed increased political training of troop leaders. In 1990, lower-level commentators held the political commissar responsible for maintaining the perception of the military as a "pure land"[净土][67] .

'Revolutionary' leadership equates party control, as the implementation of socialist ideology seems the only guarantee of unity at brigade level. In one of the rare mentions of the Tiananmen crisis in military journals, an article from *The Political Work Periodical* tells the story of a unit, in the Lanzhou military region, on the brink of implosion in 1989. A couple of individualist officers broke away from the corporate spirit of the brigade they led: "in their management of the unit, they replaced the principle of organization by individualist notions."[68] 'Organization' is a form of leadership that realizes the values of the communist party. When informed of the imminent collapse of the brigade, the party restructured the unit through study sessions, monthly reports and collective meals and schedules. After the unit had made an

[65] 徐一朋，"让科学管理出'灵魂工程师'", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, no. 1-2, 48-51.
[66] 李春良 and 武孜学，"以廉带兵"，*Guofang*, 1990, no. 3, 21.
[67] Ibid. "Pure land" is the name of a branch of Buddhism.
[68] 樊建钵 and 许振宁，"个别人工作的盲区及其矫正", in *Political Work Periodical*, 1992: "在干部管理上，滋长了用个人意见替代组织原则."

impressive comeback, the party committee and the discipline inspection committee of the brigade were distinguished as "advanced" in 1992.

The party presented itself as a guarantor against abuses of power. The guarantee rested in the collective structure of PLA leadership, within the boundaries of the party committee. No evidence shows that all officers are party members[69], but only officers who are party members sit on those party committees, where all decisions concerning the life of the unit are made. *The Regulations for military officers on active service* promulgated by the National People's Congress in 1988 (article 3), assert that "military officers are selected and promoted […] through the practice of democratic supervision [民主监督]." The collective structure is supposed to prevent troop leaders from feeling superior, as the requirement of consensus balances power.

Party committees follow a top-down order of business where every topic has to be submitted to the higher rank before it can be discussed in a meeting. In an article published in March 1989, a researcher at the armed police Political Bureau called Ma Minshu 马民书 analyzed the problems related to this top-down management structure. Ma Minshu saw a structural issue in the party monopolizing positions of authority, as it threatened egalitarianism. To fight corruption, he argued that PLA party members should be accountable not only to the top, but also to the grassroots: "party members have the responsibility to manage cadres; they should also be managed however, and they should welcome the supervision of party organizations."[70] During the months following Tiananmen, the party strengthened its control over the selection and supervision of political cadres. In December 1989, the navy's GPD submitted cadres

[69] National air and space intelligence center, *People's Liberation Army air Force*, 2010, p. 51: "Not all officers are party members".
[70] 马民书, "消滞树新党管干部观念所变", *Political Work Periodical*, 1989, no. 3, 4.

from the submarines and naval ships to examinations in what was presented as an effort to increase transparency[71].

Jiang Zemin's main legacy as CMC chairman (1989-2004) was *The PLA Political Work Regulations*. Issued in 1995, these regulations formally divided the military chain of command into leadership levels and grassroots levels, with the regiment at the junction: "in the PLA, party representative assemblies at the level of the regiment and above are the leading units.[72]" In 2003, a revision of *The PLA Political Work Regulations* (see next chapter) defines military party committees by their function: "'Collective leadership' means that all important matters concerning implementation of party policy and dispositions for important assignments must be referred to the party committee and cannot be decided by a single person."[73] Plenary party committee meetings [党支部党员大会] are constrained by strict procedures determining when the session is held, how members are elected and the way that the agenda is set[74].

Hu Jintao's ideology of "scientific outlook", which requires comprehensive planning and policy-making, has strengthened the troops' structure of collective leadership through party committees[75]. Qiu Keren calls this method "democratic scientific policy-making", by contrast to single-man leadership[76]. NDU graduate Xu Jiaming 许家明 justifies the perpetuation of PLA democratic centralism by the fact that party committees allow officers from the four headquarters (logistics, equipment, politics and staff) to meet and bring their own expertise to devising the best course of action for

[71] "海军政治部干部部部长博 傅渤海，知人善任惟才是举 — 一试谈新时期干部工作的用人之道", *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1989, no. 6, 50.
[72] Jiang 2005, 188.
[73] Gao 2008, 82.
[74] Liu Yong 2009, 1-6.
[75] Xu Guo 2008, 376.
[76] Qiu 2008, 32.

the military unit[77]. In an interview, a PLA officer based in Hunan defined military democracy as follows: "At every level of the troops, there is a commissar, a commanding officer, a logistics officer, an officer for equipment, etc. All these people make up a distinct, separate party committee which takes the strategic decisions. This is military democracy. The meaning of military democracy is that all decisions related to military matters are taken by this committee whose members are equals.[78]" In the framework of 'military democracy', i.e. PLA party committees, military officers constitute a common executive. Leadership decisions are taken after a discussion, but once the committee's session is over, the outcome is one unified decision.

Grassroots level

Historically, one of the main differences between the Soviet system of political commissars and the Chinese one was that Mao Zedong instituted the post of political instructor at the level of the company whereas the Soviet Union did not have political cadres below the regimental level[79]. The PLA's attention to the grassroots has persisted to this day. 'Revolutionization' at the grassroots has not meant compulsory CCP enrolment, which becomes necessary only for promotion. Instead, the responsibility of the political instructor at the level of the company is to ensure the authority of the party over the life and training of the recruits and also to reach out to the wider population to ensure enlistment. At grassroots level, the party resolves the problem of leadership by organizing activities open to non-party members.

The political instructor represents the party among soldiers who are, in the

[77] Xu Jia 2008, 53.
[78] Author's interview with a PLA officer based in Hunan, March 9th, 2010.
[79] Author's interview with 焦健, October 2011.

majority, not party members. The issues arising among soldiers have less of an ideological nature than at the leadership level, where the reason for weak units was liberalism. Rather, the problem that the political instructor faces in a company is a fear of difficulty. In support of military command, he has the responsibility to sustain the pressure necessary for military units to make progress, as "there are a number of units where comrades lack the determination to make breakthroughs."[80] The presence of political cadres at every rank of the PLA also provides the stability necessary for the military chain of command to adapt to developments in warfare[81]. At regimental level, the political commissar investigates, writes documents, makes strategic decisions, coordinates, resolves contradictions and makes overall plans[82].

One level down, at battalion level, the political instructor does not sit on PLA party committees, by contrast with political commissars at the higher level of the chain of command[83]. His functions are more closely delineated. In 1997, the Academy of Military Science listed seven functions for the political instructor: organize study of the party line; coordinate with the commanding officers to ensure that his orders are followed; conduct political education; integrate ideological work into everyday life; oversee party organizations; train cadres and; ensure the protection of the troops[84].

Oversight of party organizations refers to a set of 'small organizations' [小组] run by the party but open to non-party members. These are the only groupings that servicemen are allowed to join. The two main ones are the youth league and the soldiers' committee. Formed at the level of the regiment, the youth league provides

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[80] 周开喜，"实现经常性思想工作新突破举要", *Political Work Periodical*, March 1992, 4.

[81] For example, the brigade [旅] level disappeared for ten years. It was restored in 1985 to facilitate operations combining different branches of the armed forces.

[82] 程少荣，"旅团政治部（处）主任"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1995, no. 3, 32-33.

[83] At regimental level and above. See my chart in chapter I, p. 20.

[84] 军队政治工作学.

ideological training, but also recreational and sports activities to younger recruits. While publicly available textbooks published by the NDU in the 2000s underscore the importance of training the party cadres who run the youth league in the troops[85], classified [军内部] documents detail the youth league's procedure to make contact with non-party members[86].

Instituted by Mao in 1927 in Sanwan [三湾][87]，the 'soldiers' committee' is headed by a political cadre, who embodies the limits to the practice of "democracy", but members are not required to be party members: the soldiers' committee is open to all soldiers. Its role is to bring the servicemen's concerns to higher-level cadres. Historically, it was a powerful organization where soldiers could raise criticism against their officers. At the level of the brigade, officers vote for five to seven representatives[88] who meet every five years at the divisional level as the servicemen's committee. If these representatives are not required to be party members, the agenda of their committee meetings is still set by the unit's party committee[89].

Political cadres also aim to foster the artistic talents of individual soldiers to involve them in the life of the community on a daily basis. A traditional means of intra-unit communication in the PLA is a blackboard, which serves the function of a calendar, announcing the day's or the week's schedule[90]. Featuring in the propaganda material that the PLA publishes to attract new recruits, the blackboard has become a symbol of the collective life of soldiers, as it records all daily activities, military and extra-military[91]. The political instructor is not in charge of the device. Instead, soldiers with the best skills

[85] Li 2005, 55-59.
[86] Liu Yong 2009, 109-111.
[87] http://www.defence.org.cn/article-2-19496.html.
[88] Xu Jia 2008, 75.
[89] Li 2005, 41.
[90] Dong 2011.
[91] Fang 2006.

in calligraphy write and draw on the blackboard. With the digitalization of political work, the blackboard has been transformed into a bulletin for soldiers to communicate daily information. Not only is the physical object still used as such in the barracks, but photographs of blackboards are posted on the all-PLA "political work website."[92]

The 1995 *PLA Political Work Regulations* created a cultural course in ideological education. This new class makes part of a unit-wide organization of cultural life, under GPD control. For example, political bureaus oversee social clubs specific to each branch of the services (the navy's club is called "pier club", while the air force club is called "blue sky club"[93]). They also actively promote sports and artistic societies in military units, which hold regular games and competition.

Of the use of emotions in political work

The PLA's project to 'revolutionize' the troops in the 1980s has comprised an emotional as well as a moral education. One strategy was to promote emulation between units. As part of the party's wider policy of spiritual civilization (see chapter 4), journals like *National Defense*, *The Political Work Periodical*, *The Journal of the Nanjing Political College* and *Life at the Frontier* [边防生活] encouraged all units to compete for distinction by publishing a ranking of units. In a piece he wrote in 1985, Officer Wang Zhangcun 王长存 explained that awards bestowed to exemplary servicemen based on an impartial judgment have an emotional impact on their peers[94]. Political commissars thus use awards to highlight practices which are then promoted more widely[95]. Awards for model behavior provide an avenue for contact between the grassroots and the leadership, in

[92] Cf. the "黑板" section of www.allzg.com.
[93] Zhang 2011, 15.
[94] Wang 2004, 162-4.
[95] Li 2005, 30.

which roles are clearly defined: each unit or serviceman has the potential to be awarded a prize, but only the political organs have the authority to bestow it.

At the individual level, emotions play a significant role in political education. Yao Youzhi wrote: "the most fundamental requirement to constitute a modern revolutionary military is twofold: establish a proletarian concept of war, an idea of defense and; commitment to the military in the practice of arms, commitment to the military vocation."[96] In other words, the PLA had to create the desire to dedicate oneself to the military profession. Yao Youzhi emphasizes the soldier's "love for the army, necessary for him to be willing to make a contribution to national defense and army building."[97] In practical terms, this love is conceived as love for the equipment emblematic of each branch of the armed forces: love of the boat in the navy and love of the plane in the air force[98].

At the collective level, the party continued to mount campaigns involving servicemen. Even though political campaigns during the Cultural Revolution were considered to have been destructive, there was still room for positive campaigns in the 1990s[99]. Far from rejecting political movements altogether, the Academy of Military Science advocated a historical analysis of campaigns to use them creatively: Lei Feng movements, nationwide anti-pornography campaigns, Asian games propaganda, anti-liberalization movements and economic movements all serve different purposes[100]. At the same time, the technique of political campaigning was no longer taken for granted and specific uses now needed to be assessed: "to determine whether a campaign is good

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[96] 姚有志，"军队政治教育的主旋律 – 国防教育", *Political Work Periodical*, 1987, no. 3, 7: "做合格的现代革命军，有多方面的素质要求，然而最根本的素质要求是树立无产阶级的战争观，国防观，爱军习武，恪守军人的天职."

[97] Ibid.: "热爱军队，乐于为国防建设和军队建设建功立业."

[98] Li 2005.

[99] 对运动的社会存在形式的正确认识与评，*Political Work Periodical*, 1991.

[100] 公方彬, "辨析与选择"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1991, no. 3, 4-5.

or bad, one should see whether it is suited to the people's interest." The PLA meant to use emotions to revitalize the collective spirit, but wary of the ideological dangers of the Cultural Revolution.

In addition to ideological indoctrination, the work of political cadres includes the responsibility that the PLA operates at the most of its organizational capacity. Even though political commissars are now using the language of performance management in overseeing the military establishment, they remain agents of the party. They use their position as executive officer in charge of human resources to reassert the organizational specificity of the people's army, where the CCP monopolizes leadership levels. The political education and practices embedded in the PLA have instituted an upward mobility dependent on party membership. Party control of the PLA is a complex system of feedback mechanisms and internal communication.

Conclusion

The decade leading to the Tiananmen crisis (1979-1989), witnessed a widespread ideological crisis within the PLA. We have seen that servicemen and women expressed a feeling of estrangement: they felt disconnected both from the values at the core of the communist revolution of 1949 and from the mobility and change emerging in Chinese society in the 1980s and 1990s. The party's response, "revolutionization", was to strengthen and update the role of political commissars. The integration of the PRC's history into military training has allowed the party-state to renew its ideology while remaining a revolutionary state. Occulting the operational disaster that the Sino-Vietnamese war was, the GPD also managed to reconnect the PLA with Chinese

society. At a first level, "revolutionization" took on the properly military role of attracting and training new recruits, to keep the military corps in touch with the society it had the duty to safeguard.

The second level of the "revolutionization" policy was to touch the emotional and moral taproots of Chinese servicemen to ensure their civic education. The tactic is telling: as of 1987, the party decided to question the very meaning of the revolution by asking servicemen themselves what the idea meant to them. Building on this understanding coming from the grassroots and teaching the principles of Marxism-Leninism through examples of personal achievements, political work appeals to the emotions of officers and soldiers to create esprit de corps in the unit. The purpose of these educational techniques, in addition to the more traditional ideological indoctrination, is twofold. On the one hand, they allow political instructors to keep a close watch on potential dissent. On the other hand, they maintain pressure on servicemen to keep them in a state of revolutionary fervor. The moral system of values of Marxist-Leninist theory thereby provides a framework of reference that allows for 'change' while maintaining the integrity of the PLA. It serves as an incubator for the ongoing, dynamic development of revolutionary legend.

CHAPTER III: PROFESSIONALIZING THE PLA

A professional military is provided with sufficient means to be able to focus on its own area of expertise, "the management of violence" [1]. Samuel Huntington's Professionalism theory posited that officers need to be disengaged from political concerns in order to achieve this focus. In the summa he published in 2002 about PLA modernization, David Shambaugh projected this model of civil-military relations on China[2]. This chapter questions this received wisdom in the light of Chinese debates and processes.

In 1987, Deng Xiaoping had reduced the People's Liberation Army from four to three million servicemen. To the outside world, this dramatic reduction of personnel projected China as a peaceful country. From a domestic point of view, it signaled a determination to regain control of a force that had shown a fair amount of autonomy during the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, Deng Xiaoping used his mandate as chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) (1981-1989) to ruthlessly reestablish the absolute control of the party over the armed forces, which had been altered during the Cultural Revolution. To achieve recognition of its authority over the PLA, the party provided the armed forces with the means to increase its *expertise*. The PLA's General

[1] Harold Lasswell, "The garrison State", *American Journal of Sociology* 46, 1941, 455-468.
[2] David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Political Department (GPD) was tasked with establishing central standards that would serve to unify the military profession under party leadership. Rather than a set of skills, these norms were a style of administering the military establishment that emphasized discipline and adaptation to new patterns of warfare. These two new requirements were enforced by the GPD through its system of political commissars. In practical terms, they translated as 'regularization' [正规化] and 'modernization' [现代化].

I argue that as the regularization and modernization of the fighting force came to prominence, the GPD gained importance. Indeed, the GPD led the professionalization of the force by setting the boundaries of its expertise. It was not merely a top-down structure of party control over the armed forces however. On the contrary, political commissars at regimental level managed the troops with a fair amount of leverage. In a first section, I will show that the function of the law in the Chinese military is different from the expression of the collective will, which is the commonly accepted source of the law in the West[3]. In the PLA, law [法] serves as an administrative device, and its purpose is to determine the most efficient distribution of roles within the military establishment. It enunciates professional standards, which serve as common reference in military units. In a second section, I will show that this 'law' is produced by the GPD as a synthesis of the experience of political commissars. In a final section, I explain that PLA political cadres are also tasked with addressing changes in warfare patterns to flexibly adapt the function of party committees in the troops; this way, they are constantly accounting for their mission to serve and defend the single-party regime.

[3] Definition formulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau during the Enlightenment.

Resetting the terms of the debate:

the function of military law in the PRC

The way that professional military officers exercise their expertise is enshrined in the law. Thus, in 1989, Officer Xu Qinxian refused to lead the 38th Group Army under his command to suppress demonstrations at Tiananmen Square because, he explained, the order he received from the CMC did not comply with legal procedures[4]. As a result of his insubordination, Xu Qinxian was sent to jail and expelled from the CCP. Yet, the party seems to have taken his criticism seriously, as it embarked on a wide-ranging effort to bring the PLA under regulatory control after the massacre of 1989.

In 1991, the CMC adopted the policy "to administer the military according to the law,"[5] leading to the promulgation of a raft of legal texts regulating the functioning of the PLA. Following the demobilization of one million servicemen in 1985-1987, it was the second step of a process of regularizing the military establishment initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. After the crisis of authority that led to the military crackdown at Tiananmen Square in 1989[6], Deng assigned the task to make the PLA accountable to the GPD. In 1992, journalist Gu Zhaofeng 谷兆峰 explained that Deng Xiaoping introduced the language and techniques of management during his mandate as chairman of the CMC (1981-1989). Gu quotes Deng Xiaoping's words about the PLA: "we must regulate responsibilities, straighten out relationships and clarify categories of management and content […]. There must be a clear and definite system

[4] Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of military Force, Beyond the Great Wall*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 156.

[5] 我国军事法学研究的历史回顾 , *Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 1, 18-20.

[6] Larry M. Wortzel, "The Tiananmen massacre reappraised: public protest", in Andrew Scobell (ed.), *Chinese National Security decisionmaking under stress*, Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005, 55-84.

of job responsibility."[7] Gu explicitly says that Deng was introducing "management concepts." In this new managerial perspective, 'regularization' is tantamount to 'standardization', i.e. applying a single grid of evaluation to servicemen's conduct.

The significance of the National Defense Law

In March 1997, the NPC issued the National Defense Law (NDL), formulating the duties and prerogatives of the PLA as a whole. David Shambaugh interpreted the promulgation of this law as the demise of political work, claiming that the military in China would henceforth be ruled by law instead of ideology. His main point was the following:

> The 1997 National Defense Law suggests some fundamental shifts in the relationship of the military to the party and the state. A number of its articles clearly subordinate the 'armed forces' (defined as including the People's Armed Police, militia and reserves) to the state. The term "state" (*guojia*) is mentioned no fewer than thirty-nine times in the law. The implications of this term and the institutional subordination of the armed forces to state control, are specified in some detail. Only in a single clause is the relationship to the party mentioned (article 19): "The armed forces of the People's Republic of China are subject to leadership by the Communist party, and CCP organizations in the armed forces shall conduct activities in accordance with the CCP constitution" (i.e. presumably, with regard to party committees and discipline inspection work). Everywhere else in the NDL, the military's subordination to the state is made abundantly clear. It is affirmed, for example, that (article 5): "The state shall exercise unified leadership over national defense activities."[8]

In this quotation, Shambaugh makes implicit use of Huntington's model of "objective civilian control" whereby the military needs the domination of a neutral structure of political power to be able to increase its expertise. He claims that the National Defense Law provided such neutrality because it establishes a separation between party and state

[7] 谷兆峰，"运用邓小平军事管理思想指导部队建设", *Guofang*, 1992, no. 2, 5.
[8] David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 48-49.

in the PRC by withdrawing the national military from control of the former to place it into the orbit of the latter.

There are two problems with this argument. The first problem is of a linguistic nature. Despite his emphasis on the term, Shambaugh does not clearly define the meaning of the "state", his translation for *guojia* [国家]. In the first chapter of this thesis, I argued that this concept is different from the Western idea of the political state and refers to the single-party state. Shambaugh claims that "in Chinese, the clear connotation of the term for state (*guojia*) is government, as distinct from the party."[9] Given that this claim is not supported by any further discussion, Shambaugh makes a significant translation mistake. Indeed, the Chinese language has a specific term to designate government, that is *zhengfu* [政府], not *guojia* [国家]. To refer to the state's administrative apparatus, which is the meaning of 'government', the Chinese language employs the word *zhengfu* [政府].

Shambaugh argues that article 5 of the NDL, "The state shall exercise unified leadership over national defense activities"[10], testifies to the separation between the party and the military. In March 1997, however, State Council Advisor Fang Ning [方宁] had proposed a distinctly different interpretation of this article: "in China, the unified leadership of the state [国家] over defense activities and the unified leadership of the Communist party over defense activities are the same thing. The preamble to the constitution of China states that the victory of the new Chinese democratic revolution and the accomplishment of the socialist cause were both granted to the people by the

[9] Ibid., 48.
[10] The original version of the law was published in *Guofang*, 1997, no. 4, 4-10.

Chinese Communist party."[11] In this statement, four important relationships are at work. First, the identity between the state and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is reasserted as the overarching principle of Chinese politics. Second, it is recalled that this identity is enshrined in the state constitution, which establishes the communist revolution as the foundational event of the PRC. This latter proposition contains the last two linkages: 3) the interdependence between the PRC's legal framework and the legacy of the revolution and; 4) the legitimate leadership of the CCP over the people, because the party was able to provide political institutions[12]. The first article of the NDL, absent from Shambaugh's analysis, supports Fang Ning's explanation: "This law was formulated to establish and consolidate defense and to ensure the modernization of socialism."

The second problem follows from Shambaugh's claim that state law overrides party policy. Shambaugh believes that the National Defense Law removed the need for ideology by defining the duties and prerogatives of servicemen. But he overlooks two historical considerations. First, the party had long made use of legal texts to establish its control over the armed forces. Second, the nature of the political work ensuring this control had changed in conjunction with the evolution of the PLA and the establishment of a legal framework for its existence. In fact, legal statutes for military political work were the outcome of political work practice rather than a foundation for it.

The PLA had long used military legislation to implement party ideology. The top-down style of regulation established in the early years of the PLA included statutes for PLA personnel working under the GPD. The first text, the "provisional political work regulations for the Chinese Red army of workers and peasants" ["中国工农红军

[11] 方宁，"国防法的使用范围与国防活动的基本原则", *Guofang*, 1997, no. 5, 9.
[12] 事业 is an interesting choice of terms. It means both 'cause', as political ideal, and institution.

政治工作暂行条例草案"], defined the organization and content of PLA political work in 1932, the year when the GPD was established. In 1938, an amendment to the ordinance described political work as the military's "lifeline"[13] [生命线], establishing once and for all the direct connection between the military and the party. At the same time as Minister of Defense Peng Dehuai unified the PLA in 1954 by bringing together the various communist field armies, Marshals Luo Ronghuan 罗荣桓 and Chen Yi 陈毅 designed *The Political Work Regulations* [中国人民解放军政治工作条例] (thereafter *Political Work Regulations* [政工条例]). These early decrees established the connection between indoctrination in the troops and the system of party committees integrating political commissars into the PLA command structure at unit level[14].

Furthermore, the NDL was not the first attempt to unify the military from the center. In 1982, after two years of debate[15], the National People's Congress (NPC) formulated "laws on defense and army-building"[16]. In 1984, a law on military service was written afresh, then amended in 1998. In 1988, the NPC regulated the routine of active-duty officers with *The Military Service Regulations Pertaining to PLA Officers in Active Service* [现役军官服役条例]. This text provided statutes applicable to all PLA officers, be they "military officers, political officers, logistics officers and officers with special technical skills,"[17] putting political cadres on equal footing with commanding officers. Maintaining regular surveillance through the discipline inspection committee under the GPD, their job is to ensure that servicemen abide by regulations. Far from making political work obsolete, the imperative of 'standardization' increased the role of the

[13] Ying-Mao Kau, Paul Chancellor, Philip Ginsburg and Pierre Perrolle, *The Political Work System of the Chinese communist military*, East Asia language center, Brown University, 1971, 83.
[14] Ibid.
[15] 张建，"筑起我们新的长城", *Minbing*, 1994, no. 1, 3-7.
[16] *China's Defense White Paper*, 1998: http://www.nti.org/db/china/engdocs/wpnatdef.htm.
[17] 全国人民代表大会，中国人民解放军现役军官服役条例："军事军官，政治军官."

GPD in centralizing the PLA and ensuring party control over it.

The National Defense Law was the first piece of legislation enacted under Jiang Zemin to codify the mission of the PLA. With historical perspective, it appears to have increased the party's leverage rather than diminish it.

Law as a constraining norm

In a speech he gave as chairman of the Central Military Commission in 1999, Jiang Zemin discussed the place of law in "administering the military" and made his purpose very clear:

> The goal of administering the military according to law [法] is to ensure the party's absolute leadership over the troops. […] Ideological political education, policy guidance from the party, the establishment of a fine style of work and checks by different levels of party and government are all very important means of maintaining and managing the troops, which we must make the most of. At the same time, in ruling over the military, we must make full use of legal means. *As a constraining standard, the legal system can sustain our fine tradition of party leadership over the military and consolidate this successful experience*. […] To handle relations between the military and the government and between the military and the people appropriately, we must rely on legal means as well as on educational and administrative means.[18]

The important idea in this speech is the conception of law as an administrative tool. Far from having a constitutional function, law operationalizes ideology. In February 1999, a spokesperson for the Academy of Military Science (AMS) explained that it was the proper kind of tool for the party to use in the context of the liberalization of Chinese society: "Jiang Zemin emphasized the principle of relying on the law to administer the military strictly. His priority was strictness, as he himself said 'administer the military strictly. […] Strictness ensures discipline, order, unity and combat

[18] *Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 3, 4-5. Italics mine.

capacity.'[19]" Clearly, the usage that the PLA is to make of the law is purely instrumental. The power of law is that it conveys authority, but it is not itself the source of political authority. In Chinese political thought, the character that I translated as "law" [法] has a legalistic origin. Anne Cheng demonstrated that for the legalistic writers who first used the term in the second century B.C., its meaning was close to that of a mechanical scale measuring weight[20]. This moral and political neutrality expressed in the character 法 is entirely different to the Western conception of the law as expression of the collective will, that Shambaugh projects on contemporary China.

Thus the PLA has made a managerial use of the law, alongside other efforts toward 'transparency'. The two key events in this broader effort were the Chinese Ministry of Defense's decision to issue Defense White Papers starting in 1995 and the launch of an English language version of its website in 2009. Reporting on the website, *New York Times* journalist Michael Wines wrote "the site, which has Chinese and English versions, is another step by China's famously secretive armed forces to give outsiders a peek at their operations, or at least the view they want to offer.[21]" Wines however neglected to note that rather than a translation of the original website, the English version is entirely different from the Chinese one.

In the Chinese perception, all military establishments are embedded in the political systems of the states they defend, and the ideologies corresponding to those systems are reflected in servicemen's training. In 2001, NDU lecturer Colonel Zhang Chengfu 张成富 compared China with the US, Russia, Germany and Japan, arguing

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[19] 石玉坤，"跨世纪的治军指南 — 学习江主席关于依法从严治军的论述"，*Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 1, 15-17.

[20] Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*, Editions du Seuil, 1997, 242: "indépendante de toute subjectivité, [la loi] est, à l'image de la balance, un instrument parfaitement neutre, susceptible d'être manipulée par n'importe qui."

[21] Michael Wines, "China¹s Secretive Military Opens Up in Cyberspace", *The New York Times*, August 20th, 2009, available at www.nytimes.com/2009/08/21/world.

that all military establishments perform political work, defined as: "ideological political education, cadres' human resources, military law, recreation and cultural activities in the barracks, psychological training and other aspects of psychological warfare."[22] In his perspective, the only difference between the PRC and other countries is that the means through which a given political regime controls its military is implicit in foreign militaries but institutionalized through the GPD in the PLA.

In his 1999 speech, Jiang Zemin explained that PLA usage of the law went in tandem with "checks by different levels of party and government." This interdependence of party and government at different levels of the PRC in designing laws for the PLA became evident in the formulation of the *National Defense Education Law of the People's Republic of China* (hereafter *National Defense Education Law*), promulgated by the National People's Congress in 2001. Article 7 of this law stipulates: "The national defense education working institution of the state shall plan, organize, direct and coordinate the national defense education work throughout the country. The institutions responsible for the national defense education work at the county level or above shall organize, direct, coordinate and inspect the national defense education work within their respective administrative area. " This law was simply formulating a series of practices that were already widespread in the 1990s, further integrating cooperation between garrisons and local government.

Another major law drafted on the basis of practice was the National Mobilization Law [动员法], passed by the standing committee of the NPC in 2010. After a decade-long drafting process, it established 'defense mobilization committees' under the joint leadership of the CMC and the government. The concept of defense

[22] Zhang 2005, 288-330.

mobilization has a long history in communist China. Archives of local gazetteers show that the idea of national mobilization even preceded the foundation of the PRC. The earliest mention of military mobilization was the mobilization committee [动员委员会] which united the CCP and the Guomindang during the war of resistance against Japan in 1925[23]. "Mobilization" then took on a civilian meaning, referring to tax collection, as mentioned in a gazetteer from Hebei province in 1945[24], or mass effort to sustain industrial production, as shown in records from Inner Mongolia from 1959[25]. In this latter document, the concept of mobilization took a military form with the establishment of mobilization bureaus [动员部] set up under PLA control, at the local level[26].

While the formal drafting of the National Mobilization Law did not begin before the year 2000, political commissars at the level of military district had opened the debate about mobilization in contemporary warfare in 1996. That year, the political commissar for the Hebei province military district Xu Shiqiao 徐师樵 called for a national plan for coordinated mobilization of the reserve force, as warfare had become "sudden, fast and entailed a large scale of expenditure."[27] By 2003, the AMS was defining military mobilization as the use of the country's resources in preparation for war[28]. Finally, during his long ascent to China's presidency, Xi Jinping spent four years (1999-2003) acting as vice-director of Nanjing Military Region (MR)'s national defense mobilization commission. In sum, the National Mobilization Law enshrined the PLA GPD's mandate to conduct 'mass work'.

[23] Leting 1994, 725.
[24] Hebei 1996, 21.
[25] Kundulun 2006, 40.
[26] Ibid., 73.
[27] 徐师樵，"高技术局部战争中后备兵员的动员与运用", *Guofang*, 1996, no. 2, 14.
[28] Qian 2003.

As military law falls under the administrative responsibility of the GPD, the National Defense Law, promulgated in 1997, does not have a constitutional function. Rather than establishing a new regime of civilian control of the military, it set central rules for political officers to enforce. Wider use of the law in the PLA is a management technique that the party employs to durably ensure its own leadership over the PRC's armed forces. Placed in historical perspective, the NDL is one of many laws that the party has used to bring the PLA under regulatory control, including ideological indoctrination. Thus the PRC's legal framework has consolidated party control of the military during peacetime.

Regularization: political work and the law

Having argued that law in the PLA is a managerial device, I will now show that political commissars under the GPD are the key users of this device in managing soldiers. Indeed, law in the PLA is tantamount to party policy. The Chinese character usually translated as "law", 法, also means 'method' and 'standard'. The 'regularization' process has established central norms as the points of reference for military units at the grassroots level. Described as 'regulations' [规律], these norms are set down in the legal code of the PLA.

Referring to interpretations of the phrase "to administer the military according to the law" that mid-ranking political commissars have provided throughout the 1990s and 2000s, I shall consider two ways in which political commissars use the law. First, I will look at how the requirement of political indoctrination in the armed forces has influenced military legislation. Second I will explain that as a result, a new role of the

GPD has been to promote 'legal education' among the troops.

Military law and political work

The ideological crisis in the 1980s (cf. previous chapter) revealed that the historical identification of PLA esprit de corps at the regimental level had lost reality. The trajectory of Yao Nianxue 姚念学, head political commissar of the second Artillery's Command Academy, can be read as a parable illustrating the political cadres' need for the law to bring cohesion to a regiment. In 1988, Yao Nianxue was working in a local logistics bureau when he received the order to serve as political commissar in an engineering regiment of the second artillery[29]. Despite a prestigious past, the unit was suffering from a series of defections. After two months of investigation, Yao found widespread corruption. An extreme case was a soldier absconding with five guns and 900 yuans belonging to the unit. Upon arrest, the fugitive recognized the theft of the weapons but denied that he had also stolen money. Yao realized that this lack of esprit de corps was not an isolated case. In response to the question "give three important regulations", another soldier replied "to keep one's bed neat and one's hair tidy and to maintain the required standards for appearance and bearing." Military regulations evidently appeared to soldiers as mere rules one needed to follow to allow life in common. After twelve years of intensive legal education, Yao brought the unit back on track, as it successfully completed six engineering projects.

The confusion that Yao Nianxue's men expressed as regards the spirit of the law has some parallel with instances of military fraternization with demonstrators at

[29] 胡延宁 and 牛永泽，"路漫漫兮勇求索 — 第二炮兵某工程建筑团坚持依法治军建设全面", *Zhongguo Junfa*, 2000, no. 5, 14-21.

Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989. In response to this crisis of morale, the GPD used two mechanisms to restore the authority of the party over the armed forces. First, the GPD launched a propaganda offensive in the PLA after the crack down[30]. Second, it conveyed new military legislation. The military legislation enacted in the 1990s emphasized some of the most authoritarian of party policies, presumably to harden up discipline in the ranks. For example, *The Program for Military Grassroots Units* [军队基层建设纲要] promulgated in 1995 declared that servicemen must show the example in observing the one-child policy strictly. As the content of political education in the PLA expanded beyond indoctrination in Mao Zedong thought, Deng Xiaoping theory and Jiang Zemin's 'three represents,' political work also took on a more practical approach.

In order to ensure the practicality of the statutory codification of political work, the GPD became more involved in its formulation. In 2003, the Party Central Committee and the CMC jointly revised *The PLA Political Work Regulations*, providing the text governing military political work today. The consultation leading to this revision required collective approval by the political cadres of the largest military units (rank 1). In 2003, a convention headed by a Leading Small Group discussed the new amendment to the *Political Work Regulations*. Deputy Director of the AMS Political Work Department, Yang Chunzhang 杨春长, led these discussions. In his recollection, political cadres provided input based on their experience and 'grassroots practice'[31], suggesting that the basis of law in the PLA was a synthesis of the establishment's managerial experience.

The Political Work Regulations standardized the recruitment and training of military

[30] David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the state in China: the political work system in the People's Liberation Army", *China Quarterly* 127, 1991, 527-568.

[31] http://news.qq.com/a/20081020/001098.htm: "总政治部招集在京各大单位政治部主任开会，部署修订'中国人民解放军政治工作条例.'"

political cadres. Two textbooks for PLA political instructors published in 2005 and 2008 detail the requirements that they need to fulfill to work in the military[32]. Based on *The Political Work Regulations*, the first textbook enunciates the criteria by which political cadres are examined: "morals, skills, diligence and achievements". The second book explains the duties of the grassroots political cadre based on nine functions he is supposed to perform. In traditional communist jargon, these are called "the four abilities and five capacities". The abilities are: to conduct investigations, to set up a pedagogical program, to give lectures and to use information technology. The capacities are: to maintain morale, to use the key soldiers in the troops, to monitor servicemen's psychology, to adjust one's method to individual needs and to resolve isolated issues. The authors list past exams questions that political cadres have had to answer either to stay in office or as part of a job application. Rather than rote-learning, the trainees are faced with very specific cases, related to organizing the troops through party committees, conducting ideological education, enforcing discipline or setting the finances of a unit straight. This shows that they are taught to think casuistically, according to the many categories that *The Political Work Regulations* set down as their domain.

Political commissars value the law for its power to convey a system of values. This power can be harnessed to ideology in military training. The most recent statutes for military political education promulgated in 2007, the *Outline for the Chinese PLA's Ideological Education* (article 5), emphasize the role of indoctrination in contemporary military training: "China's PLA ideological political education relies on the study of Marxism, most specifically recent Chinese achievements in the development of Marxism, as well as on teaching the national army's historical mission and ideological

[32] Li 2005, 81-130 and Xu Guo 2008.

beliefs, the spirit of struggle and socialism's honor or disgrace to sustain the system of the core values of socialism."[33] The PLA itself embodies a normative system because it possesses the capacity to synthesize China's historical narrative in both "honour and disgrace". What is interesting in this quotation is the absence of the party. Rather than merely indoctrinating servicemen to swear allegiance to the party, ideological education endows them with the function of representing the history of the PRC.

The party's acknowledgement of law in military organization toned down the ideological antagonism between China and its enemies. Henceforth, the PLA systematically compared the American and the Chinese militaries, without denunciation. In 1998, the commanding college of the Nanjing Ground Force Academy argued that the functions of the "military officer responsible for legal matters" in the US military covered what the PLA refers to as 'political work': inform servicemen about major national laws and also ensure a service of civil law regulation in officers' and soldiers' private lives[34]. In 2008, the academic journal *Legal System and Society* published a detailed assessment of the use of the legal system in the American military, presenting the American case as an "inspiration" for the PLA[35]. The author Wu Yulong 武玉龙 argues that the American legal system is based on a class society. In his view, capitalism and the common law tradition determine all the characteristics of American law. In the comparison between the US and China, Wu Yulong calls "value system [价值观]" the key role that ideology plays in both countries. In his view, the difference is that these values are judicial independence and fairness in the US whereas "the party's absolute leadership" is what provides the PLA with its revolutionary esprit de corps.

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[33] Xu Guo, 2008, 35.
[34] 刘斌，美军的"政治工作"参谋，*Yunnan Guofang*, 1998, no. 2, 33.
[35] 武玉龙，浅析美军的"依法治军", in *Legal System and society*, October 2008, 203-204.

In sum, increased reliance on legal means and procedures since the mid-1990s has helped the GPD reestablish party control over the armed forces by synthesizing the experience of mid-level political cadres and devising regulations adapted to changes in troop morale. As for the content of ideological indoctrination itself, it focused both on the new orientations of the party and on establishing and conveying a unified system of moral values. In systematizing this education, law proved a very useful tool.

Soldiers' legal education

As law was becoming a managerial device for the GPD, it became necessary for the headquarters not only to make law, but also to teach servicemen respect for the law. In 1985, *The PLA Daily* created a column entitled "Servicemen and the law". The journal explained the purpose of this new section as follows: "In this column, we will notify each law that the troops must abide by, promote the experience of individuals who showed respect for the law, as well as publicize a selection of case studies, in order to facilitate a better comprehension of the content of new laws."[36] In 1986, the CCP central committee, the State Council and the CMC formally initiated legal education in the PLA[37]. That year, AMS director Liu Jingsong 刘精松 published an article entitled "Leading cadres must take the lead in studying the law."[38] Consistent with Marx's precept of law as a reflection of the ruling class, Liu Jingsong argued that a legal system should serve Chinese communism and the legal education of leading military cadres should reinforce single-party rule. In other words, legal education, focused on the military elite, is part of political work. The possibility of punishment for disobedience is

[36] "见面话", *PLA Daily*, November 11th, 1985.
[37] *Zhongguo* 1997.
[38] Liu Jing 2009, 22-36.

particularly important to Liu who emphasized the way it can increase the usefulness of regulatory law as a source of authority. Thus he notes that the law can be a "weapon"[39] for the ruling party to ensure control over the armed forces. Liu Jingsong describes the psychological effects of the law, which brings the central state into the barracks. In conclusion, he claims that the law guarantees social stability under the ruling party. Indeed, the GPD's "circular concerning the dissemination of legal elementary knowledge in the military" requests that military officers study not only military law but also criminal law and civil law.

The role of political commissars was to establish a direct connection between compliance with the law and adherence to the party's ideology. In 1992, Zhang Ping 张平, a political cadre in the South China fleet, examined ten cases involving eleven navy officers breaking the law. Seeking to draw lessons from these breaches, he provided an explanation for misconduct. "The psychological state of the eleven cadres who committed offenses was examined. It emerged that their political education had been lax; as a result, they lost faith in the socialist political ideal. Today, the fast-changing international situation presents us with forces hostile to our peaceful evolution. In these circumstances, if we do not want individuals to commit offenses, only an unremitting education about the revolution can strengthen the communist cause and the confidence in the ideal of a persistent struggle."[40] In Zhang Ping's analysis, the reason for servicemen breaking the law is the failure of political education to convey the revolutionary ideal to soldiers. For a unit to be able to function well, the safeguarding of the revolution must be thoroughly inculcated. Just like Yao Nianxue (see above), Zhang Ping considers that what matters in legal education is to convey the spirit of the law, that

[39] Ibid., 24.
[40] 张平，10 起干部违法案件的启示, *Political Work Periodical*, 1992, no. 3, 38-39.

is allegiance to the regime.

Legal education is a highly pliable theme across whose meanings high-level political commissars in the academies slide opportunistically. For example, head of the Nanjing MR air force political department Ma Shaojun 马绍君 explains that legal training compels servicemen to put their work in the air force in context: "the law is a highly authoritative concept. Legal education has facilitated a more in-depth understanding of the air force in the Nanjing military region, as well as a better acceptance and use of it."[41] Political commissars use the law as a pattern to teach servicemen to relate their experience to the history of military science in the PLA. In 1999, the political commissar of the army Staff College Major General Li Dianren 李殿仁 reflected that legislation on military education could strengthen the status of military academies by unifying the curriculum. "Teaching according to standardized guidelines would ensure a practical curriculum for academies. Strictly relying on related laws and regulations for training, political education, administrative management and logistics allows a smooth coordination of all these aspects to focus on teaching."[42]

The PLA has standardized guidelines for military training routines. A reportage from *Chinese Military Law* on a shooting exercise that took place in the Jinan MR in 2000 shows that the use of the law during training has entailed increased reliance on PLA party committees[43]. At the level of the brigade, the law refers to a set procedure. First, it is the drill's plan. Given that they are members of the brigade's party committee, officers act as depositaries of that plan; therefore, when practice diverges from the plan, only officers are able to keep the unit on course. Second, the law is a bottom-up feedback

[41] 马绍君，从执法的高度贯彻执行军事训练条令，大纲, *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1988, no. 3, 33.
[42] 李殿仁，"贯彻依法治军方针加快依法治教进程", *Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 4, 10-12.
[43] "生命线"在法制轨道上延伸，*Zhongguo Junfa*, 2003, no. 1, 18-22.

mechanism from the company led by a single political director to the battalion, which is the lowest level where the party committee convenes; a battalion's party committee can transfer a successful political director from one company to another, to maintain the cohesiveness of the battalion and the various companies' adherence to the battalion's plan.

Jiang Zemin linked scientific training to legal training in the PLA[44]. The connection between the law and scientific knowledge is captured by the word *guilü* 规律, which signifies law as a regular pattern and is used to designate the laws of nature [自然界的规律]. The use that the CCP made of this conception of the law comes clear when seen in its active opposition to other Chinese definitions of the law such as the one put forward by the *falungong* movement. According to Vivienne Shue, *Falungong* leader Li Hongzhi "not only rejects the ideals of the socialist market economy which the Chinese state now seeks to foster; he also rejects the claims to cosmological truth that are accorded by the state to the demystified rationality of modern science. Li claims knowledge of a higher science, one that is not yet comprehended on earth."[45]

In 1999, after a large-scale sit-in of *falungong* believers asking for the freedom to practice the martial art constitutive of their meditation, the PLA engaged in banning all texts produced by the *falungong* in a public show of force reminiscent of Ray Bradbury's novel *Farenheit 451*[46]. That year, the Beijing MR invited scientist He Zuoxiu 和祚庥 to give a lecture to the troops. He Zuoxiu is a physicist close to the regime who advocates a positivist view of science in his work at the Chinese Academy of Science. At the same time, the political bureau of the Nanjing MR "used television, the radio, blackboards

[44] 贯彻落实科技强军战略依法加强科技干部队伍建设，*Zhongguo Junfa*, 2000, no. 1, 6-8.
[45] Vivienne Shue, "Legitimacy Crisis in China?", in Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (eds.), *State and Society in 21st Century China*, 2004, 24-49.
[46] "坚持真理 崇尚科学 破除迷信"，*Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 5, 1.

and open air movies to discredit the *falungong* to help officers and soldiers to make a clear distinction between right and wrong and reject superstitious beliefs."[47] As part of the same campaign, the People's Armed Police in Yangzhou (Jiangsu province) helped the municipality to collect and burn over ten thousand books and periodicals illegally published by the *falungong*. The Lanzhou MR held ideological classes and small discussion groups "to increase knowledge of the *falungong*."[48]

The requirement that servicemen become conversant with legal proceedings has been part of the pedagogical project of "spiritual civilization" led by the CCP (see next chapter). For example, in 1994, the political commissar of an artillery regiment in the Beijing MR headed a Leading Small Group dedicated to teaching the inhabitants of the village where it was stationed the rudiments of law. The mission of the regiment's legal counsel, under the unit's political bureau, was to educate the civilian population about the law[49]. The Leading small Group associated the local government and the garrison, who organized a series of events jointly, following a five-year plan dedicated to the dissemination of legal knowledge among the civilian population of five villages.

The relationship between stationed troops and local governments is not always harmonious however, and the law is the only possible recourse in the case of disputes. James Mulvenon has shown how the PLA started to manufacture goods in an effort to raise revenue in the second part of the 1980s. The political bureau of stationed troops reported conflicts of interests between the local state and garrisons in the early 1990s[50]. To resolve such disputes, these bureaus advocated the teaching of basic economic law to servicemen.

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] 吴合春，"主动开展助民普法促进驻地社会稳定"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1994, no. 10.
[50] 社云春，军地经济纠纷调处三策，*Political Work Periodical*, 1991, no. 4, 45.

In brief, law in the PLA is tantamount to party policy. Political bureaus are allocated funds to subscribe to the various GPD publications and use them to implement central policies in military units. In 2001, the GPD emphasized the role of PLA political bureaus at the grassroots level (battalion and company levels, as well as study groups) in "strengthening the supervision and inspection of subscriptions" of intra-military press through a notice entitled "the subscription standard"[51].

In the 1990s and early 2000s, political education in the PLA focused on integrating the military establishment into the PRC's legal framework. Far from restricting political work, the regularization of the PLA was harnessed to consolidating the subordination of the armed forces to the single-party state. The GPD's oversight of this project was a logical consequence of the Marxist definition of law as "the expression of the ruling class." In earnestly putting this definition into practice, higher political cadres do not see a problem with the fact that the revolutionary party has become the ruling party. Law has become an efficient tool to regulate and centralize the administration of the military establishment, under the watchful eye of the party.

Jiang Zemin's policy "to administer the military according to the law" has meant a more robust administrative structure within the military establishment, i.e. a stronger GPD. In the PLA, the rule of law is the rule of the party. At the same time as the PLA was increasingly relying on legal means to maintain and train its fighting force, theoretical research at political work centers as well as official statements issued by the PRC's civilian and military authorities made it very clear that the purpose of such 'legalization' was to strengthen the connection between the military and the party,

[51] "'中国军法'要订阅到连 — 总政治部通知要求全军和武警部队认真做好报刊订阅", *Zhongguo Junfa*, 2001, no. 6, 17.

rather than substitute for it.

Modernization: modernity and tradition

As the PLA was adopting the professional requirement to standardize its mode of organization, it was crucial for the GPD to maintain the identity of the Chinese military as "an army of a new kind,"[52] that is an armed force with a political mission. In the 1990s and 2000s, the challenge was twofold: on the one hand, the PLA had to redefine what it meant to be a revolutionary army, and on the other hand, it had to address the need for the political commissar system, the repository of this tradition, to adapt to the evolution of modes of communication. "Modernization" was the corollary of regularization, conveying the imperative to keep a close eye on domestic and international developments to maintain the troops in a condition of combat readiness. Jiang Zemin's 1995 program of "two transformations" has aimed to adapt the PLA to the digitalization of warfare and to make it a technology-intensive rather than a labor-intensive fighting force. Here, I propose to show how the PLA sustained its traditional identity of a revolutionary army while adapting to changes in warfare. This "modernization" process followed two logical steps: first, the CCP clarified the PLA's mission, and then the PLA used the political commissar system to adapt to new patterns of warfare.

[52] Cf. chapter II of this dissertation, p. 6.

Redefining the PLA's domestic mission: service and protection of the regime

At the end of the 1980s, the scholars of the Nanjing PLA Political College provided a fresh analysis of the national socio-economic environment. In an article he published in *The Journal of the Nanjing Political College* in 1987, researcher Zhu Kaibing 朱凯兵 broke the Cold War alternative between socialism and capitalism by comparing the PRC with India, Brazil, Egypt and Mexico. This comparison with emerging market economies was the sign of a paradigm shift from socialism vs. capitalism to development. Comparing economic growth between 1950 and 1984, the author used a model of historical evolution emphasizing national liberation: "The numbers show that to say that developing countries cannot develop their national economy by choosing the capitalist way is a biased argumentation which is not supported by facts. After the war, these countries broke away from the imperialist system of bondage; having partially eliminated some pre-capitalist relations of production, they increased their economic growth."[53] In conclusion, he underscored China's success in ensuring that the basic needs of the people were met: in this respect, the single-party state performed well.

In this context, ideological indoctrination could no longer consist in teaching the superiority of the planned economy. Rather, it sought to convey a consistent discourse in support of the ruling party which, under Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin, made economic development the priority. In 1988, a cadre from the PLA Northwestern logistics headquarters explained that ideological education in the troops had two purposes: guaranteeing adherence to party policy and serving it[54]. The content of the

[53] 朱凯兵，"中国与印，埃，巴，墨经济发展道路的比较"， *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, no. 4, 31.
[54] 任水旺，"思想政治工作效果分类浅议", *Political Work Periodical*, 1988, 14-15.

aforementioned policy was left unspecified. In substance, ideological education now emphasized discipline. The author underscored the necessity that the political instructor adapts the theory she teaches to the troops, according to changing party policies. The "style" of teaching mattered more than content in incarnating party leadership in the military. The characterization of the military's subordination to the party as unconditional service has held sway for twenty years[55].

On China's Northwestern border, the party used the PLA both to tame political dissent and to promote the policy of "Western development". Taylor Fravel compellingly argued that after the end of the Cold War in 1989, the party perceived the most severe threats to regime security to be internal rather than external. A year after the Tiananmen demonstrations, a decade-long period of unrest started in Xinjiang province after an uprising broke out in Baren, a city near the frontier with Kyrgyzstan, in 1990[56]. In 1999, the CCP officially changed the focus of the national economic development strategy from the coastal areas to the Western part of the country. Since at least 1993, the PLA presented itself as a meritocratic institution offering opportunities to the impoverished youth of Tibet. That year, the AMS claimed that the number of recruits belonging to the Tibetan minority had surged by 80% as compared to the year before[57]. The theme of "China's Western development" [西部大开发] became prominent in military political training nationwide, not only in the Western provinces[58].

In the Westernmost province of Xinjiang, the PLA's border control function merges into the party's policy of development of the Chinese West. In the journal *Life at the Frontier* [边防生活], political commissars elaborate an epic about the military's

[55] The phrase "service" [服务] is again used in Qiu 2008, 6.
[56] Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, secure Nation, cooperation and conflict*, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008, 151.
[57] 信息之窗，*Guofang*, 1993, no. 5, 20.
[58] See, for example, *Huabei Minbing*, 2000, no. 9, 28; ibid., 2001, no. 1, 14 and; ibid., 2005, no. 3, 11-15.

involvement in regional development. Beyond border control, the troops play a cultural role in the more remote parts of the country. In 2000, journalist Xie Gua 谢挂 wrote an extensive reportage on the PLA's presence at the Khunjerab checkpoint, at the border between China and Pakistan. Describing the harsh living conditions in what is the highest international border in the world, Xie Gua brought in the various nationalities converging there: "in Tajik, 'Khunjerab' means 'red wall', in Uighur, it means 'ditch of blood'[59]." He quotes the verses of a poet stationed with the troops:

On the Pamirs, existence is	在帕米尔高原，凡是生存着的，
A miracle: ice, snow, hawk and man.	都成了奇迹：冰雪，雄鹰和人。

This kind of poetic praise is a classic example of political work. The verses distinctly recall the famous poem "红梅"written by Marshal Chen Yi half a century earlier:

When the severe winter comes, flowers vanish from sight.
The red plum blossoms do not yield to frigidity, every tree stands firm, braving snowstorms.

隆冬到来时，百花迹已绝。
红梅不屈服，叔叔立风雪。

The party had long used the exoticism of Xinjiang in state propaganda. Social scientist Nimrod Baranovitch takes the early example of Uyghur composer Kelimu:

[59] Xie 2000.

> A member of the Song and Dance Troupe of the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (*Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun zong zhengzhibu gewutuan*) for many years, Kelimu belonged to the top league of minority artists who having been enlisted and trained by governmental units have served as agents of the Chinese state in praising the regime, idealizing life in minority areas, and propagating official ideologies such as loyalty to the state and unity and harmony among all nationalities. Since the 1950s Kelimu has performed many famous Xinjiang songs, among them "Xinjiang is good" (« *Xinjiang hao* »), « Day and night missing Chairman Mao » (« *Riye xiangnian Mao zhuxi* ») and « My mother is called China » (« *Wo de muqin jiao Zhongguo* »), some of which he also composed.[60]

In 2000, Western development [西部大开发] became a major theme in political classes taught to the militia. The material used in such classes presented the policy as aiming to "develop the economy, maintain social stability and consolidate the border" of the area[61].

Military songs about Xinjiang also celebrated and stimulated PLA esprit de corps. On February 3rd, 2012, *The PLA Daily* issued an article on "red songs from the border areas, which engrave the sacred mission on the minds. […] Merged into every aspect of military training and border control, the songs keep up morale and enthusiasm for the motherland's frontier garrisons[62]. In this article, rather than being ethnicized, the experience of the troops stationed in inhospitable Xinjiang becomes the leading exemplar of revolutionary behavior. The PLA's mission in border areas is not limited to bringing civilization to the barren land, however.

Together with Khunjerab in backward Xinjiang, the checkpoint in the affluent province of Fujian is also a showcase for China's successful development. There, political cadres promote the idealized perception of China as a "paradise" by recording

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[60] Nimrod Baranovitch, "From the Margins to the Centre: The Uyghur Challenge in Beijing", *China Quarterly* 175 (2003), 726-750.
[61] 总政"民兵政治教育四课教材", *Huabei Minbing*, 2000, no. 9, 28-30.
[62] "构筑戍边官兵的精神高地 ——新疆军区用边防文化培育当代革命军人核心价值观纪实."

and diffusing stories of Chinese emigrants who come back to the homeland after having sought fortune abroad. Journalist Huang Yili 黄益利 reports on students, peasants, fishermen and even government officials who, having been driven out of the country by poverty or a sense of adventure in the 1980s, return to China in 2000[63]. The spectrum of personal experiences reflects the achievements that the PRC's opening of borders allowed.

Service to the regime is not a passive subordination, but rather an active commitment of the military to single-party rule. In 2010, the Australian newspaper *The Sunday Morning Herald* quoted an interview that Liu Yazhou 刘亚洲, head political commissar of the National Defense University (NDU), gave to the Hong Kong magazine *Phoenix* [风凰周刊]. In this interview, the officer called for a reform of the Chinese political system based on the American model[64]. This statement was the outcome of a decade of reflection on what Liu Yazhou qualified as a crisis of China's strategic position. As NDU head political commissar, he underscored the political problem that Taiwan posed to the CCP by comparing the contemporary geostrategic situation to the last year of the Ming dynasty[65]. While Liu Yazhou's views cannot be considered as representative of the PLA as a whole[66], his position as head political commissar of the country's most prestigious military academy provides insights into the making of ideology in the PLA: Liu Yazhou advocates 'democracy' within the party

[63] Huang 2000.
[64] *The Sunday Morning Herald*, August 2010, available at www.smh.com.au/world/china-must-reform-or-die-20100811-11zxd.html.
[65] Liu Yazhou, "Chapter I. History", in *Chinese Law and Government* 40, no. 5, September-October 2007, 15-18.
[66] Author's interview with two anonymous PLA officers, February 23rd, 2012.

rather than the end of CCP rule[67].

In 2004, two years after the party central Committee had redefined itself as a "ruling party" during its sixteenth national congress, Hu Jintao proclaimed the "new historic missions" of the PLA in a classified speech[68]. In substance, this mission consisted in the consolidation of the CCP's status as a "ruling party," inter alia through the grassroots efforts of the troops. From the point of view of defense, the party's legitimacy rests in the capacity it has shown to redefine and promote the country's 'core interests.' The GPD incorporated Hu Jintao's definition of the PLA's new "historical mission" in the ideological indoctrination material taught to servicemen. In these lessons, the revolutionary identity of the party is cast away to the past. The CCP's and the PLA's leading roles in the revolution and the establishment of the PRC are presented as enduring legitimacy providers. Now, the mission of the PLA is to consolidate this national past by ensuring active support to the party, identified as "the ruling power." The PLA's feat has been to combine this domestic political responsibility with its adaptation to changing patterns of warfare.

The adaptation of the GPD to new patterns of warfare

Since the early 2000s, the role of the GPD in domestic media production and communication with foreign counterparts has gained significance. In 2003, the party central Committee and the CMC redefined the PLA's strategy as "three warfares" [三

[67] Author's interview with Liu Yawei [刘亚伟], head of the China program at the Carter center, December 2011.

[68] I had access to this speech through a doctoral thesis written by an anonymous PLA officer at the Nankai University Zhou Enlai school of government in 2008.

种战法]：media warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare[69]. Military media production is primarily geared at the home front. The PLA's media expertise dates from the 1930s, when it established the Red China news agency to win hearts and minds in Yan'an. Then, the PLA also established the Xinhua broadcasting channel and the Xinhua news agency, which has since become the largest news agency in the PRC and the CCP's official news agency. In February 1999, two colonels from the PLA air force political department, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, published a polemic entitled *Unrestricted Warfare*, arguing that the Gulf War ushered warfare in a new era[70]. Explaining that televised reportage then became an actor in combat, they contended that the media expanded the battlefield to all spheres of civilian life: "With real-time or near real-time reports turning warfare into a new program that ordinary people can monitor directly via the media, […] the media has become an immediate and integral part of warfare, and no longer merely provides information coming from the battlefield."[71]

The other aspect of media warfare concerns international public relations. In the past fifteen years, military international exchanges have constituted an expanding area of GPD activity. In 1998, for the first time, the PLA officially noted the importance of foreign military contacts[72]. The number of foreign military attachés posted in Beijing[73] has steadily increased to reach 94 countries in 2008[74]. The PLA hosts an induction program for foreign military attachés, called the Changping International Symposium,

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[69] Office of the secretary of Defense of the USA, *Military Power of the PRC*, 2009, 16.
[70] Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts publishing house, February 1999.
[71] Ibid., 74.
[72] Cf. *The White Paper* issued by the PRC's ministry of defense in 1998: www.china.org.cn/e-white/5/5.4.htm#1.
[73] The US is the only country to also have a liaison officer in Hong Kong.
[74] Office of the secretary of Defense of the USA, *Annual Report to Congress: the military power of the People's Republic of China*, 2009, 55.

at the NDU campus situated in the Changping district of the Beijing municipality. Most foreign military attachés consider the Changping program as a first step toward further international cooperation. The structure of the course itself, however, reflects that the international Symposium is a way to showcase the PLA rather than an incentive for foreign officers to meet with PLA officers. Indeed, Changping is a specific campus of the NDU, designated to host the training of foreign military officers and separate from the other two campuses that are restricted to Chinese personnel. Furthermore, whereas in principle, the Changping Symposium is open to all countries, in fact the list of invited countries fluctuates with diplomacy. For example, France was excluded from Changping after President Sarkozy's visit to the Dalai Lama in 2008. Changping aside, the military training programs for foreign officers held at academies on the MR level are restricted to officers from ideologically close countries such as Nepal. On the other hand, in 2010, China refused to receive the officer selected by India for an exchange because he was the commander of Kashmir, a region still disputed by China and India[75].

Foreign military attachés have mixed perceptions of PLA political work. The thirteen military attachés of six different countries I interviewed in Beijing concur in seeing the political cadres system as unique to China. They identify two main functions of PLA political cadres: manage foreign military personnel such as themselves and organize PLA troops. The majority of the interviewed military attachés consider that political cadres have facilitated the adaptation of the PLA to the use of information technology on the battlefield. Some however consider that they hold the PLA back. The opinion of Brigadier Duncan Francis, military attaché at the British embassy in Beijing in 2009-2011, on the political commissar system, summarizes this ambivalence: "on the

[75] Author's interview with an anonymous foreign military attaché, Beijing, October 29th, 2010.

one hand, 'computerization' will make the political commissar's work more difficult, because he does not control the flow of information, or have oversight over it all. On the other hand, it is a tool that he could use to ensure wider distribution of political messages etc."[76]

The importance of psychological warfare has increased with the emergence of theories of cyber- or info- war. In 1999 Xu Yonghan 徐拥汉 published an article in the AMS journal *National Defense*, explaining that in the PLA's new doctrine of "high-tech local wars,"[77] political commissars were communication hubs in the network that the battlefield had become. Similarly, according to Guo Shengwei 郭胜伟, technological change has turned the battlefield into a network of information, compelling militaries to adapt[78]. The third bureau of the General Staff Department is in charge of info-war. The head of the political department of this bureau, Wang Yongsheng, has been the main theorizer of information warfare[79]. Another theorist is General Dai Qingmin, head of the fourth bureau, who has proposed the Chinese definition of network warfare in 2002[80]. In China, the political commissar processes, synthesizes and selects information to make it useful for command and the PLA only equips officers with this digital information. By contrast, in the American military, every soldier is equipped with high technology and acts as a hub in the battlefield, with information converging upon her[81].

The dominance of psychological war in contemporary patterns of warfare has heightened the importance of political commissars in military command. In a publication destined for PLA internal circulation, Wang Shoulin 王寿林 and Yang

[76] Author's interview with Brigadier Duncan Francis in Beijing, November 21st, 2011.
[77] 徐拥汉，"高技术局部战争动员问题研究笔"，*Guofang*, 1999, no. 7, 5.
[78] Guo 2008, 36.
[79] *Intelligence Online*, no. 555, 2007.
[80] Timothy Thomas, "Chinese and American network Warfare", *JFQ* 38, 2005.
[81] Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Garstka, "Network-centric warfare: its origin and future", article available at http://www.kinection.com/ncoic/ncw_origin_future.pdf.

Yanmin 杨彦明 underscore the importance of defining the PLA's political identity as defense of the PRC revolutionary state. In their words, "from the military perspective, there is no distinction between war and peace, there is only a distinction between warfare and preparation for war."[82] The authors put psychological war, legal war and media war under the direct responsibility of the political commissar. Because changing political goals define the location of the frontline, they argue, the political officer partakes in military command on equal footing with the commanding officer at the level of regiment and above. Brigadier Francis and Colonel Loïc Frouard (military attaché at the French embassy in Beijing in 2009-11) both emphasized the key role that the political commissar plays in the military chain of command. According to them, commanding orders need to be countersigned by a unit's political commissar before they can be implemented because the political commissar of a unit is of the same rank as the commanding officer[83]. Two anonymous attachés from two different strategic countries however emphasized the delay this might cause on operation[84].

Legal warfare refers to the military use of international norms. In 2007, the AMS issued a classified [内部] publication emphasizing the "integration" [一体化] of different modes of response, political as well as military, within military attack. One essay, dedicated to psychological and legal warfare, conflates the two to describe a new kind of offensive led by political cadres, who are also responsible for deterring war[85]. The author presents the law neither as a constraining standard nor as a regulator of international relations, but as a highly pliable means to bend the enemy's intention. Another essay explains that the GPD combines the different branches of the military

[82] Wang 2008, 47.
[83] Author's interview with Brigadier Duncan Francis, Beijing, November 21st, 2011, and; author's interview with Colonel Loïc Frouard, Beijing, September 15th, 2009.
[84] Author's interview, November 8th, 2010, Beijing.
[85] Wu 2007, 244-268.

according to the overall strategy [意图]: "Computerization has transformed the nature of military operations. In the future, war will inevitably be a series of coordinated operations and their 'integration' is the distribution of the different war capacities on the battlefield. All of these should focus on an overall strategy."[86]

Foreign military attachés posted in Beijing do not consider that integrated network warfare fundamentally changed the rules of war. British Brigadier Duncan Francis, in particular, seconded by another military attaché from a strategic country wishing to remain anonymous, emphasized that information technology is only a tool, soon to be replaced by a different one. Political cadres have included that tool into their conception of troops' organization, and even used it to strengthen their position in the PLA. Classified sources show that the PLA reacted to the dispersion of information due to the extensive reach of technology by building up a unifying thrust in a troop leadership sustained by expert political commissars. As virtual means of communication have penetrated the civilian sphere, public opinion, psychology and the law have become major components of combat. "Psychological war, public opinion and legal war are three forms of political work."[87] Ultimately, changing military structures have reinforced the role of the political commissar in the PLA.

Conclusion

As the PLA reduced the number of its troops by a quarter in the 1980s, the GPD did not lose any influence in the organization of units in peacetime and wartime. Rather, the PLA has taken advantage of the protracted period of peace, which China

[86] Ibid., 4.
[87] Wang 2008, 16.

has enjoyed since the Sino-Vietnamese conflict of 1979, to strengthen the political structure of the troops. The National Defense Law, the National Defense Education Law and the National Mobilization Law have integrated the PLA into the PRC's overall legal framework to facilitate the transmission of party policy to the armed forces. In peacetime, the GPD plays the role of the overall administrator. In the 1990s, it proceeded to set administrative standards in rules and regulations called 'law' [法]. The GPD also produced a narrative about China as a country relying on its military establishment for national development as well as national defense. This narrative served to neutralize threats to the ruling party, which were increasingly domestic. In combat drills, political commissars have adapted to the use of information technology on the battlefield to develop the central role of dual command under conditions of computerization.

The revolutionary identity of the Chinese military still rests on its modes of organization. A major conclusion of this chapter is the relatively decentralized way in which the new standards and norms for PLA management were set. It was left to mid-ranking political cadres to propose alterations to military training and strategic approaches. The resilience of the military political work system lies in the key theoretical and organizational role that these cadres have played in the modernization of the fighting force. Having gained importance with the increased need for intra-military communication, they now routinely engage with their foreign counterparts in a sustained effort to improve PLA expertise.

In addition to providing adaptive ideological indoctrination (cf. chapter II), I have shown that PLA political cadres serving as commissars and party secretaries also play the role of expert managers to ensure that the armed force trains and operates

uniformly under central regulatory control, while keeping up to date with warfare techniques. The second part of this thesis will show that at the same time as the party provided political cadres with the legal tools that endowed them with such power and flexibility, it used the same legal methods to strengthen the interdependence between garrisons and local governments, in the hope of bolstering popular support for the troops.

CHAPTER IV: MILITARY MASS WORK

According to the theory of professionalism, a 'professional' military concentrates on objectives related to its technical sphere of endeavor, limiting its activities exclusively to "the management of violence". Such an evolution would seem to be at loggerheads with the PLA's mission to engage in so-called 'mass work', i.e. troop activities involving the civilian population. Military mass work was at the root of Mao's thinking about civil-military relations and played a key role in ensuring the communists' political and military victory in the guerilla war over the Guomindang. It was in Yan'an, in 1943 that communist activists first conducted a mass campaign with the support of the military[1]. In 1945, Mao famously noted: "Without a people's army, the people have nothing."[2] In theory, this link to the people should have withered away, as it were, as the army underwent professionalization during the reform era.

I argue, on the contrary, that in China, military activity has not been characterized by such a process, as the military has professionalized. The party-state has continued to draw the PLA into aspects of local governance, which have proven to be beyond the capacity of local governments. The new party ideology of 'spiritual civilization' has promoted this integration and encouraged servicemen to play a pedagogical role in the wider society as well as a supporting role for the government at

[1] 张勃兴，"延安双拥运动的兴起及启示"，*Guofang*, 1993, no. 1, 26-27.
[2] Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, vol. III, 296-297.

the level of the county. The basis of this discourse is an idea of reciprocity [双拥] that binds the party, the army and "the people" together. Such binding reciprocity materializes as the state carries out its duty to provide for its demobilized servicemen; develops into a number of tasks that the PLA performs for the public domain; and finally crystallizes with the troops' commitment to public works projects. The tradition of mass work is perpetuated and renewed through new kinds of programmatic activity, notably poverty alleviation and local development.

As a key part of this process, PLA garrisons have become more closely linked with the county government with which they cooperate than with the military regions to which they report. During the period under examination here (1985-2010), this cooperation has been consolidated through legislation and institutions, which did not exist as such under Mao. This chapter will look at the responsibility of county-level governments for garrisons, mandated since 1984. It will also discuss the challenges, which the party-state faced as it demobilized two million servicemen between 1985 and 2005. Finally, it will look at the involvement of the troops, now routine, in local development projects. As a result of these activities, the concept of "the people" has been infused with new, contemporary content: as a political construct, it is structured by the activities and public events that the PLA and the CCP organize together, at the local level.

Garrisons in the community

In the 1980s, the party established a cooperative relationship between the troops and the government of the locality where they are stationed, called 'reciprocal support' [

双拥工作]. 'Reciprocal support' is an abbreviation for the phrase 'support soldiers and their dependents, support the government and cherish the people' [拥军优属、拥政爱民工作]. It designates a reciprocal obligation that ties county-level governments to their garrison. 'Reciprocal support' mandates the General Political Department (GPD) of each military district to make policy jointly with the general office, financial bureau and civil administration bureau of county-level governments.

Under Mao, the maintenance of garrisons was linked to the communist organization of the population in socio-economic work units and in communes. Mao had described the involvement of the PLA in the provision of public services in terms of a relationship with society in which troops are like "fish swimming in water", and able to mobilize the population, when necessary, with efficiency. Rooted in guerilla tactics, such social cooperation was institutionalized as 'mutual support' [双拥工作] committees under the aegis of the 'spiritual civilization' policy. These committees provided oversight for activities involving both local governments and the leading officers of garrisoned troops.

With the advent of 'mutual support' committees, the tradition of mass work acquired a completely new institutional form. Up until then, the identity of the PLA was mostly defined and upheld by the state propaganda machine. In this propaganda, social cooperation was a question of personal relationships, as in a collection of stories, published by the Shanghai municipality in 1970 which describe archetypical situations involving, for example, individual soldiers rescuing villagers, and lonely old men, compassionate women and little red guards mending the soldiers' shoes and feeding them hot meals in return[3]. One result of institutionalization was new content for the

[3] *Jun* 1970.

concept of 'the people', as the social and political activities mandated by these committees took shape.

A symbolic cooperation

A significant symptom of the ideological crisis outlined in chapter II was the emergence - among servicemen - of a feeling of estrangement from the fast-changing Chinese wider society. In response to this crisis of values, Marshall Ye Jianying had proposed the project of building a 'spiritual civilization' when he was head of the National People's Congress in 1979[4]. The concept of 'spiritual civilization' was neither new[5], nor was it only aimed at the military. 'The spirit' had made its entrance into party rhetoric when Deng Xiaoping called for an "anti-spiritual pollution" campaign against adverse ideological influences from abroad in 1983[6]. According to Ann Anagnost, the notion of "civilization" then pervaded intellectual circles as well as state discourse although no authority seemed to pin its meaning down. In her words, civilization "is a densely figured site that articulates statist projects of national pedagogy, intellectual critiques of Chinese national character, and popular concerns about the national order.[7]"

With Marshall Ye Jianying providing the initial impetus for 'spiritual civilization', the armed forces found themselves in the vanguard of the call for the creation of socialist spiritual civilization. This political thrust was endorsed by the party,

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4 Richard Baum, *Burying Mao, Chinese Politics in the age of Deng Xiaoping*, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1994, 88.

5 In *National Past-Times*, Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1997, 82, Ann Anagnost dates it from 1902 when Chinese political thinkers took inspiration from Japanese modernization.

6 "Top China propagandist loses his position", *The New York Times*, July 14, 1985: www.nytimes.com/1985/07/14/world/around-the-world-top-china-propagandist-loses-his-position.html?sec=&spon=.

7 Ann Anagnost, *National Past-Times: narrative*, Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1997, 75.

which produced a theoretical justification for the policy. It presented 'spiritual civilization' as a necessary counterpoint to sustained economic development. In the words of the political commissar of the second artillery corps Pan Jiancheng 潘建成, "the socialist market economy and the socialist spiritual civilization are unified to the extent that they both rely on socialism, therefore their social role is common."[8] It was for the party to provide guidance in the sphere of social conduct in an era of economic change.

The party put the armed forces at the center of the state's new educational effort which included tasks related to the maintenance of shared facilities and communal spaces. The first 'spiritual civilization' campaign took place in the city of Wendeng [文登], in Shandong province, in 1981. The troops stationed in Wendeng collaborated with the city's party committee and government to facilitate the transition from planned agricultural production to the contract responsibility system[9]. The program was conceived as a platform where the troops could demonstrate their value to the civilian population. A year later, the better part of the city's factories and mining enterprises as well as schools were involved in the pedagogical program, which came to be focused on sanitation and afforestation.[10] The aim was the beautification of the environment and the betterment of social relationships.

In 1991, under the aegis of the policy of spiritual civilization, Deng Xiaoping established a ranking of localities, according to their relative success in integrating troops into the local context where they were stationed. The party organized annual conferences where it set forth the criteria which local governments would have to meet

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[8] Pan 2005, 113.
[9] Ibid., 14.
[10] "各部队广泛与地方挂钩共建精神文明", *PLA Daily*, July 17th, 1982.

in order to be able to reach the status of 'model for reciprocal support'. The purpose of all this has clearly been to build social cohesion through military-civilian collaboration on the local level – and to build acceptance on the local level for the presence and preferential treatment of troops[11]. Inevitably, the overarching ideological framework is presented in lofty terms: according to an article published in *National Defense* in 1992, "the multifaceted programs of 'reciprocal support' and 'common construction' contribute to creating a general atmosphere favorable to the construction of the socialist spiritual civilization."[12]

In this light, 'reciprocal support' is, in fact, a propaganda operation meant to convey the unity between the civilian population and the troops stationed in their midst. From Beijing to Macau, to Guangzhou, placards advertise the program's specific achievements.

[11] For example, the policy of preferential treatment for the families of servicemen includes a program of job placement for spouses accompanying soldiers. Cf. "把事实落在实处 — 深圳", *Guofang*, 1995, no. 8, 23.

[12] 君一凡, "创建'双拥模范城'贵在'创'", *Guofang*, 1992, no. 7, 29.



"The military live with the people like fish swimming in water." Guangzhou, 2010



"Defending Macao is a duty weightier than Mount Tai." Macao, 2010.

Anniversaries of the foundation of the PRC provide an opportunity for military parades. This sort of display is not unique to China, as France yearly celebrates its national Bastille Day with a military parade. What is specific to China, however, is the way that sections of the PLA provide their own account of the celebration. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the PRC, in 1999, for example, an artillery division of the Beijing MR wrote a brief history of itself. Interestingly, the article dates the foundation of that specific division from 1948, that is one year before the foundation of the PRC[13]. Rather than a symbol of national unity, the PLA appears as a cluster of armed divisions entrenched in their locality.

[13] 李志华 and 王明智，"祖国，'战神'请您检阅"，*Guofang*, 1999, no. 10, 12-14.

In the capital, reciprocal support has served as a platform for high-profile events such as lectures given by professors from the NDU and the Academy of Military Science (AMS) to civilian cadres[14]. Between 1996 and 2000, the Beijing garrison opened its doors to the public one week-end a year[15]. In rural provinces such as Jiangxi, reciprocal support propaganda has taken the form of local TV shows and the construction of memorials in public spaces[16].

The party's promotion of 'reciprocal support' activities can even be used to advertise one's business. The deputy head of the propaganda department of Nanyang (Henan province)'s party committee reports: "upon arrival in Nanyang city, one comes across a number of businesses on the main street, with signs saying 'servicemen take precedence.'"[17] The reciprocal support relationship also requires that local leaders pay highly advertised visits to their garrisons[18]. These visits take place at least twice a year, on the occasion of the spring festival and the national army day, on August 1st, in commemoration of the founding of the PLA. Clearly conceived as public relations operations, these visits are not only symbolic. Indeed, official records report that during the annual meeting that Tianjin's party committee holds on the eve of August 1st, it allocated 5,280,000 yuan to the city's garrison[19].

Institutional design

With the gradual extinction of the commune system after 1978 local

[14] Quan 2000, 289.
[15] "北京市民开展'做一日军人'活动", *PLA Daily*, June 11th, 1997.
[16] Luo Wen 2007.
[17] 魏喜信，"南阳'双拥'", *Guofang*, 1992, no. 7, 30.
[18] 吴秀峰，"情津漫城"，*Guofang*, 1996, no. 8, 34-35.
[19] Quan 2000, 292.

governments set up Armed Forces departments, and in 1984 the responsibility for national defense was formally transferred from the commune to the county level of government[20]. At the same time, these 'People's Armed Forces departments' were integrated within the PLA's establishment, and reorganized into three sections: staff, equipment and politics. People's Armed Forces departments have a party committee[21]; furthermore, "the party central committee stipulates that the county (or town) and district committee secretary concurrently holds the position of People's Armed Forces department's first party secretary."[22] Dual leadership by the PLA and the county government over garrisons has not been achieved without difficulty. In 1988, journalist Zhao Ruchun 赵如春 of *The Political Work Periodical* compared this dual leadership with the most fraught relationship of all in traditional Chinese family lore: according to him, each People's Armed Forces Department was like a married woman with two mothers-in-law[23].

Deng Xiaoping coined the phrase "reciprocal support" just as the CCP was shifting the responsibility for garrisons to local governments. Promulgated in 1990 by the state council and the CMC, the first piece of legislation establishing the duties and prerogatives of local governments toward the district-level stationed troops was *The Notice strengthening the unity between the troops and the people* [关于加强军民团结正确处理军民关系问题的通知]. The text enumerated the duties of local governments toward the armed forces, including the resettlement of demobilized servicemen; the provision of housing subsidies and; the provision of free education to their children. It also established the reciprocal relationship between garrisons and host localities. In return

[20] Hebei 1996, 662.
[21] 穆天成，"坚持'四抓加强人武部党委建设"，*Guofang*, 1995, no. 7, 30.
[22] 伯文龙，"人武部党委书记应处理好五个关系"，*Guofang*, 2001, no. 4, 11.
[23] 赵如春，"一个'媳妇'与两个'婆婆'"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1988, no. 3, 32-33.

for the support received, "the PLA firmly protects China's security […] and actively participates in the construction of the material civilization and the spiritual civilization,"[24] and the troops have the duty to "support the work of the local government."[25] This entails the provision of technical support, by the troops, for a variety of development tasks. In the words of the circular, "the troops are subordinated to the overall economic construction and should actively support the country's administrative restructuring. [… They] should support and participate in the country's engineering projects, the construction of water conservancy works and the provision of public utilities." In the event of a conflict between the two parties, the circular decrees that it should be resolved by a joint investigation.

The party established a 'Leading Group for reciprocal Support' at the central level of government, including members of both the PLA and the government, in 1993[26]. 'Leading Groups' are a mode of party organization designed to facilitate the making of policy involving several government departments – a sort of interministerial working group[27]. In the authoritative article on the functioning of Leading Groups, scholar Wu Xiaolin 吴晓林 explains that they "make policy at the macro level without getting involved in day-to-day management"[28]. Hence, the central-level Leading Group for reciprocal support is supplemented by a series of dedicated agencies on the ground. Chaoyang district, in Beijing, provides a good example: "Chaoyang's Committee for reciprocal support is chaired by the district's party secretary and the head of the district themselves. Its members include a deputy secretary and five people constituting the standing committee; in addition, an enlarged assembly of 60 people brings together

[24] Quan 2000, 3.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Malcolm Lamb, *Directory of Officials and Organizations in China*, 3rd ed., 2003, vol. I, 440.
[27] Alice Miller, "The CCP central Committee's leading small groups", *China Leadership Monitor* 26, 1-21.
[28] Wu 2009, no. 3.

leaders from the district's assembly, government and political consultative conference, as well as from the troops stationed in the district."[29] Thus below the central-level Leading Group, civilian and military cadres work hand-in-hand in committees at the county/district level.

Reciprocal support promotes decentralization. Pan Jiancheng 潘建成, the political commissar of the second artillery, describes the different kinds of cooperation between garrisons and local governments that took shape in six different geographic areas, when the CCP first experimented with the policy in the early 1980s. Beijing was the pilot area: there, the municipal committee and the GPD set up the first Leading Small Group in 1988. In Northern China, the agglomeration of Baoding, in Hebei province, led the way, organizing classes in moral education for an audience comprising both military personnel and civilians. In Shandong province, the local government put up plaques on the houses of the families of outstanding servicemen. In the less-developed Western part of the country, garrisons conducted literacy classes. In the Northeast where Lei Feng had worked, troops conducted study sessions for the locality's youth, to preserve the hero's heritage. On the East coast, finally, locus of the most developed economy in China, the city of Shishi [石狮] (Fujian province) set the standard in 'reciprocal support' by linking up stationed troops, government organs, schools and businesses within a network of 'civilized areas.[30]'

Hence the framework of 'mutual support' can allow garrisons to link up with local governments in any number of ways. In 2007, *The Resolution on a number of issues concerning the construction of a socialist spiritual civilization* prescribed the duties and

[29] 霍国庆，杨俊亮，and 高学礼，双拥花开映朝阳，*Huabei Minbing*, 2000, no. 3, 10-12.
[30] 潘建成 and 卢成军，'与文明同行'，军民共建活动, 2005, 33-42.

prerogatives of the local Leading Small Groups for reciprocal support[31]. In addition to the central Leading Group, the ministry of civil affairs [民政部] and the ministry of finance [财政部] issue notices determining 'mutual support' policy[32]. At the provincial level of government, the party committee's propaganda department, the education committee and the political bureau of the military district are involved[33]. The garrisons' political department is the interface between the local government and the military command at the municipal level. For example, the city of Yantai [烟台] in Shandong province founded the system of reciprocal appointment: the troops invite the party's local branch's secretary to hold the post of political instructor [政治指导员] concurrently in the troops[34]. Regular exchanges between troops and officials take place in local schools and museums. Provincial news outlets advertise 双拥工作 activities and projects, with daily reports in special columns dedicated to the theme.

The role of reciprocal support in peacetime

Essentially, reciprocal support is a way to make use of the armed forces in support of party policy during peacetime. Troops have the duty to protect the civilian population of their host locality; in return, the civilian population becomes a resource for them. The evolution of 'reciprocal support' has taken shape through specific activities on both sides. The PLA, for example, requires the use of public places and the assistance of local governments for military exercises. As for the civilian population, it relies on the PLA for disaster relief. Both of these examples of reciprocal support provide

[31] 邹庆华, "双拥工作创新发展应注意把握的几个问题", 国防, 2007.
[32] For example, see 罗文兵 (ed.), 江西双拥记事, 2007, 222.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Pan 2005, 67.

insight into the functioning of the institution.

The importance of the PLA's relationship with provincial governments, and through them with the civilian population, has come to light in military bilateral drills. In 2002, the Xinjiang garrison organized the PLA's first drill in cooperation with a foreign armed force in an anti-terrorist exercise with Kyrgyzstan[35]. In 2005, "Peace mission 2005" was a joint exercise with Russia in Shandong province. While the exercise was international, the provincial party committee was responsible for designing a mock emergency plan, and the local population was drawn into the exercise, which was framed for propaganda purposes in terms of historical continuity: "The earth of Shandong reproduced scenes from the wartime generation when every family made haste to support the front, providing the troops with quality meat, grain and vegetables." [36] Beyond the military exercise, "Peace mission 2005" provided an opportunity for the Shandong government to showcase popular loyalty to the PLA, during two months of public demonstrations in which the local police escorted the incoming troops[37].

Natural catastrophes also provide opportunities for troop intervention. In the 1980s, civil- military cooperation in disaster relief was ad hoc. In 1987, a wildfire developed over 28 days in the forest of Anling, in Heilongjiang province, covering a million hectares. The commander of the Shenyang MR at the time, Liu Jingsong, provided a detailed account of the operation. According to him, this was a disaster that could only be met by the PLA. In Liu's report, the rescue operation was entirely coordinated by the CMC: "May 7th: as the fire swept across Mohe [漠河] county town, the local troops received instructions from higher levels at the same time as they were

[35] Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, 168.
[36] Shandong 2009, 28.
[37] Ibid.

facing the fire on the ground. 21:35: immediately after they received cable orders, the MR focused forces on the rescue."[38] Liu saw it as an opportunity to revive the "five revolutionary spirits" [五种革命精神], "the spirit of revolution and dedication, the spirit of strictly abiding by discipline and self-sacrifice, the spirit of selflessness, the spirit of vanquishing all enemies and surmounting all difficulties, and the spirit of consistent optimism."[39] Deng Xiaoping had listed these five requirements with specific reference to the PLA for the first time in a speech in 1983[40].

Civil-military cooperation in the management of natural catastrophes has been increasingly institutionalized since the large-scale flood of the Yangtze river in 1998. One year after the catastrophe, NDU political commissar Wang Maorun 王茂润 argued in favor of making local governments responsible for disaster relief. According to him, setting a protocol for disaster response would provide more efficient prevention[41], as well as more effective relief at the local level. Arguing from the example of the flood, he claims that local cohesion allowed for a smoother sharing of expertise and asserts that: "cooperation with the local government for disaster relief must be included in military training. Today, troops in areas prone to natural catastrophes set much store by such cooperation. The troops who performed best in containing the flood last year had learned from local experts."[42] In Wang's analysis, not only the relief operations themselves, but also the debriefing process benefit from local actors. Looking toward the future, he called for a clarification concerning the use of local resources in disaster relief as well as the command structure of the troops.

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[38] Liu Jing 2009, 41-49.
[39] "Carry forward the five revolutionary spirits", *PLA Daily*, March 9, 1993, in FBIS-CHI 93-051, March 18, 1993, 41-42.
[40] "上与下紧密结合　司政后齐抓共管　开创基层建设新局面", *PLA Daily*, December 29th, 1983.
[41] 王茂润，"新时期军队的抢险救灾应该纳入法制化轨道", *Zhongguo Junfa*, 1999, no. 2, 4-7.
[42] Ibid., 7.

In 2003, the SARS crisis acted as catalyst to increase the authority of the GPD in the event of public health emergencies. According to American Colonel Susan M. Puska, the CCP was absorbed in a leadership transition when the epidemic broke out, and as a result the party failed to address the issue as the major public health catastrophe that it was to become[43]. As hospitals were scrambling to contain the epidemic, it was the 'supervision and guidance bureau' of the GPD, which took the appropriate measures necessary to protect the staff in military hospitals from infection. Jiao Jian 焦健 was the director of the propaganda bureau of the GPD at the People's Armed Police hospital in Tianjin when the SARS crisis broke out. In his view, in 2003, "people did not know what SARS was and morale was so unstable that people thought doomsday had arrived and some were seized with a sudden impulse to commit suicide."[44] He describes how military hospitals' propaganda bureaus swung into action on the local level. The Tianjin People's Armed Police hospital took four measures. It issued a handbook on SARS; established a quarantine zone; launched a propaganda effort on newspapers and TV channels, and finally; maintained an updated news report summing up the experience in the hospital.

In peacetime, garrisons act as safeguards of the commons, engaging with the local population whenever their own training requires usage of these commons and providing emergency relief when the civilian population is under threat. As seen in the SARS crisis, the military's role in state and society in China comes to the fore when all else fails. Its political work then also has particular importance, to maintain morale and make full use of propaganda outlets. The political commissar of a military field hospital that was set up in the Beijing municipality to deal with SARS in May 2003 explained

[43] Susan M. Puska, "SARS 2002-2003: a Case study in crisis management", in Andrew Scobell (ed.), *Chinese National Security decisionmaking under stress*, 2005, 85-133.
[44] Author's interview with 焦健 in Tianjin, October 2011.

the function of political work during such a public health crisis in the following way: "in our work for the supervision and guidance bureau, we also act as political assistants[45]. What is 'politics' [政治] in such a specific environment? The priority in political work is the preservation of combat capacity. In the prevention of infectious diseases, our responsibility is to discover problems in time, and to avoid a situation where only success is reported and shortcomings are left unreported."[46] As the ultimate standby, the PLA has proven its reliability and importance, with the coordinating function of its political organs at the forefront.

Demobilization

A long-standing objective of PLA reformers, since Peng Dehuai in the late 1950s, has been to reduce the size of the armed forces and improve their quality. Under Deng, a first wave of demobilization discharged one million servicemen in 1985-1987. When Jiang Zemin became chairman of the CMC in 1989, the GPD announced that quality improvement would also need to take place, concomitant with the streamlining of the force. The professional experience of demobilized servicemen in the 1990s and 2000s – the first generation which had not seen combat – was, therefore, bound to change.

This entirely new situation in the history of the PRC presented the party-state with a problem: how was the PLA to sustain its prestige in a society which no longer had to mobilize for war? How was it to deal with demobilized servicemen who were not veterans? The party needed the PLA to have prestige for two reasons: first, to attract the skilled sections of the population into a military career and second, to preserve the

[45] 政治协理员.

[46] "追寻特殊战役的法制轨迹 – 解放军小汤山医院严格依法防治非典实现", *Zhongguo Junfa*, 2003, no. 5, 8-13.

military's capacity to implement campaigns under the policy of 'spiritual civilization'.

This section will look at the way that the law met the challenge of demobilization and resettlement, imposing the return to localities of origin and devolving implementation of this policy to the county level. It will also show how the central authorities grappled with the intrinsic problems of the system. Finally, it will look at the way the party came to use success stories about resettled servicemen for propaganda purposes. This propaganda entailed a new twist in the PRC's 'soldier-in-society' narrative: now the sole recipients of a political education that was no longer imparted to other professions, demobilized soldiers were to become representatives of the party in the wider society after they returned to civilian life.

Legal provisions

In 1984, the PRC adopted a new law on military service. This law states that all male adults are under the obligation to serve in the military for two years, with the State Council determining the number of new soldiers needed every year. In practice, there is no compulsory military service, as the number of voluntary enlisted soldiers, male and female, systematically exceeds the number of soldiers required by the State Council[47].

Military service in China is actually a two-track system. On the one hand, the professional track is designed for "volunteers" [志愿兵], i.e. non-commissioned officers who choose the military as a career. Those who make that choice "earn 800 to 2,000 yuan a month. They take soldiering as a job, which works like a renewable contract, term by term, each term lasting three years. After the first two years, a volunteer soldier

[47] 征兵指标与应征数量，*Guofang*, 1995, no. 6, 46.

earns 7,000 yuan per year on average[48]. The majority of soldiers are volunteers. If a volunteer has reached the highest level that she could reach and the army no longer requires her services, then she has to retire.[49]"

The second track involves "conscripts" [义务兵]. The problem with this widely used translation is that it suggests that enrollment is compulsory, whereas Chinese "conscripts" enroll voluntarily. These young people however do not make the commitment to become professional soldiers but commit to only two years of service. I interviewed a young woman who joined the PLA as a conscript. She described her two years of service as follows:

> I started my military service in Ningbo, Zhejiang, in December 2007. I was posted to the navy, where I specialized in telecom. Training only constitutes a fifth of the military service time: every one is assigned a specialty that one focuses on. I only had two months of training in telecom. After that, I taught myself. I did not earn a salary, but worked from morning to night. My only time off was to eat meals. Other than that, I was continuously working on my computer, translating numbers into Chinese characters. It had to be that intensive because no mistakes were allowed. A mistake could have caused a plane to crash![50]

Professional soldiers and conscripts train together during the first two years and it is possible for a conscript to change status to become a volunteer during her military service. All Chinese soldiers are volunteers. The high turnover of soldiers however does not consistently allow for sustained professional training[51]. According to British military attaché Brigadier Francis – around 70% of Chinese soldiers who enlist stay in the armed forces for only two years, which is not enough to provide them with professional training. And then, there are exit problems.

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[48] According to *The China Daily*, the average income wage for urban non-private employees was 3,000 yuan per year in 2011. Cf. www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/06/content_15555503.htm

[49] Author's interview with Jia Na, November 2010.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Author's interview with British Brigadier Duncan Francis in Beijing, November 21st, 2011.

The State Council and the National People's Congress have issued a dozen laws to ensure the resettlement of servicemen after they have completed their active duty service. The local Departments of Civil Affairs are responsible for providing demobilized soldiers with civilian employment. The fundamental text is *The Regulations on the Resettlement of demobilized voluntary servicemen* (henceforth *Resettlement Regulations*), promulgated in 1987[52]. It proclaims that local governments are responsible for providing demobilized soldiers with civilian jobs; furthermore, crucially, it decrees that such jobs should be allocated in the locality where the soldiers were recruited[53]. If a serviceman does not accept the government's job proposal, the government no longer has any obligation towards him. *The Resettlement Regulations* are complemented by a series of other national laws. Regulations such as the *Stipulations regarding the early demobilization of voluntary servicemen* (1988) and the *Temporary Measures to resettle retiring non-commissioned officers* (1999) indicate an attempt to subdivide demobilized servicemen into various categories.

Starting in the early 2000s, the overall trend in legislation concerning demobilized servicemen has related to the provision of entitlements to facilitate reintegration into civilian life, rather than job provision. Two pieces of legislation promulgated by the State Council, *The View on issues to do with demobilized servicemen choosing a civilian occupation themselves*[54] (2001) and *The Notice to support voluntary search for a job for demobilized servicemen in cities and towns*[55] (2004), inaugurated this policy. Later laws such as *The Notice to strengthen the preferential treatment of demobilized servicemen* (2002) and *The Notice to improve the resettlement of demobilized servicemen in cities and in the countryside* (2005) were also added.

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[52] Zhang 2009, 7.
[53] Ibid., 4.
[54] "关于自主择业的军队转业干部安置管理若干问题的意见".
[55] "关于扶持城镇退役士兵自谋职业优惠政策意见的通知".

Two obvious changes in Chinese society have accounted for the change from job-allocation to benefit-allocation. First, discharged servicemen are no longer veterans, since China has not fought a war since the Sino-Vietnamese conflict in 1979. Second, with the liberalization of the Chinese labor market, the state is no longer in command of job allocation. County-level People's Armed Forces Departments are mostly staffed with discharged servicemen[56]. For the most part, demobilized soldiers and officers are now entitled to special benefits in education, healthcare, and employment rather than a job.

Resettlement and preferential treatment are regulated and carried out at the county level. For example, in Yunnan, the provincial government's resettlement bureau has reserved a quota of places for demobilized servicemen to study in Yunnan's universities. In Nantong [南通] city, in Jiangsu province, the local Civil Affairs bureau created tax incentives to encourage demobilized servicemen to seek employment, or self-employment, immediately after their discharge[57].

Existing critiques

Historically, the PRC's demobilization policy has not equally favored all veterans[58]. Political scientist Neil Diamant has provided a detailed study of the status of veterans in Chinese society and politics in 1949-2007. He shows that the state discriminated against servicemen from rural areas by compelling them to return to their localities of origin for resettlement. Diamant emphasizes the disruptions in the structure of families caused by the war against Japan (1937-1945), the Korean war (1950-1953) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). He notes that few jobs were on offer in the

[56] 应注重培养，使用县，市（区）人武部，*Guofang*, 1998, no. 5, 5.
[57] Zhang 2009.
[58] Neil Diamant, *Embattled Glory*, Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

Chinese countryside and as a result, discharged soldiers from rural areas simply ended up not being resettled at all. This problem, Diamant argues, cut to the heart of Chinese patriotism, as discharged soldiers from urban areas seemed to have more opportunities than their counterparts from the countryside.

His study also noted the lack of a centralized policy for veterans, given the reliance on local governments rather than on the ministry of defense, for their resettlement. He emphasizes the fuzzy legal status of the "notices" issued to regulate servicemen's resettlement, emanating from various state bureaus, at different levels of government. This chaotic situation, he argues, led to the constitution of veterans' protest groups as early as the late 1970s.

Diamant's historical critique of the PRC's veterans' policy also holds for servicemen who were discharged without having fought a war, starting in the 1990s. Indeed, the *Resettlement Regulations* issued in 1987 reassert the state's requirement that rural servicemen return home after their discharge. Even though some provisions were made to adjust to the growing phenomenon of internal migrations after 1978[59], the state's urban bias was thus perpetuated. Based on the argument that the cost of living is lower in the countryside, demobilized servicemen in rural areas received less financial aid than those in cities[60]. *The Policy Regarding the preferential treatment in support of demobilized servicemen seeking self-employment* promulgated by the ministry of civil affairs in 2003 to help demobilized soldiers set up their own business only concerned servicemen registered in an urban area[61].

The PLA has long been sensitive to the risk represented by discharged

[59] Thus if his parents' registration [户口] changed during his military service, a soldier would be allocated a job in his parents' new locality.
[60] This statement is based of a cursory reading of Luo Wen 2007, see for example p. 213.
[61] Zhang 2009, 18-29.

servicemen becoming a potential source of protest by the 1980s and 1990s. In March 1989, a notice issued jointly by the Liaoning provincial government and military district emphasized the role of political work in "preventing unrest" among demobilized servicemen[62]. In 1993, a cadre from the Lanzhou MR, He Puwu 何普武, reported on the problem of soldiers and officers leaving the military but in practice remaining on the troops' registry for lack of proper administrative management. According to He, the issue mostly concerned officers, who should have been allocated jobs in the local government. Some officers, he says, did not check in at their new jobs because they consider that the appointment they were given is below their rank. Others do not receive an appointment corresponding to their particular professional skill. Finally, there are also uncooperative elements who "find an excuse not to report on duty."[63]

Hence these problems are no secret for the central authorities: the CCP has been letting discharged soldiers down by failing to adapt the system of job allocation which made sense when society was organized around work units and the state allocated not only economic resources but also social security. In 2005, Deputy Head of the Ministry of Civil Affairs Luo Pingfei 罗平飞 claimed: "'government malfunction' is increasingly in evidence regarding the resettlement of demobilized soldiers."[64] The core of Luo's critique is that the necessary adjustments to the system for resettlement were not made during the transition from a planned to a market economy. As becomes clear in a subsequent article (2006), "government" here refers to the central government. He notes that measures taken on the local level which have yielded positive results, for example in

[62] 广发，"辽宁省政府省军区通知各地做好老兵思想工作"，*Dongbei Minbing*, 1989, no. 3, 20.
[63] 何晋武，"滞留军营为哪般？转业部立队不报到问题透视"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1993, no. 1, 32.
[64] Luo 2005, 5-8.

Zhejiang province, have not been integrated into national regulations[65]. Luo Pingfei also emphasizes the linguistic inconsistency of legal formulations - for example, voluntary leave is not distinguished from obligatory demobilization in party documents. As a result of this negligence on the central policy level, Luo Pingfei argues, the pattern of demobilization has become overly complex.

As market mechanisms govern most employment opportunities in China today, Luo goes on, the state no longer has the capacity to provide demobilized servicemen with appropriate jobs. This is the reason why it has tried to push soldiers and officers to start new businesses on their own. Yet, it also continues to compel soldiers and officers who come from the countryside, that is half of the demobilized force in 2001[66], to return to their original *hukou*. Furthermore, he notes, performance during military service also determines whether or not conscripts receive financial support to help them convert to civilian life after discharge[67]. As a result of all these conditions related to resettlement, Luo describes "an unbalanced psychological situation among discharged servicemen."

Yet despite this widely acknowledged letdown, stories of exemplar servicemen continue to showcase the sentimental attachment of discharged servicemen to their hometown as the sine qua non of successful resettlement – a paradox on the propaganda level which merits closer examination.

Exit

In the 1990s, the PLA was broadly involved in the new Chinese market economy. The pursuit of profit-making activities was justified by the fact that the central state

[65] Luo 2006, 112.
[66] Ibid., 113.
[67] Ibid., 112.

could not provide enough funds to maintain the troops. PLA-run businesses frequently also had a strong regional identity, often linked to a particular military region. Three of the largest businesses of this kind were the pride and glory of the Beijing MR, Nanjing MR and Jinan MR. The Beijing Capital Brewery was the largest PLA-run alcohol producers, employing two-hundred people[68]. In 1993, an advertisement in *National Defense* promoted the nine different kinds of liqueurs produced by the Beijing Capital Brewery, emphasizing the local sourcing of its inputs. Similarly, the Kylin bed factory, an establishment managed by the Nanjing MR, is advertised as "the famous trademark from Jiangsu"[69] and the Jinan pharmaceutical company also adduces its local roots in the promotion of its remedies[70].

Meanwhile, during the 1990s, the party-state aggressively pursued its unequal policy of "resettlement in the native place." Indeed, soldiers' purported attachment to their 'hometown', remained the focus of PLA propaganda while it was massively reducing the numbers of personnel during this period. And although the PLA emphasized the growing importance of the reserve force within its modernized combat troops, the tales of exemplary service produced by the GPD do not emphasize martial valor. Rather, they recounted soldiers' contributions to their hometowns. In these cautionary tales, demobilized servicemen exhibit the cardinal virtue of dedication, a central theme in the political education they received while serving in the military. Success, in these stories, depends upon loyalty to one's 'native' place.

In 2001, 74% of discharged officers were still assigned jobs in the local

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[68] "北京京都酒厂一 全军食品工业企业中最大酿酒厂"，*Guofang*, 1993, no. 4, 49.
[69] "南京麒麟床具总厂", *Guofang*, 1994, no. 1, 1.
[70] "束方活血膏"，*Guofang*, 1993, no. 10 (back cover); ibid., 1995, nos. 1, 2 and 3, 1; ibid., last page of nos. 4, 5 and 6.

government[71] by the State Council's Leading Group for the conversion of military officers into government cadres[72]. In 1993 however, a cadre from the resettlement bureau of Shandong province had already reported that the Shandong province administration was no longer able to absorb additions to its workforce[73]. Faced with similar difficulties across the country, the CCP's strategy has been to encourage officers and soldiers to enter private business, with the local governments now only required to provide discharged servicemen with a lump sum of money. The government later also entitled demobilized servicemen to register start-ups without paying the fee required of civilians setting up their own business[74].

The PLA GPD has promoted the party policy of liberalizing markets in China by singing the praises of servicemen who successfully engaged in business after their discharge. It proposes, inter alia, the stories of soldiers Chen and Ma. In 1990, Chen refurbished a building materials plant in his home province of Zhejiang, doubling the production of cement in one year[75]. The particular skill he brought to the task was the team spirit and discipline he had acquired during his military service. Ma set up a company distributing sesame oil and sheepskin "in great demand in more than twenty provinces and far across the ocean in Western Europe"[76]. He called his company "the Terracotta Army." Ma's success story is rooted in his locality. His very name, Ma Jingxi 马敬西 was chosen by his parents so that he would serve his home town called Xiyang [西阳]. Ma enlisted immediately after he finished high school. He distinguished himself in the military unit where he trained. After his commercial business started making

[71] Luo 2006, no. 169, 113.
[72] Ibid.
[73] 朴明，"军转安置工作急需"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1993, no. 2.
[74] Zhang 2009.
[75] 沈，良, and 姚达人，"退伍兵的魄力"，*Guofang*, 1996, no. 4, 21.
[76] 陕西省军区转业干部工作办公室，"从退伍兵到企业家，陕西省三原县兵马俑"，*Political Work Periodical*, 1998, no. 1.

profits, he donated some of this capital to a school in Xiyang.

In their new entrepreneurial form, exemplars like Chen and Ma embody the vaunted relationship between the military and the people that is supposed to be at the root of the guerilla tactics that brought the communists to power in 1949. In 1979, Wang Zhengzhi 王正智 left the military after four years of service[77]. His tale, as told by the GPD, is one of dedicated, methodical entrepreneurship. Resettled in Taigu county (Shanxi province), he first worked in a brewery there. In 1986, Wang decided to take over the local steel factory. The factory had shut down for lack of coke and nonferrous metal. To set the plant going again, Wang went to Taiyuan (the provincial capital), Yangquan and Xinzhou to get scrap iron, to Liulin to get high quality coke and to Liaoning to get nonferrous metal. After he secured his supply, he set up a sound management system for the provision of raw material and to reduce production costs.

In short, the party's policy of resettlement of discharged servicemen was reoriented during this period to support the transformation of the Chinese economy through the encouragement of private sector entrepreneurship, employment and activity. In the GPD propaganda, demobilized soldiers are presented as a flexible workforce. At the same time, by compelling the soldiers to return to their home districts, resettlement policy also aimed to bolster the prestige of the military and military service on the grassroots level during peacetime.

[77] 请看太湖县退伍军人玛钢物资有限公司董事长, *Huabei Minbing*, 2001, no. 7, 49.

The PLA in the local economy

Last, but not least of the party's programs aiming to integrate the army into reform-era society is a form of community service associating stationed troops with sections of the local population. Dating from the early Deng era, this program, called "common construction" [共建], proclaimed that the garrisons' party committees should associate with the governments of their host localities to conduct a set of state programs and public works. As an article in *National Defense* explained in 1995, "common construction" contributes to the party's project of "spiritual civilization": with the advent of the reform era, the association of garrisons and local governments developed as a series of activities closely monitored by the central government in over 50,000 locations[78]. Passing some twenty years of "common construction" in review in 2005, the head of the department of liaison with the people [群联处] of the political department of the second artillery corps Pan Jiancheng 潘建成 presented this "common construction" policy in the context of the tradition of "reciprocal support"[79]. According to him, its purpose is the mobilization of all social forces for economic growth.

This section explains how, in this process, the PLA managed and engaged the civilian population, from their workplaces, in local development. First it trained the members of its reserve force to act as leaders. Second, it took charge of the party poverty alleviation program in the most underdeveloped counties. Finally, it invested in infrastructure building.

[78] 总政群工部干事为了中华民族，*Guofang*, 1995, no. 3, 4-5.
[79] Pan 2005, introduction.

Between the PLA and society: the militia

In tune with Jiang Zemin's ideology of the "Three Represents", the party policy of "common construction" aimed at promoting the productive forces of society. To achieve this objective, it used the PLA to tap a hybrid form of armed organization that was older than the CCP itself: the militia.

The PLA's reserve force comprises all men under 35 who have completed their military service, and the militia is the subsection of the reserve which undergoes thirty days of training per year. By 1987, the role of the militia was being cast as the promotion of economic growth. This new mission, the author of political classes' pedagogical material for the militia explains, marks a "strategic change" from the Mao era when combat was the militia's priority.[80] He further explains that as the international situation seems poised for protracted peace, the militia must assume a domestic responsibility. Through a strengthened collaboration with local governments, the PLA used the reserve force as a conveyor belt to maintain a leading presence in Chinese society.

The transition from a militia trained for war to a militia tasked with sustaining economic growth can be seen in testimonies of members of the militia who ensured border defense in Yunnan and Guangxi, during the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979. As skirmishes lasted well into the mid-1980s, the militia serving on the border with Vietnam were, effectively, part of the combat troops. But by 1987, two women of the Yunnan and Guangxi militia were describing the militia's role in the protection of the country as that of soldiers without weapons. In charge of telephone transmission, Huang Hualin 黄华临 emphasizes the physical hardship that she experienced in this logistical

[80] "民兵政治课：我国国防建设指导思想的战略性转变"，*Zhongguo Minbing*, 1987, no. 1, 20.

support role, although she was not on the frontline per se[81]. In Yunnan, the militia was responsible for handling the aftermath of the Sino-Vietnamese war, such as mine clearance, until the late 1990s[82].

The militia functions full-time during peacetime, and is able to benefit from the technical skills which its members have developed in their workplaces. For example, in Liaoning province, the militia of Fuxin's power plant was deployed to dispose of the city's waste in 1989[83]. To harness such skills, People's Armed Forces Departments link up with factories to organize the militia on-site, in factories, mines and other industrial enterprises. The military training provided to workers is extremely basic. Staff from local garrisons visit factories and teach workers how to physically move together as a group[84]. Ten percent of the time dedicated to military training is taken up by political education[85], which conveys the latest party policy and communicates the regulations specifically relevant to this section of the PLA[86]. The PLA also reactivated the traditional figure of Lei Feng, the young soldier who died during a logistical operation in peacetime. In 1990, military leaders from the Shenyang MR explained how the hero remained relevant on the eve of the twenty-first century. The MR's second-in-command, Zhu Dunfa 朱敦法, emphasized the historical importance of Lei Feng as a behavioral model at a time when moral habits were becoming loose with fast social change. In an interesting rewriting of the hero's story, originally a solitary soul, the deputy political commissar of the MR, Li Wenqing 李文卿, uses Lei Feng as a model for leadership. His idea is that the moral values embodied by Lei Feng must pervade the

[81] 话筒，*Zhongguo Minbing*, 1987, no. 2, 1.
[82] 重视做好，*Yunnan Guofang*, 1998, no. 4, 13.
[83] 于海林，*Dongbei Minbing*, 1989, no. 2, 48.
[84] 共建共育结贯硕果，*Dongbei Minbing*, 1988, no. 1.
[85] 总政群工部，"关于 1988 年民兵预备役政治工作意见", *Zhongguo Minbing*, 1988, no. 1, 5.
[86] "总政群工部负责同志答本刊记者问", *Guofang*, 1991, no. 2, 5-7.

action of organizations acting as leaders in society, such as the militia.[87]

In 1988, Tianjin's municipal party committee suggested that the militia be reorganized according to the local businesses' management requirements[88]. Similarly, records show that urban military districts, such as in Harbin (Heilongjiang province) or Dongchuan (Yunnan province) restructured the organization of the militia according to production patterns in mines and other enterprises in 1988[89]. In rural areas like Fuzhou [抚州], it was rather the mobile nature of the militia, "whose members are in the prime of life and tightly organized", that was emphasized, allowing it to adapt to the scattered pattern of farms; there, over 23,000 militia members participated in 338 engineering projects[90].

After the management of the militia was devolved from the PLA to the local government, the militias were run both by the local government and by the PLA. This entailed joined engagement in political work, i.e. teaching the latest party policy. In 1991, *National Defense* noted that in Sichuan province, the provincial government and the provincial military district worked together to promulgate *Detailed Rules and Regulations to implement* The Militia Regulations, the new militia regulations having been issued by the CCP central committee. The article describes study sessions where "article by article, paragraph by paragraph and sentence by sentence, *The Regulations* are explained" to militia members.[91]

Municipalities created local networks for militia training. In 1986, the commander of the Harbin military district established a system of specialized training for the Harbin militia, district by district. Over the years, he proceeded to ensure the

[87] "军区全国人大代表谈学雷锋", *Dongbei Houbei Jun*, 1990, no. 5, 4.
[88] "天津民兵工作与城市经济体制改革兼容并存", *Zhongguo Minbing*, 1989, no. 1, 9.
[89] "改革短波", *Zhongguo Minbing*, 1988, no. 1, 4-5.
[90] "民兵参建应注重", *Zhongguo Minbing*, 1989, no. 2, 8.
[91] 四川，山东省领导学习"民兵工作条例", *Guofang*, 1991, no. 4, 24-25.

coordination of these specialized units while providing a unified training system where all militia members "eat, live, train, and learn" at their training center, common to all the seven units constitutive of the Harbin military subdistrict. He also decreased the number of specialized teams to a hundred, to simplify their management.[92]

With time, the economic role of the militia in localities became more diversified. An evaluation conducted by the AMS in 1998 provides insights into the way that the militia has adjusted to SOE reform. The investigation concerned the involvement of the militia in twenty different businesses in Xinxiang county, in Henan province. It focused on the place of the militia after these enterprises were restructured and their personnel significantly reduced. As a wire-rod joint-stock company, a brewery and an electronics company were streamlining their personnel, they beefed up their security department by hiring members of the local militia as private security personnel[93]. In the rural county of Raoyang [饶阳], in Hebei province, the militia played a role of 'broker' in 2002: "a section of the militia arose at the historic moment as a large family buying and selling goods. […] Raoyang being one of the main counties in Hebei producing vegetables, the militia acts as a go-between in the trade of cherry tomatoes, pumpkin and over twenty other kinds of produce."[94] Just like the PLA in the 1990s, the militia was going into business.

Poverty alleviation

Launched in 1986 and still functioning today, the PRC's "aid-the-poor"

[92] 合尔滨军分区，"搞好城市"，*Guofang*, 1992, no. 4, 17.
[93] 路在何方 — 新乡市，*Guofang*, 1998, no. 2, 5-6.
[94] 王聪娜，饶阳民兵经济，*Huabei Minbing*, 2002, no. 8, 28.

program aims to reduce poverty in rural areas[95], with the help of garrisoned troops. At the outset, the PLA was involved in the program, not only for implementation but also for critical analysis. In one notable example of the latter, in 1987, the journal of the PLA Nanjing Political College reported the negative results of a program conducted in Susong county, in Anhui province. This poverty-stricken county, where at the time of writing half of the population lived on a per capita cash income of 120 yuans per year, had followed an aid-the-poor program based on income-subsidy for seven years but had little to show for it. According to PLA Nanjing Political College researcher Gong Wenyi 龚文义, the area's remote mountainous location and historical legacy of poverty accounted for its economic backwardness[96]. In his view, the problem was that income subsidies alone could do nothing to eradicate poverty – they could only ensure survival, not development. Hence, Gong calls for some state action which can "create impetus," i.e. a multifaceted aid program adapted to the various situations of the million people living in the county. Without explicitly including action by the PLA, Gong suggests an increased role for fiscal measures, better infrastructure and education provision to eradicate poverty.

The PLA's implication in the 'aid-the-poor program' involved a variety of activities ranging from food distribution to funding. In Yunnan province, where the militia was particularly involved in poverty alleviation, the local militia newspaper reported on four different county beneficiaries in 1999: Shiping [石屏][97], Fugong [福贡], Xindian [寻甸] and Zhaotong [昭通]. These reports indicate that the aid-the-poor program falls under the responsibility of the military district, emphasizing the military's

[95] Wang, "The 8-7 national poverty reduction program."
[96] 龚文义，扶持贫困户应以增强"造血"功能为主 — 安徽省宿龚松县扶贫方式的调查与思考, *The Journal of the Nanjing political College*, 1987, supplement to no. 4.
[97] "记石屏县昌合乡应急民兵排"，*Yunnan Guofang*, 1999, no. 1, 9.

role in maintaining social cohesion and the threat which poverty represents. In Zhaotong, the aid-the-poor program Leading Small Group was headed by the Zhaotong military district's head political commissar. In Shiping, the militia units specialized in engineering and telecommunications, building roads and extending telephone lines. In Hubei province, county-level People's Armed Forces Departments are in charge of poverty alleviation, including providing funding out of its own reserves for it. In Zhijiang (Hubei province), for example, the city's People's Armed Forces Department spent 5,000 yuan to purchase rice that the military distributed to poor households in 2000. In CCP propaganda, the actual distribution of rice bags by servicemen to the inhabitants mattered as much as the amount of money involved[98]: the military were key on-the-ground actors in food relief, not just sources of finance. The troops effectively provided public relief, playing the part of a charity.

In 1993, in a county in Inner Mongolia, the militia focused on the road network to meet the objectives of the aid-the-poor program. It was the militia of Alxa Right Banner (the administrative division in Inner Mongolia equivalent to a county) that built some of the new roads in the Gobi desert[99]. In promoting the engineering work provided by the militia, *National Defense* emphasized the hardship they endured in the process - the propaganda story saying that the head of the People's Armed Forces Department travelled on a camel for days without meeting a soul for preliminary surveying. Part of the rationale for needing and for using the local militia was that only local actors could find effective ways of working under the local conditions that the central authorities were ill-positioned to understand: the local militia had knowledge of the terrain and it was sufficiently committed to the locality to endure inevitable

[98] 习道存，*Guofang*, 2000, no. 2, 1.
[99] 马德荣，*Guofang*, 1994, no. 6, 20.

hardships. In the Gobi desert, poverty meant isolation, which only the savoir-faire of the militia could overcome.

Another example from Inner Mongolia may be useful in this context. Aohan [敖汉] is a banner of 540,000 people covered with marshlands. The difficulty of growing anything on such terrain had pushed most of the population into poverty and migration. Under the national aid-the-poor program, the local People's Armed Forces Department was tasked with eradicating the poverty that characterized the banner. The militia was called in, and decided to harvest reed, the only vegetation that grew in the locality. They transported the harvest to neighboring Liaoning province to sell it, making a profit for the Aohan inhabitants. In this story, the party committee and local government were the decision-makers, while the militia provided the workforce necessary to clear infested ground[100]. The militia had the capacity both to mobilize the local population and to design a development project in coordination with the county's party committee and government. In 1998, the militia of Aohan received 400,000 yuan from the sale of the reed, as a reward for twelve years of sustained commitment to the banner's development.

The modalities of the aid-the-poor program are defined in the broadest of terms by the State Council's Leading Group for poverty reduction and People's Armed Forces Departments have the discretionary authority to target specific social groups. In an interesting convergence of concerns, the military district of Xinzhou county, in Shanxi, conducted an aid-the-poor program specifically for servicemen's dependents in 1996[101]. The four-part program was conceived as a three-year plan with yearly quotas and objectives. First, a Leading Small Group to support poor servicemen's dependents was

[100] 李文志，"敖汉民兵，不让贫困进入 21 世纪"，*Huabei Minbing*, 2000, no. 1, 4－5.
[101] 霍新生，"忻州军分区帮助军属脱贫致富成效显著"，*Guofang*, 1998, no. 4, 13.

established at the provincial level with branches at the county and township level, to design the plan of action. Second, twelve kinds of aid were created to correspond to different households situations, including technical agricultural aid; training; and placement on construction sites related to the Yellow River engineering projects. Third, these different schemes were integrated into existing programs such as local 'reciprocal support' structures, militia training or programs related to the spiritual civilization policy. Finally, a three-year deadline was set. During this period, the Leading Small Group responsible for poverty alleviation was tasked with reducing poverty in the area by 30%. In effect, the plan had lifted all the area's military dependents out of poverty by 1999[102].

The troops stationed in Guang'an county, Sichuan province, initiated a plan to break the economic deadlock of Maobai [茅白] village. It was the PLA who designed an engineering project for road repair and electricity provision to the hamlet and submitted it to Guang'an city's party committee, who approved it[103]. Again, the story of Guang'an's development is the story of the planned, long-term commitment of a garrison to the population living in its locality.

Infrastructure building

In 1992, the head of the national 'Leading Group for Reciprocal Support', alternatively called an office [双拥办], explained the purpose of the cooperation between military and civilian institutions after 1978. In his words,

> a socialist market economy offers a new opportunity for associations

[102] 刘玉，*Guofang*, 1999, no. 5, 5.
[103] "华蓥山下"，*PLA Daily*, August 23rd, 2004.

> between the military and the government and between the military and the people and expands the field for such association. […] China's tradition of reciprocal support between the government and the military must play the role of an escort for the development of a socialist market economy. […] Experience has shown that localities where the socialist market economy has developed fast have also performed well with regard to 'reciprocal support', suggesting a close correlation between economic development and civil-military cooperation.[104]

Beyond poverty reduction, "support" meant that the PLA had the duty to build and maintain infrastructure designed for civilian use.

A revealing tale is the story of a successful business supporting the local People's Armed Forces Department. The protagonist is Zhou Tiansong 周天颂, a proud member of the Tujia nationality dominant in the autonomous prefecture where he opened Phoenix Cigars in Hunan province in 1989. As the business was starting to make profits, a strong wind destroyed the facilities of the local People's Armed forces Department and Zhou offered to host the troops in his own facilities. The workers disapproved, but he argued that as the national economy was developing fast, society would need a strengthened security force and business would therefore benefit from a stronger public security apparatus[105]. This is the line of argumentation that the party expounds in all its theoretical pamphlets in the 1990s. Zhou became the director of the People's Armed Forces Department.

In 1979-2009, the troops stationed in Shandong province contributed to "turning the losses of over 200 businesses into profits.[106]" An example of such activity is the PLA's participation in the setting up of a major textile factory in Zibo (Shandong province) in 1979. Interestingly, the factory's equipment was imported from Japan. An article from the *People's Daily* describes a three-year cooperation between Japanese

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[104] 江北兵，适应社会主义商品经济特点建立型的军政军民关系, *Guofang*, 1992, no. 8, 8.
[105] 郝诗康，"一个少数民族企业家的国防情"，*Guofang*, 1994, no. 4, 13-14.
[106] Shandong 2009, 41－43.

experts and the local Shandong troops to convey the skills necessary to make the factory work. Other instances of the garrisons' contribution to the province's industrial apparatus include dispatching army engineers to help set up a plastics' processing plant in the town of Nanchang Shan and the free transfer of a military training ground to serve as a shelter for fishing boats in Changdao county[107].

In 1998, Jiang Zemin divested the PLA of its commercial activities. James Mulvenon thus explains the divestiture:

> PLA divestiture was not designed to remove the military entirely from the economy. Instead, the authorities drew an important distinction between "production" (*shengchan*) on the one hand and "commerce"(*shangye*) on the other. The former, which had existed in the PLA since the late 1920s in the form of farms and other economic activity that was critical to the standard of living of soldiers and their dependents, was to continue unabated. The latter, defined as anything that involved direct dealings with "customers"—such as hotels, telecommunications services, or trade—was banned.[108]

The role of the PLA as an economic development facilitator was however maintained. In 2007, Deputy Head of the national Leading Group for Reciprocal Support Luo Pingfei reaffirmed the key role of stationed troops in "actively supporting local economic development."[109] As part of the party policy of Western development, the Xinjiang garrison was particularly involved in building infrastructure[110].

Second artillery political commissar Pan Jiancheng explains that by actively supporting the development of the local economy, garrisons have upheld the party's focus on economic development since the third plenum of the eleventh party committee in 1978[111]. Local political leaders have regularly used the militia to conduct engineering projects. Numerous news briefs report the construction of thoroughfares, such as a road

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[107] Ibid.
[108] James Mulvenon, "To get rich is unprofessional", *China Leadership Monitor* 6, 2003, 25.
[109] *Shuang* 2007.
[110] "Address by Wang Lequan at rally celebrating 70th anniversary", *Xinjiang Ribao*, August 7th, 1997.
[111] Pan 2005.

built by 500 members of the 100,000-strong militia of Tanghe [唐河] county, in Hunan province, in 1993[112]. In 2004, *The Northern Militia* published a portrait of Li, the party secretary of Xin county (Shanxi province) who, despite never having served in the military, brought his county's militia into local economic development[113].

Active-duty troops also participated directly in their locality's economic development. In the 2000s, the troops stationed in Yunnan participated in the diversion works of the river Zhang Jiu [掌鸠], the renovation of Tien Lake [滇池] and 洱海, the ecological protection on the upper reaches of the Yangtze river and other important projects at the local and national level. More surprisingly, the troops not only provided manpower and expertise to these engineering projects, but also financial support, as the provincial records report that the Yunnan contingent contributed 170,800,000 yuan to these various construction works[114].

Conclusion

'Reciprocal support', the resettlement of demobilized servicemen and 'common construction' are all programs mandated at the center but implemented at the county level. All three programs aim to ensure local integration during three moments in a soldier's career: first, during active duty; second, in the course of the transition back to civilian life; and finally, during civilian employment following military service.

In this context, the importance of the county level in post-reform China can now be seen in institutional structures: in addition to the formal, permanent structure of

[112] 后备力量建设简讯，*Guofang*, 1993, no. 3, 39.
[113] 秦国孝，贫困县里武书记，*Huabei Minbing*, 2004, no. 3, 13.
[114] *Shuang* 2007, 4.

'reciprocal support' committees tying garrisons to the governments of the localities where they are stationed, political commissars also become deeply involved in local ad hoc entities, often Leading Small Groups, designed to improve conditions for the local population. The importance of this county-level cooperation between the military and local government is evident in the provincial and national rankings which have been carried out since 1991 to showcase best performers in 'reciprocal support.'

This evolution of the local level has been accompanied by what amounts to a redefinition of "the people" – which the CCP now presents as the institutionalized, patriotic combination of the military and the local population capable of driving economic development. At the same time, there are patently some very real problems with this picture, as perceived by insiders. The urban/rural dichotomy is perpetuated, to the benefit of urban areas. Through the obligation to return home and through the unequal allocation of benefits, demobilized soldiers are a highly heterogeneous group. Clear and equitable policies for exiting the military after a few years of service are lacking. Mainstream military observers continue to decry these and other problems as and when they do come to the fore on the county level.

CHAPTER V: DEFENSE (AND) EDUCATION

"In a school of 1,400 pupils, more than half did not know the nationality of Lei Feng. Some children even said they thought he was American."[1]

In chapter II of this thesis, I argued that the party policy of reform and opening led to a sense of disconnection between servicemen and Chinese society: with individualism increasingly in evidence, even in the army, an ideological crisis developed. The party responded to this crisis by putting the military at the center of the propaganda system. In 1987, after a decade of market liberalization, the thirteenth party congress called for a "strengthening of defense education [国防教育] (…) to instill military values in wider society."[2]

Youth has been one of the main foci of its efforts to do so. Interestingly, whereas the party had deployed the unrest and energy of youth during the Cultural Revolution by pitting the red guards against a fossilized bureaucracy, the CCP of the reform era has aimed to discipline and to control youthful energies through military training. One of the questions that this chapter explores is whether this effort was a reaction from the party to the student activism that started in 1986. While noting the PLA's presence in higher education after the 1989 student demonstrations in Tiananmen[3], the secondary literature has not studied the chronology, content and modalities of PLA involvement in education during this period, either on the higher education level or more broadly. In

[1] 郭春晓，"中国小皇帝的变化 — 鞍山 52 所中小学开展国防教育纪实"，*Dongbei Houbei Jun*, 1989, no. 9, 7.
[2] 卢松华，通县是怎样开展国防教育的，*Guofang*, 1990, no. 2, 9-10.
[3] Stanley Rosen, "The Effect of Post-4 June Re-education Campaigns on Chinese Students", *China Quarterly*, 1993.

this chapter, I will try to fill this gap.

First I will describe the holistic nature of the party's policy of defense education: it is a propaganda effort that concerns the entire population and is implemented at the local level to create a sense of community. Its purpose is to popularize [普及] the notion of national defense. Rather than increasing the number of conscripts or the military presence in public places[4], the goal of the party has been to instill an "idea of defense" that was not purely military, but also a nationwide duty, and this from the youngest age[5]. Second, I will emphasize the party's focus on youth through its program of military education and training in civilian schools and universities. Finally, I will turn to the recipients of this educational program, and look at how top Chinese students actually perceive the party's domestic use of the military.

Defense at the grassroots

The party policy of 'reciprocal support' described in the previous chapter includes a broad pedagogical project, to maintain support for the work of the armed forces in the wider population. Initially, "defense education" referred to the basic knowledge that the militia had to possess about military affairs in order to be operational[6]. In the 1980s, "defense education" referred to a range of activities organized by local governments for society as a whole.

The diffusion of the responsibility of defense to the wider population has a long history in communist and even pre-communist China, as Elizabeth Perry has shown in

[4] Mulvenon, "The Party holds the ring", in *China Leadership Monitor* 26, shows that the party precisely refrained from doing that.
[5] Li Shu 2009.
[6] Earliest mention found is 黄炜，农村来信，*PLA Daily*, January 5th, 1957.

her study of the Shanghai militia, *Patrolling the Revolution*. The scholar notes that Lenin saw defense as a community-wide political duty: "Lenin envisioned the militia […] as the primary vehicle for drawing other citizens – young people and women in particular – into political life[7]." Even though the PRC had a firmly established standing military rather than composite militia forces in the 1980s, the party showed a similar concern for sustaining avenues of contact between the PLA and the wider population.

Educating and mobilizing potential recruits

As I showed in chapter II, the main problem that the party faced in the "thought work" it conducted among the troops in the 1980s was the alienation of officers and soldiers in a liberalizing society. As early as 1976, to counter this trend, Defense Education Leading Small Groups associated officers of the People's Armed Forces Departments with members of local governments to convey an ideology of defense on the county, and urban district levels[8].

In Inner Mongolia, for example, the Defense Education Leading Small Group of Hondlon, a district of Baotou[9], dedicated a month every summer to defense education in 1990. There, it was the cultural section of the municipal government that organized movie showings and other entertainment related to defense[10]. In the city of Harbin, in Heilongjiang province, the Daowai [道外] district government's branch for science and technology associated with the district's People's Armed Forces Department to organize an open-air event about defense in 1988. The three-day event, conceived as a "fair" [大

[7] Elizabeth Perry, *Patrolling the Revolution, Worker militias, Citizenship, and the Modern Chinese State*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006, 34.
[8] *Kundulun* 2006, 678.
[9] The largest city in Inner Mongolia.
[10] *Kundulun* 2006.

集], juxtaposed food stalls with exhibition halls, complete with the visit of the commander of the Shenyang MR Liu Jingsong. Militia members gave lectures about China's military history, bringing in the civilian elderly who had witnessed the events. The media were present. Journalist Bai Shengxiang 白胜祥, interviewing a youth coming out of the "weaponry" exhibit, noted that "after he graduates from high school, he wants to enroll in the armed forces, having received his first military course here. [11]"

In reality, despite such propaganda efforts, disaffection with the military as a career choice seems to have persisted into the 1990s. In 1996, *China National Defense News* reported:

> In some places, young people have tended to make the following five major career choices in this order: enter college; find a good job; become self-employed; join the army; work in a factory. Some parents have told their sons: "If you don't study well now, you will not be able to enter college and find a good job in the future. Should that happen, you would have no choice but to join the army.[12]"

Cities where accelerated economic development had created new job opportunities in the 1980s witnessed the most significant decrease in voluntary enlistment. As a result, urban centers like Beijing became foci for defense education. To remedy the waning appeal that the PLA had in the wider society, Lu Songhua 卢松华, party secretary of Tong [通] district in Beijing, launched a "ten-form" program of 'defense education' in his district in 1990. He described it as follows:

> 1) Use military newspapers as teaching material for the militia and the reserve force; 2) organize competitions about defense knowledge; 3) give awards to written pieces about defense; 4) run broadcast lecture series about defense; 5) invite distinguished speakers who fought wars to give presentations to the public; 6) plan military training activities for the whole society; 7) send children from

[11] 白胜祥，国防教育，*Dongbei Houbei Jun*, 1989, no 9, 6.
[12] "Investigation of and Reflection on recruit quality", *China National Defense News*, October 11, 1996.

> primary and middle schools on trips to the barracks; 8) organize showings of movies and television programs related to defense and teach military songs; 9) fix dates for quizzes about defense; 10) build defense parks where troops are stationed, as a basis for education."[13]

Military education gradually reaches society as a whole via the militia and the reserve force, and ultimately also influences urban planning, as venues such as "defense parks" and war memorials[14] are built in public places.

In poorer provinces like Henan, the defense education program emphasized the local roots of the revolutionary tradition, painting the PLA in bright colors and appealing to the loyalties of potential local recruits. Counties that had been "revolutionary base areas" [革命老区], i.e. the strongholds of the Chinese communist movement in the 1940s, became favoured sites for grassroots defense education. Wan Jiayong 万家永, spokesperson for Xin county (Henan province)'s People's Armed Forces Department, explains that the local government set up classes about military knowledge for political cadres and then dispatched them to factories, schools and villages to explain laws such as *The National Defense Law*[15]. To encourage the local youth to enroll, he stressed the historical commitment of his county to the PLA and the revolution:

> During the revolution, 5,500 soldiers from Xin laid down their lives for the country, out of a population of 10,000 people, meaning that almost every household lost a loved one. […] In order to transmit the revolutionary history of past generations and encourage a martial spirit, the county has emphasized education of the revolutionary tradition by compiling a dozen books such as *The History of the Revolutionary War in Xin County*, *A Record of Illustrious Heroes* and *The Scenic Spots of Xin County's Military Generals*, as well as biographies of Wu Huanxian, Xu Shiyou and Li Desheng.[16]

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[13] 卢松华，通县是怎样开展国防教育的，*Guofang*, 1990, no. 2, 9-10.
[14] Luo Wen 2007.
[15] 万家永，"将军县"， *Guofang*, 1999, no. 10, 11.
[16] Idem.

In this instance, defense education is tantamount to a cultural policy, including a yearly plan for defense education, quarterly meetings of political and military leaders and even a competition about defense-related knowledge organized for the county residents.

Officials in one of the poorest prefecture-level city in China, Zhaotong [昭通], in Yunnan province, also invoked its history as a cradle of the revolution to explain the need for outreach to the local political elite:

> Zhaotong is located in the Wumeng mountains, an area which the Red Army went through. […] To ensure the development of defense education, Zhaotong district has established a district-wide system of leadership for the program, with 12 Defense Education Leading Small Groups. Localities, counties and towns select representatives from the relevant government departments to establish these offices[17]."

Committing local leaders

Indeed, the *National Defense Education Law* promulgated in 2001 designated local cadres as a target group:

> The state organs shall, in light of the nature and features of their respective work, provide officials with national defense education in various forms. The officials of the state organs shall have basic national defense knowledge. Those engaged in national defense construction cause shall learn from them to grasp national defense knowledge that are essential for them to perform their duties. The leaders of all regions and all departments shall, pursuant to the law, organize and lead their respective region and department to perform the duties of national defense education.[18]

Provincial pieces of legislation had been issued and implemented about defense education for a decade before the *National Defense Education Law* was promulgated in 2001. In Jiangxi province for example, the provincial party committee issued *A View on deepening the long-term development of defense education for all people* jointly with the military

[17] 陈，俊 and 张掌均，"同心"，*Yunnan Guofang*, 1999, no. 4, 24.
[18] *National Defense Education Law of the People's Republic of China*, article 18.

district's GPD, in 1988[19]. This text established a provincial Leading Small Group headed by members of Jiangxi's party committee and Jiangxi's military district GPD. Shandong province issued its own *Regulations for defense education in Shandong province* in 1990[20]. In 1996, the Beijing municipality drafted the "Rules for the Implementation of the Beijing Municipality's Law on National Defense Education"[21].

In Yingjiang [盈江] county (Yunnan province), the party secretary Wang Baoquan 汪宝泉 also served as the county's People's Armed Forces Department's first secretary. Under his leadership, a defense education course, complete with a schedule, a syllabus and an exam, was integrated into the curriculum of the local party school in 2003. Wang Baoquan required that the local departments of Propaganda, of Civil Affairs, and of Education work within the PLA garrison deliver this course in Yingjiang's party school[22].

The local economic elite has also been a target group for defense education. Counties and municipalities conducting defense education in companies establish a defense education committee under the political work bureau of the corresponding military district[23]. For the first formal National Education Day in 2001, in Hongtong county (Shanxi province), "many personnel from the People's Armed Forces Department as well as special cadres visited industrial enterprises and schools to organize activities related to defense." [24] Article 19 of the National Defense Education Law stipulates: "The enterprises and public institutions shall integrate the national defense education into their respective employees education plan. They shall offer

[19] Luo Wen 2007, 222.
[20] "山东省国防教育条例", cf. Shandong 2009, 78.
[21] Wang Ziyan and Yu Baoyue, "Beijing holds meeting", *Beijing Ribao*, July 19th, 1996.
[22] 曾传芳，"盈江县人武部抓国防教育扎实有效", *Yunnan Guofang*, 2003, no. 3, 31.
[23] 李荣光，企业国防教育的组织与实施，*Guofang*, 1992, no. 3, 9-10.
[24] 李怀民 and 关阳，"第一个国防教育日"，*Beijing Minbing*, 2001, no. 11, 65.

national defense education to their employees by combining it with the political education, professional training, cultural and physical activities." The objective of defense education classes in companies was no longer to attract recruits but to select new, young workers in particular, for entry in the militia corps – two months of training would turn a young worker into a member of the militia[25].

Defense education seems to have become the new form of ideological education in state-owned enterprises. For example, a state-owned factory producing tractors in Luoyang (Henan province) reported on the implementation of defense education among its 45,000 staff in 1992. In this factory, whose head manager is also the first party secretary of the factory[26], new employees spend three to seven days doing military training when they are first hired. Then, they are fed a steady stream of defense news by the propaganda outlets in the workplace (newspapers, radio broadcasts, television and blackboards). Other activities particularly target the younger employees, including riddle-guessing games, calligraphy competitions, video shows and singing. Defense education is presented as "a component of political work in the factory", with the hours spent studying the history of the PLA considered to be a contribution to the cohesion of the workforce.

The purpose of defense education specifically targeted at political and economic leaders has been to strengthen their commitment to the county or urban district where they worked. In 1992, Na Yongzeng 那永增, the political commissar of the People's Armed Forces Department of Xigang [西岗] district, in Dalian city, recounted how his agency set up "defense education" schools in thirteen streets of the district, to keep

[25] 刘 and 岳，*Zhongguo Minbing*, 1989, no. 7, 6.
[26] 龚庆宽，"第一拖拉机厂开展国防教育"，*Guofang*, 1992, no. 3, 10.

cadres and SOE workers up to date with China's strategic position[27]. He argued that the success of defense education in his district was due to the Armed Forces Department's managing to create centers for defense education. This, in his opinion, was feasible only at the micro-level of the urban district. He organized defense education courses street by street, for shop keepers. He also dispatched personnel from the navy to commercial ships to teach geography from the point of view of defense.

Defense education and basic education

As garrisons acquired familiarity with the social conditions of the locality where they were stationed, they could take wide-ranging educational initiatives, beyond their duties to impart defense-related knowledge to the civilian population. A company from the second artillery troops stationed in Xuzhou (Jiangsu province), for example, famously established an evening school for illiterate and semi-literate women.[28] But the local troops' commitment to education has particularly found expression in local initiatives for children. These have taken a variety of forms.

Local records show examples of initiatives for the provision of education to deprived children. In Tibet, a PLA company set up a makeshift primary school in a tent where two soldiers taught literacy to nine children from peasant families in 1984. The local garrison remained in charge of the "tent school" for 16 years, with the number of pupils growing to reach 119 in 2000[29]. In Inner Mongolia in 2004, the People's Armed Forces Department of Xingan [兴安] county selected ten children who were deprived of

[27] 哪永增，运用城区优势 开展国防教育，*Dongbei Houbei Jun*, 1992, no. 2, 10.
[28] Pan 2005, 67.
[29] 何少华，为了藏族花更红 – 记云南麻栗坡县"帐篷", *Yunnan Guofang*, 2000, no. 5, 6-9.

education because their parents were too poor and saw them through middle school[30]. Similarly, in 2001-2005, Yunnan province's garrisons funded eighty-seven children to ensure that they get basic education in primary school[31].

At the same time, military involvement in primary education was also seen as essential for children who were already in school. In 1988, the board of education of Anshan [鞍山] city (Liaoning province) conducted a survey in ten primary schools, asking three-thousand 2nd grade children about their idea of defense. The results were "troubling", as the overwhelming majority of 7-8 year olds had neither idea nor interest in defense.[32] In this context, military training at schools was used as a corrective to the one-child policy. In 1992, Yin Lingshan 阴岭山, from the People's Armed Department of a district of Tianxi city (Jiangsu province), explained that in primary school, military training sought to compensate for the moral effects of the one-child policy by teaching discipline to spoilt children: "in a country where most children are only children who have been pampered and spoiled, inviting the PLA to teach them simple formation drills contributes to building up their health."[33]

A news brief in *National Defense* in 1993 reports that defense education policy was made at the county level: "The bureau for defense education of Lishi county, Shanxi province, issued 'Primary schools setting the example for defense education', a text defining standards for primary schools."[34] In primary and middle school, this training only lasts for a week[35].

In 1999, an account of defense education in schools in Shanxi province

[30] 开发西部，*Huabei Minbing*, 2005, no. 3, 11-15.
[31] *Shuang* 2007, 4.
[32] 郭春晓，*Dongbei Houbei Jun*, 1989, no. 9, 7.
[33] 阴岭山，"帮助小学开展国防教育的做法"，*Guofang*, 1992, no. 5, 20-21.
[34] 乔虎旺，"山西"，*Guofang*, 1993, no. 1.
[35] 秦，*Guofang*, 1999, no. 11, 18-19.

explained that: "in primary schools, defense education imparts rudimentary knowledge to children, laying emphasis on 'loving the party, loving socialism.'" The course comprises a history component, a presentation of the PLA's institutional set-up as well as a hagiographical account of PLA leaders. Pupils learn that there were two "phases" in the role of the PLA in the history of the PRC. First, the PLA was formed through war and the land revolution led by the communists in the 1930s and 1940s; the history of the formation of the PLA is presented as intimately linked to the establishment of the PRC, from land reform to the war against Japan. Then, since 1949, the textbooks explain, the PLA has been engaged in a process of "modernization and regularization"[36].

The law and the curriculum

The military service law promulgated in 1984 instituted a military course in civilian schools and universities. This training is supervised by the bureau of student military training of the municipality where each university is located[37]. Defense education is implemented in higher education institutions by specialized agencies called "departments for defense education" at the levels of province, county, city and autonomous region, in coordination with the corresponding MR[38].

In 1991, Minister of National Defense Qin Jiwei 秦基伟 declared: "it is very important to conduct defense education among party and government cadres, servicemen and primary school, middle school and university students."[39] Twenty years

[36] Guo 1985.
[37] 徐复兴 and 叶卫，"学生军训的再认识"，*Guofang*, 1990, no. 1, 22.
[38] "欢迎订阅'中国国防教育新论'"，*Guofang*, 1994, no. 2, 9.
[39] 秦基伟，"把国防教育普及而深入地开展下去"，*Guofang*, 1991, no. 1, 4-5.

later, all pupils and students attending high school and university on the Chinese mainland follow a compulsory course of military education as part of their curriculum – only foreign students and students coming from Hong Kong and Macau are exempt[40].

Describing this policy as "reeducation" in the early 1990s, Stanley Rosen presented the intervention of the military in civilian universities as a temporary measure[41]. According to him, it was intended to diffuse the threat that student activism had represented since students in Hefei had demonstrated for electoral reform in 1986[42], sparking a movement that spread across the country. With more hindsight and relying on government yearbooks, it is now possible to offer a new interpretation of the implementation of "defense education" in universities. PLA presence on civilian campuses has grown steadily over the past twenty-five years. It is now entrenched in the education system and hence represents much more than a short-term response to student rebellion.

Before Tiananmen

Chapter eight of the military service law promulgated in 1984 by the NPC is entitled "Military training for students of institutions of higher learning and students of senior middle schools." It declares:

> [Article 43] Students of institutions of higher learning must receive basic military training during the period of their schooling.
> To meet the needs of national defence, additional short-term, concentrated training shall be given to students fit for the posts of officers, and those who are

[40] August 30th, 2012 interview with a student from Macau who did his undergraduate degree in Xiamen.
[41] Stanley Rosen, "The effect of post-4 June re-education campaigns", *The China Quarterly* 134, 1993, 310-334.
[42] Julia Kwong, "The 1986 student demonstrations in China: a democratic movement?", *Asian Survey* 28 (9), 970-985.

considered as qualified after assessment shall serve in the officers' reserve upon approval by military organs.
[Article 44] Offices in charge of military training shall be set up and military instructors provided in institutions of higher learning to organize and conduct the military training of the students.
The short-term, concentrated training for promoting people as reserve officers prescribed in paragraph 2 of Article 43 shall be organized and conducted jointly by officers in active service sent from military organs and the offices of the institutions of higher learning in charge of military training.
[Article 45] Senior middle schools and schools equivalent to them shall be provided with military instructors to conduct military training for the students.[43]

In secondary schooling, the national education committee specified that defense education be distilled among the various disciplines already in place. A textbook published the first year that defense education became a subject of study in high school shows how defense education blended into the history course. It presents the birth and development of the national military from "the army of peasants and workers" into "the people's liberation army" through the various phases of the war of liberation, and its establishment as a standing army[44].

Has the PLA's presence on civilian campuses been a reaction to student discontent on the part of the party-state? Only a genesis of the policy can answer this question. Military education in universities started in 1985, four years before the students' demonstrations took on Tiananmen Square. The ministry of education and the PLA GPD were tasked to jointly launch military training in civilian universities at the start of the 1985 academic year[45]. During the first two years that the program was implemented, in 1985 and 1986, the training lasted from eight to ten weeks[46].

For the first five years, military training was only conducted in a number of "pilot areas" where schools experimented with different institutional settings. In March

[43] *Zhongguo* 2007, 331.
[44] Guo 1985.
[45] *Zhongguo* 1986, 207.
[46] *Zhongguo* 1988, 56.

1985, the ground force military academies in Nanjing, Guilin and Jinan conducted a training course for the personnel responsible for training students[47]. In a detailed account of the defense education program in universities that the commander of the Liaoning province military district Li Yinliang 李印良 provided in 1991[48], he explained that in 1985-1990, 49,292 students attended military training. The schools and universities set up "military education bureaus" to organize the military staff dispatched from fourteen different academies located in the province.

Basic statistics and regulations issued in 1984 and August 1986 show that the party was comprehensively working toward integrating a compulsory military course in an increasing number of civilian universities, well before the student democracy movement broke out in December 1986. "In 1985, 40,000 students attended military training in fifty-two universities in China. In 1986, over 70,000 students attended military training in sixty-nine universities. In 1987, 110,000 students attended military training in a hundred and five universities."[49] This expansion steadily followed its course, with 142 higher education institutions conducting student military training in 1988[50]. In August 1986, the national education committee set the length of student military training to ten weeks[51].

The teaching staff was composed of both personnel sent from provincial education departments and of military personnel. In 1985, the ratio was one serviceman sent to teach 300 students.[52] In August 1986, *The Notice about strengthening the student military training in pilot universities* issued by the national education committee significantly

[47] *Zhongguo* 1986, 207.
[48] 李印良，辽宁生，*Guofang*, 1991, no. 5, 30-31.
[49] Ibid., 1.
[50] *Zhongguo* 1990, 267.
[51] *Zhongguo* 1988, 56.
[52] *Zhongguo* 1986, 207.

increased the number of officers and soldiers sent to civilian universities, as now one serviceman taught only 80 students[53]. The teaching material issued by Nanjing University for its staff in charge of defense education in September 1987 listed four goals attached to the course: 1) teach students morals; 2) convey knowledge about military modernization; 3) strengthen political education; and 4) encourage students to join the reserve force[54].

The military theoretical course resembles a civic education class. A textbook published in 1988 by Xiamen University draws a list of PLA outstanding officers and expounds the national military's "honourable tradition" as incarnating the egalitarianism at the core of the socialist project: "no difference between officers and soldiers, no difference between servicemen and civilians and disintegration of the enemy force."[55]

Beyond Tiananmen

In the aftermath of the students' demonstrations at Tiananmen square, the party ordered that all incoming students at the two most prestigious universities of the country, Beida (in Beijing) and Fudan (in Shanghai), would spend one year in a military academy before starting their studies at university. The party conceived of this specific program as a "military and political training" [军政训练][56] - in fact, indoctrination emphasizing patriotism understood as support of the ruling party. Testimony from a Beida alumnus who was in the last cohort to spend an entire year (1992) at the

[53] *Zhongguo* 1988, 56.
[54] Jiangsu 1987, 18-20.
[55] Xiamen 1988.
[56] *Zhongguo* 1991, 128.

Shijiazhuang military academy provides insights into the structure and significance of that training:

> We followed the exact same course that first-year military cadets undertook. This comprised three components: physical training, political training and also a cultural course. Beida students were completely segregated from the cadets however: we hardly had any interaction with them, as we were not able to walk on campus freely. The physical training consisted in half an hour of jogging every morning, regular physical education like soccer, shooting (we lay on the ground and aimed at targets for one month), individual tactics and combat skills.
>
> The political education is what I hated. We had to read *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. Most of the military theory we studied was also Mao Zedong theory and his work on guerilla tactics. We had to study Marxism and the history of the revolution.
>
> The cultural course [文化课] was not bad thanks to a wonderful professor of classical Chinese literature. He made me read classical Chinese literature for the first time and influenced me, because he had a very attractive style. We all recited classical poetry! There was also an English course.[57]

These three years (1989-1992) of experimentation with intensive military training was a punctual response to the student demonstrations that concerned only the top two universities. Parallel to this specific measure, the integration of a military theory course and physical training in the university curriculum expanded from 100-odd universities to gradually include all Chinese higher education institutions. In technical colleges such as the East China Petroleum University, the military theory course was an exercise in practical application in which students were taught how their technical education can be applied in military contexts.[58]

In January 2012, a text issued by the Ministry of education entitled "Suggestions from the Ministry of Education and related departments about practical education in colleges and universities," presented military training as part of a broader effort to make the university curriculum more practical. According to the text, undergraduate students

[57] Author's interview with a former Beida student who attended the one-year military training course at Shijiazhuang academy in 1991, August 30th, 2012.

[58] 大学生军训，*Guofang*, 1991, no. 6.

in humanities should spend 15% of their time in practical training and those studying engineering, agricultural science and medicine should spend 25% of their time in practical training. Military training was cast as part of this "practical" reform, and allocated "at least fourteen days", during which officers convey "basic knowledge about military technology and theory, a better understanding of defense and national security, as well as promote patriotism."

The large number of provincial-level legal texts promulgated in the 1990s and 2000s suggests that local governments had a fair amount of leeway in implementing the policy which instituted compulsory university-level military training.

The national "military education bureau" in charge of military training has local branches. Located in universities themselves, these bureaus bring together personnel from the local Armed Forces department, the propaganda department, the youth league, and the students' bureau, thus providing an opportunity for young communist leaders to work directly with military personnel within the university[59].

The curriculum

During the 1980s, textbooks presented a curriculum very similar to the defense education program in middle school and high school. According to a handbook for military training in civilian universities published in 1987, the program aimed to establish an institutional and geographic link between universities and neighbouring garrisons while also teaching university students basic military skills[60].

It consisted of a military theory course [军事理论科] and a physical 'military

[59] 王银山 and 李，*Guofang*, 1994, no. 3, 20.
[60] Jiangsu 1987, 106.

training' [军训, *junxun*]. In 1991, Liaoning commander Li Yinliang explained that this military training sought to provide students with: 1) knowledge about their national military; 2) civic education based on the party's current policies and past glory; 3) discipline; 4) school spirit and understanding of the importance of the collectivity and 5) physical training[61]. Li called for the design of a unified curriculum for military training starting in junior middle school and continuing through the university level[62].

A main part of the "theory" component of the training relates to military technology: the history and use of missiles, lasers, infra-red night vision devices, and electronic weaponry, considered to be the most likely "to be used in future wars"[63] – according to one summary prepared in 1990. In this pedagogical material, the presentation of technologies was simplified, not technical. "Theory" classes also aim to impart basic knowledge about contemporary global changes and strategic development[64].

The physical component of defense education is provided by young recruits coming from local military academies. Local People's Armed Forces Departments dispatch them to schools where they lead three types of drills, focusing respectively on the individual soldier (physical discipline, appearance and bearing); the collective entity (different types of military formations) and review (students perform a mock military parade at the end of the training)[65]. Ironically, four years after military training had started in civilian universities, students put what they had learned to use during their demonstration in Tiananmen Square. As a retired PLA officer who was on active duty

[61] 李印良，"辽宁省学生军训试点回顾", *Guofang*, 1991, no. 5, 30-31.
[62] 李印良，*Guofang*, 1992, no. 6, 25.
[63] *Guofang*, 1990, no. 3, 17.
[64] A lecture in military education, delivered by a military officer, that I was able to attend at Qinghua university in 2009 delineated the various strategic shifts that happened worldwide in the latter part of the twentieth century.
[65] Zhang Han, 116-131.

in 1989 explained, protests at Tiananmen were much better organized than had been the case two years earlier, in 1987[66]:

> During the Christmas break of 1986-1987, the student protest was a mob, which led to the dismissal of Hu Yaobang. In 1989, on the other hand, before students took to the streets, they organized themselves into formations of squares, each consisting of 200 people. The organization was very tight: all demonstrators wore their school badge[67] [校徽] to identify themselves. The stronger boys held the front and the sides of the squares, and the weaker boys and girls were in the center of the square.
>
> In 1987, police in plain clothes rushed into groups of students to break them. In 1989, the tactics I described prevented them from doing that because the students were recognizable and extremely organized. Anyone trying to enter the square who did not wear a school badge was thrown into the five-meter interval between each square. The students had learnt this square formation during military training. Actually, in the course, students are taught to keep 10- to 20- meter intervals between each square, so the students improved the tactic at Tiananmen. Therefore, the police's previous tactics did not work. Furthermore, the police did not have water guns or tear gas, and there was not any riot police. This is the reason why the PLA was sent to Tiananmen, after the police had failed to stop the demonstrators.
>
> On a broader scale, the demonstrators also had a very clear geographical idea of the protest's development. Originating from Wudaokou [五道口][68], the demonstration grew in two directions. On the one hand, Qinghua students joined Beida students who were waiting for them. Beida and Qinghua linked their squares and walked South together to Renmin Daxue who took the lead, Beida linking to its squares. On the other hand, Beijing Language and Culture University walked East to Beijing Science and technology University and Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics [北京航空航天大学]. Then the two aggregated groups joined together, the first coming from the West and the second coming from the East. There was no mobile phone then! The students cycled from one university to the other to share plans. At the General Staff Department [总参谋部], the generals themselves were puzzled by the students' organization.[69]

[66] Author's interview, June 25th, 2011.
[67] The equivalent of today's student ID.
[68] District in Beijing where Beida and Qinghua are located.
[69] Author's interview with a former PLA cadre, June 25th, 2011.

University-level recruitment

An important question is whether military training in civilian universities actually increases the PLA's appeal to students. When defense education was launched in universities in the middle of the 1980s, higher education was booming in China. The university system had been re-established for less than ten years following the shut-down during the Cultural Revolution and the number of universities and students was increasing fast. This created new expectations among the youth. Why would a university graduate choose to join the armed forces where salaries were comparatively low in the late 1980s-1990s[70]?

One investigation conducted in the Guangzhou MR in 1998 emphasized the appeal of job security and guaranteed social security that jobs in the PLA could offer in a fast-changing economy. The author of the report, Wang Yongqing 王永清 focused on the record of formal schooling of the Guilin Ground force academy's recruits between 1996 and 1998. He emphasized that these university graduates came from the top of their class; furthermore, 90% of them were members of the youth league and 32% of them were party members[71]. A career in the PLA thus enabled high achievers to follow a traditional "public" career path, with some clear advantages.

Yet Wang Yongqing's rosy report may not have been very representative of China as a whole. The same year, a national report emanating from the Yancheng (Jiangsu province) military subdistrict notes that "the record of formal schooling among PLA recruits is very low by comparison with other countries. In the US, 95% of soldiers have at least senior middle school education, in Taiwan 75% do, but in China only 40%

[70] A PLA officer who served in 1987-1997 reported to earn 150 yuans per month at the start of his military career. Author's interview with an anonymous former PLA cadre, May 11th, 2011.

[71] 王永清 and 熊小宏，"为了 21 世纪的长城更巍峨"， *Guofang*, 1998, no. 6, 30-32.

do."[72] The report deplored that in 1998, the age limit for enrolment was still set at age twenty and the party state still stipulated that the national military should be recruiting 80% of its force in the countryside. It suggested that to increase the educational level of its personnel, the PLA might need to re-examine and reform the recruitment criteria.

In charge of recruitment, the GPD had in fact already established a series of recruitment schemes in partnership with over a hundred civilian universities in the mid-1990s[73]. As a result, by 2000, the GPD noted some improvement in the educational level of soldiers: since 1997, 20,000 university graduates had joined the PLA. Consistent with its emphasis on the strategic importance of media (see above, chapter III), the party-state particularly targeted media students as potential military recruits to attract[74]. It also raised the enrolment age limit to 35 years old for Phds. Recruitment schemes included "the National Defense Studentship" [国防生], a government program created in 1998[75] whereby outstanding high school graduates commit to enrol in the PLA after their first degree; in exchange, the government funds their studies. Created in 2001 as a technical partnership between the air force and a dozen colleges specialized in civil aviation[76], it gradually spread to other disciplines, including humanities.

As the National Defense Studentship has tended to favor students attending the prestigious universities concentrated in Beijing such as Tsinghua and Beida, the Ministry of Defense designed another program to attract graduates from provincial universities, called "enrollment of graduates from local universities" [地方大学生入伍][77]. The 'management' department of the GPD [管部] set up bureaus [后备军官选

[72] 盐城军区，*Guofang*, 1998, no. 9, 13.
[73] Author's interview with two anonymous PLA officers, February 23rd, 2012.
[74] 李桂金，"军队接收普通高校毕业生的有关政策规定"，*Guofang*, 2000, no. 3, 19.
[75] Finkelstein Ed., *Civil-Military Relations In Today's China, Swimming In A New Sea*, 2007.
[76] *PLA Daily*, June 5th, 2001.
[77] Ma 2006.

拔处] on these universities' campuses to facilitate the recruitment of promising students. Students can also choose to take two years out of university to do their military service: universities will hold their place up until they return[78]. All in all, the relationship between the PLA and civilian institutions of higher education has tightened up.

The conditions for enrolment for all university graduates include not only a test of physical aptitude, but also the recognition that candidates "endorse the fundamental party line.[79]" Furthermore, defense education has also promoted the education of military personnel and local technical universities, such as in Shandong province for example, have run special programs for officers[80].

Evidence shows that the military presence in civilian education took shape well before 1987. Therefore the idea of the military on campuses was not a reaction to the student movement. In fact, the program of student military training was launched before the first significant nationwide student demonstrations in December 1986.

Student interviews

In my account of the party's efforts, in the reform era, to rejuvenate the image of the "revolutionary soldier" (see chapter II), I argue that the soldier is the only model left for collective life, after the gradual extinction of the social organization of the commune and the work unit in China. Defense education thus became part of the civic education,

[78] The idea being that it would not hurt a career, in the party or elsewhere.
[79] 李桂金，"军队接收普通高校毕业生的有关政策规定"，*Guofang*, 2000, no. 3, 19.
[80] Shandong 2009, 7-8.

which had traditionally occupied a central place in the CCP's tradition of compulsory ideological indoctrination in higher-education institutions. Given that in 1986, the party adopted both the policy of spiritual civilization of which the PLA was a main implementer (see chapter IV) and the policy of defense education, I inferred that there might be connexions between the two. I tested this hypothesis in a series of interviews with Chinese students who had attended military training [军训, *junxun*] during their bachelor of arts.

Research design

To understand defense education reception among the youth, I conducted 27 interviews with students who had experienced military training. First, I wanted to see whether the legal provisions attendant to military education in universities were implemented as they were described in laws and regulations. Second, the main purpose was to get a sense of how that education was received. Finally, I wanted to outline the youth's perception of civil-military relations in China.

The theme of 'spiritual civilization' gained ground in state propaganda under the leadership of Jiang Zemin (1989-2002), at the same time as the party focused on co-opting the country's elite. To see how defense education linked into this project, I sought out top students. I used three criteria to select my interview sample: the students' commitment to their studies (all of them pursued post-graduate degrees in prestigious institutions), regional diversity (all of China's main regions were represented, except from the Northeast), and a wide age span starting with the implementation of the one-child policy. According to the first criterion, I chose Beijing University, Tsinghua

University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the John Hopkins center in Nanjing and Oxford University to find interviewees among these institutions' students. To meet the second criterion, I asked faculty and student contacts I had within these universities to introduce me to students. Through them, I was able to talk to 27 young people who had completed an undergraduate degree at eighteen leading universities in Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Wuhan, Lanzhou, Tianjin, Sichuan, Changsha and Jinan (Shandong province)[81]. 12 interviewees were young women and 15 were young men.

Born between 1975 and 1991, my interviewees represent a demographic shaped by the one-child policy and the post-Tiananmen generation. Even though a minority of them had brothers and sisters, they all grew up in the demographic dominated by the one-child policy in effect since 1978, leading to the "little kings" mentality. All of them believed that as children of the "one-child" society, they belonged to a demographic trend unique in Chinese history and expected that the education they received would be different from their parents' as a result. The Tiananmen crisis obviously influenced the way that military training was conducted in universities in the 1990s and up until today. Most students expressed ignorance about the Tiananmen events however, and as a result they did not connect the military training that they received with the repression of the demonstrations.

Half (14) of the interviewees were CCP members. Typically the issue of party membership (the last question in the interview) was sensitive, students either expressing strong opposition to the party, or often toning down their commitment to it if they were members. Interviewees had studied a variety of subjects at university, from design to international politics, to law, to engineering, to civil aviation, etc. The majority of interviewees (21 out of 27) had their first experience of military training for a couple of

[81] There are over 2,000 higher-education institutions in China.

weeks immediately before starting high school. Eight of them first received military training in middle or primary school.

Semi-structured, the interviews lasted around one hour and broadly proceeded in three stages: first, I asked the interviewees about their background, second I asked them to describe what they remembered about the military training they received and finally, I asked them how in their opinion, military training fit into higher education. My aim was to understand how they saw the purpose of military training and if they believed this purpose had been achieved.

"Bitter tea"

Junxun typically took place immediately before the start of the academic year, when students are, on the whole, newly arrived from a home that is usually far away, and are unfamiliar with the new environment. Textbooks explain that a major goal of the training is that the military personnel sent to universities introduce students to the basic rules of military discipline that they themselves follow in the barracks[82]. It established a daily routine for students following such a pattern. Soldiers taught first-year university students to fold the blanket they slept in "so neatly that it looks like a block of tofu[83]." They assessed the way that students kept their dorm daily, on an individual and a collective basis[84]. They woke them up at 7 am or earlier and kept them physically active until 5 pm, with an hour-long break over lunch[85]. In keeping with the fiction that the training is a short form of military service, students were required to buy

[82] Wang Xiang 2010.
[83] Author's interview with 姜舟, fourth-year student in civil aviation, Beijing, October 31st, 2010; author's interview with Duan Haiyan, a Phd student in political science, Hong Kong, September 20th, 2012.
[84] Author's interview with a male doctorate student in law, Hong Kong, June 19th, 2010.
[85] Author's interview with Wei Na, a doctorate student in engineering, Oxford, Spring 2010.

and wear military uniforms[86]. Symbolic contact with weaponry was ensured through a shooting practice, seemingly with real ammunition[87].

All the interviewees emphasized the physical hardship they experienced during *junxun*. They described six to eight hours of physical training every day, with hours on end spent in the sun on their campus' sports ground, just standing up straight, with the result that some students fainted. Endurance exercises included memorizing the basic steps of a soldier: standing at attention [立正 / 站军资[88]], at ease [稍息], looking straight ahead, turning left and turning right [三变转法], marking time [齐步], marching at the double [跑步], marching in goose step [正步] as well as rising to attention [蹲下与起立] and straddle standing at attention [跨立与立正] [89]. Students learnt the basic movements of martial art ［军体拳][90]. Meals were taken standing up in a communal hall[91]. Part of the training was a day-long hike for which, in some instances, students have to wake up at 3 or 5 am[92].

Interviewees all agreed that they had not acquired military skills during the training. Yet, the entire training period is focused on imitating the soldier's physical behaviour with the goal of performing a mock military parade for the local military

[86] Author's interview with 刘娟娟, a doctorate student in French literature, Beijing, Summer 2009; author's interview with a Chinese student at the John Hopkins center, Nanjing, 2009; author's interview with Li Chen, a doctorate student in archeology, Oxford, February 2011; author's interview with a visiting scholar who attended military training in Shandong University, Oxford, June 15th, 2011; author's interview with Guan Yue, Phd student in political science, Hong Kong, August 10th, 2012.

[87] Interview, Li Chen; interview, visiting scholar.

[88] Author's interview with 高晟, Phd student in computer science, Paris, March 24th, 2011.

[89] Author's interview with 姜国军, undergraduate student at Qinghua university, Beijing, November 4th, 2010.

[90] Author's interview with a female doctorate student in law, Hong Kong, June 19th, 2010; author's interview with Qin Shuang, a doctorate student in political science, Hong Kong, September 14th, 2012.

[91] Author's interview with Wu Min, a doctorate student in engineering, Oxford, January 22nd, 2011; author's interview with Xu Xibai, a doctorate student in Politics, Oxford, February 20th, 2011; author's interview with 吕志强, a master's student in electrical engineering, Beijing, December 1st, 2011.

[92] Interview, visiting scholar; interview, 吕志强.

officials and the head of the university at the end of the course. Wei (born 1982) said that they were taught to mimic the soldier's very attitude: "straight gaze, broad shoulders, imposing manner [气势]". She called this "military etiquette.[93]" To my question "how did defense education contribute to your higher education?", Bo (born 1983) answered:

> Military training taught me discipline. For every training session, we had to wake up at 6 a.m. to be ready at 6:30. Therefore we had to be efficient: wake up, get dressed, have breakfast and brush your teeth quickly. The message was: be prompt and manage your time well. We were given a strict timetable that we had to stick to. It is in that sense that military training contributed to my higher education.[94]

Replying to the same question, Zhang Yan (born 1988), reading for a degree in civil aviation, recalls that his trainers told him:

> The purpose of military training was to make men out of us. They said that one's image, the way that one looks, is more important than life. They said that it is the image that one projects of oneself that was going to gain us the trust of aircraft passengers.[95]

By contrast with the testimony of the Beida alumnus who attended the one-year training course in Shijiazhuang (see above), students and their military instructors interacted during the training breaks[96]. The military personnel came from neighbouring academies or garrisons.[97] The majority of interviewees noted that these servicemen were cadets still training in academies. Hence they were close in age and not unfriendly, even though the physical training they taught was hard and the power relationship was clear.

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[93] Interview, Wei Na.

[94] Author's interview with Bo, a doctoral student in engineering, Oxford, April 2010.

[95] Author's interview with 张彦, fourth-year student in civil aviation, Beijing, October 31, 2010.

[96] Author's interview with Dee who attended military training in 1995, Oxford, December 2009; interviews with Xu Xibai, a doctorate student in Politics, Oxford, November 28th, 2010.

[97] Interview, 刘娟娟; interview, Wei Na; interview, Wu Min; Interview with Guan Yue, Phd student in political science, Hong Kong, August 10th, 2012; interview, Dee.

Contact with these young servicemen sometimes even led to romance[98]. The relationship of emulation between students and their military tutors and the establishment of close ties (at least during the training period) seems to be one of the most important and successful aspects of the training – as Gao Sheng (born 1981) put it, "We did what a new soldier learns: how to display proper bearing as well as how to respect one's captain."[99] Another interviewee, Qin (born 1989) set much store on the quality of the interaction that her class had with their military coaches:

> The instructors were nice to us: every night the one in charge of my group [班] came to our room to chat. He told us how much attention he had to pay to his appearance: clean uniform, standing still and holding his head high to obey orders coming from superior ranks. […] It's thanks to the soldiers that the training was good. I did not enjoy the performance we gave at the end. In middle school and high school, the instructors were nasty. But at university, closer contact allowed us to understand the soldiers' feelings. Even though our instructor was younger than me, he was a role model for self-discipline and a simple life.[100]

Asked to draw a general conclusion about her experience of military training, this student expressed admiration for the "unconditional obedience" that soldiers embody, as they act as a cog in the military wheel.

Most interviewees particularly valued the fact that the training had been a humbling experience[101]. As Wu (born 1985) put it, "*Junxun* gives a spoilt child a hard time. I think that this is important. In our generation, the only child was the boss at home.[102]" Together with the impact of the one-child policy, interviewees were also sensitive to the fact that their parents had not had opportunities for university education because of the Cultural Revolution. Zhang Yi (born 1983) who, perhaps, had the most

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[98] Interview with 张奕弘, 3rd year doctoral student in law, Hong Kong, June 2nd, 2010.
[99] Interview, 高晟.
[100] Interview, Qin Shuang.
[101] Interview, visiting scholar.
[102] Interview, Wu Min.

negative perception of military training actually made a comparison with the cultural revolution: "Military training is like a cup of bitter tea. My parents were sent to the countryside. That was like bitter Chinese medicine that they had to drink for a decade. Tea and medicine can be good for you however..."[103] She was negative about military training but at the same time praised the usefulness of "bitter tea." This ambivalence expressed her belief in sacrificing individual wellbeing for the sake of collective betterment.

Making the organization work

Students were organized into groups of ten people, of the same sex and of the same department of study. The Chinese character used to designate this group, 班 [*ban*] is interesting. *Ban* is very widely used in Chinese; its broad meaning is "team." In the context of the workplace, *ban* refers to "a shift"; in the military, *ban* designates "a squad"; in schools, it signifies "a class." It is a word used everyday, in these various contexts, to refer to a small group of people pursuing a common activity together. During military training, students were gathered, ten by ten (in a few cases the squad was twice this big), into such squads, which carry all three meanings. One given squad shared a dorm and spent the entire time of the military training together as a group. During the training, individuals were completely subordinated to the group: the day started with a roll call where students who fail to respond in time are subjected to an extra run[104]. Then mimicking the military chain of command, four squads [班] are linked into a platoon

[103] Interview, 张奕弘.

[104] Author's interview with 吴璞周, who attended military training at Ningxia University in 2002, Hong Kong, September 10th, 2012.

[排] to train[105].

Across the age spectrum, interviewees emphasized the way that the training negated the individual in favor of the collective. Collective singing was appreciated to build up team spirit. During breaks between physical training sessions, soldiers led students in military and patriotic songs such as *Unity is strength* [团结就是力量][106], *Military moral Songs* [军人道德组歌]，*The Army's green Flower* [军中绿花][107], *One, two, three, four* [一二三四][108], and *The Flower of the military camp* [军营之花][109]. These were songs that students knew either from high school or karaoke – most surprisingly, *Military moral Songs* was the one that a student said he had previously sung in a karaoke[110]! One student explained that during military training they learnt a new song every three days and sang it all day long the day they learnt it, like an incantation[111]. The military coaches organized singing competitions between different student squads. Guan (born 1989) explained that singers from the local troops' cultural group even came to give performances[112]. The emphasis was not on the quality of the singing, but rather on a squad's ability to sing together, "to make noise[113]". Indeed, there seems to be a fair amount of yelling during military training, as each squad shouts together "1.2.3.4"[114] or slightly more elaborate slogans such as "Guard the country", "Study hard", and "Work

[105] Interview, a female doctorate student in law; author's interview with 王哲, master's student in Marxism at Tsinghua University, Beijing, December 1st, 2011; interview, 吴璞周.
[106] Interview, visiting scholar; interview, 美舟; interview, 吕志强.
[107] Interview with a master's student in aeronautics who attended military training in 2002, Paris, March 26th, 2011.
[108] Interview, 吕志强.
[109] Interview with Xu Jiajun, doctoral student in Politics and International Relations, Oxford, May 23rd, 2012.
[110] Interview, master's student in aeronautics.
[111] Interview, 吕志强.
[112] Interview, Guan Yue.
[113] Interview, Qin Shuang.
[114] Interview, Duan Haiyan.

hard."[115]

The majority of interviewees were party members, but that was not tantamount to enthusiasm for *junxun*, as six of the 14 students who were party members expressed complete indifference toward the training. In the eyes of students, however, there is an identification between the military and the party as exemplars of "organizations." Dee (born 1978), described this perception as "similarity", and Xu (born 1984) as "implicitness," based on their peers' attitudes. Dee explained that the most politically inclined students took the most active participation in the training[116] and Xu noted that students who were party members played the role of student leaders during the training, in whose preparation they participated[117]. In other words, students who were party members had a special relationship with the military instructors, this is what Xu qualified as the "implicit" involvement of the party in the military training, which in fact was perceived as a technique of mobilization. This becomes obvious in one component of the training, the hike. It often began in the middle of the night, involved walking up to 20 km a day - and is presented to students as a "long march."

Wang Zhe was a special case. Born in 1989, Wang Zhe was enrolled in a master's in Marxism when I interviewed him in 2011. He is a party member. He explained to me that he was not particularly interested in Marxism but was planning a career in politics. He related the military training he received to his own ambition:

> Marxism classes are boring because they just consist in repeating slogans and quotations. But *junxun* does something else. *Junxun* teaches the heart of communism because it teaches us to move as one: 集体主义, 标准，整齐划. In the physical exercises we learn, a hundred of us move as one.[118]

[115] Interview, visiting scholar.
[116] Interview, Dee.
[117] Interview, Xu Jiajun.
[118] Interview, 王哲.

Most students, even some who had a strong dislike for the party[119], felt like they learnt something from military training and that has to do with the relationship between the individual and the community. The most widely shared feeling is that military training built up a collective spirit. *Junxun* takes place before the start of the academic year and during the training, students are grouped according to the major they chose to study at college. Some interviewees talked about military training as if it was a social event similar to a freshers' orientation week, when new students get to know each other[120] or an extended sport activity[121]. Others saw this effort to build up team spirit as a lesson about integrating an organization[122], which they thought could be useful once in the workplace. One student phrased it as follows: "The emphasis was put on the benefit of the collective [集体主义].[123]" According to Zhang Yi, the goal of the physical training was to teach the students to synchronize their movements[124].

The most critical interviewees assimilated the military to the party in its show of leadership. Among them, Gao Qi (born 1975), who attended military training in 1991, related it directly to the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown. He recalled that his professors saw military training as a tool for the party to keep students on track:

> "The professors supported military training. One professor told me that we listened to what we were told [听话] more than the previous cohort.
> [I ask] - *Is that a reference to "listen to what the party says" [听党话]*[125]*?*
> - Yes, of course.[126]"

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[119] Interview, Li Chen.
[120] Interview, Li Chen; interview, Guan Yue; Interview with Gao Qi, who attended military training at the Beijing medical University in 1991, Hong Kong, September 19th, 2012.
[121] Interview, female doctorate student in law; interview, former Beida student.
[122] Interview, Dee.
[123] Interview, master's student in aeronautics.
[124] Interview, 张奕弘.
[125] "Listen to what the party says", or rather "listen to the party's word" [听党话] is a formula used by PLA political commissars. Cf. author's interview with an anonymous retired PLA political cadre who worked in the Nanjing MR, September 6th, 2009.
[126] Interview, Gao Qi.

In Dee's words: "during *junxun*, we experience participating in the party's power and organization."[127] Wang Zhe had a cynical take: "No, I would not enjoy using it [discipline] in my own life, but I intend to use it over other people when I become a leader myself[128]. Another student made a direct connection between the military training she received at university and the use that the party makes of the PLA in its propaganda, pointing to the military program broadcast on TV every night (cf. chapter II)[129].

The theoretical course

By contrast with the physical component of defense education in universities, students did not take the military theory course seriously. The historical contribution of the military to contemporary China's nation-building had already been inculcated to students by the time they reached university, through ideological indoctrination classes from primary school onward. At primary school level, the party's policy was to blend defense education with other subjects, for example history and geography[130]. Dee established a strong connection between military training and other kinds of introductory courses such as the ideological class and an agricultural class that she had attended in high school[131]. Another interviewee emphasized the importance of the military in the history course and in the political indoctrination that he followed in primary and middle school[132].

[127] Interview, Dee.
[128] Interview, 王哲.
[129] Interview, female doctorate student in law.
[130] 中国 教育年鉴.
[131] Interview, Dee, 2009.
[132] Interview, 高晟.

Performance during military training is graded and students need to pass both the physical and the theoretical exam of the course in order to complete their degree. It does not seem like either students or professors took this evaluation very seriously however, as apparently professors informed students of the exam questions ahead of time[133]. The theoretical classes, in particular, were for the most part not taken seriously:

> The whole training and theoretical classes lasted only three weeks. After that period of time, we had an essay to write that no one took seriously: we just downloaded material from the internet. We did not have an exam, we were scored and that score would count for our final credit. Everyone got the same score though.[134]

Again, Wang Zhe is an exception to the rule. This young man also considered traditional indoctrination as "empty talk", but he explained that the national defense education course he received in 2008 was different from the ideology class that his cousin had followed eight years before:

> I think that perhaps my situation was a little special, because of the unrest in Xinjiang[135]. The deputy-political commissar [副政委] of the Lanzhou Military Region came to teach us theoretical classes. […] We were given presentations of the military organization with an emphasis on the Western part of China as well as on central Asian countries. I think that defense education used to be useless but became more focused and improved: now it addresses the news, which is interesting.

In his positive opinion about the military theoretical course, Wang Zhe is a complete outlier. The overwhelming majority of interviewees totally dismissed that class as useless or "not memorable.[136]" Very interestingly, the only other student who said she "learned a lot"[137] from the theoretical course had also done her undergraduate studies at Lanzhou University, five years before Wang Zhe (I met these two interviewees in two

[133] Interview, Guan Yue.
[134] Interview, Bo; the master's student in aeronautics also explains that the evaluation was positive only.
[135] A couple of months before the Beijing Olympics, Xinjiang province was in a state of near civil war.
[136] Interview, Duan Haiyuan.
[137] Interview, Chinese student at the John Hopkins center.

different cities in China and they were not connected in any way). Although it is very difficult to generalize from only two testimonies, maybe the hypothesis that the party has a special national defense education content for universities located in the area targeted by "the Western development" (cf. chapter III) would make sense.

Findings confirmed my hypothesis that military training is a kind of civic education conveying the fundamentals of life as an adult participating in a community. The students I interviewed provided a remarkably cohesive description of the military training they received at university: across the age range, this was an experience that was physically painful but for the most part positive as a collective undertaking. Interestingly, variation in the reception of military training among students does not follow the party-member/non party-member dichotomy: some party members thought that military training was boring and useless and some respondents who were fiercely anti-party found some positive aspects to the training. All of them assimilated military organization to party organization and saw benefits in learning about its inner workings. In this sense, military training in universities is a successful policy, which seems here to stay, further integrating garrisons with local governments and with public institutions of higher education. Interviewees clearly perceived military training as a political component of their university life, either because they saw it as the continuation of the ideological indoctrination they had received in high school, or because they related the training to major events that shook the party rule, such as the 2008 Olympics[138], the 2003 SARS crisis or the Tiananmen crackdown.

[138] Interview, Guan Yue.

Conclusion

'Defense education' designates the party's attempt not only to put the military at the center of the renewed content of its 'thought work', but also to use the troops to channel civic energies. In other words, the party uses the PLA to change society. The military now purveys education in party schools and university campuses, pointing to what seems to be the opposite of military professionalism, that is the dissolution of military skill in wider society. Yet it is the image of an ever evolving military force aware of the most contemporary strategic challenges, at the same time as of its history of state-building, that the PLA projects in the 'education' it conducts throughout society at large. This propaganda effort was orchestrated by the party as part of the 'spiritual civilization' policy whereby the party-state trains the population into becoming better citizens (cf. previous chapter) and it started at the same time as this wider policy, in 1986. In this context, the way that the CCP reacted to the students' demonstrations in 1989 - both immediately by sending the troops in and during the following three years by making the students from the top two universities in the countries spend one year in the barracks – should have come as no surprise.

What is perhaps more surprising is the way that today students actually seem to welcome military training. *Junxun* conveyers and receivers concur in saying that the policy is not military in nature, and the curriculum clearly states that its purpose is to deepen the understanding of *party* ideology and policy. As they form solidarity ties with their classmates and hierarchical ties with their military tutors, students recognize and endorse the party's capacity to organize and mobilize people. The post-Tiananmen generation takes for granted the intimate connection between the CCP and the PLA.

The ruling party exploits this identification by using the military not only to promote its policies at home, but also to achieve international recognition, as the following chapter will show.

CHAPTER VI: PLA DEPLOYED: THE CHINESE PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING

"Looking ahead, the position and the role of the military contact with foreign countries will be more important in the overall work of the CPC, the state and the PLA."

Ma Xiaotian, PLA chief of staff, 2009[1]

Today, China is the foremost contributor of peacekeeping troops among the five permanent (P-5) members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)[2]. This commitment is the result of a policy U-turn on the part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at the turn of the twenty-first century, shifting from opposition to UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) to proactive involvement. This change of attitude has been analyzed from the point of view of the UN: observers have argued that when the PRC joined the UN in 1971, its position was constrained by the global international environment of the Cold War, which put the liberal ideology of the UN at odds with the Leninist PRC, and by a conservative conception of national sovereignty endorsed by the Chinese leadership. Given these constraints, the way that China has become one of the main supporters of the practice of peacekeeping, which was in place before it even joined the UN, appears puzzling.

1 "中国国际战略学会年会在京举行", *PLA Daily*, December 23rd, 2009.
2 http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2010/dec10_2.pdf.

Here I will suggest an explanation of Chinese peacekeeping policy based on the Chinese standpoint rather than international perceptions. My argument is that the CCP has used the Chinese military as a channel to engage in multilateralism. Indeed, the increasing amount of Chinese troops sent to UN peace operations in the very early 2000s was a result of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) modernization program launched two decades earlier. Although China has not engaged in military combat since the Sino-Vietnam war in 1979, PLA deployment in Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) has dramatically increased in the last decade. The relative scope and scale of this current deployment involving troops' training and mobilization represents a new kind of military engagement whose political implications have not yet been analyzed.

This chapter shows how the decision to participate in international peacekeeping fits into the rhetoric of PLA political work. In the first section of this thesis, I defined PLA political work both as the Chinese military's discourse justifying its support to CCP rule, and as the system for the promotion of officers. Considering these two aspects, this chapter argues that increased Chinese participation in PKOs serves the purpose of political work, that is using the military to represent the party, in this case abroad. Indeed, PLA literature unilaterally advocates PLA deployment abroad, under the umbrella of UNPKOs. First I show that China has followed strict rules of engagement to legitimate its participation in UNPKOs. Second, I retrace the chronology of Chinese commitment to peacekeeping to see how China's participation in peacekeeping has contributed to promote the changes in CCP ideology. Last, I explain how the party has used peacekeeping to accelerate the pace of PLA modernization.

The rules of engagement

The PLA is a politicized military, performing its duty in defense of the Chinese party-state. The strong theoretical framework accounting for party control of the PLA (see chapter 1) has led the PRC to question the legitimacy of multilateral military interventions, considered as an interference into countries' internal affairs. At the same time, however, China has repeatedly invoked the spirit of the UN charter both at the UN assembly and in its own political indoctrination, to justify its positions at the Security Council. This emphasis on the rules governing multilateral intervention makes it necessary to overview the international norms underpinning PKOs before explaining how the PLA has managed to use them to justify deployment abroad.

The existing international framework

The PRC systematically refers to the UN Charter in debates at the Security Council. Indeed, the legitimacy of peacekeeping operations is based on the UN Charter, signed in 1945[3] to establish an international framework which could prevent a third world war. PKOs are authorized *ad hoc* by UNSC resolutions, which elaborate a mandate for a UN peace operation. Military operations resulting from a UN Security Council Resolution are not all PKOs however, as shown in the instance of the Korean war, a peace enforcement action authorized by Resolution 83. In 1945, the PRC did not

[3] The signatory countries were Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Republic of China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, the USSR, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, the UK, the US, Uruguay and Venezuela.

yet exist. Nevertheless, PLA political work is committed to this foundational text and, starting in the 1960s, the PRC repeatedly applied to join the UN and its general Assembly's special committee for PKOs[4] which was established in 1965, demonstrating a will to engage in multilateralism. The Charter mandates the Security Council to monitor international peace and to intervene to maintain or to restore peace in countries where it is threatened. More specifically, chapters VI and VII of the Charter respectively call for a "pacific settlement of disputes" and "action with respect to threat to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression." Chapter VI defines the Security Council as a monitor, an investigator and an arbitrator to which any member state can submit a dispute. It states that the preferred means to resolve conflicts is negotiation. Chapter VII establishes a hierarchy of "means" at the disposal of the Security Council to ensure international peace, from economic sanctions to the use of military force. There is a tension between chapters VI and VII of the Charter as the former promotes the "pacific settlement of disputes" but the latter allows UN member states to resort to military "action." Without providing legal statutes, chapter VII of the UN Charter thus lays the constitutional basis for peacekeeping, the deployment of an international armed force in conflict-prone areas.

The word "peacekeeping" is never mentioned in the UN Charter. Instead, the rules of peacekeeping were defined over and over again by the successive UN Secretary-Generals, notably Dag Harmmerskjold in the context of the Suez crisis in 1956; Boutros Boutros-Ghali who created the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the UN in 1992; and Kofi Annan when he ordered the Brahimi report to review fifty years of UN peacekeeping in 2000. Dag Harmmerskjold enunciated two principles necessary to the establishment of a PKO which China would emphasize over the years: 1) the request of,

[4] Xiao 2009, 66.

or consent to a PKO by the conflicting parties and 2) the interdiction of firepower except in self-defense. Once the Security Council has issued a mandate establishing a PKO, it issues a call to member states for troops. There is no binding measure committing member states to send troops to PKOs: these are voluntary operations. Chief of the Police Division of the Mission Management and Support Section of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Ata Yenigun explains: "The UN does not force anyone to do anything, we only call for contributions. It is the obligation of the 192 member states to contribute."[5] Peacekeeping is a practice (the latest UNPKO "background note", published in January 2011, calls it a "technique") defined by practitioners rather than by the UN General Assembly. In 2006, the Security Council acknowledged a "bitter confrontation" with the General Assembly following reports of sex abuse by peacekeepers during the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC)[6]. Such malfunction prompted the release of "the Capstone doctrine" in 2008. In this document, the UN department of peacekeeping operations recognized that sixty years of peacekeeping had changed the practice and it reasserted Harmmerskjold's principles of consent of the parties and non-use of force except in self-defense, as well as the requirement of impartiality, defined as accountability[7].

The Capstone doctrine defined peacekeeping by contrast with other peace interventions performed by the UN and related to the maintaining of international security, such as conflict prevention, or peace-making, and peace-building. Up until 2005, China did not participate in peace-making or peace-building, but only in PKOs, the most transitory of all UN peace instruments. These three processes refer to three

[5] Author's interview with Ata Yenigun, Chief of the Mission Management and Support section of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Police division, February 25th, 2011.
[6] Security Council Report, February 20th, 2006.
[7] www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf.

distinct political actions, and take place at different moments in time. The specificity of peacekeeping is the military nature of the international force deployed in the operation tasked with the implementation of a peace agreement. Ata Yenigun defines peacekeepers as "firefighters"[8] responsible for resolving violent conflict. A peacekeeping force is an international response to a situation of emergency when a country does not have the capacity to establish a ceasefire. By contrast, peace-making is a preventive form of diplomacy aiming at defusing conflict[9]. Peace-building monitors the new political institutions established after a conflict – this kind of sustained peace action gained importance when the UN Peace-Building Commission was established in 2005 as an effort to increase coordination between different international institutions in their efforts to maintain peace after a conflict. Over half a century of peacekeeping practice however, the distinctions between peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building have become increasingly complex, to the extent that PKOs today are for the most part defined as multidimensional, i.e. incorporating all three aspects.

The principle of state sovereignty

Scholars and policy advisers[10] have characterized the Chinese position toward UNPKOs as rather passive. They agree that China's behavior at the UNSC concerning PKOs has been driven by the normative principle of safeguarding national sovereignty. The literature predominantly argues that the PRC used this principle against

[8] Interview, Ata Yenigun.

[9] http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf.

[10] Allen Carlson, "Helping to keep the peace (albeit reluctantly): China's recent stance on sovereignty and multilateral intervention", *Pacific Affairs*; 2004, He Yin, *China's changing policy on UN peacekeeping operations*, Institute for security and development policy, 2007; Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, *China's expanding role in peacekeeping*, SIPRI, 2009, 11; and International Crisis Group, *China's growing role in peacekeeping*, 2009.

peacekeeping: "Chinese leaders fear the UN becoming a 'supra-national' government' and so insist that the UN remain a state-based organization aimed primarily at reducing transaction costs, enhancing cooperation and defending the interests of sovereign states." [11] Scholars see China's position at the Security Council as reflecting a conservative conception of international relations in which sovereign states interact on equal footing. In 1996, Taylor Fravel first argued that the PRC's use of the principle of sovereignty in the Security Council reflected exigencies for domestic discourse after the Tiananmen crisis[12], qualifying China's peacekeeping policy as "defensive". He argued that by resisting any "substantive commitment", China had proved a weak player in the Security Council. Along the same lines, UN officials underscore Chinese reluctance to engage in multilateral negotiations[13] as the PRC refuses to put pressure on allies such as Pakistan to commit to international conventions. On the other hand, observers focusing on the evolution of peacekeeping within the UN[14] argue that China's policy at the security council had the purpose of establishing rules to limit this form of multilateral intervention in order to maintain the international status quo. Stefan Stahle elaborated this second interpretation of the Chinese principle of preservation of national sovereignty[15]. He argues that China has defended national sovereignty by committing only to 'conventional' (or 'traditional') PKOs, and by refraining from participation in "multidimensional" operations involving peace-building such as the UN Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) set up in 1992. The main difference between the two kinds of

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11 Bates Gill and James Reilly, "Sovereignty, intervention and peacekeeping: the view from Beijing", *Survival* 42 (3), autumn 2000, 43.

12 Taylor Fravel, "China's Attitude toward U.N. Peacekeeping Operations since 1989", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, 1996, 1102-1121.

13 Author's interview with an anonymous Western official working at the UN Convention on Disarmament, March 6th, 2011.

14 For example Pang Zhongying, "China's Changing Attitude To UN Peacekeeping", *International Peacekeeping*, 2005, 87-104.

15 Stefan Stahle, "China's shifting attitude towards United Nations peacekeeping", *The China Quarterly* 195, 2008, 631-655.

mission is that in the first case a state threatened by conflict resorts to multilateral intervention to maintain its integrity, whereas in the second case there is no state, so to speak, and the international community arbitrates between armed groups, as opposed to governments.

The historical evolution of Chinese participation in peacekeeping highlights the limits to both of these interpretations. Concerning the first one, over the first five years of PLA participation in peacekeeping (1990-1995), the number of Chinese troops sent to UN peace missions remained almost constant, around 50[16], if one excludes the large number of PLA troops (up to 488) sent to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia in 1992-93. Therefore Fravel's argument according to which the PRC opposed UNPKOs as such does not hold: the PLA provided the number of troops it was able to provide in the early years, without any retrenchment. As regards Stahle's argument that China adapted its peacekeeping policy as the practice of peacekeeping evolved (as opposed to a deliberate decision on the part of the CCP to instrumentalize peacekeeping for its own purposes), it is contradicted by the content of Chinese political work texts. Indeed, Chinese scholars present Chinese participation in compound PKOs as a historical evolution[17]. Not only has the PLA sent more troops as PKOs have become more complex but as early as 2002, it supported the UNPKO Standby Arrangements System[18] allowing for the preparation of more reactive forces. Thus interpreting the Chinese emphasis on national sovereignty as a means to oppose peacekeeping or its complex forms does not hold. It is true, however, that the principle of preserving national sovereignty has been the red thread running through Chinese

[16] Calculation based on the statistics provided by the UN department of peacekeeping.
[17] Wang Xiao 2010.
[18] Pang Zhongying, "China's Changing Attitude To UN Peacekeeping", *International Peacekeeping* 12, 2005, 87-103.

peacekeeping policy from the beginning.

As the lack of a legal framework has meant that no specific definition or situation triggers decisions by UN member states to send troops, debates at the Security Council concerning PKO authorization were inevitably framed by the themes ruling over international politics. The PLA sent its first troops to a PKO in 1989, the year that marked the end of the Cold War. While China experimented with peacekeeping in the 1990s, a wider development was changing the language and dynamics of international politics. "National sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, for long held in high esteem in international politics, were increasingly met with impatience", writes Martin Doornbos[19]. Doornbos shows that 'good governance' then emerged as a criterion for attributing international financial assistance to developing countries. In opposition to this new Western-imposed norm of behavior, China clung to the notion of national sovereignty through its peacekeeping policy. As international agencies such as the World Bank tried to reform the South by imposing governance-related criteria for their assistance, China used peacekeeping to deploy a presence abroad while remaining politically neutral. Whereas Bretton Woods Institutions established dependence in international relations, UN peacekeeping is a form of multilateralism that cuts across the North/South divide by integrating developing countries into the active units. Today, the first ten PKO troop-contributors are Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nigeria, Egypt, Nepal, Jordan, Ghana, Rwanda and Uruguay, that is to say low-income countries. The next ten contributors are an interesting grouping of countries: it includes three of the five BRICS (Brazil, China and South Africa) as well as two NATO members (Italy and France) along with Senegal, Indonesia, Morocco and Sri Lanka.

[19] Martin Doornbos, "Good governance, the pliability of a policy concept", *Trames*, 2004, 378.

The Chinese position

China made its first international policy statement about its defense strategy in a paper called "Arms control and disarmament"[20], released in 1995. In this text, the PRC government declared that the mission of its troops was dictated by the principle of peaceful development. The statement explains that in the context of China's reform and opening, China realized peaceful development by committing to international arms control and focusing the troops' activities on domestic projects such as "agricultural, sideline and industrial production and […] business." Thus, from the outset, the PRC juxtaposed international cooperation with unconventional use of the armed forces at home, emphasizing the principle of national sovereignty. A commentary issued by the National Defense University in 1997 and entitled *Defense and Politics*[21] laid out two definitions of national sovereignty. The prior definition of national sovereignty is the defense of the country's interests. China's national interests are set by the CCP who deploys troops, based on the appreciation of threats to international peace in terms of the threat that they specifically represent for China. Even though peacekeeping itself was not theorized in PLA political work before the 2000s, the idea that the role of the national military is not only to defend but indeed to promote China's interests[22] is at the core of all Chinese military deployments abroad and these have been restricted to the framework of UNPKO. In this perspective, Liu Yuan argues, "non-war military operations are low intensity military operations implemented to reach a political goal."[23]

[20] Available online: www.china.org.cn/e-white/army/index.htm
[21] Zhang 1997. The PRC published its first *Defense White Paper* in 1998.
[22] Ibid.: "Security is freedom from any infringement to a country's subsistence *and development*" [italics mine].
[23] Liu Yuan 2009, 25.

This motive is radically different from the responsibility to maintain peace stated in the UN charter and yet it explains why China progressively embraced the point of view according to which the preservation of world peace via peacekeeping is of strategic importance. Indeed, Chinese involvement in peacekeeping is based on a new appraisal of security threats that have become diffused, even if they constitute a localized danger. For example, the worldwide spread of terrorism became a direct threat to the PRC when embodied in the separatist "East Turkestan movement"[24] in Xinjiang.

The second definition of national sovereignty is the preservation of national unity[25]. Commentators have argued that as this reflects the "one China policy", it has been the reason for the only two Chinese vetoes cast against PKOs[26]. But early Chinese peacekeeping illustrates how the PRC made use of Hammerskjold's principles[27] (see above) to *promote* this view. In 1990[28], China dispatched five military observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Israel/Palestine, deciding to participate in the then forty-five-year-old mission, the first operation mandated by the UN. Over the years, the PRC has sent a total of 89 observers. Its belated participation sent the signal that China could choose to abide by international rules it had not set. At the same time, the PLA ignored the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which had also been in existence for forty years. Both missions are examples of the 'conventional PKO' strictly mandated to implement a cease-fire. Both are deployed in protracted conflicts which remain unresolved today.

The two operations had very similar mandates but different political implications for China. Through UNTSO, China has supported a country, Israel, created under a

[24] Ibid.
[25] Zhang 1997.
[26] Guatemala and Macedonia, both countries having recognized Taiwan.
[27] The requirements of the target country's consent and of prohibition to use firepower except as self-defense.
[28] http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/wh/t534321.htm.

UN mandate which receives international protection. By contrast, as UNMOGIP takes place in Jammu and Kashmir, right on the border with China, Chinese intervention could have been perceived as an aggression and an infraction of the UN Charter (chapter VI), according to which peace is best maintained by peaceful means. By refraining to send troops to UNMOGIP, the PLA avoided a conflict of interest where it would have appeared as a belligerent. The military presence constituted by a peacekeeping force embodies the theoretical tension mentioned above between chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter: the mandate of the peacekeeping multilateral military deployment is necessarily the restoration of peace.

The CCP has been careful to dispatch specialized troops with expertise in infrastructure-building, rather than combat, to PKOs. Western military attachés interviewed in Beijing do not consider the military stakes of the PLA in UN peacekeeping missions to be high. They emphasize China's reluctance to intervene in situations where the parties in conflict have not explicitly called for the UN to send troops. In their view, in China's approach to UN peacekeeping, PKOs have to be requested by the parties in conflict, and the PLA provides resources[29] and training rather than active units. Furthermore, China strictly limits PLA engagement abroad to participation in PKOs under the authority of the UNSC, thus avoiding a situation where PLA deployment would be perceived as unilateral. By contrast, the US and members of the European Union deploy peacekeepers in other contexts than UN-mandated PKOs. For example France, the US, the UK, Holland and Germany have played a major role in NATO deployments in Afghanistan, raising the issue of the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams – a very controversial concept[30]. French

[29] Military engineers and medical teams.
[30] Nima Abbaszadeh and Mark Crow, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, Princeton University Woodrow

involvement in PKOs is often embedded in a broader French military presence in the country. Thus in Chad, France conducted operation 'Epervier' at the same time as it participated in the *Mission des Nations Unies en République CentrAfricaine et au Tchad* (MINURCAT) in 2007-2010.

The emphasis that Chinese ambassadors to the UN have put on referring PKOs to the UN Charter suggests that they conceive of peacekeeping as a political intervention which requires legitimation, and it is clear that for China, legitimacy is based on the principle of national sovereignty. A PKO is not a sanction imposed on a sovereign state, but rather quite the opposite: it is the second step toward peace, after the negotiated resolution of a conflict. However, neither China's commitment to state sovereignty nor its support for the multilateral commitment to the UN Charter provide adequate explanations of the PRC's approach to PKOs and multilateral peacekeeping. The PRC's peacekeeping policy has also, and indeed mainly, been determined by domestic constraints.

The PLA's gradual involvement in peacekeeping

Starting in 1989, the PLA has contributed troops to half of the total number of UNPKOs, in sharp contrast with China's initial resistance to peacekeeping during its first years of UN membership. Since 2000 particularly, as the total number of UNPKO troops deployed worldwide increased ninefold[31], China has supported the establishment of all but one new PKO. I argue that this commitment to international peacekeeping

Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, 2008.

[31] http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/backgroundnote.pdf.

reflects an increased assertiveness of the Chinese single-party state rather than a diplomatic commitment to world peace. By sending more and more troops to PKOs, the CCP has used the national military to establish itself both at the UN and in unstable countries. The PLA top military command post (chair of the Central Military Commission (CMC)) is held concurrently by the general secretary of the CCP, therefore the integration of party policy into military training and deployment determines the logics of Chinese participation in UNPKOs. As the PRC's stance on multilateralism has evolved in step with party policy, I shall first outline how successive national leaders have defined the modalities of China's peacekeeping policy, in line with changes in the party-state's ideology.

Deng Xiaoping: low profile (1971-1989)

The Chinese leadership originally saw multilateral military intervention as an instrument for Western powers to extend their geopolitical influence. This ideological position was defined, however, in the context of China's confrontation with a UN peace enforcement operation rather than peacekeeping. Indeed, China's relationship with the UN began on the Korean battlefield in 1950. Following UNSC resolution 83, the UN sent troops to South Korea to fight the North Korean invasion supported by Chinese forces. The Korean war broke out just one year after the establishment of the PRC, when domestic tensions related to the Chinese civil war had not yet fully subsided. As a result, Mao Zedong perceived the US-led UN operation in Korea, which launched the cold war, as a direct threat to the year-old PRC[32].

[32] Allen S. Whiting, "China's use of force 1950-96, and Taiwan", in *International security* 26 (2), 2001, 103-131.

Despite initial hostility to UN armed intervention, China became a member of the UN and one of the P-5 members endowed with veto power in 1971. Successive Chinese ambassadors to the UN articulated a defensive conception of national sovereignty as territorial integrity: China would not go beyond its borders to intervene. During its first decade of UN participation, the PRC opposed PKOs by abstaining to vote for them and refusing to pay PKO contributions[33]. Nevertheless, as Samuel Kim has explained, "China has managed to exert considerable leverage, if not normative influence, in the decision-making process, not by hyperactive engagement or coalition-building leadership but by following an indeterminate strategy that has vacillated between tacit cooperation and calculated aloofness.[34]" By making a very restrained use of the veto (smallest number of vetoes cast of all P-5 members) at the UNSC without ostensibly building international alliances, China has considered PKOs on a case-by-case basis, allowing them to be set up without supporting them, by abstaining to vote. During this period, China's opposition to UNPKOs can also be explained in terms of practical impossibility. As of 1979, the PRC was deploying 1 million troops at the border with the Soviet Union and 300,000 troops on the border with Vietnam[35] in the Third Indochina war.

In the 1980s, the CCP made an ideological shift toward peacekeeping, as it started to see it as an instrument of diplomacy. Participation in peacekeeping was made possible by the PRC's new development strategy based on reform and opening, which reversed Mao Zedong's closed-door policy. In 1981, when Chinese ambassador at the UN Ling Qing supported the extension of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

[33] Taylor Fravel, "China's Attitude toward U.N. Peacekeeping Operations since 1989", *Asian Survey* 36, 1996, 1102-1121.
[34] Samuel Kim, "China in world Politics", in Barry Busan and Rosemary Foot eds., *Does China matter?*, 2004, 46.
[35] Peter Worthing, *A Military History of Modern China, From The Manchu conquest to Tiananmen square*, Praeger security international, 2007.

(UNFICYP), China voted in favor of a PKO for the first time. This UN operation was already seventeen years old at that point. The government of Cyprus had consented to UNFICYP as it was threatened by the intercommunal conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The mandate of UNFICYP, expressed in the UNSC resolution 186 as "to contribute to […] a return to normal conditions", aimed to preserve the new-born state of Cyprus from separatism. This corresponded to the PRC's principle of national sovereignty as constituted by the state and China committed to it only after a cease-fire had been established. Even though the PLA never sent contingents to UNFICYP, Chinese Major General Chao Liu was appointed as the mission's force commander in February 2011. For China, Cyprus had no geopolitical significance and this is reflected in the lack of a troop commitment. At the same time, high-level commitment at the Security Council and at the military command reflected China's decision to engage with the practice of peacekeeping.

In the 1980s, paramount leader and chair of the CMC Deng Xiaoping changed the animating principle of the CCP's agenda from class struggle to the relationship between economic development and world peace[36]. This displaced the relations of production from the national to the international level: "reform is China's second revolution, […] that is one that does not concern man but the system."[37] Deng had maintained a low profile at the UNSC while drastically reducing the number of PLA soldiers and the PLA budget at home, projecting the image of China as a pacific country. It is within this domestic context that the PLA dispatched officers to a PKO for the first time. In 1989, twenty Chinese military observers were sent to Namibia as part of the UN Transitional Authority Group (UNTAG), to monitor the elections that would

[36] Lu 2001, 20.
[37] Zhang 1997, 74: "改革是中国的第二次革命，[。。。] 不是对人的革命，而是对体制的革命。"

give birth to the independent country of Namibia[38]. Just as Mao had used class struggle as a principle for both domestic politics and foreign relations, Deng focused on the reduction of poverty as the priority for both China's domestic development strategy and its positioning on the international stage as a leader of the Third World. As UNTAG's mandate was to ensure Namibia's independence from South Africa, PLA participation in UNTAG entrenched the PRC's active support of decolonization.

Jiang Zemin: Leading by example (1989-2002)

Under Jiang Zemin's leadership, the PRC sent military personnel to thirteen PKOs, that is 30% of the PKOs in operation. Despite the relatively modest number of troops the PLA sent to UNPKOs in the 1990s[39], this was a significant contribution: China had suffered severe losses in the war with Vietnam in 1979; then in 1989, the Tiananmen crackdown revealed both the troops' low level of training and divisions in the civilian and the military leaderships. In 1989, Western countries such as Canada, France and Finland dominated peacekeeping operations on the ground. This dominance was not to last, as Pakistan took the lead in 1994. The PLA dispatched troops to Palestine (UN Truce Supervision Organization UNTSO), Iraq (UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission UNIKOM), Western Sahara (UN Referendum for Western Sahara MINURSO), Cambodia (UN Advance Mission in Cambodia UNAMIC and UNTAC), Mozambique (UN Operation in Mozambique ONUMOZ), the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), the UN Mission in the Central African Republic

[38] Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, *China's expanding role in peacekeeping*, SIPRI, 2009, 4.
[39] According to the aggregate statistics provided by the UN, China remained a median contributor of troops throughout the 1990s, at the steady place of 49th contributor out of seventy-seven.

(MINURCA) and the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). The 1990s became a period of intense activity for the PLA as it took the increase of UN peace operations as an opportunity to deploy military observers and troops in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia for the first time.

Full-fledged PLA participation in peacekeeping started as an experiment. On the one hand, it aimed to improve the level of troop training. It also aimed to strengthen the link between the party and the army, which had been weakened after Tiananmen. A new generation of officers took peacekeeping as an opportunity to enhance the political prestige of the PLA, i.e. appreciation of its usefulness by the party. Geng 耿 and Ji Shengde 姬胜德, two young elite officers from the second bureau[40] (intelligence) of the PLA General Staff Department [总参谋部], saw PKO participation as an opportunity to modernize the PLA at a relatively low cost. "These officers came from elite families: their fathers and grandfathers were CCP cadres."[41] Ji Shengde in particular, was the son of Ji Pengfei 姬鹏飞, a senior PLA officer who had served as PRC Foreign Minister from 1972 to 1974. This genealogy provided access to the internal party channels. In 1991, the PRC sent twenty military personnel to UNIKOM, providing a tenth of the total force on the ground. Through UNIKOM, the PLA was able to play a role in the follow-up to the Gulf war. Thus without having participated in the war *per se*, UNIKOM allowed the PLA to see the effects of what is considered as the first armed conflict characteristic of the Revolution in Military Affairs[42] due to the American military's use of information capabilities.

The reason for the small scale of Chinese involvement in UNTSO, UNIKOM,

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[40] 二部.
[41] Author's interview with an anonymous Chinese peacekeeper who served on MINURSO.
[42] John Baylis, *Strategy in the contemporary World: an introduction to strategic studies*, 2007, 61.

MINURSO and UNAMIC in 1990-1991 was quite simply a lack of manpower. In the early 1990s, the finances of the PLA were perilous, and the Mission Subsistence Allowance provided by the UN became an incentive both for servicemen to volunteer and for the PLA to send troops. Starting in 1989 peacekeeping training has taken place at the PLA Nanjing Academy of International Relations, which also trains the PLA intelligence officers[43] under the General Staff Department of the PLA. There were four requirements to become a peacekeeper: English language skills, driving license, marital status and party membership. The last two criteria, ensured by the monitoring of political commissars, respectively guaranteed loyalty to the homeland and party representation abroad. PLA troops were not trained and as a result the function of human resources management played by political commissars in setting standards for peacekeeping eligibility was pivotal.

The PLA's first large-scale deployment of troops under a PKO showed that for the CCP, preserving national sovereignty in Southeast Asia trumped the common cause of international socialism. In 1992 the PLA sent a total of 800 military personnel[44] to UNTAC over a period of eighteen months. This deployment was consistent with the previous Chinese military's hostilities against Vietnam in 1979. PRC leaders had started shifting support away from Vietnam to Cambodia in 1975, when they provided weapons to the Cambodian Khmer Rouge in the attempt to forestall Vietnam's hegemonic ambitions in the region. Thus PLA participation in UNTAC was consistent with China's long-term diplomatic effort to stabilize Cambodia. Indeed, at the same time as it was engaged in UNTAC, China became deeply involved in Cambodia's peace

[43] Author's interview with an anonymous Western military attaché in Beijing on November 8th, 2010.
[44] Xiao 2009, 208.

process, both inside and outside the UN framework[45]. Miwa Hirono has shown that Beijing had provided dual political support to both the Khmer Rouge and Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia from the 1970s to the 1990s[46]. During the years of China's diplomatic effort to bring the Khmer Rouge and Prince Sihanouk to the negotiating table, Chinese peacekeeping troops were ordered to keep an extremely low profile on the ground. In fact most Cambodian officers working under UNTAC cannot even recall their presence, notwithstanding their significant number[47].

Hu Jintao: Proactive participation (2002-2012)

China has become a mainstay of UN peacekeeping in the twenty-first century, as it has sent troops to 80% of the PKOs established since Hu Jintao assumed leadership in 2002 and it became the seventh financial contributor to UNPKOs in 2011. The role that PLA troops play abroad in peace support operations is very similar to the role they play at home. In the late 1990s, PLA political work circles took up the idea of "mobilization" [动员] to establish a link between military protection and economic development. This theory was developed in the domestic Chinese context at the local level of the military region. The head of the "Defense Mobilization Committee" in Sichuan thus wrote: "Defense mobilization safeguards a long period of peace and order, providing the means for economic construction.[48]" Hu Jintao made a similar statement

45 Miwa Hirono, "The Road to recovery: the spill over effects of multilateralism", in Lam Peng Er and Victor Teo, *Southeast Asia between China and Japan*, 2012.

46 Miwa Hirono, "China's charm offensive and peacekeeping: the lessons of Cambodia for Sudan", *International Peacekeeping*, 2011, 328-343.

47 Ibid.

48 四川省军区动员处陈永江，国际动员建设应与经济建设协调发展，*Guofang*, 1997, no. 6, p. 17. Also see 挂，铎 and 赵副臣，from the 吉林省军区, "提高战时经济动员保障能力的几点思考", in *Guofang*, 2002, no. 3.

at the multilateral level when he publicly acknowledged the transformation of conventional PKOs to multidimensional operations in 2005, that is three years before the UN made this transformation official in the Capstone doctrine (see p. 3). Indeed, the concept of "defense mobilization" explicitly relies on international recognition: "we must make use of every propaganda tool [...] to win international understanding and support."[49] Hu's political endorsement of the changing nature of peacekeeping is supported by engagement on the ground, as China contributes troops to ten out of fifteen UNPKOs today. All the troops that the PLA has sent abroad are tasked with the provision of emergency infrastructure: they are military engineers, medical teams and communication experts.

The CCP has used the framework of the UNSC to establish a Chinese presence abroad, under a multilateral authority. Indeed, despite being the fifteenth contributor of troops to PKO missions, China never used the UN to build coalitions. At the same time, international cooperation in peacekeeping enabled China to bypass traditional North/South divides by forming new relationships outside the Bretton Woods institutions. In this perspective, the US has presented the most serious challenges to UN authority when they led a NATO coalition to war in Kosovo in 1999 and when they launched the Iraq war in 2003, in opposition to UN general secretary Kofi Annan[50]. As a result, the United States has replaced Vietnam as the hegemonic threat in the Chinese official discourse. By contrast, peacekeeping ensures political neutrality as countries cooperate under the umbrella of the UN, which leads to some unlikely partnerships.

[49] 曹斌，非战争军事行动的动员, *Guofang*, 2002, no. 2, 17: "要利用各种宣传工具［。。。］赢得国际社会得理解和支持。"

[50] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3661640.stm.

One such example was collaboration with the traditional enemy, Japan, in Cambodia for UNTAC in 1992.

Historically, PKO missions have predominantly taken place in Africa. Since the *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC) in 1960, twenty PKOs have been in Africa, or nearly one third of the total. In the past ten years three quarters of all PKOs have taken place in Africa. More than half of the total of PKO that the PLA got involved in took place in Africa[51]. China has used this African foothold to build its international influence. The PRC has long supported Africa in the UN context, starting with its sponsorship of the first-ever UNSC meeting to be held away from New York, in Addis Ababa in 1972. Africa-China summits have multiplied since the early 2000s, even as Chinese peacekeepers were becoming more involved on the African continent. China declared 2006 to be its "Africa Year." The PRC has also used PKOs to establish a sustained Chinese presence on the African continent: China's military presence in Africa under the UN umbrella is accompanied by heavy financial and industrial investment led by the Chinese government in those countries where peacekeeping takes place[52].

Today, the PLA is present in all six UNPKOs under way in Africa: MINURSO in Western Sahara, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), African Union/UN hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire and UNMIL in Liberia. The three countries to which the PLA has sent most troops are: Liberia (operation UNMIL established in 2003)[53], Lebanon (the UN Interim Force in

[51] All of these statistics are based on the data provided by the UN on its website dedicated to peacekeeping: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors_archive.shtml.
[52] Bernardo Mariani, *China's growing role in African peace and security*, Saferworld, 2011.
[53] 584 PLA troops deployed in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) as of February 2011.

Lebanon (UNIFIL) established in 1978), Sudan (UNMIS)[54] and the Congo (DRC). The information available for UNIFIL and UNMIS shows that the PLA has deployed different military regions to each country. The troops dispatched to Lebanon were all sent from the Chengdu Military Region starting in 2006: engineering troops to clear mines, medical rescue troops as well as food and water[55]. Since 2005, all PLA troops sent to Sudan have come from the Jinan Military Region[56]. Troops were dispatched four times for nine-month periods. In addition to this sustained military presence, the Chinese government committed unilaterally to the resolution of the Darfur conflict, sending envoys to negotiate with the Khartoum government[57]. The PLA has been in Western Sahara (operation MINURSO) for twenty years, in the Congo for ten years and in the Sudan for six years.

Despite the UN's initial rebuff (1949-71), China has carefully crafted a position for itself at the UN. The PLA first allocated military observers to PKOs, then as of 1991 (operation UNAMIC), they deployed troops, in line with the changes related to domestic military reform. Since becoming a member of the UN in 1971, the PRC has consistently increased its support to peacekeeping, both at the UNSC and on the ground. This pattern of steady increase in troops' dispatch was not intended as a strategy by the PLA but rather as an experiment, which proved successful. The current Chinese leadership has accompanied UN involvement with bilateral foreign policy and a global geopolitical thrust, using PKOs to establish China's presence on the African continent.

[54] 478 PLA troops deployed in the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) as of February 2011.
[55] Xiao 2009, 209.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Bernardo Mariani, *China's growing role in African peace and security*, Saferworld, 2011, 31.

The international dimension of PLA political work

PLA political work and peacekeeping

The political stakes that the PLA sees at play in peacekeeping are perhaps best described in terms of the way that it perceives other countries' participation. In May 1992, only two months after China sent over 400 troops to UNTAC, the Japanese legislature considered involvement of peacekeeping for the first time. Three months later, the political bureau of the PLA Navy published a detailed report on this legislative review in its journal *Seaman* [水兵]. The author of the report, Jiang Yongliang 姜永良, retraces the controversy around the 'UN peacekeeping cooperation' bill, as it went from an initial rejection by the Japanese Diet to an ultimate promulgation by the House of Councilors. The Chinese report emphasizes Japanese opposition to the bill both in the legislature and in civil society, noting that popular demonstrations against the bill took place in Osaka, Yokohama and Hiroshima[58].

The implicit critique of the unrepresentative character of politics around Japanese involvement in peacekeeping points to the politicized conception that the PLA has of this kind of military deployment. After the PLA cooperated with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) as part of operation UNTAC, China kept a very close eye on the development of the Japanese military. In 1996, an article in Shanghai's newspaper *World Outlook* provided a detailed report on the fast modernization of the Japanese force, from the following point of view: "Japan is obviously becoming a political power faster, now striving to become one by the end of this century or the beginning of the next. With

[58] 姜永良，日本 "PKO 法案"风波, in *Shuibing*, 1992, no. 5, 14-15.

the end of the Cold War, while sharp and direct military confrontation is no longer the major form of global competition among powerful nations, military strength remains the key factor in a country's overall national might." As part of this growing influence, the journalist notes that between 1992 and 1996, the SDF sent 3,000 peacekeepers to Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Zaire[59].

In fact, all Chinese military units consisting of at least five servicemen comprise a political commissar, and PKO units also follow this rule[60]. Military political commissars and cadres fulfill functions comparable to the ones assigned to executive officers in the American military (non-command position responsible for the management of day-to-day activities such as maintenance). They report to the party. They are, however, completely integrated into the military chain of command and "political work implementation takes place during military training, wartime, and logistics procurement."[61] Since 2004, China has been sending police personnel to peacekeeping operations, in addition to military troops. These police are dispatched as "formed police units"[62], that is to say that they train together as units at the Langfang Peacekeeping Police Training Center, close to Beijing. Although police is considered to be a civilian force sent by the ministry of Public Security, the force trained in Langfang is part of the People's Armed Police (PAP), which is a branch of the PLA. Therefore, although I have not been able to confirm this information, it can only be assumed that peacekeeping formed police units also include a political commissar, as all PAP units do.

With PLA professionalization, military political work has become an academic discipline whose purpose is to legitimate the maintenance of single-party rule as a

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[59] Chen Lineng: "The Japanese Self-Defense Forces Are Marching Toward the 21st Century", *World Outlook*, February 8th, 1996, no. 2, 18-20.

[60] February 1st, 2011 interview with an anonymous PLA navy colonel (上校).

[61] Yue 2008, *Jun*.

[62] Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, *China's Expanding Role in peacekeeping*, 8.

requirement of China's development and to emphasize the role of the military in sustaining that rule. It defends the notion of Chinese sovereignty based on the Communist Revolution, which has become a military tradition thought to stimulate combat motivation. Qiu Keren 裘克人, one of the main proponents of this theory today, presents PLA leaders as foundational political figures[63]. He uses Marx' principles of class-struggle and historical materialism as a flexible framework to explain the changes in military doctrine catalyzed by changes in historical circumstances. For example, as today wars are fought "locally, under high-tech conditions", concern with operational terrain matters more than the geopolitical alliances crucial in the bipolar world of the cold war.

Party control over the military has two major implications for PLA deployment abroad. First, political education is particularly targeted at an officer corps dedicated to "the management of violence"[64]. Although more military academies were established at the start of China's reform era (late 1970s), party membership has remained compulsory for entry to the officer corps, ensuring party control over the military elite. At the same time, the PLA has also been influenced by the global trend of military professionalization which emphasizes the importance of training. As the PLA officers' corps has undergone specialized training, international military-to-military exchanges have increased (cf. chapter III). Training exchanges are a first engagement where Chinese officers represent the ruling party, as they are all party members. Second, the content of this political training claims that China's bilateral and multilateral foreign policy is determined by opposition to American hegemony[65] - emphasizing an explicitly

63 Qiu 2008, 55-57.
64 Huntington's definition of military expertise in *The Soldier and the State*.
65 "Interview of Deng Xiaoping by Robert Maxwell on current affairs", in Deng Xiaoping, *Speeches and writings*, Pergamon press, 1987.

anti-US position but without developing new alliances. Political work conveys this policy to the troops, defining the party's guiding ideology negatively, as anti-hegemonic. This is consistent with a military doctrine that is defensive in nature. In short, recognition that the military skill is a technical expertise enhanced by international exchange has been accompanied by an ideology which identifies the US as China's main hegemonic threat and therewith limits the scope of external influences.

Political work within PKOs does not differ from the organization and functioning of political work in regular Chinese troops. However, while all Chinese peacekeepers are CCP members, not all Chinese soldiers are CCP members. This gives political work extra significance in PKO troops. Party membership is not granted upon request but rather is awarded by the party: as such, in the severe competition for peacekeepers' posts[66], it functions as a guarantor of political reliability. As a representative of the CCP, the Chinese peacekeeper becomes an informant on the theatre of operations to which he is dispatched.

For the PLA, political work writ large is conceived as a method of troop management. Chinese officers and strategists consider the participation of the political commissar in operational decision-making as a morale-booster, ensuring the optimal integration of servicemen into the military unit. It remains to be seen how this management method benefits from international military cooperation in PKOs.

[66] Author's interview with anonymous former Chinese peacekeeper for the MINURSO mission in Western Sahara, February 21st, 2011.

Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW): theory and practice

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping initiated a military reform, which put "man" at the center. Whereas Mao's military doctrine, based on the primacy of the "people's war", considered the Chinese population in terms of dispensable masses, Deng described his focus on "man" with reference to "people who possess a certain amount of scientific knowledge and experience."[67] This statement launched the professionalization of the Chinese military.

In 1985-1990, one million PLA soldiers were demobilized, the National Defense University was established and the eleven Chinese military regions were reduced to seven. Furthermore, as Wang Shaoguang showed, "China's defense budget, measured in 1978 prices, hardly increased at all [and] China spends only a little more than 1.2 per cent of GDP on its armed forces [in 1996] as compared with 4.7 per cent in 1978."[68] According to him, even when accounting for the PLA's significant extrabudgetary sources of revenue, the Chinese military was under budget stress in the 1990s. As a result, PLA personnel were cut by a third, and a dramatic emphasis was placed on training. In 1982-1987 the new head of the PLA General Political Department Yu Qiuli promoted inner-military debate. In this context, the idea of "peacetime military combat" appeared in the academic circles of the Chinese military in the 1990s[69], referring to a use of the armed forces that would enhance "the country's interest[70]" while increasing the troops' combat readiness.

This new development in military doctrine stemmed out of the PLA's interest in

67 Speech at the opening ceremony of the national conference on science, 18 March 1978, in Deng Xiaoping, *Speeches and Writing*, Pergamon press, 1987.
68 Wang Shaoguang, "Estimating China's defence expenditure", *The China Quarterly* 147, 1996, 895.
69 Xiao 2009, 12.
70 Ibid.

American conceptions of soft power. Chinese theorists were particularly struck by the work of Joseph Nye, notably *Bound to lead, the changing nature of American power* (1990), and its multifaceted concept of global power. They were especially interested in his argument about the overweening importance of perceptions of power and the image that a country projects on the international stage. Nye defines soft power in contradistinction to military power which he assumes represents coercion and hence the epitome of "hard power." The main researcher on MOOTW at China's National Defense University (NDU), PLA strategist Xiao Tianliang 肖天亮[71], provides an intriguing interpretation of Nye's idea of "soft power." Instead of maintaining the opposition between a country's hard (military force) and soft (culture and diplomacy) powers, he applies the concept of soft power to military organization, in support of a concept of deployment without firepower. In this category he includes military operations such as disaster relief and international peacekeeping missions.

Against this backdrop, PKOs have provided a new form of military operation where troops do not fight in defense of a country and are not directed against an enemy. In theory, PKO troops do not need to be combat troops: their presence reflects power in the Hobbesian sense of the term, i.e. the retention of force. In contrast with other countries participating in UN peacekeeping, China has applied this theory to the letter, arguing that the peacekeeping mission as stated in the UN Charter is "to protect world peace, *with peaceful means*[72]". These two essential features of PKO troops make them a diplomatic force rather than a combating force and China has increasingly been using PKO missions as a means of diplomacy in contexts where military force plays the main role, even though the PRC has been the most outspoken opponent of UN interference

[71] Ibid.
[72] Liu Yuan 2009, 276. Italics mine.

into the affairs of sovereign states.

The 12,000 Chinese troops deployed as part of PKOs today are not only a show of force but also a reality of force worldwide. The decision to partake in international PKOs has been accompanied by a discourse which has moved beyond conventional CCP Marxism, to engage with international debates about the balance of power. Together with their interest in Nye, Chinese military political work thinkers read Samuel Huntington. PLA Lieutenant Colonel Zhu Ting Chun 朱廷春[73], from the NDU political work research center, has emphasized Huntington's argument that ideas matter more than resources in contemporary wars. Once again, the argument is turned upside down, to justify the Chinese troops' need for political education. The controversy about the Japanese International Peace Cooperation Law in 1992 revealed that although PKOs are not engaged in wars, their presence points to threats from other countries. Even though they do not fight against an enemy, Chinese PKO troops act as representatives of the PRC abroad.

The political training that Chinese officers receive at home before being dispatched to a UNPKO has reaped success in times where the morality of peacekeeping troops was severely damaged following accusations of rape in several unrelated instances[74]. Ata Yenigun emphasized the exemplary behavior that Chinese peacekeepers have displayed on all the missions they took part in: "One should […] emphasize the high quality of the Chinese police deployed in PKOs: none of them have been disciplined or repatriated in the history of China sending police to PKOs. This is

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[73] Guofang 2005, 136.

[74] Marc Lacey, "In Congo war, even peacekeepers add to horror", *The New York Times*, December 18th, 2004; "Uruguayan peacekeepers in Haiti accused of abuse", 5 September 2011, at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-14783538

very positive and very rare."[75].

The different kinds of Military Operations Other than War

Chinese involvement in PKOs is just one instance of MOOTW, to which the PLA has paid increasing attention. Other examples of such non conventional military operations include emergency relief, anti-terrorist activities, border defense and humanitarian aid. Lieutenant Colonel Zhu Ting Chun has put "flood-fighting, the denunciation of the American bombing of the Chinese embassy [in Belgrade in 1999] and *falungong* separatism[76]" all on the same level as security threats. This new framework of analysis considers the national military as a force for crisis-management rather than for combat. In this perspective, PLA deployment in peacekeeping provides operational training transferrable to domestic uses of the military. Indeed, PKOs and anti-terrorist military operations address situations of political instability which threaten the very existence of a state. The international nature of the threat (transnational terrorist organizations on the one hand and conflicting territorial claims on the other hand) requires international cooperation.

In October 2009, Vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission General Xu Caihou presented the PLA as "a force for multiple military tasks". The following abstract summarizes the substance of his speech: "We have an old saying in China, 'armies are to be maintained in the course of long years, but to be used in the nick of time.' Now it seems more relevant to change it into 'armies are to be maintained in the course of long years, and to be used for long years'." In Xu's thinking, disaster relief is of

[75] February 25th, 2011 author's interview with Ata Yenigun, Chief of the Mission Management and Support section of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Police Division.
[76] Guofang 2005, 135.

particular importance to China[77]. In his speech, he emphasized the heroic behavior of PLA soldiers during the Wenchuan (Sichuan province) earthquake in 2008 where the military proved to be the force with the most timely reaction capability. According to Loïc Frouard, French military attaché in Beijing, that catastrophe indeed proved the political weight of the PLA, as the head of the Chengdu Military Region sent Premier Wen Jiabao back to Beijing[78].

Participation in international post-conflict peace-keeping and peace-building ensures the training necessary for fast military response to unpredictable natural disaster. By contrast with other UN member states, China has only sent military engineers, medical units, communication experts and police to participate in PKOs so far[79]. These are uniformed personnel but without firepower: their task is to assist (with medical care and infrastructure building) and train the local population, not to engage in combat. As such, they embody the paradox of the mission to keep peace assigned to an armed force. PKOs meet the need for military presence in situations of crisis, while stopping short of engagement in armed conflict. The authority of PKO troops as uniformed pacifiers, or anti-war soldiers, comes from two essential features: 1) they report to the United Nations Security Council, which deliberates before ordering the dispatch of troops and 2) they include servicemen of different nationalities trained in their respective countries, who cooperate in the theater of operations. Today, China is able to provide the UN with specialized military personnel, in high demand among PKO troops[80].

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77 A strange statement indeed, four years after hurricane Katrina struck the American state of Mississippi.

78 Author's interview with Colonel Loïc Frouard, October 19th, 2010. This was actually the second time that Wen Jiabao showed a deferential attitude *vis-a-vis* a military officer in the context of a natural disaster. Cf the description of the 1998 flood in Xiao 2009, 19.

79 Zong 2009.

80 International Crisis Group (ICG), *China's growing role in UN peacekeeping*, 2009.

Peacekeeping has become one key element of the CCP's use of the armed forces to gain prestige, both at home and on the international arena. By participating in peacekeeping, the PLA is able to build up a positive image of itself as a force working for international peace. On the ground, it is the political training that Chinese peacekeepers receive that guarantees this prestige by contrast with the crimes that American, French, German, and Italian peacekeepers were accused of while on duty in the early 2000s[81]. According to UN officials, the behavior of Chinese peacekeepers has been consistently exemplary during operations. As I showed in chapter III, discipline is a priority among the mission of political instructors.

Conclusion

Countries support UNPKOs by sending troops and contributing money. The main reasons that practitioners[82] provide for the will of developing countries to participate in PKOs is first, the financial compensation that their troops obtain, and second, the military training that they receive. Initially, these were also the reasons for China's decision to start sending troops to PKOs. But today, participation is put to the test of political work. The political training that Chinese servicemen routinely receive makes the PLA particularly suited to PKO missions conceived as a symbolic use of international troops as negotiators.

The CCP has made a truly expert use of diplomacy in its shifting peacekeeping policy. Consistently upholding the principles articulated in the UN charter, it has

[81] Ian Traynor, "Nato force 'feeds Kosovo sex trade'", *The Guardian*, Friday, May 7th, 2004.
[82] Author's interview with a former official at the UN.

moved from principled opposition to peacekeeping to support not only for peace-keeping but also for peace-building. Taking full advantage of its membership in the Security Council, it has used its participation in PKOs to build new ties and strengthen bilateral relations. By endorsing the complexification of PKOs and their inevitable linkage to post-conflict peace-building operations, Hu Jintao has been able to establish longer-term relationships with PKO-recipient countries, through infrastructure provision and personnel training. As the overwhelming majority of PKOs have been established in Africa over the past twenty years, since China first joined PKOs, the PLA has an unrivalled presence in Africa. After decades of discretion at Security Council debates and quiet approbation without substantial commitment, the PRC is now using PKOs as a platform for the deployment of soft power, for the purpose of maintaining a conservative world order, determined by strong states.

The principle of sovereignty in China's peacekeeping policy has not led to a "defensive" position. On the contrary, in the past fifteen years, China has used the platform of UN peacekeeping to *promote* the principle of state sovereignty, not in a passive way but in a very proactive manner. China has been able to use the platform provided by UN peacekeeping in this way because of its heightened status among developing countries and its parallel efforts to create new bilateral relationships in Africa[83]. China's relationship-building in Africa can be compared to other special bilateral relationships expressed within the peacekeeping framework, such as the French leadership of Operation Turquoise in Rwanda in 1994. Of course, the difference is that this latter situation is based on the colonial past, whereas China's Africa policy is entirely directed at the future, rather than the past.

[83] Lieutenant Colonel Philippe D. Rogers, "China and United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa."

In addition to a greater knowledge of various terrains and exposure to the Western countries' more advanced modes of military organizations, the PLA has gained prestige from participating in PKOs. The popular support for the armed forces that the CCP breeds at home via the PLA's involvement in the party policy of "spiritual civilization" (cf. chapter IV) is echoed in the wide deployment of the national troops in countries threatened by war. Dramatically increasing the Chinese contribution to UN peacekeeping has greatly benefited the ruling party.

CONCLUSION

Conclusions of the research

This thesis argues that the ruling party's strategy to maintain close control over China's armed forces has entailed increased liaison between them and the wider society. As a result, the professionalization process has not led to a withdrawal of the PLA from Chinese broader society, quite the contrary. As the party provided the military with the necessary means to modernize and engage with foreign militaries, it also made it more dependent on local governments for resources and strengthened the garrisons' ties to the local communities where they are stationed. The PLA's General Political Department (GPD) played the key role in accommodating the interests of both the military and the party: on the one hand, it facilitated military professionalization and on the other, it committed the armed forces to the party's effort to provide societal leadership, under the ideological slogan of 'spiritual civilization.'

The role of political work in military professionalization

The first part of the thesis defines military professionalization as the establishment of unified training for servicemen and of regulatory control over the armed forces. Specifically, I used the three elements that Huntington defines as the key components of a professional military - responsibility, expertise and corporateness - to describe the historical process of PLA professionalization. Examining how the PLA

conveyed clear notions of responsibility, esprit de corps and expertise to its personnel, I showed that the GPD led this process. Indeed, the political work it performs, instead of hampering combat capacity, has become a discipline integrating new techniques in warfare and troops' management and strengthening the officers' responsibility toward the state.

Chapter I focuses on the elaboration and transmission of the responsibility borne by the Chinese armed forces. This responsibility is defined by political work, an ideological doctrine and method of personnel management for the armed forces. I recalled its genesis during the Chinese civil war (1927-1937), to emphasize the importance of the historical legacy in the identification of the PLA as both a national armed force and a revolutionary military. The official doctrine of civil-military relations taking root in this legacy subordinates the PLA to socialist ideology and the communist rule exercised by the CCP: in this doctrine, the ruling party represents 'the people' that the armed forces have the duty to protect. To ensure this connection, the GPD, one of the four PLA headquarters, oversees a network of political commissars, party committees, and discipline inspection committees in charge of political instruction, leadership, and appointment in the troops.

Chapter II examines how this system of 'political work' ensured esprit de corps from 1987 until 2010. With a revamped curriculum of political indoctrination, the GPD has integrated two new generations of servicemen who never fought a war. In these ideological lectures, the actual revolution that brought the CCP to power is clearly cast away in the past, but the party remains a conveyor of 'revolution'. Political commissars weld the military unit into a corporate community. In the 1980s, officers and higher officials in charge of designing the political course for servicemen encouraged a critique of the Cultural Revolution, described as an anarchic movement damaging the unity of

the PLA. At the same time, political commissars recorded a crisis of morale among servicemen, who felt disconnected from the fast-changing wider society undergoing 'reform and opening.' This crisis came to the open in the disorganization of the troops sent to suppress the student movement at Tiananmen Square in 1989, but this watershed event remains almost entirely absent from GPD accounts. In this context, the party ordered a 'revolutionization' of the armed forces, putting them at centre stage in the propaganda machine to portray them as national heroes.

Chapter III is concerned with the way that the party defined the PLA's expertise during the same period. It was particularly during Jiang Zemin's concurrent tenure of party General Secretary and chair of the Central Military Commission (1989-2002) that regulatory control was established over the armed forces, promoting the use of laws to unify military professional standards, under the aegis of the party. These constraining regulations synthesized the aggregated experience of political commissars, following the recommendations of these cadres. In parallel, the party refocused the PLA's mission on countering domestic security threats in defense of the CCP, now self-proclaimed as 'the ruling party.' This entailed the restructuring of the force into a smaller, more flexible body of troops. As the task of political commissars remained to sustain combat readiness, they also adapted the force to the changes in warfare that took place after the first Persian Gulf War. In the new context, the skills that GPD cadres had developed in internal communication became key.

In sum, the first part of the thesis (first three chapters), focused on the role played by the GPD in the PLA professionalization process. The GPD has provided servicemen with a clear responsibility, corporateness and expertise. As servicemen who have been trained by both the PLA and the party, a large part of the task of GPD cadres is to

ensure that the Chinese military has a stake in consolidating the one-party rule. The CCP has promoted military professionalization under the aegis of an adaptive socialist ideology. Part I of the dissertation showed that even though the revolutionary tradition is emphasized in the formulation of the PLA's responsibility, corporateness, and expertise, these three notions have evolved, according to the ruling party's shifting priorities. As a result, 'the revolution' has come to signify service to the regime.

The PLA and spiritual civilization

The second part of the dissertation (chapters IV, V, and VI) points to a mosaic of ways in which the party managed to bolster popular support for the armed forces. The policy of spiritual civilization is the red thread running through this mosaic. 'Spiritual civilization' is the new name that the party gave to the cultural and societal guidance it has traditionally provided to Chinese society. Whereas in the Maoist period this guidance had mostly taken the form of mass campaigns, chapter IV shows that in 1984-2010 it was institutionalized into a series of local institutions integrating garrisons within the community where they are stationed. Spiritual civilization increased the jurisdiction of local governments over military affairs through the creation of ad hoc institutions such as Leading Small Groups upholding the 'reciprocal support' that garrisons and local governments provide to each other. These Groups involve a member of the local garrison, usually the head political commissar. Within this framework, local military and political leaders perform a significant number of public relations operations together throughout the year, in the community. In some cases, such as the demobilization of soldiers, these operations serve to cover up the failings of the party to provide proper welfare. In other instances such as public health emergencies and disaster relief, the

forefront role of the PLA contributes to building a positive image of the armed forces.

Chapter V studies the genesis, promulgation, and implementation of an important policy promoting a cultural role for the PLA at the local level: the policy of "defense education". Defense education is a broad pedagogical project aimed at fulfilling two goals: on the one hand, to publicize an attractive image of the armed forces to encourage voluntary enlistment, and on the other hand, to constitute local garrisons into community educators to increase defense awareness among the wider population. Just like "reciprocal support", the policy of defense education is part of the party policy of spiritual civilization. The ideological training that servicemen received makes them teachers in "defense education", which basically holds the place of a civic course in civilian universities and state-owned enterprises. The interviews I conducted with students who experienced military training at university show that through this policy, the party succeeded in turning servicemen into representatives of the ruling party in the eyes of the youth. Indeed, the majority of interviewees valued the experience of collective organization they took part in during the training. The policies of reciprocal support and of defense education interlock to sustain the prestige of the national military and build up popular support. They both promote institutional cooperation between stationed troops and local governments.

Chapter VI investigates the reasons behind the PLA's dramatically increased participation in United Nations (UN) Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs), particularly since the early 2000s. After recalling the willingness that the Chinese party-state consistently expressed to take part in UN-led peace operations, I argue that the motivations pushing the PLA to commit to these interventions are twofold: first, PKOs allowed the Chinese armed forces to gain exposure and modernize at a low cost and second, PKO participation projected a positive image of the PLA as agent of

international peace. In the 2000s, PLA scholars of political work also explained that the sort of focused, short intervention typical of PKOs provided excellent training for an armed force now required to fulfill a diversity of tasks abroad but perhaps primarily at home, such as disaster relief and the neutralization of threats to domestic stability. The international deployment of troops under the umbrella of the UN allowed the CCP to increase its prestige at the same time as it expanded its presence abroad. In this instance again, the PLA served as a proxy for the ruling party, and the emphasis that Hu Jintao put on non-conventional threats in his concept of national security has given him enough leverage to justify China becoming a mainstay of UN peacekeeping.

The latter part of the thesis (last three chapters) explores the multiple ways in which the Chinese armed forces transmit the ideological training they received to the wider population. Under the ideological banner of 'spiritual civilization', the party has used servicemen as educators, in tandem with local governments. Although it might seem subsidiary, this reaching out to the wider population is an essential element of political work. Indeed, political education in the troops loses meaning if the relationship to the body politic slackens. Furthermore, the integration of garrisons into local communities is not only a symbolic endeavor; the institution of 'reciprocal support', in particular, entails significant transfers of resources from political to military authorities at the local level. By strengthening this local integration in the 1980s, the party has rejuvenated the triangle at the heart of the CCP's rhetoric, linking the people, the military and the party together: the people pay to sustain the military who demonstrates the party's ability to rule. The implementation of 'defense education', in educational institutions in particular, also strengthens the ties between local governments, stationed troops, and military academies as they liaise to ensure the military education

compulsory in civilian universities. The purpose of this education, and of the large-scale involvement of the PLA in UNPKOs, is to create a positive image of the armed forces within the wider society, and to directly relate this image to single-party rule.

By establishing an essential connection between the system of civilian control over the military and the use of the military to uphold single-party rule in the wider society, this thesis has argued against Huntington's dominant Professionalism theory according to which a professional armed force must be separated from politics. Indeed, I showed that it is the GPD, i. e. the very organ performing party control, that has led professionalization in the PLA, understood as the establishment of regulatory control over the armed forces and of unified professional standards throughout the military. The manner in which the party managed to maintain absolute leadership over the military has sustained authoritarian resilience.

Openings for further research

The notion of military professionalization is a comparative notion: it implies that militaries of different countries share a set of values related to their occupation. While I pointed to similarities between China and other regimes claiming a revolutionary origin such as Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran in my introductory chapter, I have not pursued this comparison for lack of space. Knowing more about how the relationship between the armed forces and the political authorities is framed in these countries would most likely bolster my argument according to which professionalization does not necessarily entail depoliticization.

One interesting starting point to pursue this comparison would be to study the relationship between ideology and law in these different countries. In chapter III, I

argued that the root of the Western misunderstanding of PLA professionalization was based on an unjustified dichotomy between law and ideology. In actual fact, through the GPD, the party has very clearly used legal procedures to ensure that the armed forces perform the missions defined by the party, namely social stability, in my period of study. Comparing this tactic to the way that military duties and prerogatives are formulated in other countries claiming to pursue a 'revolutionary' agenda would be very helpful.

In this research, I wanted to show how the Chinese ruling party produced ideas and set up institutions to build up popular support for the armed forces. Thus, I mostly relied on official material. Therefore a study of public opinion on this theme would be an excellent complement to the present dissertation. I expect that the characterization of the PLA as a 'revolutionary' force, emanating from the party-state, would probably not be shared by the Chinese public.

There is one area of society where the party-state has encouraged military participation, which I have left unexplored: healthcare provision. Anecdotal evidence shows that the best hospitals, catering for civilians as well as military personnel, are PLA-run[1]. In the analysis I provided of political work in military healthcare institutions during the SARS crisis (chapter IV), I argued that, in the context of a national emergency, the PLA had proved more responsive and less constrained by ideological caution than government counterparts. There is a wealth of printed material (both national and provincial yearbooks and newspapers) on the healthcare services published by the military that would shed light on the role the PLA plays in the national health system. Two issues in particular could be explored: first, understanding how resources

[1] Interestingly, this is particularly true in the biggest, most developed cities, such as Beijing, Guangzhou or Tianjin.

are allocated to military hospitals, and; second, the themes that these hospitals' political bureaus emphasize, in the propaganda they direct both at hospital personnel and patients.

Finally, in the second part of my thesis, I stressed the interdependence between local governments and stationed troops. While I pointed to instances of significant payments made from the former to the latter, deeper analysis is possible about the transfer of funds between local governments and garrisons. In 1996, Wang Shaoguang contended that the Chinese official defense budget only covered part of the country's military expenditure: a significant proportion originated from disparate sources such as other ministries but also provincial governments[2]. Additional research could select a small number of provinces to determine the share of local governments in military expenditure, be it for personnel, equipment or training.

The role of military political work in authoritarian resilience

The debate about military professionalization was always part and parcel of a theory about democratization. When Huntington first proposed his Professionalism theory in 1957, he argued that France and Prussia professionalized their armed forces as they were transforming from monarchies into nation states, in the XVIIIth century. According to him, the new military academies trained "average men" into professional officers constituting a force representative of the new state. When he described the modernization of the PLA in 2002, David Shambaugh similarly saw PLA professionalization as a gain in autonomy vis-à-vis the party, through legislative means. I however contended in chapter III that given that the laws Shambaugh refers to were

[2] Wang Shaoguang, "Estimating China's defense expenditure: evidence from Chinese sources", *China Quarterly*147, 1996, 889-911.

drafted by the party organs within the PLA, they did not entail a withdrawal of party control over the armed forces, but rather a tighter grip. The Western conception of the state as constituted by law is not helpful in the context of a single-party state such as the PRC, where there is no separation of powers.

To challenge the assumptions of the dominant Professionalism theory, this thesis looked at Chinese civil-military relations from a wide angle. I examined in detail whether the three elements of military professionalism, responsibility, esprit de corps, and expertise, were being pursued in the PLA. While I argued that they were, I contended that the CCP had maintained strong ideological guidance and leadership over their development. In brief, the PLA professionalized under close single-party control, a paradigm deemed impossible in Professionalism theory. Military professionalization does not necessarily lead to political opening and democratization[3]. The remaining question is: has the constitution of a responsible, corporate, and expert armed force had any impact on the political regime of the PRC? Rather than making predictions like proponents of Professionalism theory typically do, I will focus on the chronology determining my study to answer this question.

Military professionalization and China's political 'transition'

Most analysts, and the CCP itself, typically take the start of the 'reform and opening' policy (1978) as the watershed between Maoist rule and a more rule-bound polity. Observers have interpreted several changes in the functioning of the PRC as signs of political liberalization since then. Examples include local elections[4], legal

[3] Samuel P. Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave", *The Journal of Democracy* 2 (2), 1991, 12-34.
[4] Minxin Pei, *China's trapped Transition*, Harvard University Press, 2006.

reform[5], and greater institutional autonomy granted to the military. While some scholars saw these changes as so many paths towards regime democratization, others rather considered these innovations as tactics to maintain the ruling party in power. Another possible starting point is 1989 when, despite the end of the cold war, the CCP signaled its determination to stay in power by sending the troops to repress the popular peaceful demonstration at Tiananmen Square – scholars who choose this event as the beginning of a new era emphasize the authoritarianism of the PRC.

My study of civil-military relations in the reform era points to the resilience of authoritarianism in the PRC in the last thirty years, yet proposes a different chronology. Taking the chronological perspective of one generation (1985-2010) has allowed me to draw two important conclusions. First, the party policies of 'reciprocal support' and 'defense education' were actually directly related to the changes in demography and human resources management occurring within the PLA, as they both officially started in 1984, that is the same year as the new military service law. Therefore they were not *a posteriori* responses to the disaster of Tiananmen, but were rather strengthened after the party suffered significant defections among the troops during the military repression of the student movement. The Tiananmen crisis accelerated party initiatives to reconnect the armed forces to broader Chinese society, rather than initiated them. Second, contrary to studies issued a couple of years after the Tiananmen crackdown[6], I showed that by no means does the party use the military merely as a coercive arm; actually, it has spent considerable effort to craft a positive image and activities for the PLA. Although the effects of the Tiananmen tragedy are completely obliterated in the PLA literature on which this research is based, the chronology shows that Jiang Zemin's

[5] Randall Peerenboom, *China's Long March toward the rule of law*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[6] David Shambaugh, "The soldier and the state in China", *China Quarterly* 127, 527-568.

effort to promulgate a series of national-level laws determining the duties and prerogatives of the military started in 1991, that is after the crackdown.

The end of the Vietnam war of 1979, the last war that the PRC fought, corresponded to the start of 'reform and opening' and the party project of building a 'spiritual civilization.' In the thirty years that followed, the ruling party reduced the armed force by 1.5 million, devolved the management of garrisons to local governments, integrated these stationed troops into civilian education institutions, and became a foremost contributor of troops and funds to the United Nations peacekeeping program. Through these major institutional innovations, the party-state consolidated the alliance between the armed forces and the CCP that had been the foundation for winning the civil war and establishing the new regime in 1949. This alliance is not merely a convergence of interests, as it is typically described in the literature[7], but a political construct: the ruling party does not only provide the military with the resources necessary to develop its expertise, it also commits to building up popular support for the troops. The ideology of 'spiritual civilization' has played the role of a catalyst for perpetuating the link between the armed forces and the communities and local governments where they are stationed. It is in reference to this agenda of improving living conditions and building a sense of community that the policies of 'reciprocal support' and 'defense education' promoted the image of the PLA as an essential actor in the Chinese polity.

This thesis has thus emphasized continuities in the party's dealings with the armed forces, during a period when the party's ideology and agenda was undergoing tremendous change. From Deng Xiaoping's modernization program, to Jiang Zemin's

[7] James Mulvenon, "China: conditional compliance" in Alagappa Muthiah (ed.), *Coercion and Governance, the Declining Role of the Military in Asia*, Stanford University press, 2001.

'three represents', to Hu Jintao's project of 'harmonious society', the CCP has given continuous attention to the integration of the PLA with the people, local governments, and also the party, through its garrisons. At all periods, the PLA was expected to be integrated with the people; this has been a more or less permanent feature of the PLA in the polity, and of political work within the PLA. The nature of the ideal relationship posited by the party for the PLA and the people has remained in this important way constant over time, and through many otherwise politically and economically very different periods. This 'tradition' was heavily stressed in CCP propaganda, but the ruling party also used legal and institutional means to implement it. It is in the means the party has used to sustain the integration of the troops in social life that it proved resilient and innovative. In this respect, the leadership of Jiang Zemin (1989-2002) was a turning-point where broad reliance on legal procedures went hand-in-hand with a renewed focus on ideology.

As part of the debate about the nature of the PRC's political regime, an important question is whether the alliance between the party and the military has led to a militaristic type of rule, and whether the party's 'spiritual civilization' project has indeed militarized Chinese society. In his study of the Chinese civil war, Hans Van de Ven compellingly argued that in the 1930s, protracted conflict between the communists and the nationalists had led to a militarization of Chinese society, where political contenders and even local elites used armed forces to resist attacks coming from the various sides[8]. PLA political work has kept on referring to this historical period, I argued. Was the military presence in Chinese society in the reform era an attempt to revive this state of intense popular mobilization ? I believe not. Despite the presence of

[8] Hans van de Ven, "New states of war", in Hans Van de Ven (ed.), *Warfare in Chinese History*. Leiden: Brill, 321-397.

the armed forces in a significant number of areas of public life, the ruling party has not attempted to militarize China. It has clearly drawn garrisons into aspects of local governance, but always under tight control of the local state. Rather than the military overtaking politics, the ruling party has managed to establish a direct connection with all levels of the military hierarchy, through the positions of political commissar and troop party committees. It is this clear structure of civilian control that has allowed the PLA to professionalize at the same time as it fostered its political identity.

What is a revolutionary regime?

The authoritarian resilience literature emphasizes the way that authoritarian states use institutional means and innovations to perpetuate their rule. In Catharin Dalpino's comparative account, political liberalization, such as elections or measures to improve government transparency, has allowed regimes such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and the PRC to maintain their grip on power[9]. Jason Brownlee emphasized the strength and flexibility of ruling parties in the longevity of Mubarak's Egypt and of Mahathir's Malaysia[10]. According to China scholars, the CCP's success in staying in power is due to a remarkable capacity to respond to crises. Dali Yang, in particular, describes how the party-state restructured its administration following market reform in 1998 and refashioned its fiscal system in 1994, after state funds had remained stuck at the local level of government. Nathan argued that the CCP devised a series of demand- and complaint-making institutions to channel public criticism and direct it against specific state agencies in order to preserve the central state.

[9] Catharin Dalpino, *Deferring Democracy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000.
[10] Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of democratization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

In qualifying China in the 2000s as still being a revolutionary regime, Perry makes two important points. First, she dismisses the paradigm of a 'transitional' regime by pointing to the fact that the post-maoist period of CCP rule (1976 on) has lasted significantly longer than the Maoist era (1949-1976) when the communist revolution was made and the Leninist state was built. Second, she focuses on the endurance of communist penetration of the state into society to explain how the regime has managed contentious politics. In her own words,

> Precisely because protest in the PRC is both routine and officially circumscribed, once the top leadership decides resolutely upon a course of repression most of the populace is quick to fall into step --with concerns for stability rapidly overshadowing the euphoria of public criticism. The crackdown on Tiananmen protesters in 1989 or *Falun gong* demonstrators a decade later was after all a familiar drill -- harking back to the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, the military suppression of Cultural Revolution mass activism in 1969, the clearing of Tiananmen Square in April 1976, and the clampdown on Democracy Wall in 1979. In China, unlike Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union, both leaders and ordinary citizens know how to put the genie of mass protest back into the bottle of state socialism.[11]

According to Perry, a revolutionary regime encourages, frames, and channels social change. In this sense, the PRC since 1976 has indeed proved to be very revolutionary.

Perry showed that in the 1980s the Chinese broader society had integrated 'revolutionary' techniques of social organization from the maoist era into their very forms of protest, thus endorsing the ruling party's lexicon of rule. My study showed how the party-state promulgated laws to sustain political indoctrination in the military curriculum and established Leading Groups to associate garrisons to local government. I was however careful to emphasize that this institutionalization of party leadership over the armed forces went hand-in-hand with a renewed prominence given to ideology since Jiang Zemin. It is this combination of ideological guidance, under the spiritual

[11] Elizabeth Perry, "Studying Chinese politics: farewell to revolution?", *China journal* 57, 1-22.

civilization motto, and institutionalization of control, that allows to talk about a revolutionary army, in the sense that one of the missions of the PLA is, indeed, to change society, under party guidance. The party's innovative use of legal procedures and set-up of new kinds of government institutions have not signalled the demise of the importance of ideology in CCP rule.

Close attention to the party-military relationship has also taught us that the PLA is a 'revolutionary army' insofar as it continues the tradition of political work inaugurated during the civil war, which combines ideological indoctrination with systematic party cooptation of leading officers. The origin of the party's success in maintaining control over the armed forces has also been attention to the troops' grassroots, where most soldiers are not party members. The political commissars operating at the level of regiment and below have carefully registered servicemen's disaffection with indoctrination classes when they were received as 'empty talk.' To respond to this crisis which grew in the 1980s, the party brought garrisons back into community life, as important infrastructure providers in state-planned economic development projects. This way, political work realized its third, essential component, along with ideology and corporate organization, that is service to the people. This 'outward' action is not subsidiary to the 'inward' work performed by the GPD, it is its essential corollary, providing an avenue of contact between the PLA and local communities, heavily sustained by party propaganda portraying servicemen as bolsters of society. Although the policies of 'reciprocal support' and 'defense education' provided the original impetus for the integration of garrisons into local life and government in the mid-1980s, the Tiananmen crisis surely encouraged a strengthening of these practices ensuring direct contact between the military and the broader society. As the heir of the civil war, the PLA still emblematizes the CCP's ideology, from communist revolution to 'harmonious

society' – it is the ruling party's main relay in its agenda to build a 'spiritual civilization.'

A revolutionary regime, as Perry noted, uses ruling techniques that stimulate social change and efficiently frames contentious politics. As part of this agenda, the PLA is the one and only state organ that specifically claims to still be 'revolutionary' – the party itself no longer emphasizes this appellation for itself – due to the legacy of the civil war. Today, for the military to be revolutionary means that it is a forefront prop for the ruling party to implement its agenda. Within the authoritarian resilience literature, China is the only case where political power is monopolized by a single ruling party. Rather than building coalitions like in Egypt, the CCP has been anxious to entirely choke any form of politically organized opposition, to maintain a tight grip on the single official discourse of the nation. This has been the reason for a renewal of the propaganda machine since Jiang Zemin[12]. CCP ideology no longer holds the image of the worker as its hero or the principle of egalitarianism as its eschatology, but the appeal to a superior 'spiritual civilization' requiring strong central guidance and the requirement for social stability in order to achieve this program have proved successful. Interestingly, these two priorities have turned upside down the ideas of historical materialism and class struggle that were at the root of the communist revolution. Yet, the CCP still claims to be socialist in spirit, and certainly remains Leninist in nature, insofar as it explicitly aims at changing Chinese society.

[12] Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.

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