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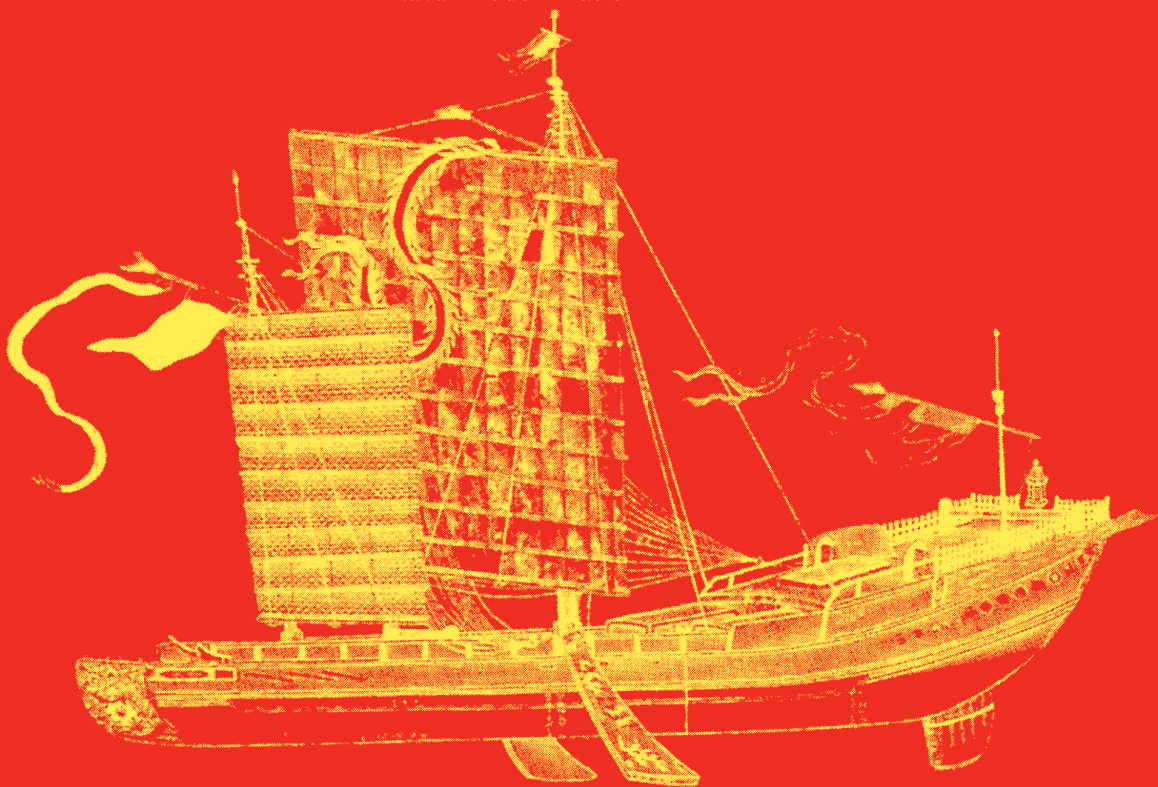
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Number 4

## Chinese Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Deng Era

Implications for Crisis Management and  
Naval Modernization



Nan Li

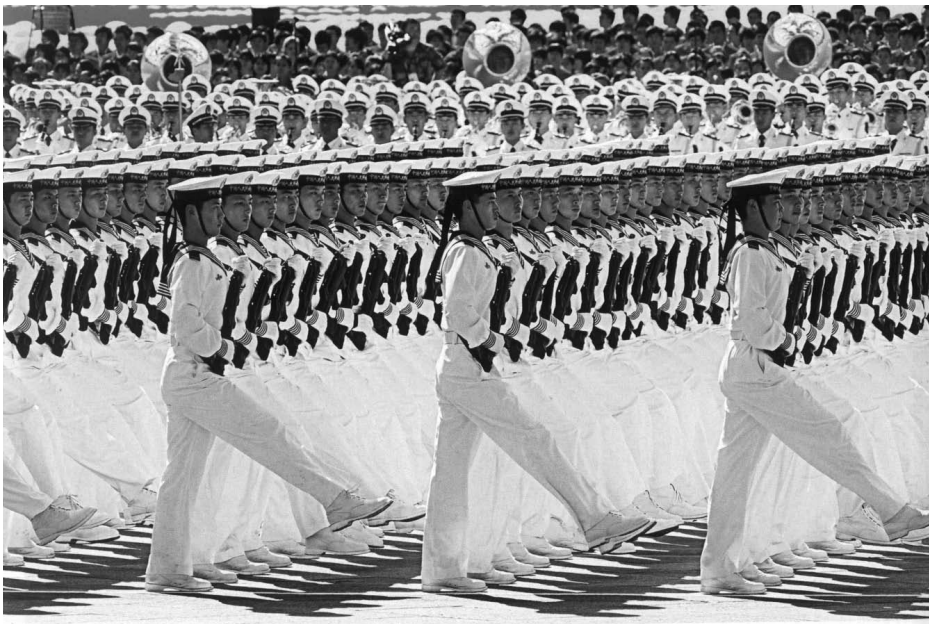
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and Naval Modernization

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# Chinese Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Deng Era

## Implications for Crisis Management and Naval Modernization

### **Analytical Questions**

**T**his study addresses two analytical questions: What has changed in Chinese civil-military relations during the post-Deng Xiaoping era? What are the implications of this change for China's crisis management and its naval modernization?

#### *Why Important?*

Addressing these questions is important for three major reasons. First, because the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a party army, it is commonly assumed that its primary function is domestic politics—that is, to participate in party leadership factional politics and to defend the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against political opposition from Chinese society. For the past twenty years, however, the PLA has not been employed by such party leaders as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao against political opposition from either the CCP or Chinese society. The PLA's ground force, which is manpower-intensive and therefore the most appropriate service for domestic politics, has been continuously downsized. Technology and capital-intensive services that are appropriate for force projection to the margins of China and beyond and for strategic deterrence but are inappropriate for domestic politics—such as the PLA Navy (PLAN), the PLA Air Force (PLAAF), and the Second Artillery (the strategic missile force)—have been more privileged in China's military modernization drive.<sup>1</sup> This study, by examining change in Chinese civil-military relations, undertakes to resolve this analytical puzzle.

Second, China's civil-military interagency coordination in crisis management during the post-Deng era has remained an area of speculation, for lack of both information and careful analysis. By analyzing change in Chinese civil-military relations, this study aims to shed some light on this analytical puzzle as well.

Finally, the PLAN was previously marginalized within the PLA, partly because the latter was largely preoccupied with domestic issues and politics, where the PLAN is not especially useful. By exploring change in Chinese civil-military relations, this study also attempts to explain why during the post-Deng era the PLAN has become more important in China's military policy.

### *Background: Legacies of Mao and Deng*

Traditional analysis of China's civil-military relations assumes that the relationship between the CCP and the PLA remains symbiotic, without functional differentiation or technical specialization-based institutional boundaries. Such a symbiosis has been attributed to Mao Zedong's reliance on a strategy of manpower-based mass mobilization rather than functional and technical specialization-based expertise and administrative efficacy for his revolutionary agenda and post-revolutionary development. A product of civil war and revolution, the PLA was naturally an integral part of Mao's strategy. Party-army "symbiosis" did not imply the lack of political dynamics; on the contrary, political rivalries and alignments were rampant in the Mao years and immediately after. But rather than party-army institutional boundaries, highly personalized leadership factions defined these rivalries and allegiances, which cut across and weakened further the party-army boundaries. That is, a few political-military factions engaged in a zero-sum struggle for political power.<sup>2</sup>

**Photo 1.** Mao met with PLAN sailors in 1953. But the PLAN was largely neglected by Mao because he wanted "politics to take command" in the PLA.



The rise of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, however, led to the replacement of Mao's revolutionary agenda with a nation-building project of "four modernizations"—modernizing industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defense. It was recognized that technical expertise and administrative efficiency based on a division of labor are indispensable for such tasks. As a result, functional differentiation and technical specialization have been promoted. Institutional boundaries between the party and

the army became clearer, so that the latter could enjoy more institutional autonomy to pursue its functional and technical expertise. This trend was reflected in the downsizing of the PLA by a million billets during 1985–87, the reduction of its role in domestic party and societal politics, the decline of cross-boundary circulation of elites, and the concentration of the armed forces on the military-technical tasks of modernization.<sup>3</sup>

**Photo 2.** *Deng reviewing PLA troops on 1 October 1984.*



There was, however, one caveat. At the top leadership level, such as the Central Military Commission (CMC), Deng's informal and personal influence remained substantial and institutional prerequisites were not so important. Deng, for instance, held the position of CMC chair from 1981 to 1989, though he did not hold the position of the CCP general secretary from 1981 to 1987 or any party or state portfolio between 1987 and 1989.

Deng's command of the military was based largely on his revolutionary and military credentials, as well as his status and prestige as one of the founders of the People's Republic of China and the PLA. Moreover, Deng appointed to key CMC positions close allies, like Yang Shangkun (CMC vice chair from 1981 to 1992 and CMC secretary general from 1981 to 1989) and such pre-1949 Second Field Army (where Deng served as political commissar) comrades as Qin Jiwei (CMC member and defense minister from 1987 to 1992), Liu Huaqing (CMC deputy secretary general 1987–89 and CMC vice chair 1989–97), and Yang Baibin (CMC member 1987–89 and CMC secretary general 1989–92). These personal factors prompted Deng to employ the PLA covertly against political opponents within the party, such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, and explicitly against threats from society such as the popular rebellion in Beijing in the summer of 1989. The

PLA's intervention in 1989 led some scholars to argue that the emphasis of China's civil-military relations had shifted from military tasks to politics.<sup>4</sup> Based on similar logic, the conventional wisdom suggests that Jiang Zemin, as the CMC chair 1989–2004, employed the PLA largely for factional struggle against political opponents within the CCP leadership, particularly in times of power transition.<sup>5</sup>

### *Useful Concepts*

The mobilization of armed forces against domestic political opposition or inserting them into domestic politics constitutes what Samuel Huntington calls “subjective control,” which aims to enhance civilian power by a “divide and rule” strategy of “politicizing” the military. It is also intended to preempt such major military interventions as coups. Subjective control is based on the premise that undesirable military intervention in politics is caused not by weak or failed civilian governance but rather by excessive institutional autonomy and professionalism of the military, fostering managerial ability, an ethos of public service, and internal cohesiveness and inculcating with the “military mind” skepticism regarding politicians.<sup>6</sup>

“Objective control,” in contrast, intends to enhance the institutional autonomy and professionalism of the military. It is based on the premise that coups and the like are in fact caused by weak or failed civilian governance or by the inability of civilian authorities to resolve major socioeconomic, political, or foreign-policy crises. It is not a product of military professionalism, because the military is mainly a conservative organization that prefers narrow functional and technical expertise to the broad and complex area of politics.<sup>7</sup> In that view, the best strategy to preempt undesirable military intervention in politics is to enhance civilian governance, not to “politicize” the military.

### *Central Argument*

This study argues that rather than employing the PLA against political opponents from within the CCP and Chinese society as suggested by the conventional wisdom, post-Deng leaders—Jiang and Hu—have prevented the PLA from intervening in intra-CCP and intra-societal political struggle, by changing the dominant paradigm of Chinese civil-military relations from subjective control to “objective control with Chinese characteristics.” Such a change, in turn, has major implications for Chinese crisis management and naval modernization.

To flesh out the central argument, this study makes four specific subarguments. First, Jiang's policies with regard to the PLA were similar to what Huntington calls “objective control”—that is, tending on the civilian side to enhance civilian governance, or the CCP's legitimacy to rule, and on the military side promoting functional and technical expertise, or professionalization of the PLA. Both policies helped to maintain

civil-military boundaries and contributed to the PLA's internal cohesion. While there is an element of subjective control in employing the PLA for power transition and consolidation, mobilizing it into factional rivalries among the CCP central leadership and in Chinese society, which would have eroded civil-military boundaries and fractured the military's cohesion, was clearly not the primary purpose of Jiang's approach to managing the Chinese armed forces.

Second, Hu Jintao's policies regarding the PLA, since he succeeded Jiang as the CMC chair in 2004, have represented not only continuity with Jiang's policies but also a significant step in the trend toward objective control, mainly in terms of externalizing the PLA.<sup>8</sup> That is, Hu has required the military to fulfill *externally oriented* missions that were absent under Jiang: to secure China's newly emerging interests in outer, maritime, and electromagnetic space, and to contribute to world peace by participating in peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance.

Third, while clearer institutional boundaries may have contributed significantly to the cohesion and professionalization of the PLA, increased civil-military bifurcation has also led to pronounced tensions in interagency coordination for crisis management. Such tensions were more or less evident in such foreign policy crises or events as the EP-3 incident in 2001, China's antisatellite (ASAT) test in early 2007, the intrusion of a Chinese submarine into Japanese territorial waters while submerged, China's refusal to allow the U.S. aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* to visit Hong Kong in late 2007, and the USNS *Impeccable* incident in 2009. They became particularly acute, however, in a domestic crisis of 2009, the Sichuan earthquake. That situation was further exacerbated by a lack of appropriate PLA force structure, equipment, and training for nonwar military operations. Remedies have been introduced to correct these deficiencies, but major issues remain unresolved.

Finally, the PLA Navy is probably the biggest institutional beneficiary of the shift toward objective control and "externalization," partly because it is one of the most technology-intensive services, and partly because of the specific environment in which it operates and the functions it is supposed to fulfill. The promotion of the PLAN by the central civilian leadership and the PLAN's skillful leveraging of that promotion are also likely to contribute to its increased importance in China's military modernization.

### *Organization*

This study has six sections, of which the first is the present introduction. The second and third sections address Jiang's and Hu's policies with regard to the PLA. The fourth discusses civil-military tensions in interagency coordination in crisis management stemming from increasing civil-military bifurcation, as well as the prospects for remedies. The fifth section examines the naval implications of objective control and

externalization. The concluding section summarizes the findings and discusses the analytical implications.

### **Jiang and the PLA**

Analysts agree that though he had no service experience and few close connections in the PLA, Jiang was quite successful in consolidating his power, by exploiting his position as the CMC chair. The CMC chair has the final say regarding all major military decisions, including appointing senior officers, allocating the budget, deploying troops, and controlling the employment of nuclear weapons. Jiang was able to win support from PLA senior officers mainly because he was able to employ his formal position to promote many of them to higher ranks and to increase the defense budget, which translated into higher salaries and better living conditions for the military. Jiang was also quite adept in cultivating and maintaining good relations with all the informal groupings within the PLA leadership, as well as with lower levels, by showing respect for PLA elders, listening to officers' concerns on major issues, honoring PLA heroes and traditions, and conducting regular inspection tours of basic-level PLA units.<sup>9</sup>

**Photo 3.** Jiang visits with PLAN sailors and officers on 23 December 2000.



### *Why Power Consolidation?*

Some argue that the primary purpose of Jiang's power consolidation in the PLA was to employ the military against political threats and opponents from within the CCP

**Table 1.** *Central Military Commission of the Fifteenth CCP Congress (1997–2002)*

| Name          | Position                                       | Date of Birth | Provincial Origin | Education                                  | Unit Origin                               | Military Expertise/ Combat Experience                |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Jiang Zemin   | Chair                                          | 1926          | Jiangsu           | Shanghai Jiaotong University               | None                                      | None                                                 |
| Hu Jintao     | First vice chair since 1999                    | 1942          | Anhui             | Qinghua University                         | None                                      | None                                                 |
| Zhang Wannian | Vice chair                                     | 1928          | Shandong          | Nanjing Military College                   | 41st Army, Guangzhou Military Region (MR) | Command and staff, infantry/Civil War                |
| Chi Haotian   | Vice chair                                     | 1929          | Shandong          | PLA General Advanced Infantry School       | 27th Army, Beijing MR                     | Command and staff, infantry/Civil War and Korean War |
| Fu Quanyou    | Chief of General Staff Department (GSD)        | 1930          | Shanxi            | Nanjing Military College                   | 1st Army, Wuhan MR                        | Command and staff, infantry/Civil War and Korean War |
| Yu Yongbo     | Director of General Political Department (GPD) | 1931          | Liaoning          | PLA Fourth Political Cadre School          | 42nd Army, Guangzhou MR                   | Political work/Civil War and Korean War              |
| Wang Ke       | Director of General Logistics Department (GLD) | 1931          | Anhui             | PLA Military College                       | 21st Army, Lanzhou MR                     | Command and staff, infantry/Civil War and Korean War |
| Cao Gangchuan | Director of General Armament Department (GAD)  | 1935          | Henan             | Artillery Engineering School, Soviet Union | General departments                       | Military engineering and administration              |
| Wang Ruilin   | Deputy GPD director                            | 1930          | Shandong          | High school                                | Confidential staff, Fourth Field Army     | Confidential work                                    |
| Guo Boxiong   | Deputy chief of GSD and member since 1999      | 1942          | Shaanxi           | PLA Military College, Beijing              | 19th Army, Lanzhou MR                     | Command and staff, infantry                          |
| Xu Caihou     | Deputy GPD director and member since 1999      | 1943          | Liaoning          | Harbin Military Engineering Institute      | Jilin Military District, Shenyang MR      | Political work                                       |

leadership and from Chinese society, lessons learned from the power struggles under Mao and from the military suppression of the popular rebellion in Tian'anmen of 1989. Such an argument, however, produces an analytical puzzle. During Jiang's fifteen years as the CMC chair (1989–2004), the PLA was in fact not employed to suppress domestic social unrest, the major type of threat from society.<sup>10</sup> Regarding political threats and opponents from within the CCP leadership, evidence of PLA intervention in intraparty factionalism struggles at Jiang's invitation is sketchy. The only evidence produced so far is the alleged collective support by senior officers of Jiang's retention of the CMC chair position at the Sixteenth CCP Congress of November 2002. In this instance, Hu Jintao, who succeeded Jiang as the CCP general secretary, was assumed to be a potential political threat and opponent to Jiang.<sup>11</sup> Some also suggest power struggles between Jiang and Hu over the role of the PLA in the SARS crisis and with respect to a submarine accident that occurred in 2003.<sup>12</sup> Jiang's promotion of a few senior officers, including his chief bodyguard You Xigui, to the rank of general in June 2004 was also interpreted as preparation for a power struggle against Hu.<sup>13</sup>

Though plausible, such evidence is inconclusive. The alleged collective petition by senior officers for Jiang to stay as the CMC chair is highly unlikely, for several reasons. Most of the uniformed CMC members—Zhang Wannian, Chi Haotian, Fu Quanyou, Yu Yongbo, Wang Ke, and Wang Ruilin, for instance—were to retire at the Sixteenth Congress. They had no special incentive to sponsor a petition to keep Jiang as the CMC chair or to encourage their subordinates to do so. New uniformed members, such as Liang Guanglie, Liao Xilong, and Li Ji'nai, were too new to sponsor such a petition.<sup>14</sup> Also, military and CCP discipline forbid senior officers (who are also party members) from organizing such a “collective action”; it is doubtful that anyone would want to risk his career to engage in politically incorrect behavior. Complaints from senior officers about the “two power centers” have been reported.<sup>15</sup> This contradicts the assertion that senior officers preferred Jiang to stay on as CMC chair while Hu took over as the CCP general secretary.

It was actually Hu who proposed to the CCP Politburo that Jiang stay on, to help him make a successful transition.<sup>16</sup> It is likely that Hu, as the first CMC vice chair since 1999, consulted the remaining military professionals in the CMC (such as Cao Gangchuan, Guo Boxiong, and Xu Caihou) and gained their support before he made the proposal. Jiang stayed on also to push for what he calls “new military revolution” (新军事革命), or a revolution in military affairs (RMA)–based transformation of the PLA, against the vested interests.<sup>17</sup> Not yet equipped with the political capital that Jiang enjoyed with the PLA, Hu would have found this agenda more difficult to accomplish had he become the CMC chair in 2002. This suggests Jiang actually stayed on for two more years to help Hu, not compete against him.

**Table 2.** *Central Military Commission of the Sixteenth CCP Congress (2002–September 2004)*

| Name                                        | Position         | Date of Birth | Provincial Origin | Education                     | Unit Origin                       | Military Expertise/Combat Experience                   |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Jiang Zemin (see table 1 for information)   | Chair            |               |                   |                               |                                   |                                                        |
| Hu Jintao (see table 1 for information)     | First vice chair |               |                   |                               |                                   |                                                        |
| Guo Boxiong (see table 1 for information)   | Vice chair       |               |                   |                               |                                   |                                                        |
| Cao Gangchuan (see table 1 for information) | Vice chair       |               |                   |                               |                                   |                                                        |
| Liang Guanglie                              | GSD chief        | 1940          | Sichuan           | PLA Military College, Beijing | 1st Army, Wuhan MR                | Command and staff, infantry/War with Vietnam (1979–89) |
| Xu Caihou (see table 1 for information)     | GPD director     |               |                   |                               |                                   |                                                        |
| Liao Xilong                                 | GLD director     | 1940          | Guizhou           | PLA Military College, Beijing | 11th Army, Kunming MR             | Command and staff, infantry/War with Vietnam           |
| Li Ji'nai                                   | GAD director     | 1942          | Shandong          | Harbin Polytechnic University | Base 52 (Anhui), Second Artillery | Political work                                         |

There were other institutional limits on the extent of Jiang's power consolidation in the PLA and on his use of this power. It is usually argued that Jiang won personal loyalty by appointing a large number of senior officers. But these appointments can be attributed to reasons other than Jiang's intention to consolidate power. *PLA Officers' Service Regulations* requires authorization by the CMC chair for the appointment of officers at and above the divisional command, or senior colonel, level. As a result, Jiang would inevitably have been responsible for a large number of such appointments; he served as the CMC chair for fifteen years, the PLA is a large bureaucracy with many senior positions to be filled in so long a period, and higher personnel turnover has resulted from new term and age limits. Also, the candidates for these appointments were recommended by the military professionals in the CMC, not picked by Jiang.<sup>18</sup> He interviewed some of the senior candidates, but his knowledge of them was limited by the little time they spent together. As a result, personal ties were not especially strong. Officers would fulfill

military tasks on Jiang's orders; however, without Deng's credentials, Jiang might have been unsure that they would follow an order from him to shoot unarmed civilians in another crisis on the scale of Tian'anmen.

From the officers' perspective, Jiang was to be supported and obeyed because he was the commander in chief. But when Hu became the CMC chair in September 2004, their support and obedience shifted to Hu, as shown by the behavior of Cao Gangchuan, Guo Boxiong, and Xu Caihou.<sup>19</sup> Guo and Xu are alleged Jiang "loyalists" but have not been replaced by a new entourage of Hu "loyalists"; to that extent, retention, removal, and new appointments of senior PLA officers are apparently more regularized by institutional and professional criteria (such as term and age limits and performance) than by the personal connections with and loyalty to individual party leaders. Finally, because rank affects remuneration and privileges after retirement, sometimes a decision by the commander in chief to promote officers to higher rank simply expresses appreciation of their services, by offering better material conditions for retirement. This can particularly explain such June 2004 appointments as You Xigui. Also, that announcement was made jointly by Jiang and Hu. This indicates that the transfer of power would take place soon, but not that there would be a power struggle between Jiang and Hu.

**Photo 4.** *Jiang and Hu speak to PLA delegates attending the second annual meeting of the 10th National People's Congress on 11 March 2004.*



Defense budget increases also cannot be explained by power consolidation alone. The 1991 Gulf War showed how large the technological gap had become between the most advanced militaries and the PLA, a gap that could be narrowed only by budget increases. The 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis and the possibility of U.S. intervention added a degree of urgency to the need to upgrade PLA capabilities, which would cost money. The post-1998 divestiture of the PLA from business activities led to a shortfall in income that had

to be offset by budget increases. In late 2002, the CMC endorsed a shift in emphasis of military modernization from mechanization to RMA-based informatization. This made digitized operational platforms the top priorities for acquisition. Because these items are technology-intensive, they are also capital-intensive and therefore require more financial investment. In the meantime, the Chinese economy had been growing rapidly since the early 1990s, which made it easier to argue for more spending on national defense. All these points were articulated and socialized by China's military planners in lobbying civilian leaders for defense budget increases. The resulting budget growth has continued since the retirement of Jiang from the CMC in 2004, suggesting that the policy has broader roots than would a crude ploy by Jiang to win support from military leaders.

*Objective Control: The Civilian Side*

If power struggle is not the primary purpose of power consolidation in the PLA, what is? Jiang's power consolidation aimed at implementing two types of policies. The first was to enhance party-state governance, or the legitimacy of CCP rule, by promoting economic growth and social stability. This would reduce the need to mobilize the PLA into domestic politics. The second was to confine the PLA to narrow military-technical tasks. Both approaches helped to maintain civil-military boundaries and enhance the cohesion of the PLA. In his writings, Jiang particularly stressed the importance of the functional specialization-based division of labor as society developed.<sup>20</sup> This was also a major lesson from the 1989 Tian'anmen incident and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991.

The CCP's dependence on military force in Tian'anmen for its survival, for instance, indicated the failure of the party-state to resolve major socioeconomic crises and implied its inability to manage social protests other than by such lethal means as tanks and sub-machine guns. This had contributed to a decline of the CCP's legitimacy to rule. Also, there are indications that the PLA was reluctant to get involved in the suppression of the rebellion, mainly because its image would be damaged.<sup>21</sup> Even for Deng, the task of persuading the PLA to intervene may have been far from easy, and it is likely that he had to exhaust much of his political capital to accomplish it. As we have noted, new leaders like Jiang do not possess the revolutionary and military credentials that Deng did, so they are not confident that the military would take their side in another such crisis. In the popular revolts that ended communist rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, rather than taking the party's side, the military mostly defied its orders.<sup>22</sup> This means the party's reliance on military force for its survival may not necessarily guarantee success but may quicken the demise of party rule instead.

These concerns explain why, at the Fourteenth CCP Congress of 1992, Jiang replaced the post-1989 policy of military control and ideological indoctrination with a new policy

of economic growth, a policy also associated with Deng's southern tour in early 1992.<sup>23</sup> It was intended to enhance the legitimacy of CCP rule by increasing income, improving living standards, and providing employment opportunities for the millions of people joining the labor force every year. It also helped to generate revenue needed for preventing and preempting crises. Strategies have been developed to manage social protests stemming from the downsides of rapid economic growth, such as massive urban unemployment due to reform of state-owned enterprises, overtaxation of the peasants, rampant corruption, wealth polarization, and environmental degradation. These strategies range from soft approaches (such as meeting the demands of the protesters and improving institutions for monitoring, expressing, and resolving grievances before they escalate) to hard ones (arresting politically conscious organizers and isolating and containing protests to prevent them from evolving into larger, better organized movements that challenge the CCP). Similarly, the People's Armed Police (PAP), which is primarily responsible for maintaining domestic social stability, has been substantially strengthened, and riot-control units with nonlethal weapons like tear gas and rubber bullets have been developed and deployed.<sup>24</sup> All these have reduced the need to mobilize the PLA against domestic political opposition.

#### *Objective Control: The Military Side*

On the military side, Jiang aimed to confine the PLA to military-technical tasks. For instance, he endorsed in 1993 the new PLA strategic principle of preparing for local war under high-tech conditions, in 1995 operationalizing the principle into a policy to transform the PLA from a manpower-intensive force to a technology-based one. He introduced the concept of "leapfrogging development" (跨越式发展) in 1997, shifting, as noted above, the emphasis of military modernization from mechanization (that is, adding new hardware platforms) to informatization (developing information technologies-based network and software) to narrow the technological gap with the more advanced militaries of the world. This led to the CMC's endorsement of a policy of "dual construction" (双化建设), referring to mechanization and informatization, in late 2002.<sup>25</sup> These technology-centric policies led to decisions to downsize the PLA by five hundred thousand billets in 1997 and another two hundred thousand in 2002.

Because bureaucracies and the ground force, or the elements most likely to become involved in domestic politics, suffered the most from the cuts, these decisions erected more technological barriers between the PLA and domestic politics. It is, for instance, more difficult to employ in situations of domestic turbulence such technology-intensive services as the PLAN, the PLAAF, and Second Artillery. The cuts, however, were unpopular in the PLA, because they eliminated numerous billets, particularly in sectors that believed in manpower-based people's war and mechanized warfare. Jiang was able to make these decisions after 1997 mainly because he felt his power was more secure than it

had been, as support from the top PLA leadership had become more solid with the death of Deng and the retirement of “old guards” like Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen from the CMC in 1997. By removing major bureaucratic obstacles, these decisions made it easier for Hu, in his turn, to consolidate power in the PLA when he assumed power. This shows that the relationship between Jiang and Hu was actually more cooperative than competitive.

Another major decision endorsed by Jiang and supervised by Hu for implementation after 1997 was to divest the PLA from its business activities, in 1998. This policy significantly reduced the domestic role of the PLA, so that it could focus on its military-technical tasks. Jiang has written that from the day he became the CMC chair, he wanted to get the PLA out of commercial business.<sup>26</sup> He was unable at first to do so, apparently because it had been more or less Deng’s decision to allow the PLA to go into business;<sup>27</sup> many children of the PLA elders were involved, and military units were poorly funded otherwise. But after 1997 Jiang felt sufficiently secure to introduce this policy without fear of displeasing Deng and the PLA elders; also, the PLA’s business had grown to the extent that it began to negatively affect the normal functioning of the national economy, and Zhu Rongji, the then premier, was particularly concerned. Furthermore, rapid economic growth had made it possible to allocate more funding to the PLA. Moreover, the policy presented itself as a good political strategy to control the PLA through control of the purse, by cutting off its extrabudgetary income. The policy would also help to reduce bickering over distribution of funds and the incidence of corruption cases among officers, thus enhancing the internal cohesion of the PLA. Finally, the policy resolved a thorny issue that may have complicated Hu’s journey to power. This is clearly another example of cooperation between Jiang and Hu to develop military policy.

### **Hu and the PLA**

Like Jiang, Hu took over, in 2002, the position of CCP general secretary with weak military credentials, having no service experience and few close connections in the PLA. Hu, however, had been the first CMC vice chair since 1999 and therefore had developed good relations with Jiang and the military professionals in the commission. His strategy initially was to employ Jiang to help him to deal with the PLA. In a “grand bargain,” he invited Jiang to continue as CMC chair after shedding his other party-state positions. Hu needed more experience in running the state and the economy and therefore wanted Jiang to preside over military affairs and foreign policy, where Jiang had more experience.<sup>28</sup> Deng had set a precedent of serving as CMC chair without other party or state portfolios for two years, beginning in 1987.

The strategy also represented a goodwill gesture to Jiang, who seemed eager to show that he was just as competent a commander in chief as his predecessors, if not more so. Partly to return the favor, Jiang endorsed the RMA-based transformation, leading to

the elimination of a large number of senior billets. This benefited Hu, because it made it easier for him to consolidate power in the PLA in the near future. Jiang stayed rather low-key and refrained from interfering in Hu's running of state affairs. By 2003, Jiang had handed over the foreign-affairs and Taiwan-affairs leadership positions to Hu. Hu had also begun to preside over major CMC decisions. At a CCP plenum in September 2004, Jiang volunteered to resign from the CMC chair, and Hu took over. More or less as a reciprocal gesture, Hu codified Jiang's theory of "three represents" (the party as representing the most advanced productive forces, culture, and the interests of the broadest masses) into the state constitution and published the *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* for all CCP members to study.

Partly because Jiang held the CMC chair until 2004, and partly because the PLA had become more professional under Jiang and therefore less politically inclined, Hu did not focus particularly on consolidating his position in the PLA after 2002 by cultivating personalized relations with senior officers or making personnel changes. Instead, Hu's policies have largely centered on objective control—that is, enhancing civilian governance, thus the CCP's legitimacy to rule, and endorsing programs that confine the PLA to its military-technical and external tasks. Both have helped him consolidate power in the PLA.

#### *Objective Control: The Civilian Side*

On the civilian side, Hu has attempted to reverse the excesses of single-minded economic growth, such as the widening of the income gap (which has led to serious social tension), lack of social security for large numbers of marginalized groups, official graft, and environmental damage. Hu believes that these issues cannot be resolved by more economic growth or riot-control techniques alone but rather require dedicated social policies. Otherwise, they could render economic growth unsustainable, thus undermining the CCP's legitimacy to rule, possibly triggering socioeconomic and political crises and military intervention. Hu has worked closely with the premier, Wen Jiabao, to divert investment from the rich coastal regions to the less developed heartland and the west, reduce tax burdens on farmers, remove restrictive regulations on migrant workers, develop basic social and medical safety nets for the poor and unemployed, fight corruption on a more substantial scale, and require "green" gross-domestic-product growth as a criterion for the career advancement of local officials.

It is still too early to determine the success of these policies, because vested interests at both the central and local levels have been recalcitrant, and some measures cannot succeed without genuine political reform. The 2008 financial crisis has also cast a shadow, by making job creation the top priority. But Hu and Wen's policies have proved immensely popular among the ordinary people in China, and contributed to the image

of the CCP leadership as having a heart and a human touch. The perception of fair and competent governance has clearly enhanced the CCP's legitimacy. This has helped to consolidate Hu's control over the PLA as well, because it has enhanced Hu's popularity among PLA officers and in the ranks.<sup>29</sup> Also the image of competent civilian governance reduces the preconditions needed for PLA intervention in politics.

As to maintaining social stability, Hu has continued Jiang's policy of minimizing the use of force. To deal with the numerous "mass incidents" (群体事件) concerning land and property compensation and environmental grievances, officials at various levels are required to increase transparency, conduct "face to face" explanation, employ persuasion, avoid "politicization" of reasonable economic and livelihood-related demands but meet them, and refrain from employing public security and PAP forces, which tend to escalate tension. Officials are also required, after resolution of incidents, to draw lessons from them, penalize accountable individuals, and formulate new "rectification plans."<sup>30</sup> To implement this policy, about 2,800 party secretaries and two thousand secretaries of party disciplinary inspection commissions, all at the county level, were brought to Beijing's Central Party School, the State Administration College, and the CCP Central Disciplinary Inspection Commission (CDIC) training center for instruction in investigating graft and abuse of power by basic-level (township and village) officials—offenses that are major triggers of mass incidents. Similarly, 3,080 public security bureau directors and 3,500 prosecutors, also from the county level, traveled to Beijing for training in how to prevent and control, and not escalate, mass incidents and how to "harmonize police-people relations."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council have recently issued regulations on penalizing and removing officials for major cases of misconduct, including mismanagement practices that trigger mass incidents.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the CCP CDIC has recently issued regulations on inspection and supervision at the county level, aimed at bureaucratic misconduct.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, domestic surveillance apparatuses, such as the First Bureau (domestic security) of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of State Security, have been strengthened to preempt mass incidents.<sup>34</sup> Millions of surveillance cameras are also planned for China's rural communities.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the PAP has continuously been reinforced to deal with domestic security threats. As the PLA continues to downsize, more infantry divisions are likely to be converted into PAP quick-reaction units.<sup>36</sup> All these measures have reduced the need to employ the military against domestic political threats and opposition.

A caveat to the PLA's relative detachment from handling domestic security threats concerns its involvement in suppressing the unrest in Tibet in March 2008. It is important, however, to note that the military units involved were relatively few and small in size and that their involvements were brief. Also, these units deliberately stayed in the background so that the PAP units could take the lead, mainly providing protected

transportation to the PAP personnel with their armored personnel carriers. Also, the denial of Chinese government spokesmen of the presence of military personnel in Lhasa and the effort made to conceal the license plates of military vehicles at the site showed that the regime is concerned about the negative image of employing the PLA against domestic political opposition.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, in the eyes of many both in and outside China, the unsettled issues concerning Tibet have both domestic and external, not purely domestic, origins, particularly as compared with hinterland provinces. Finally, in the most recent riot, in Ürümqi of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, on 5 July 2009, PAP reinforcement was transported or airlifted by civilian airlines from provinces of Gansu, Jiangsu, Henan, and Fujian to Ürümqi to “maintain stability” (维稳). No evidence, however, shows that any PLA active-service unit was directly employed.<sup>38</sup>

These policies could not have been possible without a high level of consensus, based on power consolidation, among the CCP leadership. This consolidation and consensus are possible mainly because without a strongman like Deng, institutional positions become especially important, and Hu, holding the positions of CCP general secretary and state president, is “the first among equals.” Hu is also assisted by Wen, who heads the State Council, the most influential institution dealing with nonmilitary affairs in China. Jiang, though he still held the CMC chair position for a time, was not comparable to Deng in credentials, status, or prestige; therefore, the position confined him narrowly to military affairs. Also, Hu’s policies are articulated as a further development of Jiang’s policy of economic growth, not as an affront to Jiang’s legacy. Both Jiang and Hu want economic growth to sustain the CCP’s legitimacy to rule. But Hu wants to add a “human face” to the growth so that it can be more balanced and better sustained. These policies are also popular. Both made it more difficult for Jiang to mobilize his Shanghai colleagues in the Politburo Standing Committee against these policies.

Also, Zeng Qinghong, an alleged loyalist of Jiang from Shanghai, jumped on Hu’s bandwagon, because Hu holds formal leadership positions, is popular, and thus represents the future.<sup>39</sup> Jiang’s other allies, like Wu Bangguo and Jia Qinglin, are of mediocre political acumen and not likely to challenge Hu, and the institutions they head, the National People’s Congress and the National People’s Political Consultative Conference, are not highly influential over policies. Jiang’s inability to salvage his Shanghai colleagues, such as Chen Liangyu, in the countergraft investigations reduced even more the credibility of a coherent and robust “Shanghai faction” assisting Jiang in his power struggle against Hu. Most important, Hu’s success in power consolidation within the CCP leadership has made a significant impact on the PLA’s perception of him. It is likely that most PLA senior officers see Hu as a prudent and competent leader, and this should contribute to Hu’s power consolidation to control the PLA.

### *Objective Control: The Military Side*

On the military side, Hu has continued Jiang's program of RMA-based transformation of the PLA. In May 2003, he presided over a Politburo study session where researchers from the Academy of Military Science (AMS) lectured the members on world trends in RMA and priorities for China's military modernization.<sup>40</sup> Hu met with Chinese astronauts and watched the whole processes of launching three manned spacecraft, in October 2003, October 2005, and September 2008, respectively. He has initiated a campaign to study RMA-related subjects in the PLA and has supported personnel reform to appoint officers who understand the RMA to higher ranks and key positions. For instance, Li Ji'nai and Chen Bingde, who ran the *Shenzhou V* and *Shenzhou VI* programs, respectively, now hold the positions of the director of the PLA's General Political Department and chief of the PLA's General Staff Department.<sup>41</sup> Hu has stressed regular military training and exercises, rules and regulations, and effective management as major ways to regulate behavior.<sup>42</sup> All these clearly aim to confine the PLA to its functional and technical expertise—a good political strategy to enhance the objective, or institutional, control of the PLA.

More important, however, at a CMC expanded conference in late 2004 Hu introduced a new military policy that defined the four missions of the PLA: to “serve as an important source of strength for consolidating the party's governing position” (为党巩固执政地位提供重要的力量保证); to “provide a strong security guarantee for the important period of strategic opportunity for national development” (为维护国家发展的重要战略机遇期提供坚强的安全保障); to “serve as a forceful strategic support for safeguarding national interests” (为维护国家利益提供有力的战略支撑); and to “play an important role in upholding world peace and promoting common development” (为维护世界和平与促进共同发展发挥重要作用).<sup>43</sup>

The first mission may contradict somewhat objective control, or alternatively it may reflect the “Chinese characteristics” aspect of objective control. But it is the politically correct thing to say for any new CCP leader, and it really refers to the “party's absolute leadership of the army” (党对军队的绝对领导), enshrining civilian control. Party leadership of the PLA, however, may be largely nominal, mainly because the political commissar system, the ostensible tool by which the party controls the PLA, is an integral component of the military command structure, not external to it. As a result, the true incentive for political commissars is to perform well within this structure so that they can advance their careers. They are therefore unlikely to investigate deviations and report on military commanders to outside party authorities. A critical test of the political orientation of the political commissars is a crisis, such as Tian'anmen in 1989. If political commissars are more loyal to the party than to the PLA, then one should find that the majority of political commissars followed the order of the party leaders to suppress

the students but that the majority of commanders refused to do so. Instead, there were significant numbers of political commissars and commanders on both sides of the issue. As argued in the introduction of this study, the central reasons for the PLA following the party order in 1989 was not enforcement of political commissars but Deng's prestige-based political capital and his loyalists' control of the CMC.

Also, the post-Mao objectives of the party and the PLA are consistent: to promote national economic and technological development and national defense modernization. This is very different from Mao's time, when pursuit of military expertise was criticized as practicing a "bourgeois military line" that undermined the chairman's "proletarian revolutionary line," leading to a continuous witch hunt for class enemies in the PLA and causing severe political divisions there. Finally, the new *PLA Political Work Regulations*, issued in late 2003, contained important revisions. One is that political officers are to "uphold the legal rights and interests of the military and military personnel" (维护军队和军人的合法权益). They are also to "give full play to the operational function of political work" (发挥政治工作作战功能), characterized mainly in terms of information operations, such as "opinion warfare," "psychological warfare," and "law warfare."<sup>44</sup> These revisions were clearly aimed to integrate political officers into the PLA by redefining their objectives and functional expertise in ways more in line with those of the PLA. All these indicators show that the best way for the PLA to help in consolidating the CCP's governing position is not to intervene in civilian governance but to develop and perfect its own functional and technical expertise.

The other three missions are more in line with objective control. The second, for instance, refers to continued military modernization to enhance the credibility of deterrence against threats, such as formal Taiwan independence. Strategic stability ensures a peaceful external environment for economic development at a time when China can benefit from the U.S. concentration on countering terrorism, from globalization, and also from the integration of China into the global economy.<sup>45</sup>

The third and fourth missions were not only absent under Jiang Zemin but unprecedented in PLA history. The third calls on the PLA to secure China's newly emerging interests in outer, maritime, and electromagnetic space in addition to its traditional security interests, such as its sovereign territories, airspace, and waters.<sup>46</sup> The fourth is for the PLA to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations and international humanitarian assistance. What is remarkable is that these new missions are externally oriented. Externalization of the PLA is clearly a good political strategy for Hu, if he is to control the PLA. This is because, as the end of the Cold War showed, a declining focus of the military on external threats tends to make civil-military relations more difficult to manage.<sup>47</sup>

### *Power Consolidation*

In June 2006, Hu promoted ten senior officers to three-star general and many more to lower ranks. By July, PLA officers had received a 100 percent increase in their salaries, and better-quality uniforms had been issued. As early as since 1999, Hu has regularly received briefings on major military policy issues and attended CMC meetings. He has also paid many visits to basic-level units, attended and delivered speeches at party congresses of major PLA institutions, and maintained good relations with senior officers. While these can be interpreted as efforts to consolidate power in the PLA, as discussed earlier, there are strict limits on how far the new generations of CCP leaders can go to do so and how they can use such power. In comparison with Deng's and Jiang's years, the promotion rate of senior officers under Hu to the rank of general is not high.<sup>48</sup> CMC membership at the Seventeenth CCP Congress in the fall of 2007 involved only minor changes (compare tables 3 and 4). Cao Gangchuan was retired because he was seventy-two, exceeding the normative retirement age of sixty-eight for CMC members. Wu Shengli and Xu Qiliang, who succeeded the deceased Zhang Dingfa and the sixty-eight-year-old Qiao Qingchen as the new PLAN and PLAAF commanders, became new members because the navy and air force commanders have been CMC members since 2004.

Jiang was lenient on disciplinary issues in his early years as the CMC chair, for fear of offending Deng and the PLA elders, but Hu has been bolder. Wang Shouye, a deputy navy commander, was dismissed from his office and court-martialed in early 2006 for taking bribes of millions of dollars and keeping mistresses. Also in 2006, the CMC appointed a small leading group to audit the financial conditions of a thousand senior officers.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in June 2006 disciplinary actions were taken against four senior and seven lower-ranking air force officers as the result of a crash of an airborne warning and control plane that killed forty people in Anhui. The penalties ranged from recording demerits, serious warnings, and demotions to dismissal from office.<sup>50</sup>

There are several reasons why Hu has felt secure enough to enforce discipline against senior officers soon after becoming the CMC chair. Because Jiang's credentials, status, and prestige are not comparable to those of Deng and PLA elders, his influence over Hu is much less than Deng's and PLA elders' influence over Jiang. Also, Hu has accumulated some political capital in the PLA, having been in the CMC since 1999. His objective-control measures have also contributed to the accumulation of this capital. Finally, the professionalizing trend within the PLA has had a dampening effect on the political aspiration of senior officers. Because these disciplinary measures were driven by specific issues, it may be inappropriate to treat them as stratagems meant to politicize and divide the officer corps in a power struggle against political opponents. In any case, Hu's non-sense style enhanced his authority as the new commander in chief of the PLA.

**Table 3.** *Central Military Commission of the Sixteenth CCP Congress (September 2004–2007)*

| Name                                           | Position                        | Date of Birth | Provincial Origin | Education                              | Unit Origin                         | Military Expertise/ Combat Experience      |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Hu Jintao<br>(see table 1 for information)     | Chair                           |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Guo Boxiong<br>(see table 1 for information)   | Vice chair                      |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Cao Gangchuan<br>(see table 1 for information) | Vice chair and defense minister |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Xu Caihou<br>(see table 1 for information)     | Vice chair                      |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Liang Guanglie (see table 2 for information)   | GSD chief                       |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Li Ji'nai (see table 2 for information)        | GPD director                    |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Liao Xilong<br>(see table 2 for information)   | GLD director                    |               |                   |                                        |                                     |                                            |
| Chen Bingde                                    | GAD director                    | 1941          | Jiangsu           | PLA Military College, Beijing          | 60th Army, Nanjing MR               | Command and staff, infantry                |
| Zhang Dingfa                                   | Navy commander                  | 1943          | Shanghai          | Qingdao Naval Submarine Academy        | North Sea Fleet                     | Command and staff, submarine force         |
| Qiao Qingchen                                  | Air Force commander             | 1939          | Henan             | PLAAF 6th Aviation School              | 4th Air Corps, Nanjing MR Air Force | Aviator, command and staff, Air Force      |
| Jin Zhiyuan                                    | Second Artillery commander      | 1944          | Hubei             | Wuwei Artillery School, Gansu Province | Base 56 (Qinghai), Second Artillery | Command and staff, strategic missile force |

**Table 4.** *Central Military Commission of the Seventeenth CCP Congress (2007)*

| Name                                         | Position                   | Date of Birth | Provincial Origin | Education                                  | Unit Origin                            | Military Expertise/ Combat Experience              |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Hu Jintao (see table 1 for information)      | Chair                      |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Guo Boxiong (see table 1 for information)    | Vice chair                 |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Xu Caihou (see table 1 for information)      | Vice chair                 |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Liang Guanglie (see table 2 for information) | Defense minister           |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Chen Bingde (see table 3 for information)    | GSD chief                  |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Li Ji'nai (see table 2 for information)      | GPD director               |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Liao Xilong (see table 2 for information)    | GLD director               |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |
| Chang Wanquan                                | GAD director               | 1949          | Henan             | Wei'nan Teachers College, Shaanxi Province | 47th Army, Lanzhou MR                  | Command and staff, infantry                        |
| Wu Shengli                                   | Navy commander             | 1945          | Hebei             | PLA Measuring and Mapping College          | 6th Destroyer Flotilla, East Sea Fleet | Sea measuring and mapping, command and staff, Navy |
| Xu Qiliang                                   | Air Force commander        | 1950          | Shandong          | PLAAF 5th Aviation School                  | 8th Air Corps, Nanjing MR Air Force    | Aviator, command and staff, Air Force              |
| Jin Zhiyuan (see table 3 for information)    | Second Artillery commander |               |                   |                                            |                                        |                                                    |

## Implications of Civil-Military Bifurcation for Crisis Management

While objective control, or allowing more institutional autonomy for military professionalization, may substantially benefit military modernization, it has also reinforced civil-military bifurcation, which has produced the unintended consequence of difficulty in interagency cooperation and coordination in the management of crises. The old party-army symbiosis, based on personal relationships, may have been characterized by political infighting among political-military factions, but in times of crisis, such as the Korean War and the 1979 war with Vietnam, it enabled charismatic political-military leaders like Mao and Deng to make quick decisions without much institutional hindrance. Since then, the institutionalization of civil-military boundaries that began under Deng has made it increasingly difficult for the new generations of uncharismatic technocrats like Jiang and Hu to do so.<sup>51</sup>

### *Foreign-Policy Crisis Management*

There have been several major cases where a lack of interagency coordination appears to have incurred high costs, at least in terms of diplomacy and image, on China. In April 2001 a patrolling Chinese jet interceptor collided with a U.S. EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft seventy miles off the coast of Hainan Island, leading to the loss of the Chinese aircraft, the death of its pilot, and the crash landing of the American aircraft on Hainan, where the crew was detained. The crisis remained unresolved for about eleven days.<sup>52</sup> One major reason for the delay seems to have been that the PLA took a much harder line than China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), insisting that the United States be required to terminate its reconnaissance activities in China's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and compensate the Chinese losses. This hard line reportedly made it difficult for Jiang Zemin to build quickly a civil-military consensus on resolving the issue—whereas a quick resolution is presumably what Jiang desired, to maintain a good and stable U.S.-Chinese relationship so he could focus on issues of economic development.

Similarly, in November 2004 a Chinese nuclear-powered attack submarine intruded, while submerged, in Japanese territorial waters southwest of Okinawa for two hours. It was about a week before the MFA acknowledged the incident, attributing the intrusion to a technical error, and expressed regret.<sup>53</sup> This happened at a time when Hu was preparing to attend an Asia-Pacific Cooperation Forum summit in Chile, where he was to meet with Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi to find ways to improve strained Sino-Japanese relations. The incident seems not only to have caught the MFA by surprise but to have added difficulty to Hu's effort to improve Sino-Japanese relations. It was even suggested that Hu, the new CMC chair, had not even been aware of the operation.

In January 2007, China launched a ground-based ballistic missile carrying a kinetic-kill vehicle. It impacted and destroyed an aging Chinese weather satellite orbiting 537 miles

above the earth. The United States, Japan, Australia, and Britain asked Beijing for an explanation but met with prolonged silence. Only after twelve days did the MFA officially acknowledge the test. China's space program is largely managed by the PLA's General Armament Department; such a belated response suggests that the MFA may not have been informed of the test. Nonetheless, the test contradicted the image of China as a rising power committed to peaceful development that Hu wanted to project to the world. The test produced numerous pieces of debris that could interfere with space activities for years to come, and, more important, might have triggered an arms race in space.<sup>54</sup>

Just before the Thanksgiving holiday of 2007, the U.S. aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* and accompanying ships approached Hong Kong to make a long-planned port visit. Without warning, China suddenly denied them entry; the decision was reversed abruptly, again without explanation, but the ships were already on their way to Japan. This incident again seems to indicate a lack of coordination between the PLA and the MFA; apparently the soldiers wanted to turn the U.S. ships away while the diplomats tried unsuccessfully to neutralize the fallout. It also implies Chinese insensitivity, in thwarting the planned family reunion of American sailors. Moreover, this happened only weeks after a visit to China by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who had aimed to initiate a long-term dialogue. Again, the disruption seems to have made it more difficult to maintain a stable U.S.-Chinese relationship, which Hu is understood to have wanted badly.<sup>55</sup>

In early March 2009, five Chinese ships—two trawlers, two Fisheries Administration patrol vessels, and a naval intelligence ship—blocked and surrounded the U.S. ocean surveillance ship USNS *Impeccable* (T-AGOS 23) seventy-five miles south of Hainan. The trawlers attempted to snag the towing cable of *Impeccable*'s sonar array with a grappling hook. The incident led to the exchange of protests between the two governments. It happened only eight days after the two countries had agreed to restore a military-to-military dialogue; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had just visited China, and China's foreign minister, Yang Jieshi, was just about to visit Washington, D.C.<sup>56</sup> Once more, the incident clearly made it more difficult to improve U.S.-Chinese relations as China's civilian leadership appears to have desired.

In these incidents a lack of civil-military interagency coordination may have been the cause of diplomatic and image costs to China, but several caveats are in order. First, other related but different factors may have caused delay. The indecision about the EP-3 incident, for instance, may be attributable in part to Jiang's absence at the time on a state visit to Latin American countries, to frustration stemming from the PLA's failure to recover the lost pilot, or to the absence of a more forthcoming American apology. Moreover, China's civilian leader might sometimes prefer the more hawkish positions of the military, to enhance his bargaining leverage with foreign counterparts in negotiating a resolution. In the case of the EP-3 incident, this bargaining power was further

enhanced by the fact that China held the crew, which made it difficult for the United States to retaliate. While China might have paid a high cost if it had indefinitely delayed resolution of the crisis, China's civilian leader had no incentive to resolve it too quickly, on U.S. terms.

In addition, China's civilian leader may calculate that the benefits of building domestic consensus outweigh the diplomatic and image penalties of not reacting quickly. This is particularly the case if these costs are symbolic and difficult to measure or if the chance of escalation to a real military conflict is low (either because the other side may be uncertain about the effects of escalation or because China could retaliate effectively). Collective decision making and consensus building, for instance, have become the new norms with the end of the era of charismatic leaders. One of the often-cited benefits of these norms is that they can minimize the chance of such arbitrary and costly decisions as another costly war or another Cultural Revolution, particularly under a condition of high uncertainty. As a result, China's civilian leader has an incentive to abide by these internal norms in a crisis, because doing so will enhance domestic credibility and legitimacy. This also seems a rational choice under conditions of highly imperfect information.

Similarly, one of the new missions Hu assigned to the PLA since becoming the CMC chair in 2004, as we have seen, was to secure China's newly emerging interests in outer, maritime, and electromagnetic space; Hu has also promoted PLA informatization. In both instances, space capabilities are essential. So Hu had a reason to endorse the ASAT test, and thereby match his words with deeds, which would enhance his credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the PLA high command. In comparison, space debris may be a minor issue; it did not cause a problem in earlier, non-Chinese ASAT tests. It was also unclear that the Chinese test would trigger a space arms race, because the military space programs of other major powers were ahead of the Chinese test; China still has a long way to go to operationalize its space war-fighting capabilities. Finally, the prolonged silence and lack of an explanation about the ASAT test were consistent with Chinese behavior with respect to the testing of strategic weapon systems, where secrecy is intended to aggravate the sense of uncertainty for China's opponents, thus enhancing the deterrent effect.<sup>57</sup>

There are other incentives as well for China's civilian leader not to resolve foreign-policy crises too quickly on the terms of foreign states. He, for instance, does not want to be perceived by domestic constituencies as compromising Chinese national interests, particularly at the time of power transition when he may still be relatively inexperienced and therefore politically vulnerable. He may also leverage foreign-policy crises to foster populism and nationalism and to enhance his domestic popularity by scapegoating foreigners. Jiang and Hu desired a stable U.S.-Chinese relationship, but not at all costs. If

they were to make too many concessions, their domestic legitimacy may have been hurt and therefore their rule destabilized.

Furthermore, it may be wrong to interpret some of the cited incidents as instances of poor interagency coordination. The *Impeccable* incident, for instance, might actually show good Chinese civil-military coordination. The two fishing boats that confronted the U.S. ship directly constituted the first line, backed up by two of China's Fisheries Administration patrol ships, which constituted the second line, while a naval intelligence ship formed the third line. Employing civilian ships to confront the American ship directly seems to have been a well-thought-out interagency plan, calculated to gain publicity points by showing China as the weak and victimized side. Also, Jin Yi'nan, the strategic studies director at China's National Defense University, complains that U.S. reconnaissance in China's EEZ has been a long-standing thorn in the side of Sino-U.S. military relations. The issue was raised in the PLA's Beijing meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia David Sedney in late February 2009, an event that was intended to resume the U.S.-Chinese military-to-military dialogue.<sup>58</sup> The MFA would have helped to arrange for the meeting and so would have been notified of the agenda. The CMC and Hu should be aware of the major issues to be discussed in similar meetings. Finally, making U.S. reconnaissance activities in China's EEZ difficult is consistent with Hu's requirement on the PLA to defend China's newly emerging interests in China's maritime space and with the call by China's central leadership over the years to "develop the national maritime consciousness." As a result, Hu has reason to endorse such a plan to enhance his credibility and popularity as the commander in chief of the PLA.

Even the November 2007 *Kitty Hawk* incident may actually reflect a well coordinated plan. The decision to refuse the carrier's visit to Hong Kong can be interpreted as an exhibition of MFA displeasure over a visit by the Dalai Lama to the White House and of PLA disapproval of a recent American decision to upgrade Taiwan's missile system. The quick reversal of the decision would have been meant to show that the demonstration was measured and limited, that China was still willing to maintain workable relations with the United States.

The only incident that convincingly shows weak central and civil-military interagency coordination seems to be the Chinese nuclear submarine's two-hour, submerged intrusion into the Japanese territorial waters. It is still unclear what caused the intrusion, but it is highly unlikely that Hu ordered it. Also, the MFA is unlikely to have been aware of the operation; it would have objected to it as likely to produce a major diplomatic incident.

Because the costs of these incidents are largely symbolic rather than substantial, there seems to be no sense of urgency to introduce corrective measures. A central, integrated

interagency coordinating institution similar to the U.S. National Security Council has been in discussion for many years, but there is no evidence that one has been fully established. Also, detailed information about the Chinese foreign-policy processes is generally lacking. Both factors suggest that any assumption that weak civil-military interagency coordination is causing Chinese delay or dysfunction in crisis response would be premature.

However, and in contrast to foreign-policy cases, wherein information remains highly speculative, a domestic crisis offers concrete and convincing indicators on the relationship between civil-military interagency coordination and crisis management. This is because the stakes are much higher in these crises, where there could be huge material and human losses, which in turn puts the competence and legitimacy of major leaders and institutions to a critical test. Moreover, more information has become available about these domestic crises. Finally, such crises are usually followed by observable remedial mechanisms and measures for prevention and preemption. The Chinese management of the Sichuan earthquake relief in May 2008 is a case in point.

#### *Domestic Crisis Management: Sichuan Earthquake Relief*

On the early afternoon of 12 May 2008, an earthquake of Richter magnitude 8 hit northern Sichuan Province, which has about eleven million inhabitants. The first seventy-two hours after an earthquake are critical, and most of the PLA troops deployed for earthquake relief arrived within this time, with the central objective of “saving lives” (救人). Within three hours of the earthquake, for instance, the PLA had mobilized and deployed sixteen thousand troops from the Chengdu Military Region (MR), the PLAAF, and the Sichuan provincial PAP. Within twelve hours another thirty-four thousand were mobilized from the more distant Ji’nan MR and the PLAAF airborne army in Hubei Province. On 14 May another 32,600 troops were mobilized, including a marine brigade from Guangdong Province and sixty-one helicopters from army aviation and the PLAAF. In total, China deployed 137,000 troops (including more than twenty thousand PAP men) for the Sichuan earthquake relief. It is important to note that this employment was mostly requested and authorized by Hu Jintao.<sup>59</sup> It is likely Hu was in close contact with Wen Jiabao, who reached the scene of the quake within two hours after it occurred. This contact is likely to have shaped decisions about the type and scale of the troop deployment.

The PLA transferred more than a million people in distress to safer areas and provided extensive aids in terms of tents, temporary quarters, food, potable water, medical treatment, and disease control. Nonetheless, the central indicator of “saving lives” was not impressive: only 3,336 people were saved from the ruins of the earthquake by the PLA.<sup>60</sup> In the end, over sixty-nine thousand were confirmed killed, with over eighteen thousand

reported missing. A more careful examination of the case shows that weak civil-military interagency coordination was a major reason why the PLA was not able to save more lives. The episode raises major new issues in China's civil-military relations, mainly in terms of interagency coordination-based command and control and also regarding force structure, equipment, and training in crisis management.

For higher command and control in the Sichuan earthquake-relief operation, a two-level structure was established: the Army Command Group for Resisting Quake and Relieving Disaster (军队抗震救灾指挥组), headed by the PLA chief of General Staff Chen Bingde, which is responsible for deploying out-of-area troops to the earthquake region; and the Chengdu MR Joint Command Department for Resisting Quake and Relieving Disaster (成都军区抗震救灾联合指挥部), headed by Chengdu MR commander Li Shimin, which is responsible for deploying all the troops within the earthquake region. For interagency coordination, the two-level PLA structure was to follow the orders of the State Council Command Department for Resisting Quake and Relieving Disaster (国务院抗震救灾指挥部), headed by Wen, who was at the scene of the earthquake.<sup>61</sup>

**Photo 5.** Wen Jiabao issuing orders to a PLA senior officer at the site of the Sichuan earthquake.

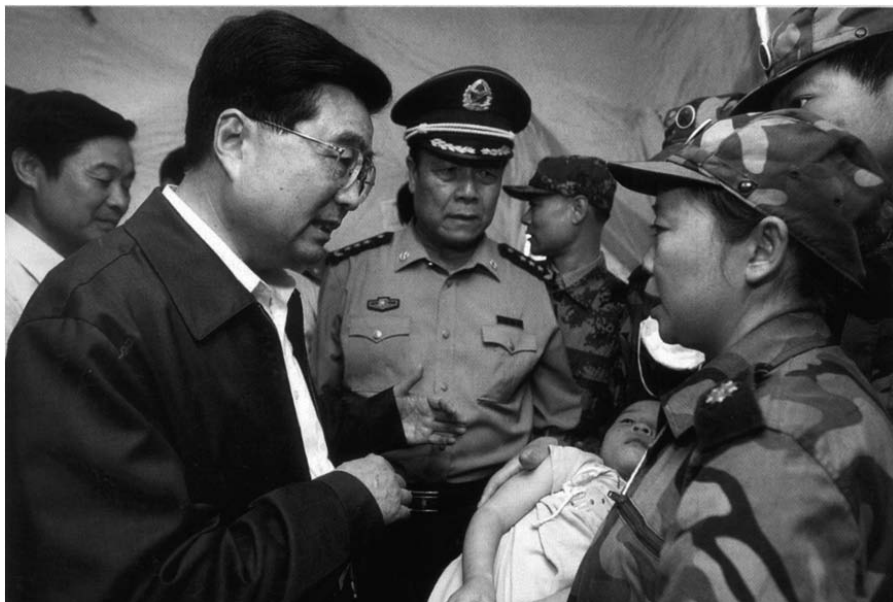


As a result partly of the urgent desire to save the lives of the hundred thousand people trapped in the epicenter of the earthquake, Wenchuan County, and partly of his lack of understanding of the PLA (stemming from the fact that he had never served in the military), Wen somewhat hastily ordered the PLA to reach the epicenter within thirty-four hours of the earthquake. The commanders on the scene, however, saw reaching Wenchuan on such short notice as almost impossible; Wenchuan, although only one hundred kilometers from the city of Dujiangyan, where most of the PLA troops had gathered, is

surrounded by impassable mountains, and all the roads were now blocked by massive rock slides and debris. Efforts to clear the landslides were hampered by incessant rain, minor quakes, and a shortage of heavy road construction equipment. Wen also requested the PLA to send helicopters or air-drop troops into Wenchuan. To the PLA commanders, however, because of the rain, quakes, four-thousand-meter-high mountains, and a visibility of less than twenty meters, such an order amounted to a reckless risking of the lives of their soldiers. The tension between Wen and the PLA commanders grew to the point where Wen allegedly snapped, “It is the people who have raised you. It’s up to you to see what to do! Even with two legs, you must walk in there” (是人民养育了你们, 你们自己看着办! 你们就是靠双腿走, 也要给我走进去).<sup>62</sup>

A PLA helicopter attempted six times to reach Wenchuan but failed. As the sky cleared on 14 May, one hundred paratroopers were airborne; fifteen of them, having left wills behind, jumped at a height of five thousand meters, with no ground command or guidance, no ground signposts, and no meteorological information. The plan to air-drop the rest of the paratroopers was aborted when the fifteen, who landed safely, reported that the terrain was too treacherous for a massive airdrop. In any case, late the night before a PAP unit had reached Wenchuan by foot, only to find the damage there not as serious as had been believed. By 16 May Hu had to replace Wen as the commander in chief on the earthquake scene, partly because it had become difficult for Wen and the PLA commanders to coordinate, as a result of the mutual mistrust that had developed.<sup>63</sup>

**Photo 6.** Hu talks with a PLA medical officer at the site of Sichuan earthquake on 16 May 2008.



For lower-level interagency coordination in command and control, the central difficulty was the lack of collateral coordination between the PLA units and the county, town-ship, and village government authorities. This is because most of the troops deployed were centrally or MR-controlled quick reaction forces (快反部队) and strategic reserve forces (战略预备队), which have no regular or institutional interactions and relationship with the local government authorities. As a result, any coordinated tasks had to go up and down their own chain of command before approval. This cumbersome and time-consuming process contributed to a situation where some units idled while none were available where relief work needed to be done; the units could not adapt well to the rapidly changing circumstances on the ground.<sup>64</sup> A high cost was incurred as a result of this inability to take timely action.

One major indicator of this weak local interagency coordination was the postearthquake call by PLA analysts to employ reserve elements (预备役部队) controlled by provincial military districts (MDs) and local militia for disaster relief. The reserve and the militia units are more familiar with local geographical, social, and cultural conditions and are closer to crisis locations. But most important, these local units are under the dual leadership (双重领导) of the PLA and civilian chains of command; provincial and local party secretaries serve as first political commissars of these units. This institutionalized relationship would facilitate local civil-military interagency coordination in managing crises, thus contributing to lower costs and higher effectiveness.<sup>65</sup>

Another major civil-military issue arising from the PLA's Sichuan earthquake relief experience concerns force structure, equipment, and training. Except for a few small support units specializing in engineering, road construction, transportation, and medicine, which are highly applicable to civil disaster-relief work, the troops deployed for the Sichuan earthquake were armed and trained to fight conventional wars. Their arms and equipment could not be used for disaster relief. Some heavy machinery, such as excavators and bulldozers, was issued to the involved units at the last moment, but the troops were not trained to handle it. The majority of the troops were issued light tools, such as spades and picks. The attempt to remove large concrete pieces of collapsed buildings with light tools and bare hands turned out to be ineffective and lost time that was precious for saving lives. Inappropriate force structure and equipment and lack of specialized training significantly increased the costs of the Sichuan earthquake relief.<sup>66</sup>

Again, a major indicator of the relative ineffectiveness of the PLA in the Sichuan episode was the postquake endorsement of remedies to correct these deficiencies. For instance, at the CMC meeting held in December 2008 Hu requested the PLA to adopt for civil-military interagency coordination in command and control a new core-value concept (核心价值观): "Be loyal to the party, love the people, render service to the state, dedicate to mission, and uphold honor" (忠于党, 热爱人民, 报效国家, 献身使命, 崇尚

**Photo 7.** *PLA paratroopers with picks and shovels await transport to the site of the Sichuan earthquake.*



荣誉).<sup>67</sup> What Hu really means by requiring the PLA to “be loyal to the party” is that the CMC and other senior PLA officers are to follow the orders of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee, of which Wen Jiabao is the second-ranking member. In the same way, by requesting the PLA to render service to the state, he means that the PLA officers are to coordinate well with state authorities, including the State Council (headed by Wen) at the highest level, in fulfilling nonwar military operations, including disaster relief. Similarly, there has been extensive discussion on how to institutionalize, and formalize in law, civil-military interagency coordination in command and control, particularly in terms of who issues orders, who follows orders, and what the legal accountability is of various parties involved concerning these orders.<sup>68</sup>

With regard to force structure, equipment, and training, Hu reiterated his instruction to the PLA to “enhance the capabilities of the military to cope with multiple types of security threat and fulfill diversified military missions” (提高军队应对多种安全威胁、完成多样化军事任务的能力), outlined in his report to the Seventeenth CCP Congress of October 2007. This means that the central criteria of PLA combat effectiveness needed to be expanded from traditional preparation for war fighting, narrowly defined, to the broader areas of counterterrorism, stability operations, and emergency and natural-disaster relief. As a result, major changes needed to be brought about in the areas of strategic guidance, interagency coordination-based command and control, unit specialization, armament and equipment development, and training.<sup>69</sup> This call for a fundamental shift in military missions, however, was implicitly criticized by various

PLA analysts. PLAAF colonel Dai Xu, for instance, argues that the primary mission of the elite forces controlled by the services and MRs is defense against foreign invasion. As a result, they are not organized, armed, or trained for disaster relief. China is prone to natural disasters, he noted, and using these forces regularly for such a mission will not only prove ineffective but could harm national security, at a time when China's external security environment is still quite grim.<sup>70</sup>

Toward the end of 2008 and, particularly, in a session with the PLA delegates to the National People's Congress annual meeting on 12 March 2009, Hu modified his earlier instruction to the PLA, seemingly taking into consideration the implicit criticisms of fundamentally shifting its missions. Hu now instructed the PLA to place "emphasis on enhancing *core military capabilities* construction, while at the same time [to] handle well nonwar military capabilities construction in overall planning" (重点加强核心军事能力建设, 同时统筹搞好非战争军事能力建设). That is, the PLA was to continue to emphasize preparation to fight and win "local war under informatized conditions."<sup>71</sup>

**Photo 8.** Hu receives PLA delegates attending the second annual meeting of the 11th National People's Congress on 11 March 2009.



This modification of policy has two implications. First, rather than requiring the PLA to shift its missions fundamentally, it points to a division of labor among the elite forces, the provincial MD-controlled reserve and militia forces, and the PAP. The elite forces would concentrate on traditional security missions, which also lay a solid basis for an ability to support nontraditional security missions. The MD reserves and militias would focus on preparation for nontraditional security missions or nonwar military

operations, including emergency and natural-disaster relief.<sup>72</sup> The elite forces, however, would support these operations, particularly with transportation and logistics. Moreover, because the elite forces have become more technology-intensive and therefore need more systematic, lengthy, and uninterrupted training to translate informatized platforms into combat effectiveness, the PAP would take full responsibility for operations to maintain domestic social stability. As a result, more motorized infantry units of the PLA will likely be transferred to the PAP to reinforce its mobile units (机动部队).<sup>73</sup> Second, the elite forces would designate units with appropriate specializations and expertise, arms, equipment, and training (those specializing in engineering, medicine, road construction, transportation, and nuclear, biological, and chemical defense) for nonwar military operations (flood and earthquake relief; nuclear, biological, and chemical disaster relief; transportation disaster relief; and international peacekeeping).<sup>74</sup>

### *The Gulf of Aden Mission: A Success Story?*

The PLA's participation in fighting piracy in the Gulf of Aden appeared to be more successful in terms of civil-military interagency coordination. The fact that no sudden, unexpected incident (突发事件) was involved allowed more time for planning and preparation. Also, the PLAN seems to be interested in opportunities to expose itself to genuine maritime conditions in more distant seas, in order to gain operational experience. Both factors contributed to this success, but more forthcoming PLA cooperation and coordination with the state authorities to remedy deficiencies revealed in the Sichuan earthquake relief were clearly also important.

The Ministry of Transportation (MT) of China's State Council first raised the issue of deploying naval ships to escort Chinese merchant ships against pirates in Gulf of Aden, at a meeting of the MT and MFA in mid-October 2008. The MT had two concerns. One was that the piracy issue had become so disruptive that Chinese shipping firms might have had to breach contracts and so lose global market share; relatedly, four hundred thousand Chinese merchant mariners needed to be protected. The second was that diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue through foreign governments and international organizations had been difficult and ineffective. The MT, MFA, and PLAN quickly reached consensus on the urgency and importance of the issue after intensive coordination and research on three key issues: capacity, logistic supply, and international law. The PLAN Military Art Studies Institute (海军军事学术研究所) in Beijing, for instance, analyzed legal issues concerning counterpiracy naval operations: whether it is legal to deploy naval ships against pirates; what they can do and how much force they can use; legal accountability if a warship fails to rescue a vessel under pirate attack; and what must be done if Chinese naval ships enter Somali territorial waters.<sup>75</sup> By 26 December 2008 a naval escort group had set sail for the Gulf of Aden.

**Photo 9.** A Chinese warship patrols the sea-lanes against pirates in the Gulf of Aden.



A circular coordination chain has been introduced for interagency coordination in command and control in counterpiracy operations. It begins with voluntary applications of concerned ships, seven days in advance, to the China Ship Owners Association. The applications are forwarded to the MT, which analyzes the capacities of the ships involved, holds coordination conferences, and makes escort recommendations to the PLAN. The PLAN command decides on a final escort plan; the MT coordinates with the merchant ships, directing them to designated sea areas where the naval ships are deployed. To enhance effectiveness, a highly advanced maritime satellite-based ship-movement tracking system (船舶动态跟踪系统) has been deployed with newly developed software that provides all-

dimensional tracking (全方位跟踪) and video-based communications among all concerned ships.<sup>76</sup>

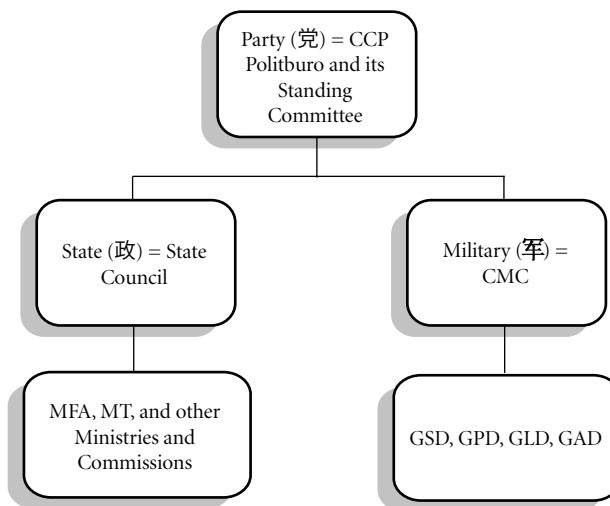
#### *Room for Improvement*

The PLAN's counterpiracy operation in the Gulf of Aden appears to be a success of civil-military interagency coordination. The PLAN's cooperative behavior here is in contrast to its earlier reluctance to get involved in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami relief and in the evacuation of Chinese nationals threatened by civil unrest in the Solomon Islands in late April 2006.<sup>77</sup> But major issues still exist and need to be resolved in order to reduce the cost of future crisis management. For instance, the issue of who pays for nonwar military operations remains unresolved. "Military budgets do not cover nonwar military operations. But under emergency, the military budget has to be used, and the equipment can be very expensive. If there is no compensation afterward, routine war preparation and training would be negatively affected." Also, if they do not have to compensate the PLA, civilian authorities may develop the habit of considering military assistance in crises a "free ride," making it more difficult for the PLA to cooperate in the future.<sup>78</sup>

Also, the role of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) of the State Council is ceremonial. It has no real organization or personnel; the putative functions are fulfilled by the PLA's four general departments (staff, political, logistics, and armament). However, those departments answer to the CMC and its chair, not the premier of the State Council. There

may be coordination conferences with State Council ministries, but the senior officers who represent the PLA general departments are likely not to follow the instructions of the State Council but simply report the proceedings of these conferences to the CMC, if only for fear of being suspected of institutional disloyalty. Also, the State Council premier, Wen Jiabao, has no control over the career advancement of senior PLA officers, so the latter have little incentive to follow his orders. This partly explains why it is difficult for Wen to order the PLA to do things on his own authority; he has to go through Hu Jintao. Similarly, his predecessor, Zhu Rongji, had to go through Jiang Zemin to get the PLA out of business activities when they began to impact the national economy.

**Figure 1.** *China's Civil-Military Bureaucratic Hierarchy*



Because the CMC is at the same bureaucratic level as the State Council, it is external to the State Council, answering only to the CCP Politburo and its Standing Committee (see figure 1).<sup>79</sup> But the latter do not meet regularly to manage daily state affairs, and the State Council, which does, has no administrative jurisdiction over the PLA, making routine civilian oversight over PLA affairs clearly more difficult. Such a difficulty, however, can be eased by establishing a genuine, more civilianized MND, one within the State Council and answering to the premier. A real MND could absorb the majority of the PLA's four general departments, which would in turn help streamline the PLA command structure and turn the CMC into a central, joint command institution of chiefs of services.

### Naval Implications of Objective Control and Externalization

As discussed earlier, the sense of insecurity in dealing with military matters, arising from lack of personal military credentials and their technocratic backgrounds, have generally

motivated new leaders like Jiang and Hu toward objective control and externalization of the PLA. The PLAN is clearly the biggest beneficiary of this trend, partly because it is one of the most technology-intensive services and partly because of the specific environment in which it operates and of the functions it fulfills. Also, the promotion of the PLAN by Jiang and Hu and the leveraging of this promotion by the PLAN have combined to elevate the importance of the navy.

### *Technology, Environment, and Functions*

Objective control allows for more institutional autonomy and military professionalism. To the extent that the PLAN is much more technology and capital-intensive than the ground force and therefore requires more systematic, intensive, lengthy, and uninterrupted training to translate technologies into combat effectiveness, institutional autonomy without major political interference clearly benefits the PLAN more than it does the ground force.<sup>80</sup> It is certainly true that objective control should also benefit greatly the PLAAF and the Second Artillery, because both are also technology and capital-based. Externalization, however, should benefit the PLAN more than the PLAAF and the Second Artillery, for two major reasons.

One has to do with the operational environments of these services. The environment in which the PLAAF and Second Artillery operate is mostly nonphysical or one or two-“dimensional.” The second reason is a result of the first reason—that is, the functions of the PLAAF and the Second Artillery tend to be fewer and narrower, mainly in terms of providing operational support and strategic deterrence. But the environment that the PLAN operates in is mostly physical and multidimensional, involving the sea surface, the ocean depths, the air, space, the littoral, and the shore. As a result, the functions that the PLAN fulfills are more numerous and also broader, which explains why the PLAN is a *comprehensive* (综合性) service possessing its own surface combatant, submarine, air, sea-based strategic deterrence, amphibious assault, and coastal-defense arms. But whereas the physical environment of the PLA ground force is largely internal, that of the PLAN is often the high seas—that is, external to national territories—and therefore necessarily more *international* (国际性). Because of its comprehensive and international nature, the PLAN is also a versatile service that can be employed on its own for multiple tasks in distant areas. They range from traditional security tasks, such as strategic and local deterrence, sea control and denial operations, and surveillance and countersurveillance, to nontraditional security tasks, such as sea-lane security and counterpiracy operations, naval diplomacy, and international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. As a result, the PLAN is also a *strategic* (战略性) service.<sup>81</sup> On the whole, the PLAN is clearly more useful in fulfilling the “new historical missions” assigned by Hu to the PLA generally, missions that aim to externalize the PLA.

*Civil-Military Interactive Dynamics*

The PLAN benefits from objective control and externalization also because Jiang and Hu have actively promoted the PLAN, which in turn has leveraged this priority position. Both Jiang and Hu have promoted the PLAN, though for different strategic priorities.

For Jiang the top strategic priority, particularly after the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, was to deter Taiwan from declaring formal independence and the United States from intervening militarily in a conflict over Taiwan. As a result, he promoted the PLAN by acquiring *Sovremenny*-class destroyers and *Kilo*-class submarines from Russia, as well as indigenously developed more advanced surface and undersea combatants. He paid particular attention to the East Sea Fleet, deploying the heavy, Russian-built antiship platforms in that fleet. Because air superiority in any military conflict over Taiwan can be gained by land-based combat aircraft, Jiang did not endorse the aircraft carrier program for which Admiral Liu Huaqing, who served as the PLAN commander from 1982 to 1988 and CMC vice chair from 1989 to 1997, had actively lobbied, to provide air cover for naval operations over the more distant Spratlys, in the South China Sea.<sup>82</sup> Instead, Jiang pursued diplomacy with Southeast Asian countries under his “new security concept,” leading to China’s signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of the Declaration of Code of Conduct with ASEAN with regard to the South China Sea. Jiang even removed a commanding officer of the South Sea Fleet for advocating, directly to him during an inspection tour of the fleet, aircraft carriers to resolve the Spratlys issue.<sup>83</sup>

By the time Hu took over, the naval capabilities thought necessary to deter a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan and U.S. military intervention in its support were largely in place. As shown in the second of his four new historical missions for the PLA, Hu wants the military to deter flash points on China’s margins such as the Taiwan issue from escalating into military conflict, so that China can leverage the twenty-year window of strategic opportunity from 2001 to 2020 to develop its economy.<sup>84</sup> But as shown in the third and fourth historical missions, Hu has other strategic priorities on his mind as well. The election of the anti-independence candidate Ma Ying-jeou as Taiwan’s new president in March 2008 made it easier for the PLA to fulfill the second historical mission, making it possible for Hu to concentrate on the other two historical missions, in which the PLAN would play a major role, because these missions are largely external.

Hu, for instance, has been particularly concerned about China’s newly emerging national interests in terms of energy security. As early as at the Central Economic Work Conference held in November 2003, Hu, as the new CCP general secretary, advanced the concept of oil security (石油安全), and stressed the need to develop a new energy-development strategy from a “strategic overall height” (战略全局高度) to achieve

national energy security.<sup>85</sup> Because the South China Sea has potentially rich deposits of fossil fuels and natural gas and straddles major sea-lanes through the Strait of Malacca into the Indian Ocean, Hu seems to favor particularly the development of the South Sea Fleet.

The first PLA unit that Hu inspected after becoming the CCP general secretary, for instance, was a destroyer flotilla of the South Sea Fleet, and this took place as early as 11 April 2003.<sup>86</sup> On 9 April 2008 he inspected the South Sea Fleet again. This time he visited the naval base at Sanya on Hainan Island, where he instructed: “The navy is a strategic, comprehensive, and international service. It holds an important position and plays an important role in safeguarding the security of state sovereignty and territorial integ-

**Photo 10.** Hu visits PLAN officers and sailors at Sanya Naval Base of Hainan on 9 April 2008.



ity and national maritime interests.” He particularly requested the PLAN to strive to develop “powerful” capabilities for accomplishing the new “historical missions” that he had assigned to the PLA.<sup>87</sup> It is also important to note that the first two escort groups for the Gulf of Aden deployment in the first six months of the mission came from the South Sea Fleet.

The special attention that Hu has paid to the PLAN is also reflected in his other endeavors. In December 2006, Hu attended the inauguration ceremony for a new-type nuclear

submarine and conferred a PLA flag upon the captain of the boat.<sup>88</sup> Finally, Hu attended the naval parade in Qingdao to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the PLAN, on 22 April 2009.<sup>89</sup>

Another indicator of naval promotion by both Jiang and Hu is the increased naval representation in China's party and PLA central institutions under their rules. In September 2004, for instance, the PLAN commander gained membership in the powerful CMC, together with the PLAAF and the Second Artillery commanders. This membership has surely enhanced the PLAN's bargaining position (as well as those of the PLAAF and the Second Artillery) in negotiating budgetary allocations, force restructuring, senior personnel appointments, and weapons acquisition.

Moreover, the navy's representation in the CCP Central Committee has also increased under Hu's tenure. Counting both full and alternate members and excluding the PAP members, PLA membership constitutes about 17 percent, or sixty-two out of 356, of the membership of the CCP Central Committee elected at the Sixteenth CCP Congress of November 2002.<sup>90</sup> Out of sixty-two, five (8 percent of the PLA delegation) came from the PLAN. PLA membership declined to 15.6 percent of the membership of the CCP Central Committee elected at the Seventeenth CCP Congress of October 2007, or fifty-eight out of 371. Naval membership, however, grew from five to seven out of the fifty-eight, or 12 percent of the PLA delegation.<sup>91</sup>

Finally, many senior positions within PLA central institutions have opened up to senior PLAN officers under Jiang and Hu. Vice Admiral Sun Jianguo, for instance, now holds the position of deputy chief of the PLA General Staff, while Vice Admirals Tong Shiping and Xu Yitian hold the positions of NDU political commissar and National Defense Science and Technology University political commissar, respectively. Rear Admiral Wang Zhaohai, on the other hand, held the position of vice president of AMS.<sup>92</sup>

While Jiang and Hu have actively promoted the PLAN, the PLAN has also leveraged this promotion well to advance its own institutional interests. Only one month after Hu became CMC chair in September 2004, researchers from the Navy Military Art Studies Institute in Beijing published several articles in the October issue of the prestigious *Military Art Journal* of AMS, arguing for shifting the PLAN strategy from one of "near-sea active defense" to "far-seas operations." Their argument was based on the need to secure newly emerging Chinese interests with respect to increased dependence on maritime resources, energy imports, external trade and investment, merchant fleets, and sea-lanes, as well as on the need to improve China's unfavorable maritime strategic posture by breaking out of the narrow, long, and blocked "near seas" in order to gain the initiative.<sup>93</sup> This was clearly an institutional effort of the PLAN to operationalize both Jiang's and Hu's

naval aspirations and promotions, and perhaps even more a response to Hu's concern about China's energy security.

Similarly, in response to Hu's instruction, given during his inspection tour of Sanya in April 2008, that senior naval officers follow his neo-Confucian concept of "taking people as the foremost" (以人为本) by paying particular attention to basic-level units, the PLAN launched a "Project of Warming Hearts and Benefiting Soldiers" (暖心惠兵工程), meant to improve the quality of life for PLAN sailors and officers. The project involves construction on shore of living quarters, study facilities, libraries, sports facilities, psychological counseling facilities, and battlefield-acclimatization facilities in all naval bases, with an emphasis on humanistic concerns, ecology, and personal privacy. Moving sailors from ships to land has helped to improve their health, because quarters on board are smaller, hotter, more humid, more crowded and noisy, and more subject to electromagnetic radiation, and as a result are more likely to make sailors physically and psychologically ill. The project has also saved energy costs and lengthened the service lives of ships, because generating energy on board ship is costly and takes a high toll on power plants. Moreover, it has helped to protect the environment, because trash disposal on land is easier to manage; there is less trash to pollute harbors and waterways. Finally, the project has helped to enhance morale, because sailors can eat and rest well on shore after long and exhausting sea tours.<sup>94</sup> Undoubtedly, this quality-of-life improvement effort closely aligns with Hu's priorities to improve genuinely both living standards and the environment.

Finally, among all PLA services, the PLAN appears to be most responsive to Hu's call to cope with multiple types of threats and fulfill diverse missions, partly because, as discussed above, the PLAN is more versatile and therefore more appropriate for these missions. Senior naval officers, for instance, have published major analytical pieces to operationalize the PLAN role in these missions.<sup>95</sup> But more important, the PLAN is clearly much more amenable to complex interagency cooperation and coordination, as demonstrated in the counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, and as compared to the PLA's role in the Sichuan earthquake relief.

Generally speaking, the civil-military interactive dynamics stemming from naval promotion by the central civilian leadership and the PLAN's skillful leveraging of this promotion are likely to enhance the PLAN's importance in China's military modernization.

## Conclusions and Analytical Implications

This study shows that even though Jiang was successful in consolidating his power in the PLA, there is little evidence that he employed the PLA against domestic threats, from either Chinese society or within the CCP leadership. There were also major institutional limits on the extent of this power consolidation and on Jiang's use of this power.

Personnel appointments and budget increases, for instance, may have been driven by reasons other than an intention to consolidate power in the PLA, and Jiang may have been unsure that the military would follow his orders to fulfill functions other than its usual tasks. As a result, the central thrust of his policies to control the PLA was to enhance civilian governance or the CCP's legitimacy to rule, through promoting economic growth, and to confine the PLA to narrow, military-technical tasks. These policies prevented and preempted domestic crises and threats that might have provided excuses for the PLA to intervene in domestic politics. Jiang's policies in this regard helped to maintain civil-military institutional boundaries and therefore increased the internal cohesion and combat effectiveness of the PLA.

Hu's policies are similar to Jiang's. One exception is that Hu has not particularly focused on consolidating his power in the PLA. While inviting Jiang to help him to deal with the military, Hu has concentrated on enhancing the CCP's legitimacy to govern, by promoting more equitable income distribution and sustainable economic growth, and on adopting programs that confine the PLA to its narrow military-technical tasks. But more important, he has directed the military to fulfill new external missions, such as defending China's newly emerging interests in outer, maritime, and electromagnetic space, and in international peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. These policies have also helped him to consolidate power in the PLA.

While objective control benefits PLA modernization, it has also contributed to civil-military bifurcation, which has complicated interagency coordination in managing crises and, as a result, increased the cost of crises. This complication is reflected in both foreign-policy and domestic crisis cases, including particularly the Sichuan earthquake-relief episode. While policies have been adopted to remedy deficiencies, apparently with some success, unresolved issues remain.

Finally, the PLA Navy is the biggest beneficiary of objective control and externalization, partly because it is one of the most technology-intensive services, and partly because the specific environment in which it operates is mostly physical, multidimensional, and external, as a result of which its functions are highly diverse. Also, the promotion of the PLAN by the central civilian leadership and the service's leveraging of this promotion are also likely to contribute to the increased importance of the navy in China's military modernization.

The findings of this study have three analytical implications. One is that the conventional wisdom on party-army relations in China may be flawed. According to this view, the CCP leaders, highly insecure in the face of domestic threats both from within the party and from society, attempt to buy off the military with higher ranks and more money. In this way, it is often said, the leaders can consolidate their power by controlling the

military (or part of it) in order to employ it in power struggles against political threats and opponents; as a result, they can feel more secure. However, such linear thinking neglects the possibility that by employing the military against domestic political opponents CCP leaders would no doubt reveal their own weaknesses or incompetence, which could be exploited by the military. As a result, they actually would create a new threat—the military itself—and thus make themselves feel even less secure.

Roman emperors established the Praetorian Guard to protect them from domestic unrest. Over time, the unit gained independent power and became instrumental in installing and deposing emperors. As its domestic political role increased, its effectiveness in war waned. The newer generations of CCP leaders may not be students of Greco-Roman history, but their sense of insecurity—arising from lack of charisma, military credentials, or close ties with the military—may have convinced them that there are major limits on how far they can go to consolidate power in the PLA and how they can use this power. They seem to have adopted an additional way to control the military—that is, enhancing civilian governance and thereby the CCP's legitimacy to rule, to prevent and preempt domestic threats, on the one hand, and to confine the PLA to narrow functional-technical and external tasks, on the other. In this way the chances of undesirable military intervention in politics decline, and as a result the leaders should feel more secure.

Second, as the findings of this study show, an unintended consequence of a Leninist party-army structure is that if the military is given institutional autonomy and allowed to increase its professionalism, routine civilian oversight becomes difficult, mainly because state authorities have no administrative jurisdiction over the military, whereas the party, which controls the military, does not manage daily state affairs. The effects are particularly pronounced in unexpected crises. Accordingly, the extent of efforts to introduce new institutional arrangements to ease this difficulty should be carefully analyzed; they may have important implications for China's future crisis management.

Finally, the extent of military involvement in domestic politics is closely related to the degree of the military's institutional autonomy and level and types of its technological development. If this is true, research should continue to focus on the evolving relationship between these two key variables in China. This is because such a focus may help to reveal both the level of civilian governance-based political and social stability and the degree and types of technological development of the military. But more important, if domestic political and social stability can be achieved and maintained in China, more analytical attention should be paid to technological development in the PLA. This development has widened and deepened during the past twenty years, and it may have major implications for Asian and global security.

## Notes

1. Recently, for instance, China announced plans to cut its ground force by another seven hundred thousand billets and boost naval and air force personnel in the next two to three years. See "China to Cut Army by 700,000 Troops: Sources," Reuters, 30 September 2009.
2. See William Whitson, "The Field Army in Chinese Communist Military Politics," *China Quarterly*, no. 37 (1969), and *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927–1971* (New York: Praeger, 1973). For a more rigorous discussion of factional explanation of Chinese political-military politics, see William Parish, Jr., "Factions in Chinese Military Politics," *China Quarterly*, no. 56 (December 1973).
3. See Nan Li, "Political-Military Changes in China, 1979–1989," *Security Studies* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1994/1995).
4. David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China: The Political Work System in the People's Liberation Army," *China Quarterly*, no. 129 (September 1991), pp. 551–68, and *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002), pp. 11, 20–31.
5. See Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, eds., *Civil-Military Change in China: Elites, Institutes, and Ideas after the 16th Party Congress* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2004), mainly chapters by James Mulvenon and John Tkacik.
6. For the underlying premise, see Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 1, 27–29; and W. H. Morris Jones, "Armed Forces and the State," *Public Administration*, no. 25 (Winter 1957), pp. 411–16.
7. See Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 80–85, and *Political Order in Changing Society* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 193–94.
8. For a theoretical argument that a military focus on external threats makes civil-military relations easier to manage, see Michael Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999). Desch's prediction on China, however, reflects the conventional wisdom and contradicts the findings of this study.
9. You Ji, "Jiang Zemin's Command of the Military," *China Journal*, no. 45 (January 2001); and James Mulvenon, "China: Conditional Compliance," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2001), p. 318.
10. See Dennis Blasko, "Servant of Two Masters: The People's Liberation Army, the People, and the Party," in *Chinese Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Nan Li (New York: Routledge, 2006). In 1999, the Chinese government labeled Falun Gong an "evil cult" and began a campaign to eliminate the movement. While such a campaign was also waged within the PLA, no evidence exists that it was mobilized to suppress Falun Gong outside the service by force.
11. You Ji, "Hu Jintao's Consolidation of Power and His Command of the Gun," in *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*, ed. John Wong and Lai Hongyi (Singapore: World Scientific, 2006), p. 59.
12. James Mulvenon, "Party-Army Relations since the 16th Party Congress: The Battle of the 'Two Centers'?" in *Civil-Military Change in China*, ed. Scobell and Wortzel, pp. 27–38. SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), which spread from Guangdong Province in early 2003, reached near-pandemic status by that summer.
13. Wang Chu, "Power Struggle in Beijing: Hu vs. Jiang," *Asia Times*, 8 July 2004.
14. Compare tables 1 and 2 for changes in the CMC membership at the Sixteenth CCP Congress.
15. Mulvenon, "Party-Army Relations since the 16th Party Congress."
16. Conversations with the Chinese security and military analysts and officials during trips to China in 2003. The Chinese term for such a cooperative leadership transition is 扶上马,送一程—the predecessor assisting the successor to "mount the horse and accompanying his journey for a short while."
17. This is discussed in detail in a following section.
18. Appointments of senior officers had largely been worked out by Zhang Zhen (CMC vice chair), Liu Huaqing (CMC vice chair), and Yu Yongbo (CMC member and director of the General Political Department) and approved by Jiang during the 1992–97 period. See 张震[Zhang Zhen], 张震回忆录, 下册 [Zhang Zhen's Memoirs, Book 2] (Beijing: Liberation Army Press, 2003), pp. 377–78.
19. Willy Lam, "Hu Moves to Exert Added Control over PLA," *China Brief*, 20 September 2006.
20. See 国防大学军队建设研究所 [Army Construction Studies Institute of National Defense University (NDU)], 江泽民国防和军队建设

- 思想学习读本 [A Reader for Studying Jiang Zemin's Thought on National Defense and Army Construction] (Beijing: CCP History Press, 2002), p. 309.
21. See Blasko, "Servant of Two Masters," pp. 118–19.
  22. The military, for instance, may insist on staying out of the dispute between the party and society. Or it may decline to intervene to suppress social protest but instead join the protesters against the party. Also, the military, disappointed with the way the party handles a crisis, may even attempt to overthrow party rule through a military coup. Finally, if the party leadership fractures over how to handle a crisis, the chances are that the military may fracture as well if it is ordered to intervene. This may lead to a civil-war situation, where different political-military factions fight one another to seize state power. For instance, while the execution of the Romanian communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife in late December 1989 was largely the result of a military decision to stay out of conflict between the party leader and society, the failed August 1991 Soviet coup and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union show what serious consequences a fractured military mobilized along different political persuasions can cause.
  23. See 郭德宏 [Guo Dehong] and 李玲玉 [Li Lingyu], eds., 中共党史重大事件述评 [Review of Major Events in CCP History] (Beijing: Central Party School Press, 2005), pp. 310–19.
  24. For the PAP, see Blasko, "Servant of Two Masters," pp. 126–27.
  25. See Army Construction Studies Institute of NDU, *A Reader for Studying Jiang Zemin's Thought*, pp. 56, 232–44.
  26. 江泽民 [Jiang Zemin], "军队必须停止一切经商活动" [The Army Must Stop All Its Business Activities] (speech, 21 July 1998, at a CMC meeting), in Jiang Zemin, 论国防和军队建设 [On National Defense and Army Construction] (Beijing: Liberation Army Press, 2002), pp. 321–34.
  27. The policy was formally endorsed by Zhao Ziyang (first CMC vice chair) in 1988. But Zhao was likely to have consulted Deng, the CMC chair at the time. See Zhang, *Zhang Zhen's Memoirs*, p. 399.
  28. Conversations with the Chinese security and military analysts and officials during trips to China in 2003.
  29. Conversations with the Chinese security and military analysts and officials during trips to China in 2005.
  30. 陈锡文 [Chen Xiwen], cited in "中央三措施应对群体事件, 原则上不使用警力" [Three Measures of the Central to Cope with Mass Incidents, Not to Use Force in Principle], 中国评论社 [China Review News], 2 February 2009. Chen is the deputy director of the State Council Office of Central Finance and Economics Leadership Small Group and director of the State Council Office of Central Rural Work Leadership Small Group. See also "群体性事件应对之忧" [Worries about How to Cope with Mass Incidents], 瞭望新闻周刊 [Outlook News Weekly], 30 June 2009.
  31. See 杨章怀 [Yang Zhanghuai] and 陈雨 [Chen Yu], "中纪委集训2,000县纪委书记, 主要内容是群体事件" [CDIC Assembles 2,000 County-Level Disciplinary Inspection Commission Secretaries for Training, Mass Incidents Being the Primary Content], 南方都市报 [Southern Metropolis News], 14 May 2009; Shi Shan, "China Trains 3,000 Public Security Bureau Directors to Cope with Mass Incidents," *Radio Free Asia*, 19 February 2009; and "中国首次大规模培训基层检察长" [China for the First Time Trains Basic-Level Prosecutors on a Large Scale], 新华网 [Xinhua Net], 17 June 2009.
  32. "中办国办印发 '关于实行党政领导干部问责的暂行规定'" [CCP Central General Office and State Council General Office Issue "Provisional Regulations on Interrogating Accountability of Party and Government Leading Cadres"], Xinhua Net, 12 July 2009.
  33. "中共中央印发 '中国共产党巡视工作条例(试行)'" [CCP Central Issues "Regulations on CCP Inspection and Supervision Work (Trial Implementation)"], Xinhua Net, 13 July 2009.
  34. Public security bureaus at the provincial, city, and county levels, for instance, have specialized units, known as "state security teams" (国保大队), for domestic political surveillance.
  35. So far, China has installed 2.75 million surveillance cameras in public areas across the country, mostly in urban communities. See "Rural Areas to Get Surveillance Cameras," *Shanghai Daily*, 11 August 2009, p. A8.
  36. Many of the seven hundred thousand PLA billets to be downsized in the near future are likely to be transferred to the PAP.
  37. For a detailed account of civil-military issues in the 2008 unrest in Tibet, see Edward Cody, "Backstage Role of China's Army in Tibet Unrest Reflects Heed for Reaction Abroad," *Washington Post*, 13 April 2008, p. A17.
  38. For an example, see "乌维稳部队换防, 南京武警接替兰州武警" [Change of Guard in Ürümqi's Stability-Maintaining Force: Nanjing PAP Replacing Lanzhou PAP], 大公报 [Ta Kung Pao (Hong Kong)], 11 July 2009.

39. For Zeng Qinghong's evolving behavior, see Joseph Kahn, "Former Rival Helps Hu Solidify Grip on China," *New York Times*, 25 September 2005.
40. Lyman Miller, "More Already on Politburo Procedures under Hu Jintao," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 17 (Winter 2006), p. 22.
41. "航天功臣多获要职" [Many Space Heroes Hold Vital Positions], *Ta Kung Pao*, 9 September 2009. Among many reasons, familiarity with the role of space in future military operations was clearly important in the appointment of Li and Chen to their current positions.
42. 张建军 [Zhang Jianjun], "树立新观念, 履行新使命" [Develop New Concepts, Accomplish New Missions], 国防大学学报 [Journal of the National Defense University], no. 12 (2005); 龙义和 [Long Yihe] (Senior Col.), "新世纪新阶段我军创新的治军思想" [Creative Thought of Our Army to Manage the Army at the New Stage of the New Century], 军事学术 [Military Art Journal], no. 3 (2006).
43. See 杨春光 [Yang Chunchang] (Maj. Gen.) and 刘义焕 [Liu Yihuan] (Senior Col.), "科学认识和把握我军新的历史使命" [Scientifically Comprehend and Handle the New Historical Missions of Our Army], *Military Art Journal*, no. 11 (2005).
44. Yang Chunchang, "《政工条例》的一次重大修改" [A Major Revision of *Political Work Regulations*], *Liberation Army Daily*, 19 October 2008, p. 3, available at [www.chinamil.com](http://www.chinamil.com).
45. For an explanation of "important period of strategic opportunity," see 徐根初 [Xu Genchu] (Lt. Gen.), "对我军维护国家发展重要战略机遇期的思考" [Reflections on Safeguarding the Important Period of Strategic Opportunity for State Development by Our Army], *Military Art Journal*, no. 11 (2005).
46. Hu, cited in 陈振阳 [Chen Zhenyang] and 孙艳红 [Sun Yanhong], "贯彻落实科学发展观与全面提高我军的威慑和实战能力" [Implement Scientific Development Concept and Comprehensively Enhance the Deterrence and Real War-fighting Capabilities of Our Army], *Liberation Army Daily*, 28 February 2006, available at [www.chinamil.com](http://www.chinamil.com).
47. See Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*.
48. The military rank system was restored in 1988. Seventeen senior officers were given the rank of general by Deng in September 1988. Between 1989 and 2004, Jiang's fifteen years as the CMC chair, eighty-one officers gained the rank of general, an average of slightly fewer than eleven every two years. Hu's promotion of ten to general rank in slightly less than two years as the CMC chair is a promotion rate quite similar to Jiang's. Hu presided over the ceremony to promote Zhang Dingfa (navy commander) and Jin Zhiyuan (commander of the Second Artillery) to the rank of general several days after he became the CMC chair. The two were counted as Jiang's appointments, because he had approved their promotions. By 2006, only thirty-six generals were on active duty. See "胡锦涛主席授予十位将军上将军" [Chairman Hu Jintao Confers the Rank of General on Ten Senior Officers], 南方周末 [Southern Weekend], 6 July 2006.
49. See "全军领导干部经济责任审计领导小组成立" [Economic Accountability Auditing Leadership Small Group for All-Army Leading Cadres Is Established], Xinhua Net, 20 July 2006; James Mulvenon, "So Crooked They Have to Screw Their Pants On: New Trends in Chinese Military Corruption," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 19 (Fall 2006).
50. See "中央军委通报: 空军运输机失事责任人已严肃处理" [CMC Circulates the Notice: People Responsible for Loss of Air Force Transport Plane Have Been Dealt with Seriously], Xinhua Net, 7 September 2006.
51. In Mao's time, party-army symbiosis was pervasive not only at the highest level but also at the provincial and local levels. A major reason why Mao had to mobilize the centrally controlled field armies (野战军) to "support the left" during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) at provincial and local levels is that provincial military district–controlled local units (地方部队) tended to protect the provincial and local party secretaries and governors, or "those who took the capitalist road." That was because most military-district (MD) commanding officers had developed highly personal relationships with provincial and local party and state officials over time. This had happened mainly because most civilian party and state officials had served in the PLA and most MD officers had local civilian working experience during the war years, as well as because of a lack of career mobility stemming from a lack of age and term limits and retirement requirements. In the post-Mao era, however, the relationship between the provincial and local party secretaries and governors and MD commanding officers has become highly impersonal, formal, and bifurcated. This has happened mainly because officials on both sides are regularly rotated within their own systems, because of the introduction of age and term limits and retirement requirements. In the meantime, little cross-boundary circulation of elites occurs—that is, few military officers have had any civilian experience, and few civilian officials have had any military experience. Provincial party secretaries also serve as first party secretaries of provincial MDs, but they are largely part-timers, and their

- ties to the military are only nominal. For this post-Mao change at the provincial and local levels, see Zhiyue Bo, "The PLA and the Provinces: Military District and Local Issues," in *Civil-Military Relations in Today's China: Swimming in a New Sea*, ed. David Finkelstein and Kristen Gunness (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006).
52. See "Hainan Island Incident," Wikipedia.com; and "Chinese Poker," *Economist*, 17 April 2001.
  53. See "Chinese Submarine Enters Japanese Waters," Wikinews.org, 18 November 2004; and Sean Curtin, "Hu Warns Koizumi against Going to Yasukuni," *Asia Times*, 23 November 2004.
  54. See "2007 Chinese Anti-satellite Missile Test," Wikipedia.com; and "Space to Maneuver: Satellite Attack Upsets U.S. Space Supremacy," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 7 February 2007.
  55. See James Pomfret, "China Opens Hong Kong to U.S. Carrier," Reuters, 22 November 2007; and Richard Halloran, "Looking beyond the Kitty Hawk Incident," *Honolulu Advertiser*, 10 December 2007.
  56. "U.S. Navy Provoked South China Sea Incident, China Says," *New York Times*, 10 March 2009.
  57. See Chong-Pin Lin, *China's Nuclear Weapons Strategy: Tradition within Evolution* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1988).
  58. 金一南 [Jin Yi'nan], "美在南海活动严重破坏中国国家安全" [U.S. Activities in the South China Sea Seriously Harm China's National Security], 中国广播网 [China Broadcast Net], 13 March 2009.
  59. See 陈炳德 [Chen Bingde], "回忆汶川地震救灾决策指挥过程" [Recollect Command and Decision Processes for Wenchuan Earthquake Relief], *Liberation Army Daily*, 9 December 2008, available at [www.chinamil.com](http://www.chinamil.com); and "国防部: 解放军四级指挥体系确保地震高效救援" [Ministry of National Defense: PLA's Four-Level Command System Ensures Highly Effective Earthquake Relief], 中国新闻网 [China News Net], 11 June 2008.
  60. See "Ministry of National Defense: PLA's Four-Level Command System Ensures Highly Effective Earthquake Relief."
  61. Chen, "Recollect Command and Decision Processes for Wenchuan Earthquake Relief."
  62. This paragraph is largely based on conversations with informed sources in Beijing in late December 2008 and with Chinese scholars and officials in Shanghai in early August 2009. For an example of various interpretations of Wen's famous quotation from major Chinese websites, see [blog.sina.com.cn/](http://blog.sina.com.cn/).
  63. For these events, see "地震救援13.7万军队是如何调配?" [How Were 137,000 Earthquake Rescue and Relief Troops Deployed?], 中国新闻周刊 [China Newsweek], 6 June 2008; and Chen, "Recollect Command and Decision Processes for Wenchuan Earthquake Relief."
  64. Conversations with informed sources in Beijing in late December 2008.
  65. See 戴旭 [Dai Xu] (Col., PLA AF), "中国应建立常备救灾体系" [China Should Establish Permanent Disaster Relief System], 环球时报 [Global Times], 2 July 2008; and 刘世青 [Liu Shiqing] and 潘杰昌 [Pan Jiechang], "提高预备役部队执行处置突发事件任务的能力" [Enhance the Ability of the Reserve Units in Executing Tasks in Handling Emergency Incidents], 27 May 2008, in *Liberation Army Daily*, available at [www.chinamil.com](http://www.chinamil.com).
  66. For issuing different types of equipment, see Chen, "Recollect Command and Decision Processes for Wenchuan Earthquake Relief." For inappropriate equipment and lack of training, see "李运之: 关注非战争军事行动装备建设" [Li Yunzi: Show Concern for Equipment Construction of Nonwar Military Operations], *Liberation Army Daily*, 11 March 2009, p. 1; and Dai, "China Should Establish Permanent Disaster Relief System." Li Yunzi is a former deputy political commissar of the Shenyang MR.
  67. For PLA interpretations of the new core-value concept and ways to internalize it, see 李亚萍 [Li Yaping] and 张涛 [Zhang Tao], "我军核心价值观的精辟概括" [An Incisive Summary of the Core-Value Concept of Our Army], *Liberation Army Daily*, 2 February 2009, p. 7; and 占国桥 [Zhan Guoqiao], "把握军人核心价值观的内在逻辑" [Grasp the Internal Logics of the Core-Value Concept for Military Men], *Liberation Army Daily*, 29 March 2009, p. 7.
  68. "兵马未动, 军法先行—中国军队也需要法律'掩护'" [Military Law Precedes Movement of Troops and Horses: The Chinese Military Also Needs "Cover" of Law], *Southern Weekend*, 2 April 2009. According to this story, on 28 March 2009 a research seminar was held at China Politics and Law University in Beijing involving legal experts from the CMC Legal Bureau, AMS, NDU, PLA Science and Engineering University, PLA Xian Political College, and the PLAN.
  69. See 霍小勇 [Huo Xiaoyong], "锻造有多样化能力的现代化军队" [Forge a Modern Military with Diversified Capabilities], *Liberation Army Daily*, 24 June 2008, p. 11; and 韩志庆 [Han Zhiquing], "'能战度'—非战争军事行动新课题" ["The Levels of Ability to Fight": New Issue for Nonwar Military Operations], *Liberation Army Daily*, 24 June 2008, p. 11.

70. See Dai, "China Should Establish Permanent Disaster Relief System." It is important to note that Dai's article was published on 2 July 2008.
71. Hu, cited in 张兆垠 [Zhang Zhaoyin] (Maj. Gen.), "坚持不懈地加强我军核心军事能力建设" [Resolutely and Steadily Strengthen the Core Military Capabilities Construction of Our Army], *Liberation Army Daily*, 2 December 2008; and "胡锦涛强调军队重点加强核心军事能力建设" [Hu Jintao Stresses That the Military Should Place Emphasis on Enhancing Core Military Capabilities Construction], *Xinhua Net*, 12 March 2009. Zhang is deputy commander of the Fourteenth Group Army, stationed in Yun'nan Province.
72. See 陈学武 [Chen Xuewu], "科学推进核心军事能力建设" [Scientifically Move Forward Core Military Capabilities Construction], *Liberation Army Daily*, 12 March 2009, p. 10; and 王西欣 [Wang Xixin], "打造与时代同步的核心军事能力" [Forge Core Military Capabilities in Step with the Time], *Liberation Army Daily*, 2 May 2009, p. 6.
73. See 李飞 [Li Fei], "中国需强大内卫力量, 增强对内维稳能力" [China Needs Powerful Domestic Security Force to Enhance Ability to Maintain Domestic Stability], *Global Times*, 5 June 2009. Li, a PAP major, is a doctoral student at NDU in Beijing.
74. See "非战争军事行动有精兵" [Nonwar Military Operations Have Elite Forces], *Liberation Army Daily*, 16 September 2009.
75. See "交通部国际合作司长透露海军护航决策由来" [Head of International Cooperation Department of Ministry of Transportation Reveals Origins of Decision on Naval Escort], *三联生活周刊* [Sanlian Life Weekly], 16 January 2009; and "Military Law Precedes Movement of Troops and Horses."
76. See "Head of International Cooperation Department of Ministry of Transportation Reveals Origins of Decision on Naval Escort."
77. Conversation with Chinese scholar visiting the U.S. Naval War College on 16 September 2009.
78. See "Military Law Precedes Movement of Troops and Horses."
79. Nominally, the CMC also answers to China's legislature, the National People's Congress.
80. It is important to note, however, the PLA ground force is also undergoing transformation in terms of "mechanization" and "informatization."
81. For a discussion of the special characteristics of the PLAN, see also 田中 [Tian Zhong], "海军非战争军事行动的特点, 类型及能力建设" [Characteristics, Types, and Capability Development of Naval Nonwar Military Operations], *中国军事科学* [China Military Science], no. 3 (2008). Tian is the commander of the PLAN's North Sea Fleet.
82. For Liu's advocacy of an aircraft carrier program, see Liu Huaqing, 刘华清回忆录 [Liu Huaqing's Memoirs] (Beijing: Liberation Army Press, 2004), pp. 477–81.
83. Conversation with informed sources in Guangzhou in 2003. See also "凤凰网专访马辛春: 十年前就该造航母" [Phoenix Net's Special Interview with Ma Xinchun (former PLAN North Sea Fleet commander): Aircraft Carrier Should Have Been Developed 10 Years Ago], *Phoenix Net*, 14 October 2009. In the interview, Ma makes the point that someone was criticized for advocating aircraft carriers ten years ago. He actually refers to an incident where a North Sea Fleet senior officer was reprimanded by Jiang at a National People's Congress annual meeting for advocating aircraft carriers.
84. See note 45.
85. Hu, cited in 瞿健文 [Qu Jianwen] (deputy dean of International Relations Research Institute of Yunnan University), "中缅油气管道, 两国人心所向" [Sino-Burmese Oil and Gas Pipeline Is Favored by the People of Both Countries], *中国青年参考* [China Youth Reference], 1 July 2009.
86. "碧海铸剑: 党中央、中央军委为海军现代化建设科学决策" [Forge Sword in Blue Seas: Party Central and CMC Make Scientific Decisions for Navy Modernization Construction], *Xinhua Net*, 18 May 2009.
87. See "远征索马里背后: 中国海军为国家利益挺进深蓝" [Behind the Expedition to Somalia: The Chinese Navy Advances to Deep Blue for National Interests], *China Newsweek*, 1 February 2009; and "海军2006年服役两艘新型核潜艇, 胡主席亲自授旗" [Two New-Type Nuclear Submarines Entered Service in 2006: Chairman Hu Personally Conferred the Flag], *人民日报* [People's Daily], 18 May 2009.
88. See "Two New-Type Nuclear Submarines Entered Service in 2006."
89. "China Parades Naval Might," *Agence France-Presse*, 23 April 2009.
90. PAP members are excluded from the PLA membership mainly because the PAP has a separate budget and its senior officers are not represented in the CMC or the PLA's four general departments.
91. PLAN members are 吴胜利 (Wu Shengli, PLAN commander), 刘小江 (Liu Xiaojiang, PLAN political commissar), 童世平 (Tong Shiping, NDU political commissar), 孙建国

- (Sun Jianguo, deputy chief of PLA General Staff), 苏世亮 (Su Shiliang, PLAN chief of staff), 徐一天 (Xu Yitian, National Defense Science and Technology University political commissar), and 丁一平 (Ding Yiping, deputy PLAN commander). This paragraph is based on materials from 军政在线 (Military and Politics Online), [www.chinajunzheng.com](http://www.chinajunzheng.com), a Chinese website on military and political personalities in China. Similarly, PLAAF members grew from five to eight and Second Artillery members from two to three. PLAAF has one more member than the PLAN, because Yang Liwei, China's first astronaut, became a member.
92. “中国海军四化舰长将领领航，清一色科班出身” [Ship Captain Admirals of the Chinese Navy in Command, All Having Professional Origins], *Ta Kung Pao*, 7 April 2009. Wang Zhaohai, however, recently became the director of PLAN Political Department, and his AMS billet was filled by Rear Adm. Xu Lili, former political commissar of PLAN Logistics Department.
  93. See Nan Li, “The Evolution of China’s Naval Strategy and Capabilities: From ‘Near Coast’ and ‘Near Seas’ to ‘Far Seas,’” *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (May–August 2009), pp. 161–63.
  94. See Wu Shengli, “万里海疆推进暖心惠兵工程” [Move Forward the Project of Warming Hearts and Benefiting Soldiers along the 10,000 Li Sea Frontier], *Liberation Army Daily*, 20 January 2009, p. 11, available at [www.chinamil.com](http://www.chinamil.com).
  95. For examples, see Tian, “Characteristics, Types, and Capability Development of Naval Nonwar Military Operations”; and 沈金龙 [Shen Jinlong], “海军非军事行动面临的挑战及对策” [Naval Nonwar Military Operations: Challenges Faced and Coping Strategies], 人民海军 [People’s Navy], 20 January 2009, p. 4. Shen is commander of a North Sea Fleet support base.



## Abbreviations and Definitions

|   |              |                                                     |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| A | <b>AMS</b>   | Academy of Military Science                         |
|   | <b>ASAT</b>  | antisatellite                                       |
|   | <b>ASEAN</b> | Association of Southeast Asian Nations              |
| C | <b>CCP</b>   | Chinese Communist Party                             |
|   | <b>CDIC</b>  | Central Disciplinary Inspection Commission          |
|   | <b>CMC</b>   | Central Military Commission                         |
| E | <b>EEZ</b>   | exclusive economic zone                             |
| G | <b>GAD</b>   | General Armament Department                         |
|   | <b>GLD</b>   | General Logistics Department                        |
|   | <b>GPD</b>   | General Political Department                        |
|   | <b>GSD</b>   | General Staff Department                            |
| M | <b>MD</b>    | military district                                   |
|   | <b>MFA</b>   | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                         |
|   | <b>MND</b>   | Ministry of National Defense (of the State Council) |
|   | <b>MR</b>    | military region                                     |
|   | <b>MT</b>    | Ministry of Transportation                          |
| N | <b>NDU</b>   | National Defense University                         |
| P | <b>PAP</b>   | People's Armed Police                               |
|   | <b>PLA</b>   | People's Liberation Army                            |
|   | <b>PLAAF</b> | People's Liberation Army Air Force                  |
|   | <b>PLAN</b>  | People's Liberation Army Navy                       |
| R | <b>RMA</b>   | revolution in military affairs                      |

## About the Author

Nan Li is an associate professor at the China Maritime Studies Institute, in the Strategic Research Department, Center for Naval Warfare Studies, of the U.S. Naval War College. He has published extensively on Chinese security and military policy. His writings have appeared in *Security Studies*, *China Quarterly*, *China Journal*, *Armed Forces & Society*, *Issues and Studies*, and many other journals. He has contributed to edited volumes from RAND Corporation, the National Defense University Press, Clarendon Press, M. E. Sharpe, U.S. Army War College, and National Bureau of Asian Research. He has also published a monograph with the United States Institute of Peace. He is the editor of *Chinese Civil-Military Relations* (Routledge, 2006). His most recent publication is “The Evolution of China’s Naval Strategy and Capabilities: From ‘Near Coast’ and ‘Near Seas’ to ‘Far Seas’” in *Asian Security* (Spring 2009). Nan Li holds a PhD in political science from the Johns Hopkins University.