

**RECONCEPTUALISING
CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE PRC**

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CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUALISING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN COMMUNIST SOCIETIES

This chapter deals with the theoretical issues which are essential to any conceptualisation of civil-military relations. These theoretical issues vary from one research area to another. A study of these issues, along with their shortcomings, is crucial to an understanding of civil-military relations in communist societies, especially in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The themes of existing models of civil-military relations in communist societies are (a) the status of the military as an organization; (b) its role as a professional body and (c) its relation with the civilian authorities. However, these themes are based upon the fact that, politics in communist societies is not confined to civilian institutions like political parties and pressure groups alone. It also involves the military as a power-institution because of its contribution to the national-liberation struggle and to nation-building. Politics in China is not an exception to this. Considering the role of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Chinese history and its position in Chinese polity as well as in Chinese society, such themes have also been applied to the study of civil-military relations in the PRC.

The study of the military through conventional themes has so far been influenced by sociologists and comparative political analysts. They tend to address concerns about

whether the military is a progressive or a retrogressive agent; whether it is more efficient than its counterpart i.e. civilian institutions, while engaging in tasks like economic development, social stability and national integration, and what leads the military to intervene in the political process, as well as what are the means and consequences of such intervention. The models have mostly been developed by scholars who have studied civil-military relations from the perspective of threat or strategic concerns that related to the period of the Cold War.

The first explanation in the 1960's by Samuel P. Huntington & Morris Janowitz, falls under the rubric of the "totalitarian model".¹ The model primarily focused on the control of the party over the army. The party in communist societies was shown to have rigorously subordinated the military to the former's will and power which emanated from the party's legitimacy based on the support of the masses. The party was able to control the army by using institutions like the secret police, party cells in the army itself, political commissars, as well as the political socialisation of soldiers and officers and the careful selection and

1. Samuel P. Huntington, Soldier and the State : The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relation, (Camb.: Harvard University Press, 1957). Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier : A Social and Political Portrait, (New York : The Free Press, 1960).

advancement of officers. Under such supervision and control by the party, the officers of the army were kept at bay by limiting their professional independence which virtually curtailed their role in domestic politics. What is of note is that the party in this model was seen as having an upper hand in the political sphere through the use of ideology and the ideological apparatus. This allowed the party to make a direct appeal to the people and gave it a significant position as opposed to the military, especially as it related to the kinds of political practices which finally set up a specific political culture in which the dominant position of the party was upheld.

Hence, in such a political culture power remained with the civilian authorities. But this model was found to have little value in analysing communist societies where the army played a vital role in policy-making. In fact, this model was developed mainly on the basis of the investigation of the Soviet system, a system which was dissimilar in many respects from that of other communist societies like China, Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea. In these latter societies the army, has often emerged as a powerful political actor along with the ruling party. Therefore, the model remains silent about the role of the army in these societies. Again such a model fails to provide insights into a pluralist

political culture. The problem arises because no nation or polity has a monolithic structure that lends itself to understanding through a model. Even for non-pluralistic nations like the erstwhile Soviet Union or for China, the model fails. With respect to the Soviet army, this model provided little guidance to the understanding of the Soviet army as a significant and legitimate interest group.

Roman Kolkowicz develops another model by dwelling upon the constant conflict between the party and the army in the Soviet Union.² By looking at the inherent interests of these two institutions, he considers those interests as dichotomous and aimed at expanding the respective institution's autonomy. Kolkowicz maintains that the army constantly attempts to expand its autonomy in the management of its internal affairs, while the party throws spanners in those attempts. Kolkowicz's formulation falls under the banner of "interest group theory". This theory draws a line between the party and the army. It depicts the political apparatus in the army as a foreign and hostile element resented by the regular officers. In fact, Kolkowicz

2. Roman Kolkowicz, "Interest Groups in Soviet Politics : The Case of the Military," in Dale Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, eds., Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems (Boulder, Colorado : Westview Press, 1978), pp.9-26.

explains the army as an "emerging special interest group, guild-like in character and engaged in perpetual tension in its relationship with the party leadership".³ The military is seen as the greatest reservoir of violence in its organised form and thus poses a formidable challenge to the dominant paradigm-"politics" and its most important channel, the party. In other words, the absolute powers of the party elites are confronted with various challenges. Hence, the military is accorded greater professional independence while at the same time the party seeks constant control over it with a view to secure its own regime. Tension emerges from these cross purposes which requires a careful adjustment of mutual interests for the maintenance of internal stability.

Following Kolkowicz's interest group model Ellis Joffe in his work "The Chinese Army After Mao, (1987) provides a fine blend of insights into the past and present Chinese thinking on the PLA.⁴ His major contention is that Maoist policies during the Cultural Revolution impeded the professionalization of the PLA for almost twenty years. He argues that increasing politicisation of the PLA has made it a dominant group in Chinese politics. He explains the post-

3. Ibid., p.22.

4. Ellis Joffe, The Chinese Army After Mao, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987).

Mao military reforms as an attempt to restore the party's control and to prepare a professional army in accordance with the present requirements of modern warfare.

This explanation can be challenged in the light of the later development in the political history of the PRC. Plainly speaking, Joffe has made an attempt to describe party and army in terms of their institutional values and separate goals on the basis of the results emanating from the reforms in the post-Mao era. But events like the 1989 Tiananmen Square Demonstration revealed a different and complex aspect of party-army relations where goals and values seems to be more intertwined than separate. Joffe's model was formulated when an all round reformation of the army was still underway and the residual institutional relations and interactions were still shrouded by the aura of reforms. As well, Joffe seems to have missed the essential sense of vulnerability within the new regime that became so apparent only a few year later. Hence, Joffe's perspective lacks theoretical precision and an inability to reflect upon elements of continuity in Chinese civil-military relations.

Another attempt to survey the implications of civil military relations is the work of William E. Odom.⁵ His

5. William E. Odom, "The Party-Military Connection A Critique", in Herspring and Volgyes, pp.27-52.

framework is known as the "institutional congruence model" and projects a symbolic relationship between the army and the party. The elites from the army are viewed as "executants" who themselves lack understanding of the issues that are framed from above. In this model, the military is treated as an administrative arm of the political bosses. In other words, the military is simply maintained as an inseparable part of the state. Moreover, Odom looks at the military's institutional values as a part of the entire political culture of the state. On political issues the military in this model is viewed as a faction of the party, unlike a separate institutions that bargains for its status from the outside. In other words, Odom's attempt to understand the military is based on the premise that the army is not an alienated and parallel institution, bargaining with its political counterpart, but is based upon a different formulation that political officers are a part of the military structure as regular line-officers and vice-versa. This means that political leaders have a consensus with the army and that all decisions are formulated by an apex body of leaders from both the party and army. Odom's model, however, does not take into account the drive for professionalism in the army that was an especial feature of post-Mao reforms. Hence the claim that 'the role of

political officers increases the effectiveness of the military rather than detracts from it' makes one of the most constitutive parts of the history of the military -- professionalism -- a misnomer.

Timothy Colton, rejecting Kolkowicz's interest group theorization, has developed a "participatory model" for understanding civil-military relations.⁶ He refutes Kolkowicz's stress on the party's control of the military. Instead, Colton's model emphasises the military's participation in politics and the existence of a potential but unused military power in communist societies. He downplays tensions within the political system among the army and other political actors. However, this model views the military as an institution having its own interest. The party has to satisfy these interests by permitting the military to solve its own internal problems; by allowing the army to participate in the decision-making process by providing expert advice and by adopting internal and external goals with which the military generally agrees. In order to retain support the party leadership has to be careful not to depart too far from the policies advocated by

6. Timothy Cotton, "The Party-Military Connection : A Participatory Model," in Herspring and Volgyes, pp.54-78.

the military. This model does not arrive at dichotomous positions for the party and the army. Rather it take into account the aggregate participation of the party and army in politics. This model also discusses the internal differentiations in both the party and army and the existing cross-constitutional connections and alliances. Colton's attempt encourages analytical flexibility and variation in civil-military relations.

Nevertheless, there are also recent attempts to provide a more systematic framework to analyse this issue. David Albright conceives of a "contingency approach" that takes into account the whole range of relations between the party and the army from total cooperation to total conflict. He finds this continuum is based on seven variables such as (a) the path to power, (b) foreign relations, (c) the extent of functional specialization in the upper strata of the ruling elites, (d) the extent of factional strife within the governing elites, (e) the amount of bureaucratization of politics, (f) military doctrine and finally, (g) the extent of domestic order.⁷ This model, however, does not give us a clear picture of the relations between the above variables. Secondly, this model also fails to specify the relative

7. David Albright, "A Comparative Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," World Politics (Baltimore), Vol.32, No.4, July 1980, pp.553-576.

importance of each variable. Hence, Albright's contingency model, irrespective of its systematicity, provides a hazy picture of civil-military relations.

The "bureaucratic" model which is a late comer, tries to illuminate civil-military relations with respect to political changes, especially in China. This model focuses on institutions and formal roles within institutions in an effort to identify changes in roles on the basis of which we might draw conclusions about institutional stability or instability in a changing political environment. This model can also be used to organise data for comparison with a Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy to explain and predict bureaucratic behaviour.

Under this model, Monte R. Bullard, studies five key institutions to explain the relations between the party and the army in China.⁸ These are - the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the Military Regions, the Military Districts, the Provincial Party Committees, and the Provincial Revolutionary Committees. This selection of institutions indicates the emphasis on structural change in China or on the institutional linkages in civil-military

8. Monte R. Bullard, China's Political-Military Evolution : The Party and the Military in the PRC, 1960-84, (Boulder and Colorado : Westview special studies, 1985).

relations. While Bullard's bureaucratic model provides insights into the Party and the Army as discrete organizations with interactions at the level of bureaucratic hierarchies, Bullard's model stops short of providing a functional view of the two institutions. It is pertinent to say that our problem is more functional than institutional.

All the models have been used to analyse the relations between the civilian institutions and the military, in the Peoples Republic of China. They take recourse to conventional descriptive methods which have inherent analytical disadvantages. None of the above models, for example, view the military as a constituent part of the prevailing condition in which the military responds, independently. These models, however, do not adequately explain civil-military relations in the PRC. They ignore the role and influence of the army in making political decisions, and its importance in a power-struggle with the civilian authority. They further ignore how and why the civilian authorities deliberately decide to make the army a major player in the political arena for the survival of the party, or a faction of it, in the power. As well, they ignore how the army responds to these deliberate political decisions and its consequences. The present work is an

attempt to understand these aspects of civil-military relations in the context of a political crisis.

However, in our effort towards a reconceptualization of civil-military relations in contemporary China, all the above discussed models cannot be rejected totally. Except the totalitarian model, each of them provides partial and relevant insights into civil-military relations in China. None of them, however, adequately explain civil-military relations in the changing political environment of post-Mao China, and where the role of the Chinese Communist Party and the PLA, and their interaction, have undergone changes. In post-Mao China, pragmatism was given priority over ideological concerns. In an effort at creating a rational political structure, emphasis was placed on the process of institution-building. This seriously undermined the development of personality cults and the influence of individual leaders in the Party hierarchy, on the one hand. On the other hand, the Party's supremacy was restored in political and civilian matters by disengaging the Army from these activities. A major reorientation of policies was initiated to carve out separate roles for the Party, Army and the Government. This separation of roles, and consequently powers, an essential condition for a stable and rational political culture, moved the PRC towards a new set

of rules for the interaction between the two major institutions - the Party and the Army.

The subsequent modernization and restructuring of the PLA not only increased the combat capabilities of the PLA, but it also developed a professional attitude among its officers. These professional officers were distanced generationally from the revolutionary legacy and they preferred to stay away from the political concerns and power-struggles within the civilian institutions. The sudden employment of the PLA in the June 1989, Tiananmen Square Crisis, however, brought the PLA once again onto the centre-stage of Chinese politics. Here, the Party used the military in its internal factional struggle by overriding its own internal decision-making and control mechanisms. This event established certain new equations between the Party and the Army. Since 1989 there has been a reversal of steps from professionalisation to politicisation. A reconceptualization of civil-military relations in post-Mao China must be able to explain these developments. In arriving at such an explanation contemporary political situations and political processes within China cannot be ignored.

If civil-military relations in contemporary China are to be explained meaningfully, they must be done so not

through partial models such as the above, but through a consideration of the dilemma for Chinese leaders that the internal and external pressures for political modernization create. While the PRC has enthusiastically developed and implemented a policy of economic reform it has clung resolutely to its stand that "political modernization" must be postponed for the present. Significantly, political modernization has never meant the provision of political rights and freedom alone. It also involves the creation and strengthening of civilian political institutions and civil-society mechanisms which ensure popular control and a stable political culture.

Certainly, some steps have been taken in post-Mao China towards this, especially as some devolution of power supports the process of economic reform. But the reliance on a coercive apparatus in a crisis where the image of the Party is under question, reveals that China still has a long way to go in this direction. Hence, the strength of civilian institutions, and the existence of non-coercive mechanisms are the crucial determinants of the character of civil-military relations.

The present work seeks to take this formulation as the basis of the hypothesis for reconceptualising civil-military relations in China. The hypothesis assumes that wherever civilian institutions become discredited they are vulnerable

to military penetration. Wherever the mechanisms of socio-political control have been impaired and the image of the party and its leadership has been tarnished with the decline of its ability to elicit compliance through persuasion, the civilian leadership have relied on coercive means of control by ensuring that the instrument of coercion remains dominant in politics.

This study is, therefore, an effort to reflect upon the broader issue of political modernization in post-Mao China. It will endeavour to contribute to the broader political modernization framework which is crucial both for communist and developing societies. To this end, this study will explore the effort made by the post-Mao leadership in creating a rational political structure by reorienting the Party-Army relationship through a series of military reforms and the reason why the Party leadership chose to reverse this process by using the PLA in a domestic crisis after almost a decade of reforms. The study will also explore the intention and ability of the Party leaders to use the PLA in their political interests and the response of the PLA to being used in domestic affairs for political purposes. It is hoped that the evidence will allow for some insights on the political modernization and the establishment of a rational political culture in the PRC.

The process of institutional rationalization in the People's Republic of China (PRC) was initiated soon after the Cultural Revolution. The concern over the tendency and practice of institutions to overlap the functions of other institutions was grounded in the events of the Cultural Revolution, specifically as they related to the overwhelming role and reputation of the military in political affairs. While Mao evinced some concern over this in the early 1970s, it was left to Deng Xiaoping to develop and implement a policy whereby major institutions in the PRC would arrive at a position of autonomy and independent decision-making. The separation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from civilian affairs, and therefore, from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), was a significant move in this direction.

This chapter, therefore, deals with post-Mao military reforms and their implications on the civil-military relations in post-Mao China. An analysis of military reforms will give us an idea of the status of the PLA and its interaction with the Party before the outbreak of the June 1989 Tiananmen Crisis. This chapter is, hence, divided into three different parts. The first part explores the need for reforms in military thinking and practice. The second part focuses upon the areas of reforms, both on the changes in aspects of China's contemporary military

CHAPTER II

POST-MAO MILITARY REFORMS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

doctrine, as well as the reforms in their organizational aspect. The final part look at the implications of these reforms for Party - Army relations in the changing political environment. This provides the background against which the relationship and interaction between the Party and the Army will be examined during and after the Tiananmen Crisis.

In the post-Mao era, the People's Republic of China took a great leap towards modernisation. Since the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (1978), sinologists have described the country as moving "rapidly from ideological dogmatism towards eclectic pragmatism, from an extreme totalitarianism towards liberalised authoritarianism, from a command economy towards Market Socialism".¹ However, while there was no opposition to modernisation *per se*, differences arose in the Party on the pace and approach to reform. The "conservatives" following Mao's line, considered "bourgeois liberalism" to be the main aberration and wanted gradual changes. On the other hand, the "reformists" led by Deng Xiaoping, felt that "leftism" was the main enemy and rapid development, vital for China could not be achieved without eradicating "leftism". As things developed, Deng's view

1. A. Doak Barnett, "Ten Years After Mao", Foreign Affairs (New York) Vol.64, Winter 1986, p.37.

prevailed because he persuaded many senior comrades to step down and removed the opponents of the reform process from positions of power while installing his supporters in key positions. A major reorientation of policies was initiated at the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CCP in November 1978, along with the launching of the "four modernisations" programme in four general areas of development - Agriculture, Industry, Science and Technology, and Defence. As such the modernisation campaign set a new direction for Chinese development which indeed added up to a "Second Revolution" China.² This "Second Revolution" of profoundly transformed the role of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). While Mao's effort towards increasing politicisation during the Cultural Revolution was largely responsible for the deterioration of the PLA, Mao's later recantation and Deng's effort to undo the Maoist Legacy provided the vital thrust for its modernisation.

NEED FOR REFORMS

The impetus for military modernisation in China was both internal and external. As well, China's leaders agreed on the need for military modernisation. This

2. Harry Harding, "China's Second Revolution", (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987).

consensus was reinforced by the political importance of the PLA. The PLA had performed a vital function in toppling the radical leaders during the brief succession struggle that erupted after Mao's death and before Deng Xiaoping was finally installed in power. The military's support for the new leadership and its reform policies was crucial. The PLA's support remained steady even though Deng had radically reduced the political role of the PLA. Lacking Mao's stature and political charisma, initially Deng had to operate through coalitions and the backing of the military was crucial to the effective functioning of any coalition. Deng had to be sympathetic toward the needs of the military, if only to ensure their goodwill and support. His rejection of the military's demands for more resources, was constrained only by overriding economic considerations. In areas not subject to economic limitations, Deng personally campaigned for and carried out far-reaching reforms for a more professionalised and efficient armed force.

The final impetus for the modernisation of the PLA came from the PRC's experiences of the war against Vietnam in February 1979. Setting out to teach Vietnam a lesson, the Chinese learned how inefficient the PLA was with its obsolete military equipment and strategy against a much smaller but better equipped army. Earlier, in July 1975,

Deng as the Chief of the General Staff of the PLA had marked out the deficiencies of the PLA and saw it as being "overstaffed, lax, arrogant, lazy and in considerable disarray having lost its fine traditions and become a bloated outfit unable to make a good showing in combat".³

The subsequent restructuring and modernisation of the PLA was also based on an overall assessment of the world situation. Chinese strategic planning has traditionally made a connection between threat perception and military policy. However, this connection became closer and more complex in the post-Mao period because the world situation changed Chinese threat perception. After the withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam, the Chinese perceived the Soviets to be a clear and present danger in the region. This perception was strengthened when the Soviets supported Vietnam in its efforts to consolidate its position in Indochina. It was further reinforced when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and developed close relations with India. The Chinese assumed the Soviet collusion with the

3. Deng Xiaoping, "The Task of Consolidating the Army", The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975-1982, Beijing, People's Press, 1983, p.27.

other nations around China's borders was a greater threat to its security than a direct invasion of the mainland.⁴

At the sametime, the Chinese also developed a belief that they could resist any Soviet invasion of China if it occurred. Such a belief was reinforced significantly by the performance of the Afgan rebels against the mighty Soviet Red Army. Again, China's entry into the nuclear club, with a second strike nuclear capability and its new strategic alignment with the United States gave the Chinese enough confidence to face even a Soviet nuclear threat. Perceiving the existing world situation in their favour, the Chinese concluded that "a World War was no longer inevitable, an early and nuclear war between major powers was not likely and the future conflicts will be smaller, of lower intensity and confined to border wars and ethnic conflicts".⁵ Hence, Chinese leaders found that the period was most suitable for a steady and long-term rebuilding of the PLA.

Military modernisation in China was also a part of the long-term aspirations of Chinese leaders. China's leaders

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4. Jonathan D. Pollack, "China's Global Strategy and Soviet Power", Problems of Communism (Washington D.C.), Vol.30, No.1, January-February 1981, pp.54-69.
5. Guo Ping, "A Review of World Situation in 1981", Xinhua, 21 December 1981, trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: China (Washington D.C. - hereafter FBIS-CHI), December 22, 1981, p.A4.



aimed at making China a great power, commanding respect and influence in global politics and playing a major role in the strategic balance between world powers. To achieve this China required military power to decrease its vulnerability to military threats. This outlook reinforced the need for a powerful and modern army.

The modernisation of the PLA called for a process of professionalisation that dominated its functioning in the 1980s. The process essentially aimed at three kinds of transformations of the PLA known as - Modernisation, (xiandaihua), Revolutionization (geminghua) and Regularization (zhengguihua).⁶ In short, these were aimed essentially at improving areas of leadership, training and organization. These areas were also free from economic and technological constraints. However, these were the areas neglected during the Maoist period and had seriously affected the professional competence and the efficiency of the PLA. It was also assumed that a technological advancement at the level of weapons acquisition would make no sense without reforming and strengthening these crucial areas within the PLA. The post-Mao leadership considered professional skills to be of prime importance. Unlike the

6. Deng Xiaoping, "Revolutionization, Modernization and Regularization; Build a Powerful Modern and Regular Revolutionary Army, Selected Works, pp.349-351.

Maoists, they were not interested in politicising soldiers and projecting them as role models for society.

In line with this thinking, measures were taken to reform the PLA and transform it into a more regular force capable of modern combat.

The term "modernisation" refers to the updating of equipment and changes in strategy and tactics for war. This requires newer training methods and modern fighting-doctrines. Chinese views on modernization⁶ were that China was to have a modern military force but not necessarily in the Western sense of the term. To them "modern" meant less reliance on traditional weapons and the doctrine designed on the basis of guerrilla warfare. Yet modern strategy never meant the complete abandonment of the doctrine of People's War.⁷ The term "Revolutionisation" as it emerged, stood for greater political indoctrination and the acceptance of the principles and policies of the Party. Here the ultimate goal was to guide the thinking of PLA personnel in every important issue ranging from their role in the civilian sector to the type of strategy or force needed to prepare them, down to budget allocations. In other words, this effort implied the acceptance of the line, principles and

7. Ibid., p.349.

doctrine of the Party leadership.⁸ "Regularization" stood for professionalism as well as reorganisation. Professionalism meant technical competence and an overall effort to improve the quality of personnel at all levels. Reorganisation stood for streamlining the system for greater efficiency and organisational consolidation.⁹

AREAS OF REFORM

Ideology - The first major step towards reforming the PLA was to reassess and revise Mao's military doctrine of "People's War".¹⁰ The post-Mao leadership was aware of the need to revise Maoist military doctrine found unsuitable both as a strategy in future wars and one suited to the on-going modernization of the PLA. Maoist military strategy was understood to be ineffective in the nuclear era. Its emphasis on the human factor was found to be misplaced especially in the face of a nuclear threat. The evidence of the Second World War had seriously undermined the importance of the human factor in modern warfare. But refuting the Maoist doctrine of "People's War" was a very sensitive

8. Ibid., p.350.

9. Ibid., pp.350-351.

10. See Mao Zedong, "On Protracted War", Selected Military Writings (Beijing; Foreign Language Press, 1972). pp.187-267.

issue, pertaining as it did to the position of the ideological legacy of Mao and whether it was politically wise to tamper with it. Hence, the post-Mao leaders were unable and unwilling to make a complete break with the Maoist doctrine. The dilemma before them was how to use Maoist ideology to legitimate their political regime while transforming it in the face of new needs.

Speaking to the Army Political Conference in June 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced the revision of the Maoist doctrine without repudiating Mao. Citing the Maoist principle of "seeking truth from facts", Deng suggested "we must at no time violate Maoist principles, but we must integrate them with reality, analyse and study actual conditions and solve practical problems".¹¹

As a way out of this dilemma the formula of "People's War under Modern Conditions" was devised to guide the PLA on its road to modernization. Although the Chinese leaders did not systematically explain the new doctrine, their pronouncements and practices indicated that the two parts of the new doctrine - People's War and Modern Conditions - did not carry equal weight in their considerations. While some components of the "People's War" were retained, the leaders

11. Deng Xiaoping, p.123.

emphasised the adaption of the PLA to modern conditions.¹² Nevertheless, under this new doctrine various aspects of the traditional doctrine were revised with significant ramifications for the PLA and its personnel. Ultimately, it ushered in a readjustment in the National Defence Policy of the China. The innovations under the doctrine were firstly, that the strategy of luring an enemy deep into China and then surrounding and attacking him was amended to include the possibility of forward defence. Instead of abandoning territory automatically, the Chinese would try to block the advance of the enemy by "positional warfare", and then go on the offensive. Here garrison and reserve forces would spearhead the attack while mobile and guerrilla warfare would play a supporting role in eroding the enemy's strength. Secondly, in contrast to traditional People's War, China would employ ground - forces or combined arms instead of infantry alone. Thirdly, the army would no longer perform its twin function both as a combat force and a civic force simultaneously. The development of the army was to be in accordance with the needs of battle, not with political and ideological concerns. Under the conditions of

12. Shong Shilun, "Mao's Military Thinking is the Guide to Our Army's Victories", Red Flag, 16 August 1981, trans. in FBIS-CHI, September 17, 1981, p.20.

modern warfare, commanders were to be given more autonomy in the military sphere against the restrictions of old procedures.¹³

As a sequel to these changes in strategy, the new tactics was not to abandon or retreat from industrial centres but to meet the enemy at the gate. The main emphasis was on holding their ground by "positional defensive warfare" to be conducted by the joint services. This shift in strategy meant that the PLA was to be transformed into a well-equipped, regular, highly professional army with substantial logistic bases."¹⁴ These changes in doctrine set the new strategic perspective at a remove from Maoist doctrine.

Organisation - From the organizational aspect, the most important task for the post-Mao leadership was to improve the quality of personnel at all levels of the PLA. This was crucial to the process of overall military modernization. There was a need for a new breed of officers who would be younger, better educated, and hence professionally more

13. Paul H.B. Godwin, "Mao Zedong Revised: Deterrence and Defence in the 1980's", in Paul H.B. Godwin, ed., The Chinese Defence Establishment: Continuity and Change in the 1980's, (Boulder and Colorado: Westview Press 1983), pp.21-40.

14. Xu Xiangqian, "Strive to Achieve Modernization in National Defence", Red Flag, 20 October 1979, trans. in FBIS-CHI, January 19, 1982, pp.L24-25.

competent. The Maoist legacy had damaged the quality of the officer corps more than any other aspect of the PLA for political and factional considerations. The military's involvement in politics diverted officers from professional duties and drew them into factional struggles for political power. The political engagement of PLA's personnel ensured security and longevity of service resulting finally in an oversized, overaged, incompetent officer corps incapable of adjusting to new times.

In an effort to restore efficiency in the officer corps, the post-Mao leaders introduced reforms in all phases of an officer's career, starting from recruitment and ending with retirement. The reforms were further governed by the requirements of military professionalism and of modern conditions of war. Instead of promoting officers from the lower ranks, the leadership stipulated that new officers should be graduates of military academies. These military academies were regarded as the foundation of the new personnel system within the army and the key to the success of military modernization. Hence, enormous efforts were made to rebuild and refine the military academies in order to make them capable of providing suitable officers. In 1983 the Annual Conference on Military Academies decided that formal professional education should receive top

priority, even if it meant fewer soldiers and manning offices with fewer people. In the same year the Military Affairs Commission approved the decision of the General Political Department on strengthening education in Science, Culture and Political theory for officers in the armed forces. The decision further emphasised that all officers under forty years of age should strive to reach high-school level or equivalent, to professional-school level by 1990, while those over forty should take special courses connected with their work.¹⁵ In 1984, there were over a hundred military academies divided into broad categories of command and specialized technical schools and a three tier system was created to educate junior, mid level and senior officers. The teaching staff was also recruited from graduates of the military academies, from graduates of civilian institutions of higher learning, as also from commanders with combat experience.

In 1986, a National Defence University was established to provide integrated military studies at a higher level by merging three existing separate academies of the PLA - the PLA Military Academy, the PLA Political Academy and the PLA

15. See Ellis Joffe, "The Chinese Army After Mao" (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987). p.126.

Logistic Academy. Its basic task was to train commanders or officers at the higher echelons and to facilitate research work in military theory and other strategic issues. It was also entrusted with the task of advising the Military Commission on policy decisions. Its focus was to be on training senior commanders for future requirements.

Under the new promotion policy new promotion criteria were adopted to weed out those who were less qualified and inefficient. The slogan of the "four cadre transformations", established these new promotion criteria. The "four cadre transformation" stands for revolutionization, rejuvenation, intellectualization and professionalization.¹⁶ The army units were told to drop past promotion practices and to give more weightage to formal training as a criterion for promoting officers. They were also told to stop drawing officers mainly from the ground forces and to select more and better educated persons from technical and non-combat units for command positions. Most significantly, they were also told to discard the practice of promotion through seniority.

16. Monte R. Bullard, Chinese Political Military Evolution: The Party and the Military in the PRC, 1960-84, (Boulder and Colo.: Westview Special Studies, 1985), p.28.

In 1984, the new Military Service Law was adopted. It formalised the conditions of service in the PLA. According to this law, the officers were to be selected only from graduates of military academies, from those who received officer's training in an approved military institution and from graduates of institutions of higher learning and special technical secondary schools who were found suitable to serve as officers. This law also restored the system of military ranks which was abolished in 1965, an essential device for raising the prestige of officers and strengthening the sense of organization and discipline within the army.¹⁷

Along with the above steps the introduction of measures like demotion of officers for lack of achievement led the replacement of officers who had not committed any serious mistakes, but also had not accomplished anything. However, the demotion would not be regarded as a personal dishonour or disgrace. These professional approaches were applicable to all strata including the higher echelons of the military hierarchy. But the efforts to place the younger professional officers in positions of responsibility throughout the armed forces required the availability of

17. Beijing Review (Beijing), Vol.27, No.24, June 11-17, 1984, pp.18-20.

such positions. The availability of such position had to be facilitated by the retirement of veteran leaders from such positions. The old veterans were redundant in the new circumstances as they were conservative in their ideas and incapable of adjusting to the new strategic and institutional perspectives. Some of them resisted the reform process and questioned the need for professional measures. Replacing these veterans with younger and more competent commanders was expected to be beneficial to the leadership.

The leadership, however, choose to persuade rather than force the aging officers to leave the armed forces. China's political leaders were reluctant to antagonize veteran commanders because these commanders had vast networks of personal ties. To persuade them to end their careers in a dignified manner would ensure their cooperation with the Party's leadership. The leadership, hence, emphasised retirement with dignity and social respect and made proper arrangements for their retirement taking good care to see that veteran cadres would be comfortable.¹⁸ In January 1986, it was reported that this demobilization

18. Joffe, p.133.

process was running ahead of schedule and that more than ten thousand officers had already been discharged.¹⁹

The mass retirement of veteran officer also contributed to the reduction in the size of the PLA. The vast size of the armed forces consisted of more than four million soldiers had been a continuous problem for the leadership. This created organizational overlapping making weapons modernization difficult. Therefore Deng Xiaoping emphasised the necessity of decreasing the number of personnel, mainly officers in order to "carry out the four modernizations or to streamline the army and raise its combat effectiveness".²⁰ A smaller but better armed and trained army would also conform to the new military doctrine. This new doctrine postulated positional defence and swift counter attack and therefore, required fewer but better equipped troops. A reduced army would also enable the Deng leadership to dismiss officers, with a smaller and weaker network, over ideological disputes regarding policies inside and outside the PLA.

The adoption of the new Military Service Law in 1984 was also a milestone in the process of troop reduction. Until then, China had no formal reserve system, although the

19. Beijing Review, Vol.29, No.3, January 20-26, 1986, p.8.

20. Deng Xiaoping, pp.269-270.

militia had served as a reservoir for the PLA. By establishing a formal reserve system and merging it with the militia, the Military Service Law effectively reduced the standing Army. Subsequently, in 1985-86, plans were announced to cut the size of the army by a million people. The number of military regions was reduced from eleven to seven, thereby cutting down on the number of headquarters along with their personnel. The reduction reportedly cut down the number of the officer corps by twenty five percent. Finally, late in 1988, about eighty thousand non-combatant cadres including, technical and administrative personnel were released into civilian life.²¹

The post-Mao leadership was also keen on training programmes considered as the key to the modernization programme in the PLA. It acknowledged the fact that through proper training during peacetime the capacity to make war could be increased.²² Hence, troop training programmes were ordered and reorganized. Less time was devoted to political study sessions and more to the study of strategy and tactics. The major change was from training the infantry

21. Harlan W. Jencks, "The Chinese People's Liberation Army" in Segal and Goodman, eds., China at Forty, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). p.104.

22. Deng Xiaoping, pp.248-251.

units to train the armoured formations and from single service exercises to combined-arms manoeuvres. Speaking to the participating troops in a combined services exercise in 1981, Deng Xiaoping said that "these exercises have given us an opportunity to assess our achievements in building modern, regularized armed forces and have simulated modern warfare very well"²³

Thus, joint-services exercises were conducted in line with the strategy of "active defence". They were designed to improve the abilities of Chinese officers to command and co-ordinate complex operations under modern conditions. High technology was incorporated into the command systems of combined forces to ease control and co-ordination. It was also used to develop training programmes, particularly in producing laser and electronic simulators.

At the same time, the leadership also reemphasized the traditional virtues of discipline and decorum within the military. To upgrade the standards of behaviour, the Deng leadership issued regulations concerning discipline and appointed Discipline Inspection Committees to enforce them. It also sought to strengthen personnel commitment to the PLA through the institution of parades, oath-taking

23. Deng Xiaoping, p.372.

ceremonies and the issuance of new uniforms. The promulgation of national service regulations in 1984 postulated the duties and rights of servicemen pertaining to discipline, training, study, rest and physical appearance as well as procedures for daily routine and combat readiness.

The vast size of the PLA had also contributed to making its organizational structure a complex, inefficient and wasteful one. Various steps were taken to streamline this organizational structure by simplifying the administrative procedures within the PLA. This process involved the merger, abolition and transformation of various military units to improve organizational processes and evolve interlocking systems.²⁴

Subsequently, the PLA's Engineering Corps was abolished, the Railway Corps was incorporated into the Railway Ministry and local troops were merged with the Ministry of Public Security. This was intended to free the PLA from internal concerns so that it could concentrate on external threats.

The top three organs of the PLA - the General Staff Department, the General Political Department and the General Logistics Department - and their procedures were also

24. Joffe, p.138.

simplified. The 1982 Constitution of the PRC established the State Central Military Commission replacing the party's Military Affairs Committee. The National Defence Science and Technology Commission was combined with the National Defence Industry Commission to form the new National Defence Science, Technology and Industrial Commission in order to improve the weapon's modernization process. The structure of military regions was altered and changes made in their commanding personnel. In 1985-86, the infantry field armies were converted into group armies consisting of various arms and services for the needs of modern warfare. During the late 1980s, the issue of "local wars" and the special troops needed for them was raised. Military officers and civilian leaders also debated the lessons of ongoing wars in the Middle East. It was agreed upon that rapid deployment forces were crucial in such conflicts and in 1988, a battalion-sized force was formed on an experimental basis. But due to financial and technological constraints these efforts have been post-poned to the near future.

The 13th Chinese Communist Party Congress (October-November, 1987) and the 7th National People's Congress (April, 1988) marked the culmination of the process of professionalization in the PLA. Here in his Political Work Report, Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang referred to the

achievements of the PLA in the reform process and stated that while reducing its size by one million, the Army had achieved progress in its endeavour to become modernised, regularised and more revolutionary. It had also improved its defence capability.²⁵

IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTY-ARMY RELATIONS

The revival of professionalism in the PLA was also accompanied by a transformation of the PLA's political role and its relations with the Party. It was believed that professionalism would ensure a politically apathetic army. Prolonged involvement in politics had made the PLA unfit for the new reform regime. Military intervention in the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, had made the PLA a prime political force at the expense of its professional competence. It had deviated from military concerns and had become autonomous of civilian control. After the Cultural Revolution, the military resisted the attempts of civilian leaders to limit its political power. This resulted in civil-military conflict which reached its climax in the Lin Biao affair (1971). After the fall of Lin Biao, even though the military was disengaged from the political arena, it was

25. Beijing Review, Vol.30, No.45, November 9-15,1987, pp.i-xxvii.

still a key factor in Chinese politics until the end of the Maoist era. The military also played a very crucial role in the post-Mao succession struggle and in the establishment of the new regime. One of the prime objectives of the Deng leadership was to complete the withdrawal of the PLA from politics and to reassert political control over it. This was essential not only for military modernization but also for carrying out reform programmes in all other areas. The danger of conservative military leaders, dissatisfied with the policies of the Party leadership, forging co-operation with dissident groups in the Party to hinder the implementation of reform policies was always present. Therefore, both military as well as political considerations compelled Deng to alter the existing balance in civil-military relations.

Although the withdrawal of the PLA from politics had made substantial progress by the late 1970s, the completion of this process occurred only after Deng's ascent to power. Under Deng's leadership the concentration on the modernization of the PLA and its concern solely with professional pursuits and the return of the army to the barracks started to reveal concrete results.

Attempts were also made to relieve the PLA of its non-military functions, in particularly those related to

internal security. The establishment of the People's Armed Police under the Ministry of Public Security in 1983 was a major move towards the withdrawal of the PLA from non-military duties at the basic level of society. The Deng leadership also relieved the PLA of such functions which were politically insignificant, but indirectly enhanced the PLA's presence in the civilian sector. The withdrawal of the PLA from non-military functions was also simultaneous with a redefinition and restriction of its role in society. The main aim was to restore the PLA to its traditional role of assisting the population in times of need, rather than ruling over it.

The reduction of military representation in political bodies also reduced its influence in central-policy-making organs like the Central Committee and the Politbureau. The representation of the military in the Central Committee was reduced from more than fifty percent in 1969 to about thirteen percent in 1985. By the end of the 1980s, there was no one with a primarily military background in the Standing Committee of the Politbureau and very few members with military background in the Politbureau.²⁶

26. D. Banerjee, PLA and the 13th Chinese Communist Party Congress, Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), Vol.11, No.6, June 1988, p.225.

After the troops returned to the barracks and military commanders were dislodged from political posts at regional and national levels, Deng sought to reduce the influence of the military from domestic politics. This process went together with the restoration of political control over the military. Deng supplemented the army's retreat from power with the reassertion of internal control over it through various personnel changes and by appointing his confidants at key levels of power in the military establishment.²⁷

Through these appointments he controlled the key levels of power in the military establishment. Numerous personnel changes were also made at lower levels. The criteria of all these appointments was the principle of professionalism. From Deng's standpoint, this principle assured of maintenance of civilian control. Officers were expected to devote themselves to military duties and to cease involvement in politics. Significantly, the professional ethics which kept the PLA out of politics, also made the commanders challenge the Party leadership when their professional interests were jeopardised.²⁸

27. Beijing Review, Vol.30, No.46, November 16-22, 1987, p.21.

28. Alastair I. Johnston, "Changing Party-Army Relations in China, 1979-1984", Asian Survey (California), Vol.24, No.10, October 1984, pp.1016-1017.

As far as institutional mechanisms are concerned, the Maoist leadership remained committed to the political control system as the mainstay of Party dominance over the armed forces. This was ensured through mechanisms like the supreme decision-making power of Party Committees in military units, and the equal status of Political Commissars and Military Commanders as executors of its decision. But the post-Mao leadership rejected these mechanisms of political control. There was now no reference to these in statements on the role of political work in the PLA and in descriptions of political activities throughout the armed forces.

The interference of Party Committees and Political Commissars had been one of the main sources of conflict between Party and Army since the late 1950s. The commitment of Deng's leadership to the supremacy of 'experts' over 'reds' in management, and the abandonment of the "People's War" doctrine, elevated the military commanders to the dominant positions in military units. The essence of the new approach was that political work in the armed forces should serve military objectives and should not interfere with the command structure of the military.

But the reduction of intervention by political organs in military affairs did not reduce their role. These organs

continued to perform important functions like conducting political education and indoctrination. Political education was required to explain and disseminate party policies and to explain important measures undertaken by the army. Party organs were also responsible for carrying out campaigns of ideological rectification. Formal party rectification in the PLA continued from 1983 to 1986. When the nation-wide movement against "spiritual pollution" was launched, these organs were instructed to implement the campaign in the army. The Party organs were also responsible for the enforcement of political discipline throughout the armed forces. Hence, Party organs in the PLA still wield considerable clout in political matters.

Moreover, opposition to Party leadership and Party policies within the PLA came from a group of senior military leaders who had not limited their concerns solely to military interests. These leaders intervened in political affairs and, owing to their adherence to Maoist legacy, spoke out against the policies of the Deng leadership. Deng overcame these dissenting groups successfully, primarily because dissent was limited to a segment of the PLA and did not include the professional officers. Even though professional leaders differed from the Party leadership on the issue of resource allocations for weapons

acquisitions, they were fully satisfied with other areas of reform and had many reasons to cooperate with the Party leadership.

This understanding formed the basis for civil-military cooperation in the Deng era. Such a cooperation should be attributed to the fulfillment of two conditions which the Deng leadership accomplished successfully. First, the Chinese military's commitment to the principles of civilian supremacy when the civilian leadership demonstrated the capacity to rule effectively. Second, the Army's non-resistance to and acceptance of political control, provided it was exercised in a moderate fashion and did not interfere with their professional interests. Such a professionally oriented relationship between Party and Army in the PRC continued to exist until the middle of 1989. The military crackdown at Tiananmen Square in June 1989 marked a watershed in this development.

CHAPTER III

THE JUNE 1989 TIANANMEN CRISIS - I (THE DECISION TO USE THE PLA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS)

The efforts of the post-Mao leaders to disassociate the army from the Party as well as from politics were, no doubt, crucial steps towards political modernisation in China. These efforts also contributed to strengthening the civilian authority to some extent, by reducing the role and influence of the military in civilian affairs. But the subsequent failure of the civilian authority to resolve the June 1989 crisis through non-coercive instruments and its decision to use the armed forces in a domestic political crisis revealed unresolved contradictions in the new set of conditions underlying the relations between the PLA and the Party. It also revealed the continued political importance of the armed forces and the dependence on it of the civilian authority even after a decade of reforms.

The processes and the circumstances under which the decision to use the PLA in the 1989 crisis was made, had implications for the Party and its leaders. This chapter, therefore, will analyze the 1989 Tiananmen Square crisis in the backdrop of these issues. It will focus on the ability and intention of the Party leaders to use the PLA for domestic political purposes and the underlying cleavages among the leaders for such an use of the coercive apparatus in political matters. This exercise will also reveal the

strength and effectiveness, or otherwise, of the civilian authority while dealing with a crisis.

Before examining the Party's decision to use the PLA to crush the movement for democracy and to restore Law and order, it is essential to analyse briefly the nature and background of the June 1989 crisis.

NATURE AND BACKGROUND OF THE CRISIS

Like "Hungary 1956" or "Prague 1968" or "Gdansk 1980", "Tiananmen Square 1989" is a crucial milestone in the history of communist societies. The event was also another watershed in the history of PRC. The event was unique not only because the regime used armed forces against unarmed students demonstrating in a democratic manner but also because the regime was confronted with an oppositional movement with widespread public support.

The origin and the character of the entire incident have been extensively debated and documented.¹ Even though there are diverse views regarding its origin, certain common factors can be outlined as responsible for the crisis. Firstly, the origin of the crisis can be traced to the

1. Charlie Hore, The Road to Tiananmen, (London: Bookmark, 1991), Lee Feigon, China Rising: The Meaning of Tiananmen (Chicago : Ivan R. Dee., 1990); George Hicks, ed., The Broken Mirror : China after Tiananmen, (London Longman, 1990).

ongoing economic reform programme which had started producing some negative results. The most important causes of concern were the growing rate of inflation and the growing inequalities in the distribution of the positive outcomes of the reform programmes. The high-rate of inflation hit the fixed income group most. However, its effect was felt more in urban areas than in the countryside. Secondly, during the initial phase of economic reforms. Some Party cadres converted their political resources into economic benefits, at the cost of ordinary citizens. However, under the euphoria of rapid economic growth, the decision-makers did not consider these matters in their policy formulation. This heavily influenced the course of the reforms in the later period. When the reform process entered its second stage, the earlier beneficiaries found themselves in positions of advantage and reaped most of the benefits which led to a divergence in income distribution. This, in turn led to dissatisfaction among government employees and intellectuals whose support was necessary to carry out the reform policies. Their living standard was affected by the growing inflation and indecisiveness of the government.

Thirdly, the success of early reform measures generated high expectations among both the people and the leaders. The over-confident leaders took a few impulsive economic

decisions without considering their economic and non-economic consequences. The decision to decontrol the prices in 1985, without proper legal and political arrangements, led to confusion. Hu Yaobang's open advocacy of high consumption was another such decision.² All these resulted in lopsided development, an incentive for social disturbances.

Fourthly, along with the liberalization of the economy, there was no corresponding political opening-up. The economic prosperity fuelled Chinese demands for political freedoms and rights as it exposed people to outside influences. Since the 1970s, debates on ideological and cultural policy issues had become more open. China's academic and cultural exchange programmes with other countries had been increased. The country also sent its students to study in the West. Foreign books, periodicals, movies, music and broadcast were available in Chinese cities. All these created a new generation of Chinese urban youth who were better informed about Western political and democratic ideas.³ The absence of these ideas in the political sphere in China provoked a demand for them at home. Students were

2. See Tianjan Shi, "The Democratic movement in China in 1989 : Dynamic and Failure", Asian Survey (California), Vol.30, No.12, December 1990, p.1193.

3. Huan Guocong, "The Events of Tiananmen Square" Orbis (Philadelphia), Vol.33, No.4, Fall 1989, p.490.

also influenced by the developments in the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and 'Glasnost' in the Soviet Union.

Finally, widespread "official profiteering" by the offsprings of top leaders and officials created resentment throughout the country. The children of top leaders often relied on their parent's connections and positions to do business or advance in the government bureaucracy. These privileged elements also indulged in illegal business activities and accumulated huge amounts of money by using their political influence. The Chinese leaders were, however, aware of this. Since the beginning of 1986, the Party had concentrated on various criminal activities which were termed "anti-economic" and taken various steps towards punishing the officials who profited.⁴ But the situation was complicated by the fact that these privileged groups also controlled the government and Party mechanisms. They successfully opposed reform measures which might jeopardize their political and economic interests. They even participated in the anti-Hu Yaobang conspiracy to oust him from power.⁵

As far as the students were concerned they had to face many other practical problems. Their scholarship money was

4. Quoted in Tianjan Shi, p.1191.

5. Ibid., pp.1191-1192.

reduced while the cost of living rose significantly. In 1988, the State Education Commission announced a reform measure in the job assignment policy.⁶ It stipulated that the State would no longer be responsible for assigning jobs and the students would have to look for jobs on their own. This seriously affected the students because of the lack of a developed labour market and the crucial role of political connections in getting jobs. This reform policy also restricted new graduates from going abroad. All these combined created tension between the government and the students and provided students an incentive for political protest.

As far as the nature of the movement was concerned, the Chinese official view considered it as a "pre-mediated counter - revolution". However, at the outset, the demands of the movement were very modest and never a challenge to the four basic tenets of Chinese socialism. The basic demands of the students were to end corruption, to implement some basic political rights including freedom of speech and the press, to enter into a dialogue with Party leaders, and finally, to reverse the verdict on Hu Yaobang. The movement

6. Beijing Review (Beijing), Vol.31, No.4, January 25-31, 1988, pp.6-7.

was hampered by major limitations. Firstly, the agitation was effective only in Beijing and other provincial capitals. The countryside was generally unaffected by it. Secondly, the class basis of the movement was very narrow. The participants were mainly urbanites comprising students, intellectuals and a few ex-officials. Thirdly, the movement lacked a coherent programme and an effective leadership and, therefore, failed to attract people from different social stratas. Finally, the movement was unnecessarily provocative. The students repeatedly criticised Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng. The movement also became pro-Western. The provocative anti-government interviews to foreign journalists and the erection of a statue in the name of democracy provoked the Chinese leaders to respond in a heavy handed manner to the situation.

At the beginning of 1989, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was divided by two overlapping cleavages -- generational and ideological. Generationally, the leadership was divided between a younger group comprising of Premier Li Peng, Central Disciplinary Inspection Commission Chairman Qiao Shi, Propaganda Department Chief Hu Qili, State Planning Commission Chairman Yao Yilin, and General Secretary of CCP Zhao Ziyang on the one hand, and a shadow cabinet of elder leaders on the other. This shadow cabinet

comprised of Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Yang Shangkun, Wang Zhen, Bob Yibo, Song Renquiong and Deng Yingchao. These elder leaders had the advantages of seniority and experience and the fact that the younger generation of leaders was obliged to them for political favour or support. Most of the members of this older generation were more ideologically orthodox and less reformist than the younger leaders. This however was not a uniform condition, for some of the younger members like Li Peng were very orthodox like the elders, while some of the elders like Deng Xiaoping supported reforms.

Ideologically, the Party leaders were divided into reformists led by Zhao Ziyang, and conservatives led by Li Peng and Yao Yilin. The conservatives criticised the reformists for the high inflation rate, huge fiscal deficit, shortage of consumer goods and widespread corruption. In response, the reformists sought political reforms which they believed necessary for the success of economic reforms. While the reformist failed to deal with the immediate economic crisis in the country, they continued to suggest political reform particularly the issue of a multi-Party system and its suitability for China.⁷

7. Zhao Ziyang had referred to such reforms in "Report to 13th CCP Congress", Beijing Review, Vol.30, No.46, 1987, pp.20-23.

By the end of 1988, the leadership cleavages within the CCP deepened further when conservatives increasingly criticised the reformists for the failure of various reform measures. They attacked Zhao's economic reform program as "undermining the socialist system". However, Zhao Ziyang continued to push for economic and political reforms. Deng Xiaoping was also not in favour of implementing political reforms synonymously with economic reforms. In mid-January 1989, Deng observed that, "the major direction of reform has been correct but there have been minor mistakes."⁸ The failure of the top leadership to make reliable succession arrangements also contributed to the crisis. Having ousted Hu Yaobang, the old guards were also opposed to Zhao and wanted to replace him by Li Peng or Qiao Shi. By the end of 1988, Zhao Ziyang had lost his power base in the State Council to Premier Li Peng and had offered to resign several times. However, he retained his position only because Deng Xiaoping needed him to balance power at the top.

However, for the students the issue was not which faction within the leadership was most capable of ruling the nation but how to establish democratic norms and to get the

8. South China Morning Post, January 30, 1989, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report; China (Washington D.C. - hereafter FBIS - CHI), January 20, 1989, p.21.

constitutional rights required for a civil society. After the death of former CCP secretary Hu Yaobang on 15th April, the spontaneous student movement gained momentum and spread to other provincial capitals like Xian and Changsha where riots also broke out. Subsequently, thousands of students held demonstrations at the Tiananmen Square to denounce the "1987 antibourgeois liberalization campaign" and to demand Hu Yaobang's rehabilitation.⁹

The official response to these events started with the Report of the Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee and Politbureau member, Li Ximing. The Report was based on extracts from the students' big wall posters and from secret information relating to the demonstrators' objectives collected by the Beijing Municipal Party Committee. The Report called the demonstrations the beginning of the "chaos" meant to overthrow the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the socialist system. It also asked for a mandate from the top leadership to deal firmly with the problem.¹⁰ On 24th April, the Report was submitted to the Politbureau Standing Committee which approved it

9. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.19, May 8-14, 1989, p.5.

10. Mu Wang, "The Actual Facts About the Power Struggle within the highest leadership structure of Zhongnanhai in Ching Pao, trans in FBIS-CHI, June 9, 1989, p.24.

unanimously in the absence of Zhao Ziyang who was on an official tour to North Korea.¹¹

On 25th April, Deng Xiaoping after being briefed about the demonstrations and Li Ximings Report, gave a statement in which he characterised the movement as leading to chaos and accused the students of attempting to oust the leadership of the CCP.¹² On the basis of his statement, People's Daily (Renmin Ribao) published an editorial on 26th April under the title "We Must Take a Clear-cut Stand to Oppose Turmoil". The editorial stated that "a small number of people with ulterior motives" and "a handful of bad elements" using violence and organising strikes were causing disturbances and social unrest. It described the demonstration as a "serious political struggle confronting the whole Party."¹³

This strongly worded People's Daily editorial further complicated the situation by intensifying the movement. Again, the situation was also influenced by the presence of foreign journalists in Beijing for two high-profile international events scheduled for May. The Asian Development Bank

11. Ibid., p.25.

12. "Quarterly Chornicle and Documentation" in China Quarterly (London), No.119, September 1989, pp.717-719.

13. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.18, May 1-7, 1989, p.9 : FBIS-CHI, April 28, 1989, p.21.

was to convene its first ever meeting in Beijing and the country was also to host the first Sino-Soviet Summit in thirty years in May. Both the events were overshadowed by the mass demonstrations.

Students protested against the People's Daily editorial demanding that their movement should be recognised as "patriotic" by retracting the April 26 editorial and their genuine elected representatives should be allowed a dialogue with the top leaders. Later they demanded the live telecast of such a dialogue. To avoid the conservatives' criticism, the students also held up posters with slogans like "Support the Communist Party" and "Support Socialism".¹⁴

When Zhao Ziyang returned from North Korea, he questioned the People's Daily editorial and wanted it to be withdrawn.¹⁵ This created differences between Zhao Ziyang and other members of Politbureau. Two crucial incidents in early May further revealed these differences. On 3rd May, Zhao Ziyang refused a last minute insertion of a paragraph on "the anti-bourgeois elements" in his speech commemorating the 70th anniversary of the May 4th movement. The next day, at the Asian Development Bank meeting, Zhao Ziyang in his

14. FBIS-CHI, April 30, 1989, p.28; Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.19, May 8-14, 1989, p.5.

15. FBIS-CHI, June 9, 1989, p.25.

speech called for "a cool, rational, restrained orderly, democratic and lawful way to resolve the student problem." He further asserted that, "the Party and the government are ready to do so and I believe the students are also ready to do so."¹⁶ Even though the students and intellectuals welcomed the speech, it marked a clear departure from the earlier Party line. This also paved the way for a power struggle among the CCP leadership.

Zhao Zhiyang used the crisis as a political opportunity for his struggle against the conservative faction. His conciliatory approach towards the demonstrators was meant to gain public support and sympathy for this policies. On May 10 at an enlarged meeting of the Politbureau, Zhao Zhiyang made five points.¹⁷ First, he argued for refuting the People's Daily editorial, second, he stated that he would take responsibility of its original publication; third, the NPC should investigate the speculative activities of high ranking Party cadres; fourth, it must publicise the backgrounds of all senior cadres; and finally, it must make public the income and privileges of all senior leaders. Given the closed traditions of the CCP Zhao's demands were

16. Ibid.

17. Mu Wang, p.26.

unrealistic and they were vehemently opposed by the veteran leaders and other conservatives. Deng too found the demands unacceptable, as they meant a retreat from his earlier stand. This impasse made Deng shift his support to the conservative function.

On 16th May, Deng Xiaoping called a meeting of elder leaders which included Chen Yun, Bob Yibo, Li Xiannian, Yang Shangkun, Wang Zhen and Peng Zhen. The meeting supported the April 26 People's Daily editorial and vehemently opposed any concessions to the students.¹⁸ This finally tilted the balance in favour of the conservatives. It also exposed the orthodoxy of the elder leader and their overriding influence within the CCP.

The students, on the other hand, resorted to hunger-strike to coincide with the scheduled Sino-Soviet summit. Zhao's appeal to not disrupt the meeting was not taken seriously by the students who assumed that there would be no crackdown because of the presence of an international audience. By 17th May, the movement had swelled to more than one million people and had spread to more than twenty provincial capitals. Apart from intellectuals, factory workers, government functionaries and even non-military army

18. FBIS-CHI, 9 June 1989, p.28.

officers who identified their interests with that of the students, joined the demonstrations.¹⁹

After the Sino-Soviet summit, an attempt was also made by the Party leaders for a compromise to convince the students to end their protests. Premier Li Peng met the students' representatives for a dialogue. However, Premier Li refused to accept the students' basic demands that their movement be recognised as patriotic and democratic, and that an open dialogue on equal terms with Party leaders at the decision-making level be arranged.²⁰ He only said that their issue would be discussed at an appropriate time in the future and urged the Beijing Red Cross to move all the fasting students to the hospital.²¹ On the heels of the failure of this meeting came the decision to impose Martial Law. The decision to impose Martial Law was made at an enlarged Politbureau Standing Committee meeting convened by Deng Xiaoping at his residence. Along with all five members of the Standing Committee, two elders - Yang Shangkun and Li Xiannian - were also present at the meeting. After a long and heated discussion, Zhao and Hu Qili dissented on the

19. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.22, May 29 - June 4; 1989, pp.8-9.

20. Ibid., pp.16-21.

21. Ibid.

question of imposition of Martial Law while the other members reported it. The meeting approved their decision to impose Martial Law on Beijing.²² The decision was, in the final analysis manipulated by Deng Xiaoping, who had called in the two elder leaders only to weigh the decision in his favour. Even though Zhao Ziyang's resignation was not accepted by Deng Xiaoping, Zhao was, henceforth, sidelined and played no part in future developments. He only made a last tearful appearance at Tiananmen on 19th May before the students, expressing his failure to get a verdict in their favour.

The motive behind the imposition of Martial Law was never to repress the student demonstration alone. From the point of view of the Chinese authorities the situation was a more complicated one. Chinese authorities had controlled their people through the mechanism of media control which limited the flow of information and deprived the people of the right to association, thus preventing interest articulation. These two mechanisms were usually used in communist societies to mobilise people to carry out the regime's agenda. The demands of the students were directly targeted to these two mechanisms of Party control. Apart from the

22. FBIS-CHI, May 22, 1989, pp.20-21; 23 May 1989, p.42.

freedom of the press, the students consistently stressed an open dialogue on equal terms with Party leaders. This was related to the recognition of an independent organisation at par with the Chinese Communist Party. Hence, any concession to these issues would mean an end to existing principles and norms. Therefore the demands and the demonstrations were a challenge to the leadership of the Party, a cardinal institution in Chinese socialist state. Reflecting these opinions the People's Daily editorial of April 26 stated that the students' movement was "a planned conspiracy aimed at negating the Party leadership and the socialist system".²³ This editorial further stated that the demands of the students could be satisfied only under the leadership of the CCP.²⁴

However, Premier Li Peng's speech to Party cadres including representatives of military organs at midnight of 19th May, further clarified the concern of the Chinese authorities towards the situation. In his speech, Li called for resolute and powerful measures to curb the turmoil and restore order.²⁵ He alleged that a handful of persons were

23. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.18, May 1-7, 1989, p.9.

24. Ibid.

25. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.22, May 29 - June 4, 1989, p.5-7.

using the hunger-strikers as hostages to threaten and force the Party and the government to yield to their political demands; that is, to negate the Party leadership and to alter the socialist system. He appealed to the nation to take a clear-cut stand in opposing the turmoil and exposing the political conspiracy of a handful of people who had instigated the turmoil.²⁶

However, the resort to Martial Law by the Chinese authorities was meant to suppress, as well, a growing faction within the Party which was seen as undermining the position of the Party in the overall affairs of Chinese society. Challenging the absolute leadership of the Party was seen as a threat to the broader goals of socialist modernisation. When the challenge to the processes of socialist modernisation came from within the Party itself, the Party conservatives and elders decided to adopt coercive mechanisms and to get the support of the PLA in removing the obstacles from their path. The People's Daily editorial of April 26 and the May 19 speech of Li Peng repeatedly pointed out that the demands of the students were in conformity with the wishes of the Party. But these statements had strictly differentiated between young student's patriotism and the

26. Ibid., p.6.

conspiratorial activities of few people behind the scene. Premier Li Peng also promised not to penalise the students for their radical words and actions.²⁷

Hence, the imposition of Martial Law was not just to solve the problem of some hunger-striking students but to end the turmoil, eliminate a serious anarchic situation, restore normal order, and prevent more serious turbulence. In spite of a dialogue with the students, social unrest in Beijing did not come to an end. The post-ponement of various programmes on the eve of the Sino-Soviet Summit, anti-government reports given to foreign journalists and the clear deadlock among the leaders at the decision making level forced Chinese authorities to curb the turmoil through the use of military force.²⁸

On May 25, speaking to a meeting of three new ambassadors, Li Peng differentiated Martial Law from military rule by stating that Martial Law was a warning measure to quell the turmoil, and aimed at safeguarding the life and property of the people .²⁹

27. Ibid.

28. Shi Wei, "Why Impose Martial Law in Beijing", Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.26, June 26 - July 2, 1989, pp.16-21.

29. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.24-25, June 12-25, 1989, p.5.

After the announcement of the imposition of Martial Law, President Yang Shangkun announced that troops had already been dispatched to restore order. Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong also issued three Martial Orders which instructed troops to enforce Martial Law by what ever means necessary.³⁰

However, the formal decision to impose Martial Law was not made with the approval of the PLA commanders. This was evident from the fact that even though Martial Law was declared on 20th May, it failed to come into effect immediately.³¹ It is true that Beijing citizens delayed the enforcement by coming out into the streets and blocking the troops marching towards the Square. But there was also reluctance among some sections of the PLA to enforce the order of the Party. This is evident from the public pronouncements of some soldiers and the appeals of some veteran PLA commanders to the Martial Law enforcement troops not to use force against the students.³²

Owing to disassociation from political matters during the reform decade and the involvement of a popular element

30. FBIS-CHI, 22 May 1989, p.26

31. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.22, May 29 - June 4, 1989, pp.5-7.

32. FBIS-CHI, May 22, 1989, p.4, Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.33, August 14-20, 1989, p.9

in the crisis, the obligation of the PLA to the Party leadership on this issue could not be taken for granted. The PLA commanders were not convinced of the use of force against their own people in a domestic crisis. The appeal of Li peng to the whole nation including the army organs to take a clear-cut stand against the turmoil did not convince the PLA member's of their role during the crisis. The Party elders were confronted with the task of using their personal influence to convince the military leaders of the need for Martial Law.

Subsequently, Deng himself called an enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission (CMC) at Wuhan. This was also attended by all the military regional commanders and some other senior PLA leaders. Here the military commanders of Beijing, Lanzhou and Guongzhou opposed the imposition of Martial Law. However, Deng's immense prestige and influence prevailed over the military commanders. But they could not see why they should dispatch troops to Beijing.³³ On 24th May, in another enlarged meeting of the CMC in Beijing, Yang Shangkun criticized Zhao for his actions and convinced the military leaders of the existing situation in Beijing as well as in other parts of the country. He maintained that

33. FBIS-CHI, May 22, 1989, p.16.

Martial Law was imposed to maintain law and order and troops were absolutely not to be used against the students. He appealed to the PLA commanders to unify their thinking in line with that of the central leadership. Finally, he threatened to punish the troops according to military law if they did not accede to the Party's orders.³⁴ After this, there was no further dissent and the PLA leaders quietly obeyed the Party by directing their troops to implement Martial Law.

On May 25, a letter to the PLA Martial Law enforcement forces, jointly sent by the Headquarters of the General Staff, The General Political Department and The General Logistic Department appreciated the role of the officers sent to enforce Martial Law. It stated that the troops had come to Beijing in accordance with the order of CMC to quickly curb the turmoil. It demanded that all officers obey the orders and take a clear stand in fighting against the plot of a very few people.³⁵ Yet, the Party leadership took steps for an overwhelming troop concentration as they were not sure which military region or unit of the Army would remain loyal and which would not. The final fateful

34. FBIS-CHI, May 30, 1989, pp.17-20.

35. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.24-25, June 12-25, 1989, pp.6-7.

decision to crush the demonstrators had the approval of Deng Xiaoping and other elder leaders, even though the decision was formally made by a small leadership group comprised temporarily also of Yang Shangkun, Li Peng and Qiao Shi.³⁶ The initiative senior leaders was also evident from the fact that the order was never challenged by anyone at any level within the Party. Even though the wording of the order was ambiguous, the decision was quite clear. The vague language was deliberate since no one wanted to assume direct responsibility for the decision and its resultant bloodshed. The troops were simply instructed to empty Tiananmen of demonstrators as quickly as possible. They were also instructed to use all means to dispose of those who defied Martial Law regulations.³⁷

IMPLICATIONS

The pattern and the processes by which the Party leadership took the decision to use the PLA against its own people reveals that the decision was not smooth and swift. It also reveals the kind of influence the old veterans had over the decision-making process within the CCP. The con-

36. Beijing Mayor's address to the NPC Standing Committee on the background to the 4th June Massacre, in China Quarterly, No.120, December 1989, p.940.

37. FBIS-CHI, June 5, 1989, pp.76-77, Beijing Review, Vo.32, No.24-25), June 12-25, 1989, pp.5-6.

vening of an enlarged meeting to take crucial decisions like the imposition of Martial Law, and including senior leaders who were not even members of that decision-making body to participate, puts a question mark on the credibility of the internal processes of the CCP. While it makes evident the factional struggle within the CCP and the role played by the elders in those struggles, it also reveals the weakness and inability of the regime to elicit compliance through non-coercive measures.

The Chinese leaders were aware of the fact that their decision would lead to blood-shed. But they took this as a price to pay for the establishment of their authority over the dissenting factions within the Party and, thereby, over the nation. Following an earlier tradition, the Party leaders sought the PLA's support to overcome the factional struggle within the CCP. The leadership did not use the other existing mechanisms like People's Armed Police Force because by using the PLA they could protect the leadership of the Party in the PRC. Their attempt to involve the PLA in this crisis was only intended to tilt the balance of power against the rival factions within the Party and to secure the support of the PLA as a coercive instrument of political power. This contradicted the reform trends to separate the PLA from political and domestic affairs which Deng Xiaoping had been fostering throughout the last decade.

CHAPTER IV

THE JUNE 1989 TIANANMEN CRISIS-II (RESPONSE OF THE PLA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTY-ARMY RELATIONS)

The factional struggle among the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and their subsequent reliance on coercive mechanisms was not the only significant aspect of the June 1989 Tiananmen Square Crisis. The other crucial aspect of the crisis was the role of the PLA in this political struggle after undergoing a decade of reform. In the post-Mao era various reform measures had successfully reduced the role as well as the influence of the PLA in political and civilian matters. However, at a crucial moment when civilian authority was threatened, the PLA came out of the barracks to fire on unarmed civilians. Such an act reveals the political importance of the PLA and hence, the fact that its role and position is crucial for the eventual rationalization of political institutions in China. Against its role in this crisis also reveals how far institutional reforms in the PLA had, in fact, deepened the commitment to professionalism. This chapter, therefore, explores the pattern in the response of the PLA to the Party's directives during the 1989 Tiananmen Square crisis, its implications for the PLA as a professional military institution and the PLA's relations with the Party. The chapter also looks at the post-crisis developments in Party Army relations in order to mark the break from the pre-crisis period.

THE RESPONSE OF THE PLA

The decision to impose Martial Law in Beijing was the first step towards involving the PLA in the crisis. However, after the decision, taken by an enlarged Standing Committee of the Politbureau, both Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun convened a series of meetings of regional military commanders and members of the Central Military Commission to convince the military leaders about the need to use the PLA for this purpose. The commanders of Beijing, Lanzhou and Guangzhou regions in particular, had serious reservations against the use of the PLA.¹

In many Army units, the troops were extremely reluctant to move against the students. Many military officers publicly declared themselves against using troops to suppress the student movement. Nie Rongzhen and Xu Xiangqian, the two surviving marshals who had led China's war of liberation advised the Martial Law Command against the use of force and publicly insisted that the PLA should not be used to suppress the protests.² Former Defence Minister Zhang Aiping and other military figures including Yang Dezhi, Xiao Ke, Ye Fei and Chen Zaidao urged that the PLA should not be

1. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report; China, (Washington D.C. - hereafter, FBIS - CHI) May 22, 1984, p.4.

2. Ibid.

sent into the capital. Their open letter to the Party's CMC and Martial Law headquarters, on May 21, stated that the PLA belongs to the people, and should not stand against the people. It should under no circumstances fire at the people and create any bloody incidents.³ Next day another open letter written by some unnamed middle-ranking officers was sent to the CMC urging restraint and supporting Zhao Ziyang.⁴ These public letters and pronouncements revealed the depth of opposition to the Party's suggestions.

The troops of the Beijing based 38th Army, which first moved into the city after the imposition of Martial Law, seemed most reluctant to take action against the students. It's commander Lt. General Xu Qinxian refused to carry out the orders and then offered to resign by raising the issue of the legality of the orders. On May 16, a group of approximately one thousand soldiers marched publicly to show their solidarity with the students.⁵ On May 22, a group of one hundred PLA Naval Cadets marched through Tiananmen in full uniform shouting "Down with Li Peng".⁶

3. Ibid., pp.15-16.

4. FBIS - CHI, May 23, 1989, pp.41-42.

5. FBIS - CHI, May 17, 1989, p.42.

6. FBIS - CHI, May 24, 1989, p.29.

Hence, the Army had certain initial hesitations and therefore was reluctant to obey the Party's directives. The PLA's response was slow and uneven with different units responding in different ways. Various factors contributed to such a sluggish response. The Army was under oath not to turn against the people. Being the People's Army the troops hesitated to oblige the Party's directive to move against the people demonstrating in a democratic manner.

The military personnel were also dissatisfied over the issue of continuous reduction of resource allocation and budgetary cuts which had affected their professional interests. This had caused serious economic strains in every day situations. Military personnel found their salaries far too low in the context of growing inflation. This undermined their morale and diminished their preparedness to handle a crisis. Apart from this, widespread corruption at the officer level also created dissatisfaction among the lower personnel. Hence, Many of the PLA members were sympathetic towards the students protesting against abuses like inflation and widespread corruption.⁷

7. June Teufel Dreyer, "The Role of the Military", World Policy Journal (New York), Vol.6, No.3-4, Fall 1989, p.648-650.

The PLA's internal unity was also undermined by the existence of personal ties and loyalties within the PLA's command structure. The difference in the response of different units of the PLA was based on these personal ties with, and loyalties to, different leaders and factions. The tradition of nominating successors by the outgoing leaders or commanders strengthened these personal ties and loyalties. Because of the earlier common command structure of both the Army and the Party, these personal ties and loyalties of the soldiers and their commanders were not confined to the Army alone. The soldiers and commanders also had their personal ties with and loyalties to different leaders and factions within the Party. For this reason, the split in the Politbureau and in its Standing Committee was also reflected in the PLA and the PLA commanders responded to the situation accordingly.⁸ Among those siding with the reformers was Qin Jewei, who before being named as Minister of Defence, headed the Beijing Military Region. He was succeeded by his long time loyal deputy Xu Qinxian. This factor provides an explanation for the reluctance of the

8. June Teufel Dreyer, "The People's Liberation Army and the Power Struggle of 1989", Problems of Communism, (Washington D.C.), Vol.38, September - October 1989, p.43.

38th Army of the Beijing Region to move against the demonstrators.

The conservative faction, on the other hand, was led by Yang Shangkun who had built a loyalty network of his own by appointing his family members to crucial positions. The 27th Army which was sent into Beijing to counter the influence of the 38th Army was under the change of one of Yang's nephew. It was the 27th Army which first moved into Tiananmen Square in the early morning of 5th June to crush the demonstration.⁹

Despite these factors conditioning the PLA's response to the Party's call, the PLA, finally, fell into line with the Party's directives. The indecisiveness over the use of the PLA troops and the resulting delay in moving them into the city helped the Party elders to create a consensus among key military officers by using personal influence. Both Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun had convened a series of enlarged meetings of the Central Military Commission and Regional Military Commanders for this purpose.¹⁰ Apart from these, the military leaders also perceived the fear of ultimate disintegration of the PLA and its unity and discipline. They found the senior leaders of the Party

9. FBIS - CHI, June 6, 1989, pp.15-16.

10. FBIS - CHI, May 22, 1989, p.16, 30 May 1989, pp.17-20.

united on the issue and the course of action. When Zhao Ziyang lost the power-struggle within the Party, the PLA veered around to obliging the Party's elder leaders as it had no other alternative. The decision to do so came because the PLA finally received decisive orders from the Party. Apart from this a consensus also emerged among both the senior civilian and military leaders that the unrest had gone on for too long and order had to be restored for the good of the nation. Many younger reform minded officer who were sympathetic toward the students also began to fear that such a prolonged crisis would sink the nation into chaos.¹¹ Apart from this, sniper attacks on PLA soldiers, public humiliation and physical violence against them and clashes with the crowd changed their attitude towards the demonstrators.¹² All such considerations convinced the PLA commanders to fall in line with the Party.

But, given the reluctance of certain factions and units within the PLA to move against the protesters, and the subsequent long discussions and debates between the CCP leaders and the PLA commanders, the Party leaders were

11. Harlan W. Jencks, "The losses in Tiananmen Square", Air Force Magazine, Vol.72, November 1989, p.64.

12. Shi Wei, "What has happened in Beijing?", Beijing Review, (Beijing) Vol.32, No.26, June 26 - July 2, 1989, pp.11-15.

apprehensive about relying on military units in and around Beijing. This led them to deploy troops from various military regions in excessive numbers with full fire power. Troops from outlying areas like Inner Mongolia and Sichuan were also called to Beijing to deal with any unexpected development. The presence of the troops from different units and regions would not allow any one unit or regional commander to dominate the whole process and thus would reduce any chance of a military coup.

IMPLICATIONS

The role of the PLA in the June 1989 crisis damaged the long time & almost sacrosanct bond between the PLA and Chinese people. The PLA had traditionally enjoyed a high prestige and social position in post-revolutionary Chinese society. With the events of June 1989, the Army lost face before the people. While the PLA had earlier been regarded by the people as an institution from which they could learn, this admiration was now replaced by anger and revenge towards it. For example, immediately after the Tiananmen Square crisis, a mother refused to let her son wear his favourite green trousers because its colour was the same as that of PLA uniforms; a man threatened to break the leg of a

small boy if he said he wanted to join the military.¹³ In their evaluation of the PLA and its soldiers, people frequently quoted the ancient Chinese proverb that "Good iron does not make nails, good men do not make soldiers."¹⁴ The future role of the PLA as a revolutionary, modernising force in society was also questioned.

In the late 1920s, a noted Chinese philosopher and literacy figure, Hu Shi, insisted that China's most basic problem was not the strength of warlordism but rather the lack of a secure civil authority and this lack was the fault of civilians themselves.¹⁵ Extending this to contemporary China, one can say that the Tiananmen Square crisis revealed that the determining factor behind the PLA's role was not the political ambition of the Army but, rather, weak civilian authority which tends to rely on the military to protect it from being challenged.

The June 1989 Tiananmen Crisis brought enormous discredit upon the civilian authorities and civilian political

13. Dreyer, "The People's Liberation Army and The Power Struggle of 1989", p.46.

14. Cited in Eberhard Sandschneider, "The Chinese Army After Tiananmen", The Pacific Review (Oxford), Vol.3, No.2, 1990, p.122.

15. See Arthur Waldron, "Worldism Vs Federalism: The Revival of a Debate?", China Quarterly (London), No.121, March 1990, pp.121-122.

institutions in China. It revealed the inherent weaknesses of the Party's internal decision-making mechanisms as well as its organisational strength. During the course of the crisis, the established procedures of decision-making were deliberately eroded because of internal factionalism within the Party. Because of these irregular and arbitrary procedures of decision-making, the command and control mechanisms of the Party also declined considerably. The Party elders deliberately convened the enlarged sessions of the Politbureau and its Standing Committee meetings where they could manoeuvre the decisions in their favour through the help of non-formal members. Such extra-legal procedures created confusion about the legality of the orders and hence contributed towards a crisis of legitimacy. Such procedures also confused the PLA commanders as some of them questioned the legality of the Party's directives to move against the demonstrators.¹⁶ Party elders further resorted to these extra-legal procedures to persuade the military to implement the Party's directive.

The crisis of 1989, from the imposition of Martial Law to the final crackdown, suggests that the PLA was used as a powerbroker to resolve a power struggle between the

16. Harlan, W. Jencks, "Civil-Military Relations in China: Tiananmen and After", Problems of Communism, Vol.40, No.5, May-June, pp.14-15.

reformists and conservatives within the Party. The PLA was brought back to the political arena to throw its support behind one faction against another. This raises the fundamental question about *who* in the Party controls the Army rather than whether the *Party* controls the Army. The factional struggle among Chinese leaders during the crisis was at a stalemate until Deng Xiaoping decided to support the conservative faction. This tilted the balance in favour of the conservatives by enabling them to remove Zhaio Ziyang from decision-making and bargain with military leaders for their support. When the military fell into line with the conservatives it confirmed the conservative's victory over the reformists.

However, the initial reluctance of the PLA to enforce the directives of the civilian authorities does not confirm the liberal notion of "Professionalism". Professionalism here refers to the subordination of the military to the civilian authority and its directives.¹⁷ Again, this notion recognises the defence of the nation as the basic objective of the military. The initial hesitation of the PLA and its subsequent role in defending the *Party*, not the *nation* in a

17. See Samuel P. Huntington, "Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations" (Camb.: Harvard University Press, 1957).

crisis situation reveals that a decade of reform within the PLA had created dilemma by injecting a more rational, liberal notion of "professionalism" into the PLA. The reluctance of the PLA to act was not a sign that the PLA was challenging the Party for political power but that the PLA had evolved a perspective on its basic objective and functions arising out of its recent emphasis on professionalism. However, when the PLA leaders were convinced of unanimity among Party elders, including Deng Xiaoping, about the course of action, they supported the implementation of the Party's directives. The Party's handling of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, on the contrary, bears out the typical experience of communist regimes where the Party uses the Army to defend itself against a challenge to its authority. The Party line was that those who sought greater political and economic benefit and had disrupted normal activities in Beijing did not fall under the category of the "People" and hence were "counter-revolutionaries". The Army, had an obligation to defend the Party and the nation from counter-revolutionaries.¹⁸ The Party and the nation were from this perspective the same.

18. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.24-25, June 12-25, 1989, p.4; FBIS - CHI, June 9, 1989, p.4.

Under Chinese socialism and the 1982 Constitution, the hegemony of the Party has been considered as a crucial pillar of, as well as a mechanism for, achieving the basic goals of the Chinese nation. Hence any threat to the dominant position of the Party is a threat to the nation. This argument is also in conformity with the views of those Chinese leaders who supported Martial Law and the use of the PLA for resolving political factional struggles.¹⁹ Hence, the basic tenet of the Maoist conception of a "politicised Army" was not been intrinsically altered even after a decade of military reforms. The post-crisis developments further confirmed this position.

Post Crisis Developments

The events of the June 1989 Tiananmen's Square Crisis raised serious question about the political role of the military and the Party's supremacy over it. The post-crisis period witnessed a reversal of policies separating the Army from the Party and from civilian matters. The reversal of the earlier policies was meant to avoid a recurrence of the pattern of response that the PLA had shown during the crisis. The crisis had made the Party leaders aware of the

19. Report on Checking the Turmoil and Quelling the Counter Revolutionary Rebellion, Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.29, July 17-23, 1989, Center Fold.

existence of a dissenting faction within the PLA. All such considerations made the Party leaders reassert the Party's authority over the military through traditional Maoist methods. The relationship of the PLA to the Party was recast in strongly Maoist terms. Political control mechanisms like equating the status of political commissars and military commanders as the executors of decisions, and strengthening the Party Committees within the PLA units as the supreme decision making bodies, were reintroduced. Within the PLA, "red" was once again given primacy over "expert" for cadre selection and promotion. The Party leaders also held up the PLA as a political model for the rest of society.²⁰

At the Fifth Plenum of the 13th Central Committee (November 6-9-1989), the Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, was appointed as the new Chairman of the Party's Central Military Commission, replacing Deng Xiaoping.²¹ The appointment of the Party's General Secretary as the head of the CMC reestablished the Maoist tradition of a uniform

20. Wang Changan, "Uphold the Party's Absolute Leadership over the Army with Great Firmness", Jiefangjun Bao (Beijing), December 18, 1989, trans. in FBIS - CHI, February 16, 1990, Supplement, pp.37-39.

21. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.47, November 20-26, 1989, pp.5-6.

command structure for both the Party and the Army. It also confirmed that a separation of powers between the Party and the Army was not conducive to China's political stability.

In his farewell speech to an enlarged meeting of the CMC on November 12, Deng Xiaoping urged the PLA to stay loyal to, and to work in accordance with, the three basic goals of "Revolutionisations, Modernization and Regularisation".²²

Here Deng Xiaoping reversed the order of these three goals. Unlike in the pre-1989 period, "Revolutionisation" was given the first priority in place of "Regularisation". Subsequently, both Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin called for the CCP's absolute leadership over the Army. They emphasised the strengthening of Party organs at all levels and improving the ideological work within the PLA in order to keep both the Party and the Army united.²³

Chief of the General staff, Chi Haotian, enunciated the neo-Maoist view on Party-Army relations in an article published in Qiushi (Beijing) in January 1990.²⁴ Chi

22. Beijing Review, Vol.32(48), November 27 - December 3, 1989, pp.7-9.

23. Ibid., p.9.

24. Chi Haotian, "Strive to Raise the Leadership Level of the Party Committees and Ensure the Party's Absolute Leadership over the Army", Qiushi (Beijing), trans. in FBIS - CHI, March 8, 1990, pp.35-40.

reiterated the Marxist view that every Army serves a particular class. He pointed out that while under the 1982 Constitution the armed forces serve the people and the State, the Constitution also stipulates that the Party leads the State and the people. Hence, the Army is ultimately subservient to the Party.²⁵ A separation of the Army from the Party and the existence of a depoliticized Army is not in accordance with the State Constitution and will create tension between two institutions. He, therefore, suggested the "reconstruction of the Party Committee system at all levels in order to ensure that the troops are kept fully in line with the central authorities, ideologically, politically and in their actions."²⁶

In the post crisis period, political study within the PLA was raised to a new level. High ranking officers are now required to attend study classes on Marxism and the thought of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.²⁷ In this political study sessions, emphasis was placed on issues like the Party's absolute leadership over the military, the non-relevance of ideas like separating the Army from politics

25. Ibid., p.37.

26. Ibid., p.38.

27. Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.40, October 2-8, 1989, p.4.

and checking increasing military corruption. Among other measures, confiscation of pornographic literature and obscene audio and video tapes and scrutinisation of military publications were aimed at purifying the ideas of the PLA cadres. Party leaders also held up the perennial PLA hero and dedicated soldier to Maoist principles, Lei Feng, as the role model for emulation by the PLA cadres.²⁸

Since 1989, steps were also taken to improve the living conditions of the soldiers by increasing the allocations for military expenditure and by raising the salaries of military officers.²⁹ Research and publication on the military's glorious past was encouraged. On June 9, 1989, Deng Xiaoping in his address to senior PLA commanders, hailed the achievements of PLA troops for successfully quelling the counter-revolutionary rebellion.³⁰ All these were efforts to secure the Army's loyalty in future and to keep dissent within the military to a minimum.

A series of efforts were also undertaken to restore the image of the PLA and strengthen its relationship with the people. The military's actions at Tiananmen were portrayed

28. Beijing Review, Vol.33, No.23, June 4-10, 1990, p.17.

29. Beijing Review, Vol.33, No.37, September 10-16, 1990, p.27.

30. "Deng Hails Armymen", Beijing Review, Vol.32, No.26, June 26 - July 2, 1989, p.16.

as protecting the people from a handful of counter-revolutionaries instigated by foreign governments. The PLA members were ordered to do good deeds for the people. The slogan "the Army and the people are one", was extensively propagated by the media.³¹ A campaign for "National Defence Education" was launched to repair the gravely damaged relationship between the Army and the people. As a result in 1990, the National People's Congress adopted a law protecting military facilities from civilian encroachment and providing sentences for rumor-mongering and creating civil-military disturbances.³²

However, the June 1989 Tiananmens Square Crisis, strengthened the PLA's role as an instrument of internal stabilisation in the Peoples Republic of China. Once again, it proved itself as a pillar of the State by serving the Party and the nation as a full scale military, political, social and economic service system.

31. "PLA of the People, For the People", Beijing Review, Vol.33, No.3, January 15-21, 1990, p.13.

32. FBIS - CHI, July 30, 1990, p.30.

CONCLUSION

The present effort to reconceptualise civil-military relations in post-Mao China under the broader framework of "political modernization" has been based upon the hypothesis that the strength of civilian institutions is a crucial determinant of the character of civil-military relations. The concept of political modernization refers to the transformation of an existing political order to answer the needs of a modernizing society. It involves a set of related characteristics like (a) equality in the management of public affairs and in political participation, (b) the capacity of a political system to formulate policies and to have them carried out, (c) the differentiation and specialisation of political institutions and their functions, but not at the expense of their overall integration, and (d) the secularisation of the political process. The hypothesis of this work further assumes that whenever the ability of the civilian authorities to elicit compliance through non-coercive mechanisms declines, they rely on coercive mechanisms and the coercive apparatus of State power by ensuring its dominance in politics. This obstructs the creation of a rational political structure subject to popular control. In post-Mao China, the decade long efforts to create a rational political structure by reforming institutions and by sepa-

rating their roles from each other was discredited due to the inability of the civilian authorities to handle a crisis in 1989 because of internal factionalism and a subsequent reliance on the PLA, the coercive apparatus of the State, to handle the crisis.

Post-Mao reforms in the PLA transformed the PLA's political role and its relations with the Party. The PLA's role in domestic as well as in non-military matters was reduced considerably because of its professional pursuits. Simultaneously, PLA representation in political bodies was also reduced and military commanders were dislodged from political posts. All these efforts diminished the military's influence over domestic politics. Along with these efforts the Party's control over the military was also reasserted. Unlike the Maoist period, however, military commanders were given dominant positions within the military but the Party was also strengthened by establishing its supremacy in non-military matters. The post-Mao military reforms resulted in a new basis for civil-military cooperation. This cooperation had become possible not only due to the limited political controls and non-interference in its professional interests, but also due to the effective functioning of the civilian leadership.

During the June 1989 Tiananmen Square Crisis, the decision of the civilian authorities to bring the PLA back into the arena of domestic matters reversed these developments. During the crisis, the Party underwent an internal factional struggle between the two rival factions - conservatives and reformists. Their factional struggle at the decision-making levels weakened the Party's internal control mechanisms and eroded its authority. The conservative faction along with the support of the Party elders resorted to various extra-legal procedures to obtain decisions favourable to them during June 1989 crisis. The basic objectives behind the use of the PLA was to tilt the balance in favour of one faction of the Party in its struggle against the other faction. The Party elders, particularly Deng Xiaoping maneuvered the Party's decision-making mechanisms successfully by using personal influence. They also resorted to the same techniques while convincing the PLA commanders about using the PLA in the crisis. Even though the use of the PLA was justified on various grounds, the crisis revealed the inability of civilian leaders to resolve the crisis by non-coercive mechanism, due to internal factionalism. The Party elders decided to rely on the PLA when they found that their policies were being attacked from both within and outside the Party.

The PLA, on the other hand, responded to the Party directives to move against the demonstrators in a very sluggish and uneven manner. Due to various factors, it showed an initial reluctance to comply with the Party's directives. This led to speculation about its political role and interaction with the Party. This initial reluctance also questioned the levels of professionalism the PLA had achieved in the reform decade. This also raised questions about the effectiveness of the existing political control mechanisms within the PLA after the reforms. However, apart from the other factors, this temporary reluctance of the PLA units was mainly due to the confusion in the command mechanisms. When the PLA commanders were convinced of the unanimity among the Party elders about the decision they supported the Party's directives. This revealed that, when there was a consensus among Party leaders about political matters, the PLA has had a good record of compliance with their decision. But whenever there was disagreement it was also reflected in the military.

The Tiananmen Square Crisis of 1989 revealed some new equations between the Party and the Army. It convinced the Chinese leaders of the negative implications of separating the Party from the Army in a regime where political pluralism had not yet evolved sufficiently. The post-crisis

period witnessed the adoption of a series of policies to create a more politicised Army having close links with the Party through traditional Maoist methods. This deliberate move to politically indoctrinate the Army may, however, be counter-productive as the Cultural Revolution revealed.

The use of military force in overwhelming strength was not merely intended to stamp out student resistance at Tiananmen Square. It was intended to make a wider impact and to stamp out resistance all over China as well as in the cadres of the Party and in the PLA itself. But such use of coercive instruments in factional - struggles by the civilian authorities in the name of maintaining law and order further weakens the authority as well as legitimacy of civilian institutions. The military remains dominant and penetrates civilian institutions. Being a power-broker it exerts its influence over non-military decisions. Finally, when the military becomes conscious of its role as a power broker and of the dependence of the civilian authorities on it, it usually, then, competes for political power with civilian institutions. The civilian institutions, in this case, are no match for the military because of the military's superior organisational strength and monopoly over force. Hence, it is necessary for civilian institutions to lessen their dependence upon the military and to carve out

various other non-coercive mechanisms to deal with crisis situations.

However, in the PRC, the PLA has always remained dominant due to factors like its revolutionary traditions, its role in the nation's socio-economic development and finally due to its use by the civilian authorities in their factional struggle. Along with this, the concept of the Party's leadership over the Army is also deeply entrenched. But the earlier Chinese experience reveals that the Party's ability to control the Gun erodes whenever the Party is weakened by the leadership cleavages. (See Parris H. Chang, "Changing pattern of Military's Role in Chinese Politics" in William Wilson, ed., *Military and Political Power in China* in the 1970s, New York, 1972). During the 1989 crisis, the Party elders particularly Deng Xiaoping, successfully used their personal influences in controlling the Gun when civilian institutional mechanisms failed. But after the passing from power of these elders, there is no one in the top echelons of the Party who can exert a similar influence in commanding the Gun. The present Party Chief and Chairman of the CMC, Jiang Zemin, has no such personal stronghold and influence over the PLA units. Hence, there is a need to strengthen civilian institutional mechanisms rather than having a highly politicised Army.

Rationalizing the political structure as well as the political culture of China depends upon the ability of Chinese civilian authorities to build non-coercive rational civilian institutions and to reduce their dependence on coercive institutions. The issue of institution building and rationalizing the political culture involves the pluralisation of the socio-political structure. It also implies the autonomy of organisations for interest articulation and interest aggregation. Without considering these factors, any attempt towards institution building and rationalizing their role will be a futile one. All these issues constitute a part of the delayed "political modernisation" in China which is still only an agenda.

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