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THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S MILITIA AND THE DOCTRINE OF
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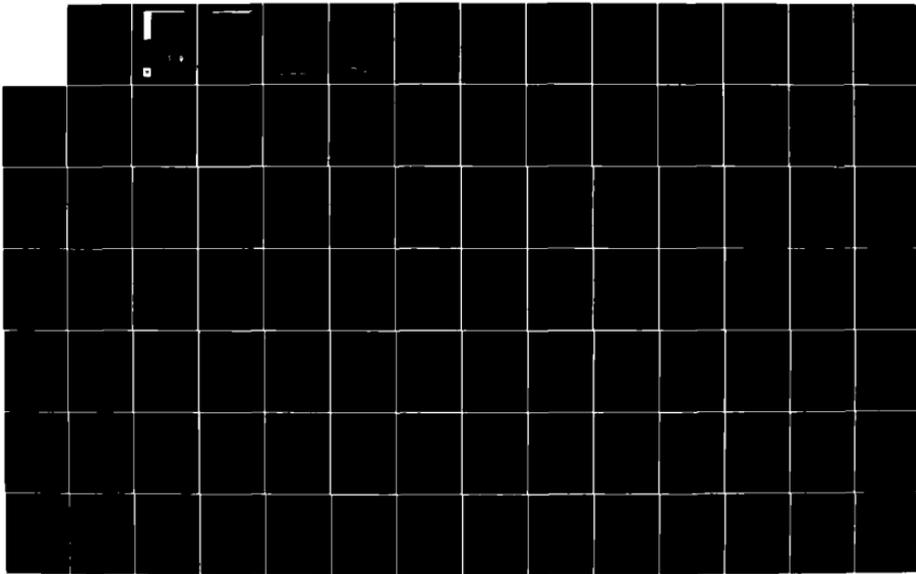
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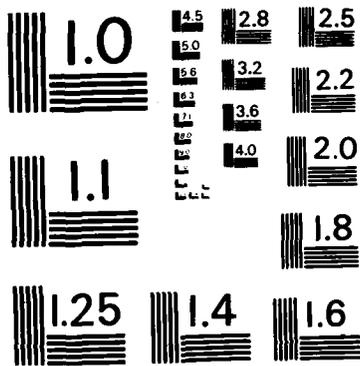
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THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S MILITIA AND THE DOCTRINE OF PEOPLE'S WAR

THOMAS C. ROBERTS

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FOREWORD

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Roberts, US Army, examines recent developments within the Chinese People's Militia—the huge, but heretofore obscure arm of the People's Republic of China armed forces. Because the militia is closely linked to Maoist military doctrine, Roberts argues, analysis of its role may yield insights into PRC defense strategy.

This study substantially adds to our knowledge of the organization, command structure, and tactics of the People's Militia. Colonel Roberts contends that the doctrine of People's War is not only alive, but reinvigorated, and that the militia holds a key role in China's land defense. His conclusions may help predict the course of China's military modernization, thereby being useful to China watchers in general.

Observers of Chinese defense strategy have seldom enjoyed reliable, authoritative information, but this new analysis brings just such illumination to the matter of PRC military modernization and related defense issues. The National Defense University is pleased to present this work for discussion in the national security arena.



John S. Pustay
Lieutenant General, USAF
President, National Defense
University

THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Roberts, US Army, wrote this monograph while assigned as an Associate Research Fellow at the National Defense University and while attending the National War College. He is currently a US delegate on the International Military Staff of the NATO Military Committee. LTC Roberts has recently been designated to serve as the Army Attache at the US Embassy in Beijing, People's Republic of China. Previously, he was a liaison officer at the US Consulate, Hong Kong; and China Desk Officer, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Headquarters, Department of the Army. LTC Roberts is a doctoral candidate in international relations, George Washington University; he received a master's degree in East Asian Studies from the University of Michigan. He is also a graduate of the US Naval Academy, the National War College, and the US Army Command and General Staff College.

ABBREVIATIONS

DCOGS	Deputy Chief of the PLA General Staff Department
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
GLD	General Logistics Department
GPD	General Political Department
GSD	General Staff Department
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
KMT	Kuomintang
MC	Military Commission of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee
MD	Military District
MND	Ministry of National Defense
MR	Military Region
MSD	Military Subdistrict
NDSTC	National Defense Science and Technology Com- mission
PAD	People's Air Defense
PAFC	People's Armed Forces Committee
PAFD	People's Armed Forces Department
PC	Political Commissar
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study looks for clues to Chinese thinking on defensive strategy and doctrine and to its approach to military modernization in the recent history of the Chinese People's Militia. The role of the militia in China's military system is little known or understood outside of China. Yet the militia and the Maoist doctrine of People's War—since 1949 the officially proclaimed cornerstone of China's strategy for the defense of its land frontiers—are inseparably linked. Analysis of Beijing's policy towards the militia can tell us much, therefore, about how Chinese defense planners view that doctrine and the extent to which it continues to provide the fundamental framework of planning for the ground defense of China.

Organized in four chapters, the study begins with a detailed examination of the militia system itself. The militia's organization, its military and political command and control system, its peacetime and combat roles, and its relationship to the regular forces of the People's Liberation Army are described. The first chapter adds considerably to the body of knowledge available on this hitherto obscure component of the Chinese armed forces.

The second and third chapters examine recent developments in China which have shaped Beijing's current militia policy. These chapters describe the way in which Chinese defensive strategy and the militia's role in that strategy have been influenced by the evolution since 1977 of Beijing's military modernization program. Trends in the relationship of the militia to the regular forces are identified and their effects on

the militia's combat capabilities and effectiveness are assessed.

In the final chapter, the author concludes that the many obituaries written on People's War in recent years by observers of Chinese military affairs are premature. As long ago as 1975, the Chinese are shown as determined that budgetary constraints and the need to reform the armed forces required deferral for an extended period of a major weapons improvement program. But the continuing threat posed by Soviet forces along the northern frontier demanded that some interim solution be found to the problem of China's relative military inferiority. The alternative to accelerated modernization of the armed forces, says the author, was reinvigoration of Mao's concept of People's War—the doctrine which exploits China's two greatest military assets, territory and manpower. In essence, it was a buildup of the militia—the principal operational instrument of People's War doctrine—which offered the Chinese the greatest potential for a rapid and relatively low-cost increase in defense capabilities.

Measures undertaken in recent years to improve militia combat effectiveness indicate that a major operational role is envisioned for the militia in the event of a Soviet attack. Among these measures are the introduction to militia units of greater amounts of more modern equipment; the strengthening of militia unit organization and leadership; the improvement of militia unit and individual combat training; and the strengthening of militia-army operational cooperation. The overall effect, says the author, has been to bring the militia under the direct control of the army to a degree unprecedented in the history of the People's Republic of China.

This study shows that valuable insights into Chinese thinking on major issues of national military policy can be gained through use of the militia as a lens through which to view the evolution of Chinese strategy and doctrine.

INTRODUCTION: THE MILITIA AND THE PRC MILITARY SYSTEM

An important consequence of the reorientation which occurred in Chinese politics following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 was the resumption of efforts to reform and modernize the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). Beijing has revealed few details concerning its military modernization program, and speculation has been rife both in the United States and abroad that China may be planning major purchases of modern foreign weapons systems—speculation which has been fueled by expressed and perceived Chinese interest in a wide range of Western armaments. Do the Chinese really intend to upgrade the combat capabilities of their armed forces through major acquisitions of sophisticated weaponry? Are there indications that China's military doctrine and strategy are being revised to incorporate concepts of defense against Soviet attack which would require substantial improvements in PLA weapons and equipment? A careful study of developments within the Chinese People's Militia can provide Washington policymakers with valuable clues to these and other important aspects of PRC defense policy.

The Chinese militia is little known or understood in the United States, and at first glance may seem an odd place to look for insights into Chinese thinking on national strategy issues. The key lies in the fact that the militia and Maoist military doctrine are inseparably linked. Thus, analysis of Beijing's policy toward the militia should reveal how Maoist doctrine is viewed by PRC defense planners and the extent to which it continues to provide the fundamental framework of planning for the ground defense of China. Additionally, trends in Beijing's militia policy can tell us much about the pace and

direction of China's military modernization program. Finally, a study of the militia will bring into sharper focus the combat capabilities as well as the limitations of this huge but obscure component of the Chinese armed forces.

THE MILITIA AND MAOIST MILITARY DOCTRINE

Since the earliest days of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the doctrine of People's War has been the officially proclaimed cornerstone of China's strategy for the defense of its land frontiers.¹ Developed by Mao Zedong during the 1930s, the principles of People's War reflect his conviction that politically indoctrinated workers and peasants, mobilized and armed in defense of the state, hold the key to victory in a protracted war against a technologically superior enemy. In short, the doctrine is rooted in the belief that man, not weaponry, is the decisive factor in combat. Its central operational principle is that of "luring the enemy in deep." Space is traded for time; advancing enemy forces gradually are worn down and weakened, and then annihilated in a campaign of mobile and guerrilla warfare waged by a combination of regular forces and militia. The vital role of the regular forces in the decisive final phase notwithstanding, the glue which actually binds together the various elements of People's War is the militia. It is the "tar baby" from which the enemy can never shake free. Constant attrition of the enemy's troop strength, logistical capacity, and morale by the militia will eventually alter the balance of forces sufficiently to enable the Chinese to switch from the "strategic defensive" to the "strategic offensive."²

Despite its cloak of Maoist legitimacy, however, the military merits of People's War and of its principal operational element, the militia, long have been subjects of debate within the officer corps of the People's Liberation Army. Many PLA officers apparently believe that changes in the nature of warfare since the 1940s have made Maoist military doctrine obsolete. This belief no doubt derives in part from the reversal of roles

experienced by the Communists after 1949. During the revolutionary and civil war periods, the Communists had not yet wrested control of the country from the Nationalists (and the Japanese) and thus more easily could rationalize the temporary abandonment of territory under their control in an effort to gain a strategic advantage. Now that the country belongs to them, however, the political, economic, and psychological costs of surrendering large portions of north or northeast China in order to "lure deep" a Soviet invader may appear so great as to compel a fundamental shift in defense strategy.

Also possibly undermining the heretofore sacrosanct doctrine of People's War is the trend toward pragmatism, which increasingly has informed official policy formulation and planning in China since the radical leadership was deposed in late 1976. This trend, characterized as "de-Maoification" by some Western observers, can be viewed as a shift toward the right from "red" to "expert"—that is, a shift in emphasis away from judging a policy by the degree to which it is grounded in the tenets of Mao's thought, and toward measuring its legitimacy by its ability to achieve practical results. This phenomenon confers a certain legitimacy on concepts long held to be heretical by defenders of orthodox Maoism, and thus increases the likelihood that traditional principles will be challenged.

By embarking on a program of military modernization, have the Chinese relegated People's War and the militia to the "dustbin of history"? If not, what role does the militia play in contemporary PRC defense strategy? And what are the implications for Sino-US relations? The answers to these questions are sought in this study of the PRC militia system.

To give the reader a frame of reference by which to evaluate the significance of recent changes in Beijing's militia policy, Chapter 1 examines the militia system in detail. What is the militia? How is it organized, equipped, and controlled? What are its peacetime and combat roles? And what is the relationship between the militia and the regular forces of the PLA? In addressing these and related topics, Chapter 1 adds

to the body of knowledge available to analysts concerned with assessing the combat capabilities and limitations of China's ground forces.

Chapter 2 looks at the 1973-76 period and finds clues to current militia policy and defense strategy in the struggle between the "Gang of Four" and the PLA for control of the militia, in the strategy debate of 1974, and in the abortive military reform program of 1975.

Chapter 3 shows how PRC defense strategy and the militia's role in that strategy have been largely determined by the evolution since 1977 of Beijing's military modernization program. The chapter examines trends in the PLA-militia relationship and assesses their effect on the militia's combat effectiveness. It goes on to evaluate the militia's performance in the 1979 PRC-Vietnam war and ends with a look at evidence of a change in doctrine affecting the role of urban defense in PRC ground defense strategy.

Chapter 4 offers a brief conclusion based on the foregoing study.

SOURCES

Given the closed nature of the Chinese military system and the absence of freewheeling public debate on contemporary defense issues of the sort seen in the Western press, "hard" information is scarce concerning current Chinese thinking on matters related to national security. However, from the standpoint of research methodology, treatment of the militia as a lens through which to view developments within the Chinese military system has the important advantage of increasing manyfold the quantity of material available for analysis. Because the militia is basically a civilian mass organization rather than an element of the secretive and security-conscious PLA, a considerable amount of information about its activities routinely appears in the PRC media.

Translated and original-text transcripts of PRC articles and broadcasts constitute the principal source of data for this study. Many of these translations were found in the relevant daily reports published by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) in Washington; others were obtained from translations made available by FBIS to journalists and the wire services in Hong Kong. I also drew on data from unclassified US government and government-contracted studies dealing with relevant aspects of PRC defense policy and on information derived from personal interviews with PRC officials, foreign academic specialists on the Chinese armed forces, and private research organizations in Hong Kong during the period 1977-1980. Of particular value in resolving questions which arose as my research progressed was a field study trip I made to Hong Kong in December 1980 while a student at the National War College.

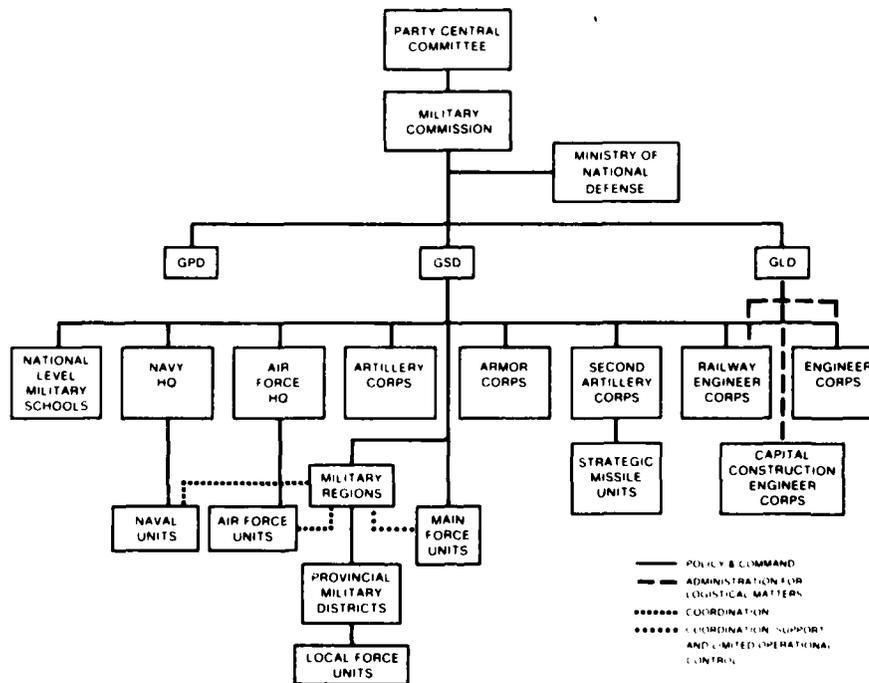
The source materials I have cited are the most reliable materials currently available to the researcher in unclassified data on Chinese defense issues. Nevertheless, most of the PRC data are derived from media reports and therefore are inherently subject to error in interpretation. In some cases, it may appear that I have based a judgment on a single provincial press account or broadcast. This generally is not the case; I simply have tried to spare the reader's time by selecting a representative media reference from among several which could be used to make the point. Where information is particularly thin, I have alerted the reader to the tenuous nature of my conclusions.

TERMINOLOGY

Throughout the text, I frequently use the word "army" to refer to the Chinese armed forces as a whole—sea, air, and land. This practice conforms to Chinese Communist usage and derives from the fact that, in the broadest sense, the term "People's Liberation Army" refers to all components of the PRC military establishment. Occasionally the term "army" refers only to the ground forces, as the context will make clear.

Use of the terms "cadre" and "officer" also requires some explanation here. Ranks were abolished in the PLA in 1965. There are, therefore, no "officers" as such in the PLA today. For clarity, however, this term frequently is used in the text when referring to persons whose positions would make them officers in Western military services. The term "cadre" includes all those holding positions of leadership—from squad leaders to the Chief of the PLA General Staff. All "officers" thus are cadres; however, not all cadres would be "officers" were this distinction still made in the PLA.

I devote the remainder of the introduction to a brief description of those aspects of the PRC military system (figure 1) which are relevant to this study. Readers already familiar with the Chinese armed forces may wish to turn directly to Chapter 1.



SOURCE:
ADAPTED FROM HAN, HONG, *THE CHINESE ARMED FORCES*
WASHINGTON, DC: DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1976,
ANNEX A, 2.

Figure 1. Military Organization of the PRC

THE PRC MILITARY SYSTEM

The State Constitution adopted in 1975 vests command of China's armed forces in the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. However, de facto control of the armed forces is exercised by the Chairman of the Central Committee's Military Commission (MC). In the past, these two positions usually have been held concurrently by one man. However, when Mao Zedong's successor, Hua Guofeng, was replaced as Party Chairman by Hu Yaobang in the summer of 1981, the top post in the Military Commission—and thus in the military hierarchy—was assumed by Party Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping.³

The Military Commission

In a strictly organizational sense, the Military Commission (MC) is but a subordinate functional staff element of the Central Committee. Yet in reality this body probably is overshadowed only by the Politburo as a locus of power and influence within the ruling structure of China. Here, within the MC, the top echelon of the political and military leaderships translates the will of the Party into the policies and directives which guide every aspect of the PLA's military, political, economic, and civic activity. But the scope of the MC's authority extends well beyond the formulation of policy, encompassing in addition the operational command and control of the major operational elements of the ground forces, the Navy, the Air Force, the strategic missile forces, and the supporting arms of the PLA. Probably no major alteration of the disposition, the employment, or the readiness status of these elements can take place unless directed or approved by the MC.⁴

Meetings of the full MC are rarely revealed to the public, but apparently take place only infrequently—at most, only two or three times a year since 1977. These plenary sessions convene only for deliberation of major issues of military policy. The affairs of the MC are handled on a day-to-day basis by its Standing Committee, comprised of the Chairman, several

Vice-Chairmen, and a number of other senior MC members. In the past, the Chairman normally has delegated responsibility for managing routine operations of the MC and its subordinate staff elements to the First Vice-Chairman.⁵

Ministry of National Defense

Unlike its counterpart organizations in the West and the Soviet Union, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) exercises little real authority over the armed forces. It has no command authority and only limited administrative powers. Although the precise nature of the MND's function is unknown, it is thought to be responsible for such matters as the conscription and demobilization of PLA personnel (but not for personnel administration), liaison with foreigners, some aspects of militia policy, and matters related to foreign military attaches stationed in China and Chinese military attaches stationed abroad. The Ministry appears also to exercise some jurisdiction over the military budget.

The high rank of the Defense Minister and his consequent prominence at state and military functions perhaps have contributed to a common misperception concerning the status of the MND.⁶ While the power, influence, and prestige of the Defense Minister are great indeed, these have derived in the past not so much from his position as head of the MND as from his authority as First Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission.

Ascription of the personal power of the Defense Minister to the organization of the Ministry itself has led some students of the Chinese armed forces to conclude erroneously that the central staff organization of the PLA is directly subordinate to the MND.⁷ Although this may have been true during the 1950s, since at least 1960 the PLA general staff has functioned as the primary staff element of the Military Commission, not of the MND.⁸

The PLA General Departments

Immediately subordinate to the Military Commission are the General Staff Department, the General Political Department, and the General Logistics Department of the PLA. These three General Departments comprise the central staff organization of the PLA, and it is through them that the Military Commission administers the armed forces and directs military operations.

The General Staff Department (GSD) serves as the army's general staff headquarters, performing staff and operational functions for the PLA as a whole, in addition to discharging staff duties for the Navy and Air Force. (There is no strictly "Army" or ground forces headquarters, as such.) Among the functional subelements of the GSD are organizations responsible for operations, military training, intelligence, communications, the PLA's military academies and the military schools system, mobilization, antichemical warfare, general administration and personnel, and armaments. The top post in the GSD is that of Chief of the PLA General Staff—the most influential in the armed forces. Assisting him are a number of Deputy Chiefs of Staff, each of whom probably supervises a specific functional area of GSD work.

The General Logistics Department (GLD) is responsible for centralized logistics planning, procurement, and distribution for the PLA. (The Navy and Air Force have their own logistics systems, but these are under the overall supervision of the GLD.) The principal services provided by GLD include:

- The supply of weapons, ammunition, vehicles, unit equipment, personal equipment, fuel, vehicles, rations, clothing, medical supplies, and funds.
- Frontline first aid, and evacuation and treatment of the sick and wounded.
- Repair of equipment, weapons, and vehicles.

- Transportation services and the maintenance of roads.
- Construction, maintenance, and management of barracks and various other rear area facilities.⁹

The General Political Department (GPD) is responsible for maintaining the ideological standards, discipline, and morale of the armed forces and has extensive authority over internal PLA security. Broadly stated, the role of the GPD is to guarantee Party control of the PLA and to shape the thought and behavior of PLA personnel. It attempts to accomplish these goals by:

- Supervising political indoctrination of PLA personnel.
- Raising the military and general education levels of the troops.
- Reviewing officer performance and selecting those to be promoted, reassigned, or demoted.
- Exercising leadership over political security work and supervising military procuratorates and courts.
- Publishing PLA newspapers and other publications.
- Overseeing relations between military units and the civilian population in their locales.
- Overseeing the political activities of the militia.¹⁰

Providing the means for carrying out these diverse tasks is a network of Party committees, political departments, and political commissars which extends into every PLA organization and unit.

Below the General Departments in the organizational structure, headquarters elements of the various PLA services and arms, regional commands, and units of the operating forces discharge the staff, logistics, and political responsibilities appropriate to their particular organizational level. They

accomplish this in the same way the General Departments do at the national level for the PLA as a whole.

PLA Services and Arms

The next echelon in the PLA structure is comprised of the headquarters of the Navy, the Air Force, and those of the six PLA special arms—the Artillery Corps, the Second Artillery (that is, the strategic missile forces), the Armored Corps, the Engineering Corps, the Railway Engineer Corps (for construction and maintenance of railroads), and the Capital Construction Engineering Corps (for construction of defense-related installations).¹¹

The headquarters of these services and special arms probably are mainly administrative in nature. Their primary function seems to be to provide the technical training and logistical support peculiar to the specialized forces and units over which they exercise supervision. The operational involvement of the Navy and Air Force headquarters may be relatively greater, for these organizations appear to function more directly under the General Staff Department as subordinate staff elements responsible for naval and air operations. The General Logistics Department oversees the administration of the Railway Engineer Corps, the Engineer Corps, and the Capital Construction Engineering Corps; the General Staff Department exercises this authority over the Artillery Corps and the Armored Force. The GSD also exercises operational control over the "independent" tactical elements of each arm (that is, those elements not organic or attached to a major tactical headquarters), issuing orders directly to these units or through the headquarters of the military region concerned.¹² Little concerning the Second Artillery has ever been made public by the Chinese. As a consequence, not much is known about the way it fits into the PLA command structure. However, in view of the strategic nature of its mission, command and control of the Second Artillery probably is held closely by the MC itself.

The Regional Commands

China is divided into eleven Military Regions (MRs) which take their names from the cities in which the MR headquarters are located (figure 2). Each MR is further divided into Military Districts (MDs), the boundaries of which in most cases are coterminous with the boundaries of the 26 provinces and autonomous regions and which take the names of these administrative divisions.¹³ The districts or prefectures within each province constitute the third level of the regional military command system—the Military Subdistrict (MSD).

The fact that Military Region boundaries usually coincide with those of the several provinces they encompass no doubt



Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative.

FIGURE 2. CHINESE MILITARY REGIONS

facilitates the army's discharge of its internal security responsibilities and enhances development of the close army-people relationship which is a characteristic of the Chinese Communist system. At the same time, however, the MR boundaries as presently drawn appear in many instances to complicate the MR commander's task of organizing his region for defense against an external attack. Beijing MR with its extended and relatively shallow western and northern wings is one example; Lanzhou MR with its 50-mile front on Mongolia and 1100-mile-wide rear area in the south is another. Thus, while the present system probably is adequate for the peacetime administration of the PLA and may be adequate to cope with border clashes or limited incursions, a threat of large-scale conflict on the borders probably would result in the combining of those MRs most directly concerned into "fronts" under the operational control of the General Staff Department.¹⁴

Main Forces and Local Forces¹⁵

The "regular" forces of the PLA are divided into two categories; main forces and local forces. Main forces are those regular PLA troops which are under the direct command of the General Staff Department and available for duty anywhere in the country. The bulk of the main force divisions are found in the 36 tactical armies which constitute the core of the PLA's fighting strength.¹⁶ Each army normally is comprised of three infantry divisions (each with an organic artillery regiment and, in some cases, an armor regiment), an artillery regiment, an antiaircraft artillery regiment, and various smaller support elements—for a total personnel strength of approximately 43,000. In the aggregate, the main forces total 121 infantry divisions, 12 armored divisions, 3 airborne divisions (these under the Air Force), 40 artillery divisions (field, antitank, and antiaircraft artillery), 16 railway and capital construction engineer divisions, and about 150 independent regiments.

Local (or "regional") forces are those PLA units stationed in and assigned the mission of defending a particular locale or geographic area of China. They are responsible for the imme-

mediate defense of coastal areas and land frontiers and share responsibility for the internal defense and security of the PRC. Local forces normally are under the command of the headquarters of the Military Region in which they are stationed and generally are not transferred out of their immediate areas of responsibility.

Local forces total about 85 divisions and 150 independent regiments of three distinct types: border defense, internal defense, and garrison. Border defense units, as the name implies, are stationed in and responsible for the defense of China's immediate border areas. The border defense units are lightly armed infantry forces and are somewhat smaller than corresponding main force units. Internal defense units also are lightly armed infantry. Their primary peacetime mission is the maintenance of law and order in the localities to which they are assigned. Garrison units are deployed in static positions along the coast and on many offshore islands. They are "artillery-heavy" and have few infantry troops. Their mobility is minimal.¹⁷

Because local force troop units are tied both by origin and mission to the area in which they are stationed, they tend to be more heavily involved on a day-to-day basis in the civilian affairs of that area than the main force units. Close and constant interaction takes place between the PLA headquarters at each level of command within the provincial Military District and the local Party committee at the corresponding level of civil administration. This symbiotic relationship serves local PLA units by facilitating the annual conscription and demobilization of PLA personnel and the organizing and training of the militia—two major responsibilities of the provincial military commands. At the same time, such a setup enhances the responsiveness of the army to the direction of local Party committees and ensures the availability of local force units to assist in local construction projects, planting and harvesting, disaster relief, and a broad range of other civic action projects.¹⁸

1. THE PEOPLE'S MILITIA

No matter how warfare has changed and how many new weapons have been developed, the great truth that the "militia is the basis of victory" remains unchanged.

Internal PLA Document
January 1979¹

The organization and functions of the Chinese People's Militia and its role in the People's Republic of China military system are little known outside of China. Yet it is difficult to make sound judgments concerning the effectiveness of contemporary Chinese defense strategy without understanding the militia system. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to examine the militia's organization and its relationship to the regular forces of the People's Liberation Army, and thereby to establish a frame of reference for subsequent examination of recent developments in the evolution of China's People's War doctrine and the role of the militia in that doctrine.

THE MILITIA SYSTEM

The people's militia (minbing) is a nationwide civilian mass organization of politically reliable and physically fit men and women under the dual leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the PLA. Because it is structured along military lines and is one element of the triad of forces (main forces, local forces, and militia) that comprises China's military system, the militia often is viewed only in terms of its military role. But the militia has three principal roles—as made clear by the

"Regulations on Militia Work" promulgated by the PRC Ministry of National Defense in 1978. Article 1 of the "Regulations" stipulates the missions of the militia: (1) to play a leading role in production; (2) to safeguard coastal areas and land frontiers and to maintain social law and order; and (3) to be ready at all times to join with the PLA to attack invaders and protect the motherland.²

Peacetime Role

During both peace and war, there are two aspects to the militia's role—civilian and military. In times of peace, the militia's primary responsibility is to act as a "shock force" in production. Individual militiamen are to lead the production effort by acting as model workers in their industrial or agricultural work units. Militia units are periodically mobilized to carry out high-priority, labor-intensive production tasks such as planting and harvesting of crops during the growing season, and farmland capital construction (for example, construction and repair of dikes and irrigation works, well-digging, stonework for terraced fields, and road repair) during the winter months. In order to "safeguard the four modernizations," militiamen also guard factories, warehouses, mines, bridges, and railways in addition to insuring the security of their own worksites. In society at large, the militia is empowered to assist (but not to replace) Public Security personnel in maintaining social order by "exposing reactionary elements" and apprehending criminals.³ Beyond this, however, it serves a far larger purpose, for because of its vast size and geographical dispersion, the militia provides the single most effective vehicle available to the Chinese authorities for the political education and direction of the masses.

So much for the militia's civilian peacetime mission; its military mission in peace is to prepare for war through individual and unit combat training. Yet militia units also perform important peacetime duties in support of regular forces of the PLA. Militiamen participate directly with the PLA in the

patrolling and surveillance of coastal and border areas ("army-people joint defense"). Militia units in these areas are mobilized to assist the PLA in the construction of defense works. Militia antiaircraft artillery (AAA) units provide a major portion of the air defense for key Chinese urban and industrial centers.⁴ The militia also constitutes a reservoir of manpower from which the PLA can recruit each winter partly to replace the estimated 20-25 percent of its total strength which is demobilized annually. Moreover, since all those demobilized from the PLA are required to join the militia, the militia provides a source of trained and experienced veterans who can be called back into service with the regular forces in the event of war. Thus, while China has no formal military reserve system in the Western sense, the militia effectively performs that function.⁵

Wartime Role

In time of war, the relative emphasis placed on the civilian and military aspects of the militia's role likely would depend upon proximity to a combat zone. In areas distant from the fighting, those civilian activities described above would predominate, though with increased attention being given to the security of installations and lines of communication, urban air defense readiness and vigilance, and the construction of defense works. Production in support of the war effort rather than military duty per se likely would remain the overriding concern.

In the combat area, militia units would conduct conventional and guerrilla operations in coordination with and in support of the regular forces. Other militia missions would cover a wide spectrum of combat support and combat service support functions. Militiamen would construct barriers, obstacles, and fortifications; gather intelligence; guide PLA units; evacuate wounded to the rear and carry ammunition and supplies forward; carry messages; guard prisoners; provide security for

rear areas and lines of communication; and provide anti-aircraft defense for urban areas.⁶

Of great importance, too, would be the militia's role as a source of combat replacements for the PLA. In a 1978 speech, Marshal Nie Rongzhen emphasized that any future war likely would be protracted and fought on a "great scale." Thus, he said, casualties would be high. "During the course of the war the armed forces will need ten million or even tens of millions of troops, rather than several million [presumably the 'several million' now in service]. Where will such an enormous number of troops come from? They will come from the militia."⁷ Available evidence is insufficient to justify more than tentative judgments concerning how this concept might work in practice. However, it seems safe to assume that many militiamen—especially those with prior service—would be incorporated into existing PLA units as individual replacements, and that some militia units would be upgraded both to expand the ranks of the PLA and to facilitate replacement of regular units decimated in combat.

A 1971 draft revision of the PRC's 1961 Militia Work Regulations suggests how this would be accomplished.

Basic militia battalions and regiments must be organized independently by xian [county] in accordance with the requirement that a small xian organize a battalion, a medium-sized xian organize two battalions and a large xian organize a regiment. By doing so, the xian must be capable of forming local force units [difang budui] in the event of war.⁸

Judging by this document, militia units would be upgraded to PLA local force rather than main force units. Such a system seems logical, for it would provide reasonably well-trained and well-equipped "reserve" units to the main forces while enabling the majority of raw militiamen to receive some training in rear area local force units before being committed to combat.

Organization

The militia is divided into two general categories: "ordinary" (putung minbing) and "basic" (jigan minbing—sometimes translated as "backbone"—, "primary"—, or "core militia"). The ordinary militia comprises perhaps 55–65 percent of total militia strength. Membership is open to all physically fit and politically reliable men between the ages of 16 and 45, and similarly qualified women between 16 and 35. Although organized along military lines, the ordinary militia essentially is little more than a massive labor force. It receives little military training and, in a strictly military sense, would be of limited value in the event of war.

The basic militia is a more select grouping, being comprised of men between the ages of 16 and 30 and women between 16 and 25 who are considered suited for participation in combat. Unlike the ordinary militia, the basic militia regularly receives military training of from several days to about two weeks annually.

From the ranks of the basic militia is recruited a third category, the armed basic militia (wuzhuang jigan minbing—usually translated simply as "armed militia"). This is the hard core, the elite of the militia. Armed militia members are younger (16 to 25) than basic militiamen, must have a properly proletarian family background, and must have demonstrated both exemplary "class consciousness" and good military aptitude. Not surprisingly, therefore, a large proportion of armed militiamen are Communist Youth League and Party members and demobilized servicemen. Armed militia units normally receive several weeks' training each year.

Participation in the militia—although ostensibly voluntary—is considered a citizen's "glorious obligation." Hence, those eligible for membership are under considerable pressure to join. A person normally joins the basic militia and, if qualified, soon moves up to the armed militia. If he does not

become an armed militia cadre, he reverts to the basic militia at age 25. Basic militiamen revert to ordinary at age 35, and all leave the militia completely at 45 (except for women, who "retire" at 35). These age limits can be extended in the cases of former servicemen and basic and armed militia cadres.⁹

The 1978 militia regulations require that militia units be established in all communes, factories and mines, government organs, schools, neighborhood organizations, and other public enterprises. The size of unit formed in each case is largely a function of population or civilian production unit organizational strength (table 1). In general, rural counties form one or more militia divisions (made up of both ordinary and basic militia) and at least one armed militia regiment; communes have an ordinary/basic militia regiment or battalion and an armed militia battalion or company; production brigades field a battalion or company and an armed company, platoon, or squad. A production team will have an ordinary/basic platoon and perhaps a squad, or only several individual armed militia members.¹⁰

Table 1. Militia Unit Distribution

Administrative or Production Unit	Ordinary/Basic Militia Unit	Armed Militia Unit
County	Division(s)	Regiment
Commune	Regiment/Battalion	Battalion/Company
Production Brigade	Battalion/Company	Company/Platoon/ Squad
Production Team	Platoon	Squad/Individuals

Militia divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies also are found in urban areas, with the number of militiamen available determining the size of the unit actually formed. Armed militia regiments normally are formed at municipality level (or within a municipal ward) and by large factories and

mines; medium and small factories, mines, and enterprises will have armed battalions, companies, or platoons.¹¹

Obviously, the armed contingent is the portion of the militia which has the greatest relevance to discussions of China's defense capabilities. Yet in their descriptions of militia organization and strength even the more comprehensive and well-researched recent analyses of the militia system generally fail to make a distinction between the ordinary, basic, and armed categories. This failure to differentiate between categories of units tends to distort militia organizational models and can lead to confusion over roles and missions. For example, two respected authorities on the PRC armed forces, Harvey Nelsen and Harlan Jencks, state that militia unit organizations above company level (that is, battalion, regiment, and division) exist only on paper and only for administrative or mobilization planning purposes.¹² Both authors appear to base this judgment on a description of militia organizational relationships by a Taiwan source which itself does not distinguish between the different categories of units.¹³

If Nelsen and Jencks are referring to the *armed* militia organization (and presumably they are, for both make the assertion in the context of militia combat effectiveness), the evidence suggests they are mistaken; armed militia battalions and regiments *do* exist. Armed militia divisions may exist as well, although conclusive evidence still is lacking. That is, not only do the 1978 "Regulations on Militia Work" require that armed battalions and regiments be formed, but frequent references to such units in the PRC media indicate that in fact they are established in both rural and urban production units. For example, a 9 April 1980 Guangzhou city broadcast reporting a municipal party committee conference on urban militia work mentioned the need to improve training of militia artillery "battalion" and "regimental" commanders. Another broadcast reported the inspection by a province-level team of "the armed militia battalions" of a rural county in Gansu. A third example is provided by a *Tianjin Ribao* (*Tianjin Daily*) article which refers to a training session for "battalion commanders and cad-

res of the headquarters, political and rear services organs of the independent militia regiment" of Ninghe county (one of five rural counties subordinate to Tianjin municipality).¹⁴ The reference to cadres of the three regimental staff sections indicates this is a functioning headquarters and not simply a notional or "paper" organization.

Misconceptions concerning the armed militia structure probably stem in large part from confusion over the relationship existing among the ordinary, basic, and armed militia at any particular level of organization. Figure 3 depicts this relationship as it might exist within the organization of a large rural commune. The commune has a militia regiment made up of ordinary and basic militiamen and an armed militia battalion. Under normal circumstances the two units do not exist side by side; instead, the personnel of the armed battalion are dispersed throughout the composite ordinary/basic battalions of the regiment. As current militia regulations require only that

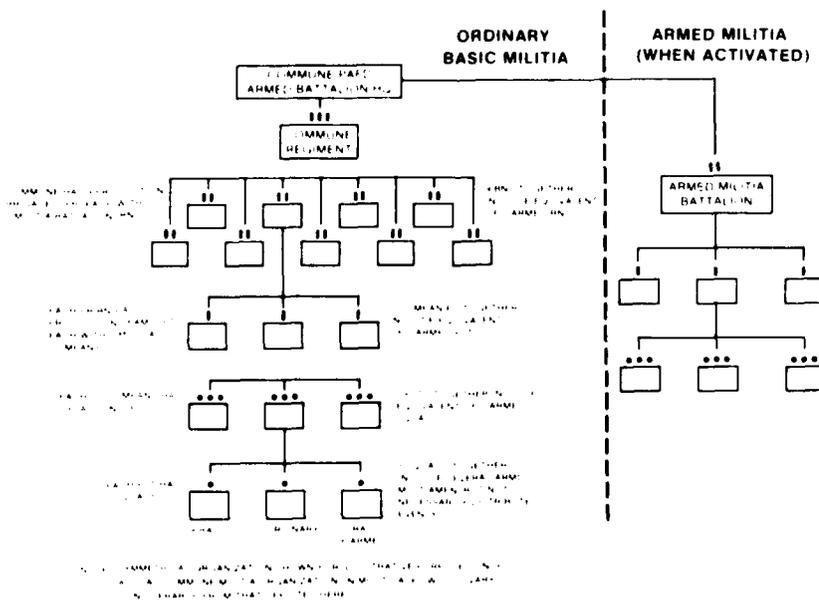


Figure 3. Hypothetical Commune Militia Organization

ordinary and basic militiamen be organized in separate squads, it would be possible for armed militia platoons or even companies to be integrated as units into the ordinary/basic regiment.¹⁵ This may be the practice in some units (with perhaps a greater likelihood in urban militia units because of their more specialized roles). However, the emphasis placed on having armed militia members fill leadership positions in the composite ordinary/basic units strongly suggests armed militiamen normally are integrated into these units as individuals. Thus, in the hypothetical case depicted in figure 3, the commanders of the armed militia platoons command companies in the commune regiment and the company commanders command three of the nine battalions; armed militia squad leaders command platoons or assume other cadre positions of similar authority in the regiment. The remainder of the regiment's leadership positions are filled by basic militiamen.

Although the armed battalion is not a "standing" unit, it probably has a permanent headquarters staff—the commune People's Armed Forces Department (PAFD). Under normal conditions, the armed militiamen are subject to the regimental chain of command, many elements of which are not part of the armed militia. However, when the armed militia is activated for combat, training, or any other purpose, the armed militiamen are detached from their respective regimental units and form the armed battalion. The battalion then comes under the direct command of the commune PAFD, not of the regiment. If the situation required, the battalion then would join with the armed battalions (or companies) of other communes to form armed regiments under the command of the *county* PAFD. This process—the formation "on call" of an armed militia unit from the ranks of the ordinary/basic unit at a particular level, and its subsequent integration with other units similarly formed to create a larger unit under higher-level command—is believed to hold true for all levels of civilian organization (i.e., production team, production brigade, commune, urban wards, and enterprises) regardless of the size of the ordinary/basic and armed units at the respective levels.¹⁶

The "Order of Battle" Problem

Further compounding the difficulty of analyzing militia organization is the lack of a universal order of battle. On the basis of the number and types of militia units on a particular commune, for instance, one cannot with any confidence extrapolate to determine the militia organization of a commune in the next county, much less in a different province.

Several factors complicate determination of militia order of battle. First, the strength of the ordinary and basic militia contingents in any given area is largely a function of the size of the population base of that area. Second, Article 9 of the "Regulations on Militia Work" stresses that "the organization of the militia must be adapted to the locality." What this injunction means in practical terms is spelled out by the official PLA newspaper, *Liberation Army Daily*:

The militia is organized in such a way that it does not disrupt the production, administration and studies in which its members normally engage, and thus it should not be an arbitrary organizational entity that is set up without consideration for these other activities. . . .

There are no hard and fast rules for determining the organizational and personnel strengths of militia units at the various organizational levels. . . . Militia divisions will usually have regiments directly subordinate to them. But they can also have directly subordinate battalions and even companies. Militia regiments will usually have battalions under them, but they can also have directly subordinate companies and platoons. . . . Battalions can have anywhere from three to six companies. Companies can have anywhere from three to more than five or six platoons. A squad may be composed of anywhere from six to more than ten men.

The organization and personnel strengths of militia units at the various levels must not be determined by arbitrary rules, regulations and constraints, for to do so would result in unrealistic organizational procedures,

making leadership difficult and leading eventually to the disruption and disintegration of the militia organization.¹⁷

Because the Chinese normally specify "armed militia" or "armed basic militia" when referring to that category, these guidelines probably are intended primarily for the ordinary/basic militia organization. However, although armed militia order of battle tends to be more "regular," instances of the type of "skip-echelon" subordination mentioned above are found within armed units as well as in the ordinary/basic militia structure.

Finally, the organization and composition of militia units are influenced by their geographical location. The Chinese place relatively greater emphasis on organizing, equipping, and training the armed militia in border and coastal regions than in the interior. Consequently, the armed militia probably comprises a higher percentage of total unit membership at any particular level of organization in these areas than would be the case if averaged on a nationwide basis.

Specialized Units

Although the militia, like the PLA, is basically an infantry force, the number and type of specialized militia units has significantly increased in recent years, and their geographical distribution has broadened. Most such units probably function as an integral part of and provide support to larger armed militia formations. The "Regulations" reveal the diversity of these specialized units and the basis for their formation:

From the armed regiments, depending on conditions, specialized teams such as artillery, anti-aircraft machine gun, communications, reconnaissance, chemical warfare, engineer, anti-tank, and sea and air, etc., may be organized.¹⁸

Other types of units observed by travellers or mentioned in the media include motor transport, medical, demolition (probably an engineer element), and, near the Soviet and Mongolian borders in Xinjiang, cavalry.¹⁹ On at least one occasion, a militia pontoon bridge company (zhouqiao minbing lian) has been noted.²⁰ Whether such a unit would be independent or subordinate to an armed regiment or division is not known.

Probably the most numerous of the specialized units are the militia antiaircraft artillery companies, battalions, and regiments which provide much of the air defense protection for key urban and industrial centers and for vital lines of communication. Normally equipped with 37mm and 57mm AA guns, such units frequently form part of the militia organization of large factories and other major industrial facilities and, in the event of air attack, would be responsible for the point defense of these installations.²¹ Two mid-1979 references to militia AAA training activities provide an idea of the size of this urban air defense force. In the Shanghai area, "approximately fifty" militia antiaircraft artillery companies equipped with "several hundred guns" participated in a week-long live-fire exercise; in the northern coastal city of Tianjin, fifty-seven militia AAA companies from thirty-two factories and mining enterprises received training which included "battle drills with live ammunition."²² The training in Tianjin was provided by a unit of the PLA Air Force, suggesting that militia AAA units may be subordinate to the local air defense sector under Air Force command rather than to the PLA's municipal garrison commands.²³ This is made more likely by the fact that militia radar units are known to be operating in some areas under Air Force control as part of the air defense network.²⁴ Militiamen manning such units presumably are demobilized servicemen who served in similar units while on active duty.

Many specialized militia units, however, draw on the training and experience of technicians from civilian industry. Militia antichemical warfare units, such as the antichemical warfare company of the Suzhou (Jiangsu) Dyestuffs and Chemical Works, are a good example. Similarly, militia medical units frequently are organized by hospitals and other rural and urban

public health organizations. A signal unit in Beijing is made up of electricians drawn from the militia organization of the Beijing Heat and Power Plant.²⁵

Little is known of the air and maritime (or marine) components of the armed militia—included here because of their specialized functions. In addition to those Air Force-associated air defense elements discussed above, other militia units possibly augment Air Force support of civil air operations by providing some general ground support or security for air facilities; others apparently receive sport glider training of the type given prospective Air Force pilots.²⁶ The bulk of the maritime militia is found among the coastal and offshore fishing fleets; armed fishing boats of up to two hundred tons augment regular PLA Navy forces in the patrolling and surveillance of China's coastal waters. Other militiamen have trained directly with naval units aboard fast coastal patrol craft.²⁷

Strength

The only thing that can be said with certainty about the strength of the militia is that most estimates of it are wrong. This assertion can be made with confidence because of the weakness of the statistical data on which such estimates are based. The Chinese, extremely reluctant to reveal statistics concerning any aspect of national security, seldom knowingly disclose data related to the strength of the armed militia. Instead, most public references are vague and tend to aggregate militia strength—an example being the reference by PLA Deputy Chief of Staff Zhang Caiqian in 1978 to "hundreds of millions of militiamen."²⁸ Occasionally, the militia will be described as a percentage of the work force in a specific location. For example, Jilin province Party first secretary Wang Enmao stated in 1978 that "the militia [presumably of Jilin province] comprises a larger number of people, accounting for more than 80 percent of the entire labor force." Several foreign travellers in China have been given roughly similar fig-

ures (70 percent) for the percentage of workers belonging to a factory militia unit.²⁹ This author was told during a visit to the Taiyuan (Shanxi) Heavy Machinery Plant in 1980 that the factory's work force of 12,000 was organized into a militia division.

Such statistics provide little basis for calculating total militia strength, much less the strength of the armed militia or even the size of the armed militia as a rough proportion of the whole. Only slightly more helpful are revelations such as made by Anhui radio in December 1977. During 1977, the broadcast claimed, personnel of the Anhui Military District trained 2.54 million militiamen throughout the province.³⁰ Since the ordinary militia receives little if any training, it can be safely assumed that the figure in this case represents mostly basic and armed militia. Even Taiwan sources offer little clarification. The 1974 *Yearbook on Chinese Communism* (Taipei), for instance, stated that there were 1.7 million militiamen in Shijiazhuang prefecture of Hebei province and that they were organized into 5350 companies.³¹ The most this reveals is that in Shijiazhuang, at least, the strength of an ordinary/basic militia company averaged about 320 in 1974.

Foreign estimates of total militia strength vary by at least 300 percent and those of armed militia strength by up to 400 percent. The respected International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) (London) estimates armed militia strength at "up to 5 million organized into 75 cadre divisions and 2,000 regiments."³² This estimate appears to be the result of an assumption that the PLA and local Party organizations have strictly implemented the guidelines in Article 10 of the "Regulations On Militia Work" and have been able to organize *and equip* an armed division in each of China's 78 second-order (prefectural-level) municipalities, and an armed regiment in each of the country's 2000-odd county-level administrative units. Given the flexibility and variations in militia order of battle and the priority placed on building up the armed militia in the high-threat border and coastal regions, such an assumption seems unwarranted.

Other estimates abound. The DIA *Handbook On the Chinese Armed Forces*, like the IISS, puts armed militia strength at 5 million, basic at 15 million, and ordinary at 60 million. Nelsen estimates the armed militia at between 7 and 10 million and the basic at between 15 and 20 million. Jencks puts the two categories at between 3 and 5 million and between 12 and 15 million, respectively. Taiwan intelligence sources have estimated the armed militia at "about 10 million" and the basic at between 50 and 100 million. One of the highest estimates is that of June Dreyer, who places total militia strength at 250 million, with figures of 100 million for the basic and 20 million for the armed militia.³³

Dreyer bases her estimate on an assumption that the militia comprises about 25 percent of the population. Whether the Chinese actually have been able to achieve that level of participation is questionable, but of little real significance. From the perspective of defense capabilities, the important figures are those for the basic and armed militia. Immigrant and refugee data compiled in Hong Kong suggest that Dreyer's estimate of 100 million for the basic militia may be reasonably accurate if intended to reflect the aggregate of basic and armed militia strength. On the other hand, 20 million probably is high for the armed militia; a figure of between 12 and 15 million likely is closer to fact.

In any case, it should be kept in mind that the most which can be expected from any system for estimating militia strength is a very rough approximation—an "order of magnitude." As Dreyer herself cautions, even the usefulness of data derived in Hong Kong from immigrants and refugees is limited; samples from this group contain a disproportionate number of persons from the coastal and border areas of southeast China where the proportions of basic and armed militia would be expected to be higher, making difficult the extrapolation of statistics from this area to interior regions of the country.³⁴ In the final analysis, since the militia is essentially a provincial rather than a national organization, the Chinese leadership itself may

have only a rough idea of the size of the militia's component elements.

Command, Control, and Leadership

As a component of China's three-tiered armed forces system, the militia is under the dual leadership of the national military command and the Party Central Committee. However, this leadership is not shared equally by the People's Liberation Army and the Party. By regulation, primary responsibility for militia affairs resides with the Party, not the PLA, and is discharged primarily through the local Party committees at province level and below.

The PLA's Role in Militia Leadership

For simplicity's sake, let me begin with the role of the PLA in supervising the militia. Throughout the following discussion, reference to figure 4, "Militia Command and Control," will help in tracing the rather complex dual PLA-Party leadership of the militia.

Policies and directives concerning those aspects of peacetime militia work which involve the PLA and policies related to the militia's wartime military missions are formulated by the Military Commission and implemented through the PLA General Departments and their respective subelements in the subordinate regional commands. While there is no evidence to suggest the existence of a national militia "headquarters" as such, an element of the Military Commission's internal staff organization probably has overall responsibility on the military side for supervising militia affairs. (The MC is known to have had a "militia department" during the 1950s, but it has not been mentioned publicly since that time.)

Within the PLA General Departments, two staff sections appear to be particularly heavily involved in militia work. With-

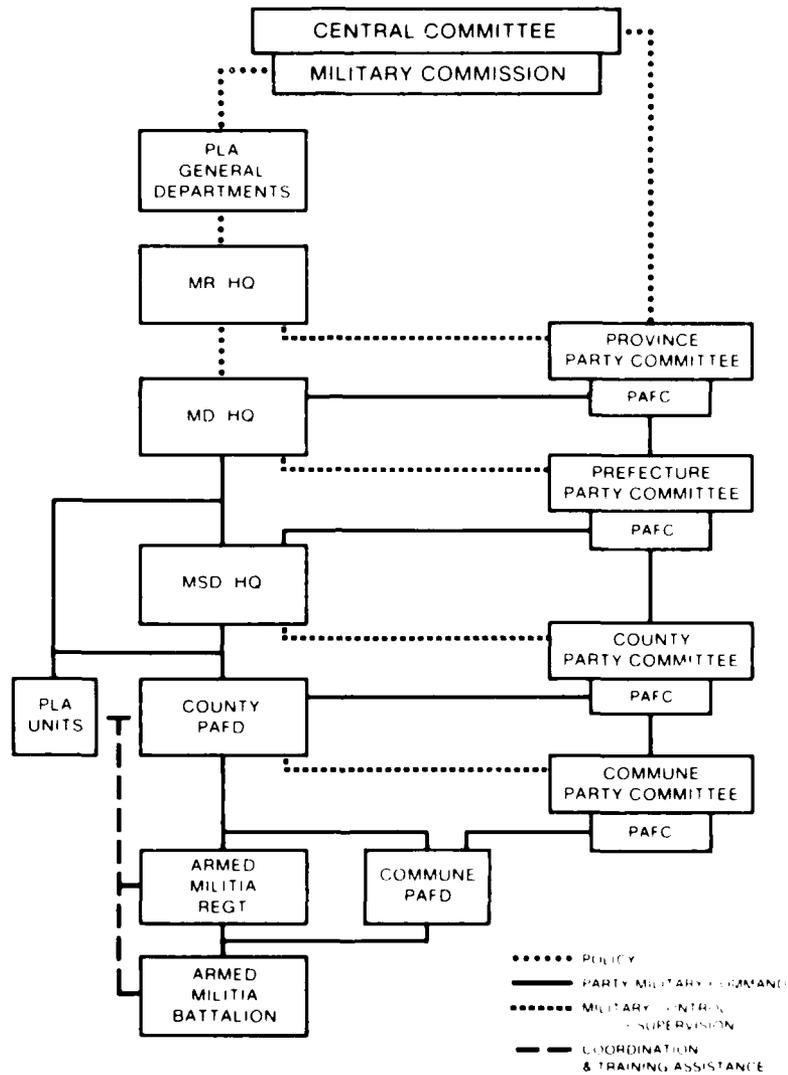


Figure 4. Militia Command and Control

in the scope of its broader responsibilities for PLA involvement in civil affairs, the Mass Work Subdepartment of the General Political Department oversees the political training and indoctrination of the militia by the PLA, including the publishing of militia newspapers by the GPD and the Military Regions. The Mobilization Subdepartment of the General Staff Department—in addition to its responsibilities for PLA conscription and demobilization and for wartime mobilization planning—is believed responsible for overall militia organization, for supervision of the militia's military activities, and for coordinating PLA training assistance. It also is known to compile militia training manuals.³⁵

But PLA central staff involvement in militia affairs is not limited to the activities of these two Subdepartments; each of the General Departments shoulders responsibility for important aspects of militia work. Militia weapons and armories, for example, appear to be the responsibility of the General Logistics Department. The Signal Subdepartment of the General Staff Department supervises the organization and training of armed militia communications units. Militia antiaircraft gunnery also falls within the purview of the GSD. The General Political Department, through the Party committees in the headquarters of the Military Regions and Districts, directs the Party committees in the county-level People's Armed Forces Departments—the primary organs of PLA control within the militia system.³⁶

Yet in terms of overall PLA staff planning, coordination, and supervision of matters pertaining to the militia, the Mobilization Subdepartment of the General Staff Department appears to be the dominant organization within the General Departments, exercising all the responsibilities of a militia headquarters except the key function of command.

Although little is known concerning the duties of the Deputy Chiefs of the PLA General Staff (DCOGSs), it has been suspected for some time that several, or all, of the DCOGSs individually are responsible for a specific functional area of PLA activity—for example, communications, armaments pro-

duction, electronics, or intelligence. That a DCOGS may be in overall charge of the PLA's militia work is suggested by the fact that in at least some of the Military Regions, one of the Military Region deputy commanders (the counterpart at this level of a DCOGS) is believed to be responsible for militia work in the MR.³⁷

Although the Military Region's headquarters performs an important function in coordinating and supervising the militia work of subordinate Military Districts, direct involvement of the MRs in militia work appears to be fairly limited. Nevertheless, the convening of MR-level meetings and conferences on various aspects of militia work and the attendance of MR leaders at provincial militia conferences places the authority and prestige of these "four-star" headquarters squarely behind the efforts of the Military Districts, and thus presumably facilitates the militia work of the provincial PLA commands. It probably is at MR level, too, where PLA training assistance and material support for the militia and wartime mobilization plans first begin to be worked out in detail. Finally, the MR headquarters seems the logical approving and coordinating authority for militia work engaged in by PLA main force, Air Force, and any Navy units stationed in the region.³⁸

The militia system first comes into sharp focus at province level, where the provincial PLA command is enjoined to take militia work as its main task.³⁹ The provincial Military District headquarters directs the organizing, equipping, and training of the militia through its subordinate Military Subdistricts and People's Armed Forces Departments. Found in counties, municipalities, communes, and large industrial enterprises, the PAFDs exercise direct control over the militia units and are the point of convergence of all Party, government, and PLA militia work in their jurisdiction. Without question, they are the key elements in the entire national militia system.

The People's Armed Forces Departments of counties and municipalities are regimental-level PLA commands, thought to be staffed in most cases by active-duty PLA cadres.⁴⁰ However, they are at the same time organs of the county and mu-

municipal governments.⁴¹ The municipal PAFDs have much the same responsibilities as the county PAFDs but on a larger scale, as they supervise not only the PAFDs of the municipal districts (wards) and large urban industrial enterprises but also those of the suburban counties as well. (For this reason, the PAFDs of larger cities may be division-level commands.) Municipal district PAFDs are departments of the district government and constitute the lowest element in the urban branch of the PLA's provincial chain of command. They control neighborhood militia units and those factories too small to have their own PAFDs.⁴² In the rural communes, PAFDs are headed by former servicemen rather than by active-duty PLA officers.⁴³ This may mean they are not PLA organs. On the other hand, during the Cultural Revolution the Shanghai newspaper *Wen Wei Bao* at one point criticized the slogan, advocated by some, of "bombard the Armed Forces Departments indiscriminately" because, it said, these departments were under the PLA.⁴⁴ (Whether this referred to all PAFDs or just to those in urban Shanghai is unknown.)

The evidence is insufficient to warrant a firm conclusion one way or the other. In any case, militia units under the commune PAFDs do not suffer from a lack of attention from the provincial PLA chain of command. We learn from *Liberation Army Daily* that "cadres of provincial Military Districts, Military Subdistricts and People's Armed Departments should go down to grassroots-level units of the militia and work there for no less than three, four, or five months a year, respectively."⁴⁵

The Party's Role in Militia Leadership

Up to this point, the military side of the militia's dual leadership system has been examined virtually in isolation; the resulting picture of the command relationships involved may seem straightforward. In fact, however, when the Party and army channels of authority over the militia are seen in juxtaposition, it becomes obvious that the militia command and control system is quite complex.

The principle of Party primacy in militia affairs is clearly stated in an order issued jointly in 1961 by the PLA's General Political Department and the Central Committee's Organization Department establishing Party committees in county and municipal PAFDs:

The Party committee of a county (municipal) People's Armed Forces Department shall work under the dual leadership of the Party committee of the military Subdistrict and the county (municipal) Party committee, with the latter as the principal leader in the activities of organizing and training the militia, examining and allocating militia cadres, carrying out Party and League work among the militia, and preserving social order.⁴⁶

Although this order refers only to the county, the Party's system for controlling the militia—like that of the military—really begins at the provincial level.

The organizational instrument for exercising this control is the People's Armed Forces Committee (PAFC), a grouping of representatives from all agencies concerned with militia work and with PLA conscription and demobilization. The PAFC forms a component element of the Party committee at each administrative level within the province. The function of the PAFC is to "control the armed forces." Its specific responsibilities were described in a May 1979 provincial broadcast:

The basic task of the People's Armed Forces Committee is to strictly implement all general and specific policies and directives of the Party Central Committee, the State Council, and the Military Commission . . . concerning militia building. It also includes working out a solution to major questions in militia work by following the related directives of the Party committee and the military organ at the higher level and by linking them to local conditions. It also calls for implementing the principle and policies on sources of recruits, mobilization, and settling of demobilized and retired soldiers.⁴⁷

Appointment to leadership positions within the provincial PAFCs does not appear to be determined on an ex officio basis. Indeed, a variety of top Party, government, and PLA officials fill these posts in different provinces. The following examples illustrate the integration of Party, government, and PLA authority over the militia that takes place within the PAFC. In 1979, the Chairman of the Qinghai provincial PAFC was the Qinghai Military District commander (concurrently a provincial Party committee second secretary and a deputy commander of Lanzhou Military Region). In Jiangsu, the PAFC was headed by a party committee secretary (concurrently an MD second political commissar); the Jiangsu MD commander was a PAFC vice-chairman (concurrently a standing committee member of the provincial Party committee), as was an MD deputy commander. And in Hubei province, the chairman of the PAFC was the first political commissar of the provincial MD (concurrently an MR deputy commander, a standing committee member of the provincial Party committee, and a vice-chairman of the provincial government); another PAFC vice-chairman also was a government vice-chairman.⁴⁸

The pattern of leadership assignments in lower-level People's Armed Forces Committees within any particular province probably is no more uniform than it is among the various provincial-level PAFCs. Nevertheless, there are certain cross-assignment practices which appear to be followed in most cases. The first, a part of the PAFC system itself, is the practice of having the top civilian Party official at each level serve concurrently as the chief political officer of the military department or PAFD at the corresponding level. Because this official always holds a top post within the PAFC, the PAFC automatically is directly involved in the military command of militia units.⁴⁹ At the same time, however, the commanders of the military departments and PAFDs also fill leading positions in the PAFCs at their respective levels, and thus presumably influence decisions taken with respect to their own and subordinate units.

Several things point to a substantially greater degree of PLA control over even the routine affairs of the militia than is generally recognized. As is apparent from the foregoing sample of provincial PAFC leaderships, the immediate superior military command element exercises considerable influence over the civilian side of the militia control system through the posting of army cadres to the subordinate-level PAFC. Another feature of the PAFC system often overlooked by Western analysts is the fact that appointments of civilian Party first secretaries and secretaries as first political commissars and political commissars (PCs) of the military commands down to commune level are made by the party committee of *the military department* at the next-higher level.⁵⁰ It may be argued that these appointments are *ex officio* in nature and thus are not really subject to PLA approval. This may or may not be true. However, because regional PLA leaders normally hold civilian Party posts at the same level, their opposition to a lower-level civilian Party secretary conceivably could block his appointment.

In any event, the quotation above outlining the functions of the PAFCs makes clear that these bodies answer equally to their respective party committees and to the higher-level PLA command (or PAFD). Zhejiang Party first secretary Tie Ying (himself the provincial Military District first political commissar) made this point emphatically at an October 1978 militia conference. The Party committees at all levels, said Tie, must "thoroughly study and conscientiously carry out any instruction and demand concerning military affairs and militia work issued by higher-level military organs. . . ." ⁵¹

There are certain aspects of the militia cadre system, too, which tend to favor the military rather than the civilian side of the militia control system. In general, militia cadres are selected from among "Party members, Communist Youth League members, outstanding workers, poor and middle peasants, and other revolutionaries." ⁵² However, priority presently is given to recruiting demobilized and retired service-

men. Most individuals apparently accept the opportunity to maintain the elite status they enjoyed as members of the PLA; one commune in Hubei claimed that 61 of the 64 demobilized servicemen in the commune were serving as militia cadres (presumably basic and armed) at platoon level or higher.⁵³ "Full-time" militia cadres are found only in the armed militia. These are the regular PLA officers who staff the county and municipal PAFDs and who are believed to serve on "career" assignments as militia cadres. Specific responsibilities of these full-time cadres are thought to include teaching the doctrine of People's War, recruiting and training militia cadres, conducting political and military training, controlling militia weapons and ammunition, and PLA conscription and demobilization. One county in Jiangsu had 41 full-time cadres in charge of militia work in 1979—a figure which may reflect the approximate manning level of rural county PAFDs.⁵⁴

As stipulated by the "Regulations On Militia Work," appointments to the top political posts of militia units at all echelons from division to company are made by the secretary of the respective unit Party committee or Party branch. These appointments appear to be pro forma in units down to commune level (that is, divisions and regiments), for the political commissars of these units normally are the secretaries of the local civilian party committees. This interpretation is supported by the fact that appointments to these posts do not require approval of the higher-level military Party committee, whereas those to division and regimental *deputy* PC posts do. Division and regimental commanders, deputy commanders and deputy PCs, and battalion commanders all are appointed by the unit party committee at its respective level but must be approved by the next higher military party committee. Cadres below battalion level are nominated by their unit Party committee and then "selected by democratic election," with upper-level Party committee approval required in the case of company commanders.⁵⁵

As the "higher-level" for cadres at county level, the Party committee of the Military Subdistrict would be involved in the process described above. But the MSD's role in militia cadre

selection and appointments seems to be considerably broader than suggested in the "Regulations." Specifically, the MSD's political department probably assigns full-time cadres to posts within the subordinate county PAFDs and, through them, selects and appoints cadres to commune PAFDs and to key leadership positions in lower-level units. (This would be in accord with the role of political departments at the various levels under the General Political Department in the selection and assignment of cadres in the regular forces.) Such control by the MSDs over everything except *ex officio* militia cadre appointments would, in itself, tend to place authority over lower-level militia administration in the hands of the PLA.

Training

Overall responsibility for militia training rests with the provincial Military District, but the subordinate Military Subdistricts and People's Armed Forces Departments actually conduct it. Emphasis is placed on the training of the armed militia and militia cadres. Regulations require county and municipal PAFDs to provide 15 days of training for militia battalion and company commanders each year, although training sessions for *all* cadres in a particular county have been noted. Armed militia personnel are to receive 15–20 days of training annually, conducted by commune and urban sector PAFDs.⁵⁶ In many cases, training for the armed militia exceeds this by a considerable amount, with 6 weeks per year being common. The basic militia receives considerably less. Both the armed and basic militia conduct training on a regularly scheduled basis according to annual training plans (probably drawn up by the MSDs) and with a "point of emphasis." In recent years, this emphasis has been on learning the "three defenses" (defense against tanks, aircraft, and airborne troops), and on defense against chemical, biological, and nuclear attack. Instruction in other techniques includes night fighting, close-quarter combat, and the "five basic skills"—grenade throwing, marksmanship, demolition, bayonet fighting, and foot drill.⁵⁷ The ordinary militia, on the other hand, receives little formal training—in many cases, none at all. What it does receive

consists mainly of elementary skills like bayonet fighting and foot drill.

Integration of military training with productive labor is a fundamental principle of militia work, but one which contains the potential for a conflict of priorities. To avoid such conflict, flexibility governs the scheduling and, to a certain extent, the amount of militia training. Speaking at a provincial militia conference in 1978, Jilin province Party first secretary Wang Enmao explained that

although militia training should, in the main, be conducted in connection with production work, there should be a certain time spent solely on training... Training is always carried out in scattered places when there is much other work, and assembled training is conducted when there is less work. In a flexible way ... training is carried out whenever possible. In addition, small-scale training is conducted by using spare time after work... We should, on the one hand, insure necessary time for militia training and, on the other hand, see to it that time for production work is not occupied to such an extent as to increase the commune members' burden and affect production.⁵⁸

In practice, this means that in rural areas the crop cycle dictates training, with most training concentrated in one or two sessions each year after the major harvests. "During the busy farming season," reads one Military District directive, "the Military Subdistricts and People's Armed Forces Departments should not order militia cadres to attend meetings and should not schedule military or political training for militiamen."⁵⁹ Urban militia training, on the other hand, is linked to the shift cycles and production requirements of the major industrial enterprises. Consequently, training in urban areas occurs more frequently than in the countryside, often being conducted on a daily or weekly basis.

Generally speaking, the PLA trains the armed militia and, in some cases, the basic militia.⁶⁰ Normally, however, the basic militia is trained by the armed militia, and both train the ordinary militia. Although PLA assistance to militia training is provided mainly by local force units under the regional com-

mands, all PLA units, services, and arms must play an active role. Every army, division, and regiment must have a department specifically in charge of militia work and headed by a leading unit officer; every battalion and company must have a "militia work team"; and air and naval units and units of the various PLA arms must train specialized technical militia detachments.⁶¹ As most rural militia training takes place within the commune or production brigade areas, the amount of PLA training assistance a militia unit actually receives depends to a great extent on how far it is from the nearest PLA installation. When a PLA unit is stationed nearby, PLA training assistance is common; in areas where there is no PLA, the militia often must fend for itself.

Lack of compensation for time lost on the job by those participating in training has presented problems in the past and has received renewed attention in recent years. At the National Conference on Militia Work in 1978, Yang Yong, then first Deputy Chief of the PLA General Staff, stated:

Armed basic militiamen and militia cadres participating in military training should be regarded as on duty, and they should earn wages or work points and be evaluated and commended as usual.

A subsequent Liaoning report on a provincial militia conference makes it clear that basic militiamen are to be similarly remunerated.⁶² In addition to compensation for any production shortfall resulting from time spent in training, each basic and armed militiaman receives a daily food allowance for the duration of the training period. The production unit of the militiamen concerned probably bears these expenses, with the funds coming, at least in some instances, from commercial enterprises run by the production unit.⁶³

Weapons and Equipment

At present, the militia has a great amount of cannons and communication, antichemical and engineering equipment, as well as great amount of small arms.⁶⁴

So claimed Jinan MR commander Rao Shoukun in May 1980. Although of interest because it suggests militia arms and equipment inventories have increased in recent years, Rao's statement offers little on which to base an estimate of current militia holdings. Other public references to militia armaments are similarly vague, little being said publicly by the Chinese about national security preparedness.

Nevertheless, foreign eyewitness accounts and occasional Chinese media reports on militia training have provided what is thought to be a representative picture of the wide variety of weapons currently in use by the militia. In general, these include hand grenades, semiautomatic and automatic rifles, submachineguns, light and heavy machineguns, antitank grenade launchers, recoilless rifles, anti-aircraft machineguns, and anti-aircraft artillery. The following specific types have been identified:⁶⁵

- Japanese 6.5mm rifle, Type 38
- Japanese 7.7mm rifle, Type 29
- Mauser Standard 7.92mm rifle
- US .30 caliber rifles and carbines
- Various US, British, Chinese and German submachineguns
- Chinese 7.62mm semiautomatic rifle, Type 56
- Chinese 7.62mm assault rifle, Type 56 (AK47)
- Chinese 7.62mm auto/semiautomatic rifle, Type 68
- 40mm antitank grenade launcher, Type 69
- 60mm mortar, Type 63
- 82mm mortar, Type 53
- 37mm AA gun, Type 55
- 57mm AA gun, Type 59

The older small arms listed above (the first five items) are relics of the war against Japan and the Chinese civil war and are no longer in production. With the notable exception of the Type 68 rifle, the remainder are mostly copies or variations of Soviet-designed weapons and have been produced in China for years.

Providing ammunition and maintaining such a wide variety of weapons obviously imposes a considerable logistical burden on the PLA ordnance system. In recent years, however, there appears to have been an effort to replace the older types of small arms with those common to the PLA inventory—in particular, with the Type 56 carbines and assault rifles which until about the mid-1970s were the standard issue weapons of the regular forces. The extent to which this effort has succeeded is unknown; however, it undoubtedly has enhanced the combat effectiveness of militia units and, through weapons standardization, has somewhat reduced the logistical requirements of militia units in the field under wartime conditions.

Of particular interest is the introduction to the militia of the Type 68 rifle. In the past, only weapons no longer needed or suitable for use by the PLA were issued to the militia.⁶⁶ The Type 68 began to replace the Type 56 as the standard PLA rifle only in the early to mid-1970s, first appearing with the airborne divisions. In July 1979, however, a usually reliable leftist Hong Kong military publication reported the Type 68 was already in use with some militia units, even though conversion to the newer weapon had not yet been completed among regular units of the PLA!⁶⁷ The implications of this significant departure from past practice will be examined in Chapter 3.

No conclusive evidence exists to indicate that any militia units are equipped with field artillery. The Chinese media commonly refer to mortars and recoilless rifles as "artillery" (see note 18 to this chapter), and such references with respect to the militia are generally assumed to refer to these kinds of weapons. Admittedly, there have been rare references to 85mm "cannons" and, on one occasion, a report of militia units "on parade" with "field guns" in Beijing.⁶⁸ The first could refer to either the Type 55 antitank gun or to the Chinese version of the Soviet KS-18 anti-aircraft gun; the second, to practically any "tube" artillery weapon in the PLA arsenal. However, the equipping of militia units with any of the variety

of 122mm to 152mm howitzers or field guns commonly used by the PLA would contradict militia doctrine and would pose combat transport and resupply problems which the practically non-existent militia logistical system probably could not handle.

We have little way of knowing—even roughly—how many weapons the militia inventory holds. (One Chinese source claimed in 1965 that the militia then had nine million weapons of various types.⁶⁹ Whether this figure is accurate, or what changes may have occurred since that time can only be a matter for speculation.) But total numbers do not really matter. The question should be: Could the Chinese arm 2,000 militia regiments with Type 56 carbines and assault rifles? Apparently they could. As Nelsen makes clear, past production levels of these weapons have far exceeded PLA and export requirements.⁷⁰ However, this assessment must be tempered by the fact the Chinese have stated that establishment of armed militia units is to be governed not only by “the requirements of combat readiness” but also by “the condition of weapons and equipment”—implying the supply of arms is a constraining factor and that militia units in strategic border and coastal areas are accorded top priority for arms and ammunition. In this regard, Taiwan intelligence sources have assessed the basis of issue for militia units in the strategic border province of Heilongjiang to be as follows: a rifle and 300 rounds of ammunition for each armed militiaman; an automatic rifle or light machinegun with 2,000 round for each platoon; and a mortar with 200 rounds for each company.⁷¹

Regulations state that in rural areas weapons may either be retained by the individuals to whom they are issued or safeguarded at company or battalion headquarters. However, probably because control of militia weapons has been a persistent problem in the past, the latter procedure seems to be in common use. The individual weapons of urban militiamen are kept under centralized control by the production unit concerned. Major caliber weapons such as antiaircraft guns and antitank guns (if a unit has any) probably are stored in depots

at county and municipality level and above, to be issued only for training or in time of emergency.⁷²

The major burden of militia weapons repair and maintenance falls on local industrial enterprises rather than on the PLA's ordnance facilities. In rural areas, the county or commune agricultural machinery plant generally does the repair; in urban areas, responsibility belongs to the unit to which the weapons are issued. Reports from one city in Jiangsu indicate that repair work is consolidated under a special "municipal weapons repair group" which repairs the weapons of all militia units subordinate to the municipality. (Although an isolated reference, this arrangement may be common.) Repairs beyond the capability of the county or municipality become the responsibility of the PLA's MR-level ordnance repair facilities.⁷³

While most militia weapons are issued from PLA stocks, frequent references to the production of various types of explosive devices by militiamen working in industrial plants indicate many of the hand grenades, demolition charges, and antipersonnel and antitank mines which the militia would use in combat are "homemade." Most such references originate in the strategic regions of Xingiang and Manchuria.⁷⁴

Other than his individual weapons, and possibly ammunition pouches and belt, the individual militiaman apparently has no personal equipment. He wears civilian clothing on duty, frequently with an arm band identifying him as a member of the People's Militia. Unit equipment also seems to be limited, consisting primarily of the vehicles, tools, and specialized items such as communications, chemical, and engineering equipment that the normal operating inventory of the parent production unit makes available.

PEOPLE'S AIR DEFENSE

Under conditions of modern warfare, People's Air Defense is an important strategic measure for wiping out the enemy and preserving ourselves ... and a continuation

and development of Chairman Mao's concept of People's War under new historical conditions.

Defense Minister Ye Jianying, 1978⁷⁵

The concept of People's Air Defense (PAD) embraces both the doctrine and the organization for the defense of China's urban areas. Although the PAD organization is separate and distinct from that of the militia, PAD doctrine depends heavily on the militia in execution and can be viewed as a specialized application of militia doctrine to city defense.

People's Air Defense has two separate but related aspects, one passive and the other active. Neither has anything to do with the militia anti-aircraft artillery forces, with which People's Air Defense sometimes is confused. The passive aspect consists of a nationwide civil defense program based on the construction of extensive tunnel systems and underground facilities which are intended to provide much of China's urban population with protection against air, nuclear, and chemical attack. In several of the larger cities, foreign visitors have been shown massive underground complexes consisting of tunnels large enough for vehicular traffic, fully equipped industrial shops, hospitals, mess halls, storage areas for large quantities of grain and other foodstuffs, and other facilities sufficient to support sizable populations underground for extended periods.

Apart from these urban networks, many large industrial plants reportedly have constructed underground complexes where equipment could be protected and production continued under wartime conditions.⁷⁶ Although common in most major urban centers, the underground facilities of Beijing are said to be especially elaborate, "with tunnels that lead to the suburbs in all directions." In at least some cases, the tunnel system infrastructure includes a wide range of support services. The Wuxi (Jiangsu) municipal Party committee claimed that "in constructing People's Air Defense works, we have also paid attention to establishing an ambulance corps, emergency repair teams, public security and antichemical warfare teams, fire brigades and other professional contingents."⁷⁷

Most such teams probably draw from the ordinary and basic militia, but this cannot be confirmed from available evidence.

There is no doubt, however, that the militia—specifically, the armed militia—plays the central role in the “active” aspect of PAD doctrine. The active doctrine envisions a tenacious defense of urban centers by militia units which would base their operations in the tunnel systems and emerge to contest with an attacking enemy for control of every city block, every factory and building. In this way, People’s Air Defense is to be China’s “underground Great Wall,” holding the invader at bay and turning every city into an indigestible “poisoned shrimp.”

At the top of the PAD hierarchy is the National People’s Air Defense Leadership Group, thought to formulate overall PAD policy in coordination with the PLA high command and the various government ministries and commissions responsible for urban capital construction. Exactly where this body fits into the central leadership structure is not clear, but it is almost certainly headed by someone of Politburo rank. (Chen Xilian, identified as “deputy leader” in 1978, was then a Politburo member. PLA First Deputy Chief of Staff Yang Yong was identified as deputy head of the Group in 1980—presumably having replaced Chen.) Given the military nature of PAD, the national-level leadership organ likely functions as a subordinate staff element of the Military Commission.

In the provinces, People’s Air Defense “Leadership Groups” are found at each level of military and Party administration down to the level of municipal ward. As with the militia, overall authority for PAD work within a Military Region appears to be delegated to one of the MR deputy commanders. Routine PAD operational matters may be handled by the Operations Subdepartment headquarters of the MR and lower level headquarters, although evidence for this is tenuous.⁷⁸ The principal function of the Leadership Groups at Military District level and below probably is to coordinate and direct the activities of all PLA units involved in supporting PAD construction work, the training of PAD cadres, and the training of the militia in city combat and tunnel warfare.⁷⁹

Similar PAD Leadership Groups operate within the province, prefecture, municipal, and ward Party committees to ensure overall civilian Party leadership of PAD work. Here again, however, cross-assignment of PLA and Party officials blurs the distinction between military and Party control—mirroring the militia control system. For example, a province Party secretary heads the Anhui PAD Leadership Group; his deputy is the Anhui MD commander who concurrently is a standing committee member of the province PAFC. Exactly the same situation exists in Jiangxi.⁸⁰ The fact that an MD commander would also hold a high position on the provincial PAFC (as would, presumably, a province Party secretary) raises an interesting question concerning the organizational relationship of the PAD Leadership Group to the PAFC. The paucity of evidence makes any judgment speculative at best. However, since militia work, not People's Air Defense, is the "main task" of the Military Districts and the principal concern of the PAFCs, and given the concurrent PAFC/PAD Leadership Group membership of ranking MD leaders, it seems likely that the PAD organ functions as a subordinate element of the provincial PAFC. Such an arrangement would facilitate the close integration of People's Air Defense with urban militia work which is essential to the effectiveness of the PAD effort.

In contrast to the militia, where command and control is exercised almost entirely through the regional PLA commands and local Party committees, there is a third locus of authority in the PAD system. This is the PAD "office" of the local government organization at each level from province to municipal ward. These offices are thought to be the de facto command centers of PAD work, coordinating and directing PAD-related activities of all government departments concerned and, in the case of municipal and ward offices, actually administering the underground complexes within their jurisdictions.⁸¹

I have attempted in this chapter to describe the Chinese militia as it currently exists. An understanding of what the mili-

tia is and how it fits into the overall PRC military system improves our ability to evaluate the capabilities and limitations of the Chinese armed forces. But we can learn most about current Chinese thinking on defense doctrine and strategy and about the general thrust of PLA modernization through an examination of the events which have shaped the militia as we see it today, something I'll proceed to discuss in the next two chapters.

2. 1973–1976: THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF THE MILITIA

The "Gang of Four" ... were bent on wresting leadership and command of the militia from the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission in a wild attempt to destroy our militia and set up a "second armed force," that is, the armed force of the "Gang of Four" in order to facilitate their usurpation of supreme Party and State power.

*Liberation Army Daily Editorial,
18 June 1977*

The period from mid-1973 to late 1976 was marked by a complex struggle between the PLA and the leftist or "radical" leaders close to Mao who later would be known as the "Gang of Four" (Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen). The militia became a central issue in this struggle, for control of the militia to a very large extent meant control of political power at the local level in the provinces. Less visible but no less important in terms of the evolution of PRC defense policy were continuing conflicts over the related issues of defensive strategy and PLA modernization. If the PLA were to be transformed into a modern, "regular" military machine, would not MAO's doctrine of People's War become anachronistic, and the strategy of "luring the enemy in deep" become unnecessary—even foolhardy?

THE "URBAN MILITIA"

The rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping in April 1973 spurred the restaffing of the central and regional PLA command structures with many of the veteran cadres who had followed Deng

into oblivion during the Cultural Revolution. The radicals, seeing their influence in the army threatened by efforts of the revitalized PLA leadership to restore discipline, instill professionalism, and reduce the level of political activity in the armed forces, moved in the last half of 1973 to bypass the PLA and create an alternate base of political power and influence—the “Urban Militia.”

On 29 September 1973, barely a month after the 10th Party Congress elevated the young Shanghai radical leader Wang Hongwen to the number three position in the Party, joint editorials in *People's Daily* and *Liberation Army Daily* praising the militia organization in radical-controlled Shanghai signaled the beginning of a nationwide campaign to emulate “the Shanghai experience” in militia work. This “experience,” a major departure from the traditional militia system, consisted of the following essential elements: (1) militia under the absolute leadership of the local Party committee; (2) militia units comprised almost exclusively of urban factory workers; (3) the militia's primary mission defined as “participation in class struggle”; (4) “Militia Commands,” independent of the PLA command structure, established to command militia units; (5) urban fire-fighting and public security organizations subordinated to and incorporated into the militia (the “three-in-one combination”); and (6) full-time armed militia security detachments manned by workers drawn from the labor force.¹

No longer was the militia to be the PLA's “mighty assistant and strong might in reserve.” Indeed, to the extent that it was successfully implemented, the Shanghai model cut the PLA out of the militia control system entirely. As *Liberation Army Daily* charged in later 1976, after the radical leaders were purged:

The Gang of Four went their own way under the smokescreen of local Party committees exercising direct leadership over the militia. . . . The system of militia leadership they established was not subject to the leadership of local military organs or the Military Regions nor was it subject to the Military Commission and the headquarters of the three services. . . . They ordered the Armed Forces

Departments and full-time cadres of the armed forces in the places under their control to stop their activities, and had the Armed Forces Departments stop their work They actually dissolved the Armed Forces Departments.²

Similar charges were leveled by various regional commands. In Jinan MR, for example, the command elements and Party committees of "higher level" army units (probably meaning local force regiments and divisions) reportedly were prevented from exercising authority over militia affairs by local radical power-holders who then "deployed without authorization militia units and their weapons from one locality to another."³

Probably owing to the influence of Mao's nephew, who held high posts in Shenyang MR and in the Liaoning provincial Party and Revolutionary committees,⁴ the "Shanghai experience" took deep root in the three strategic northeastern provinces of Jilin, Liaoning, and Heilongjiang. In Liaoning, the Militia Commands were ordered to take charge of militia work in rural as well as urban areas. As a result, "in some areas Militia Commands were set up everywhere from provincial to commune level, and the People's Armed Forces Departments were shut out." Speaking in 1978, the Jilin provincial MD commander charged that

militia headquarters or militia offices were set up in our province from provincial level down to municipal, prefectural, county and district levels. From sixty to seventy percent of the industrial and mining enterprises incorporated militiamen, public security men and firemen under one command, and a great number of detachments divorced from production were organized in town and countryside.⁵

Such "detachments" formed the spearhead of the radicals' counterattack against "capitalist restoration"—that is, against the growing political power of veteran cadres who were rehabilitated in increasing numbers following Deng's own return in April 1973. Through their control of all security and judicial functions, these militia units enabled the radicals to move against their opponents outside of the legitimate arena of intra-Party political conflict.

At least in the important industrial centers of east and northeast China, the shift of focus of militia activities to "class struggle" appears to have had a major adverse effect on production. A typical example of accounts which appeared in the media after 1976 is that of the Tunghua (Jilin) Iron and Steel Plant, where 110 workers reportedly had been diverted to full-time neighborhood patrol and surveillance activities. Over the three-year period of radical ascendancy (1973-1976), the effect on the plant's production was said to have been "equivalent to the 260-member rolling mill workshop being idle and unproductive for fourteen months." A June 1976 Shenyang broadcast boasted that 130,000 worker-militiamen in Liaoning province were engaged full-time in patrol duties and another 800,000 on a part-time basis.⁶

Despite continued media references during this time to militia training activities, post-1976 accounts suggest that in those areas where the "Shanghai experience" was followed, militia combat training suffered considerably. To a certain extent, time lost to security patrolling and political activities presumably would come out of time normally devoted to combat training as well as to production. Beyond this, however, a distinct shift in training emphasis in those units under radical control apparently occurred, with political indoctrination and the study of Mao's military writings claiming an increased share of training time.

In training, as well as in all other aspects of militia work, implementation of the Shanghai model was facilitated by the "gerrymandering" which occurred with the establishment of the new Militia Commands. As these were formed, the radicals "not only did away with middle and high-level cadres of various Military Districts," but also eased out many of the full-time professional cadres serving in basic-level PAFDs. As a result, in Shenyang and Luta, for example, only 40 percent of the professional (PLA) militia cadres were transferred from the PAFDs to the new Militia Commands.⁷ A major drive to select and train new militia cadres took place at the same time. One county in Heilongjiang claimed new cadres accounted for 64

percent of the heads and deputy heads of its commune PAFDs, 70 percent of militia company commanders and deputy commanders, and more than 90 percent of the platoon commanders and deputy commanders. In contrast with emphasis since that time, the report made no claim that any of these new leaders were former servicemen. On the contrary, political activism rather than military expertise may have been the basis for selection in many cases, for another Heilongjiang report stated that more than 6,000 militia cadres had been selected from among the educated urban young people who had resettled in one rural area.⁸

PLA OPPOSITION

The fall of 1973 found the PLA leadership under Ye Jianying slowly rebuilding the central military command structure which had been severely weakened by the Cultural Revolution and post-Lin Biao purges. That leadership also attempted to restore discipline to the ranks and to instill a greater degree of professionalism in the officer corps by reducing PLA involvement in politics and devoting greater attention to training.⁹

The return to active duty of large numbers of veteran cadres, and the army's stress on discipline, combined to reduce substantially the influence of the Gang's activist supporters at the unit level. However, this was offset at the center by Wang Hongwen's rise to prominence at the 10th Party Congress, a development which strengthened considerably the radicals' position in the Military Commission.¹⁰ The PLA high command felt the impact almost immediately. In the autumn of 1973 the Gang successfully blocked publication of two books of military writings by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin which had been in preparation by the PLA's doctrinal "think tank," the Academy of Military Sciences, since 1972. Quotations from these volumes which appeared subsequent to 1976 suggest strongly that the radicals saw them as an attempt by the PLA to establish a philosophical justification for professionalizing and

modernizing the PLA, this at the expense of the Maoist orthodoxy on which they based their own political power. Engels: "Victory . . . is based on the production of weapons." Lenin: "It is necessary to have the strictest discipline in the army." Engels: "Lacking training and organization, nobody can win a battle by depending on fervent spirit only."

The radicals' ability late that same year to prevent the publication and dissemination of routine internal PLA regulations on discipline and internal administration demonstrates even more vividly the extent of their authority over military policy at the highest level.¹¹

With the battle lines between the army and the radicals clearly drawn before the Urban Militia movement was launched, there must have been few among senior PLA leaders who did not view the onset of that movement with concern. This concern likely would not have stemmed simply from a jealous regard for the army's prerogatives in militia work. Of far greater consequence was the fact that urban militia units under radical leadership and divorced from PLA control constituted a "second armed force" (as Deng would characterize it in 1975) which the Gang of Four could employ in an attempt to place a stranglehold on political power in the provinces. The military strength of this force, while insufficient for a direct confrontation with the main forces of the PLA, nevertheless mattered enough to be taken seriously. By March 1973 the Shanghai militia is reported to have numbered more than 800,000 and to have had 23,700 small arms and crew-served infantry weapons of various types, 324 AAA guns, 10 armed militia regiments, 18 AAA regiments, five independent AAA Battalions, three AAA machinegun companies, one motorized regiment, and various specialized units.¹² By June 1976, Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenyang each claimed militia forces in excess of one million men.

The militiamen themselves produced some of the weapons with which these forces were equipped. Probably anticipating PLA reluctance to arm urban worker-militia units under radical control, the Gang as early as 1972 began to di-

vert productive capacity in some factories to the production of small arms. To what extent this occurred is not known; however, the Shanghai Electric Cable Plant reportedly produced 2,500 semiautomatic rifles in 1972 and increased output to 3,000 weapons per year by 1975.¹³

Lacking the political strength to oppose the Gang within the Military Commission, the army responded to demands that it support the Urban Militia campaign by fighting a holding action against the movement in the countryside and smaller provincial municipalities. Media accounts of provincial militia conferences held in November and December indicate the PLA was conducting militia work on a "business as usual" basis, and that the "Shanghai experience" was being largely ignored or paid only lip service by the provincial military commands. This appears to have been true especially in the sensitive border and coastal areas. There is evidence, too, that in at least some areas the army's reaction to the campaign was to involve itself more deeply in militia work so as to insure its continued control of militia activities. In Jiangxi, for example, the provincial Military District requested in December that locally stationed PLA main force units play a more active role in militia work.¹⁴ Even in places under radical control, PLA intransigence and footdragging appear to have inhibited and delayed implementation of the Shanghai model. In Anhui, for instance, a provincial meeting on Urban Militia work demanded that PAFDs "ask instructions from and report to 'local Party committees' more often."¹⁵

In late December 1973, the commanders of eight of China's 11 military regions were reshuffled in the largest such reorganization since these commands were established in 1954. This move has been widely interpreted as a measure designed to reduce further the political clout of the PLA. Certainly this must have been a major factor, for prior to their transfer seven of the eight (all but Pi Dingjun in Lanzhou) had wielded enormous political authority through concurrent postings as first secretary of a provincial Party committee and chairman of the provincial Revolutionary Committee, and none were ap-

pointed to such posts in their new locations.¹⁶ Yet it seems likely that an attempt to break the army's grip on the militia also was involved. If so, the plan probably met with little immediate success. Although the establishment of a Militia Command in Hangzhou (Zhejiang) was announced in February 1974, no other Commands were set up during the remainder of the first half of that year.

February 1974 also saw the launching of yet another mass political movement—the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. Lin, of course, had been attacked as the wellspring of all evil since his death more than two years earlier. Criticism of Confucius, comparing his “school of thought” unfavorably with that of the Legalists, had begun in August 1973, shortly before the 10th Party Congress, and had gained momentum in October.¹⁷ A 2 February *People's Daily* editorial made clear the contemporary relevance of the renewed assault on the ancient sage; it linked the two criticisms for the first time and signalled the beginning of the campaign:

Lin Biao feverishly advocated the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius. His reactionary ideological system was identical to that of Confucius and Mencius. Both [*sic*] wanted to restore the old system.

It soon became evident that the principal target was those who, in words attributed to Confucius, would “revive states that are extinct, restore families whose lines of succession have been broken and call to office those who have fallen into obscurity”—that is, those (presumably Zhou Enlai, Deng, and other “moderate” leaders) responsible for the return to political life of many of the veteran Party, state, and army cadres purged during the Cultural Revolution.

Once again, the army leadership dug in its heels. PLA participation in the campaign, although widely reported and acclaimed in the radical-controlled media, appears to have been largely perfunctory. Wang Hongwen is reported to have complained in March that the PLA high command “has put an iron lid” over political activities in the armed forces.¹⁸

After languishing for most of 1974, the Urban Militia movement began to show signs of life in September, apparently because of nationwide commemoration of Mao's 1958 directive to "organize militia contingents in a big way." During the last half of the year, Urban Militia Commands were established in Nanchang (Jiangxi), Chongqing (Shichuan), Guangzhou, and Haikou (on Hainan Island). Analysis of media reporting during this period shows that between September 1974 and the end of the year, 35 Urban Militia conferences or rallies were held throughout the country by various provincial Party and Revolutionary Committees, Military Regions and Districts, and Urban Militia Commands. Only eight had been convened between January and the end of August.

Yet despite increased PLA visibility in the promotional aspects of the campaign, there is substantial evidence pointing to continued efforts by the army to thwart its effective implementation. An unambiguous statement broadcast by Shanghai radio is revealing: "The more frenzied the Lin Biao anti-Party clique's opposition to the militia, the firmer will be our determination to do a good job in the three-in-one combination."¹⁹ A *Southern Daily* (Guangzhou) editorial admitted that "perplexing problems" had emerged in the attempt to learn from Shanghai. "Some people," it said, "feel uneasy on hearing that the militia needs to be transformed; they seem unable to make a move." Others, it said, "don't want the militia to participate in class struggle."²⁰ A *People's Daily* article authored by the militia regiment of the Shanghai Glass Works condemned as Lin Biao's "revisionist theme" the notion that the "central task" of the militia is production.²¹

In locations where PLA commanders could not avoid giving at least the appearance of active participation in the establishment of Militia Commands, many simply feigned compliance while insuring continued PLA control by manipulating the staffing of the new organizations. The Guangzhou case is a good example. The inauguration of the Guangzhou Militia Command was announced on 16 December at a mass rally of 30,000 militiamen (7,000 of whom were

said to be the "main force," armed with "light and heavy weapons") and representatives of the provincial and municipal Party and Revolutionary Committees, Guangzhou MR, the provincial MD, and the Guangzhou Garrison Command. The commander of the new Militia Command, Liang Xiang, was a secretary of the municipal Party committee. The second-ranking deputy commander, Liang Jindang, was a member of the Central Committee and chairman of the Guangzhou trade unions. However, the first deputy commander—the individual who normally would handle the day-to-day affairs of the Command—was the commander of the Guangzhou Garrison, Song Wenyu. Song's appointment behind a local Party official and ahead of a Central Committee member indicated that, contrary to the intent of the "Shanghai experience," the army retained the dominant role in Guangzhou's militia affairs.

This impression is strengthened by the high visibility of PLA representatives at the rally and the listing of a Guangzhou MR deputy commander first among attending dignitaries. A local broadcast on the same day revealed a further divergence from the Shanghai model when it described Guangzhou militia work as being "closely coordinated" with Public Security organs.²² That more than a year after the launching of the campaign the radicals had not been able to effect the integration of Public Security elements into the militia in a major urban center like Guangzhou demonstrates the limited success the campaign had achieved up to the end of 1974.

The failure of the Urban Militia movement to make greater inroads outside of Shanghai, Beijing, and the northeast probably can be partly attributed to local PLA commanders' desire to sabotage a development which threatened to undermine the bases of their personal political power. Yet statements attributed to the Gang make clear that by the late summer of 1974 they perceived army obstructionism as resulting from the highest levels of PLA leadership. "Whenever the question of militia reform arises, there are sharply contradictory opinions," Wang Hongwen reportedly complained at a militia work conference in September. In order for opposition to the Shanghai

model to be overcome, he said, it was first "necessary to solve the ideological problem of thinking in the three general headquarters [departments] of the army." Zhang Chunqiao was even more direct: "We will not submit to the leadership of the local military organs, the Military Regions and the three headquarters of the Military Commission."²³ No wonder, then, that an October *People's Daily* article extolling the virtues of the "Shanghai experience" and hailing its "gains" over the previous year made no mention of PLA support and guidance—a consistent theme in earlier "militia-building" drives.²⁴

ATTACK ON LIN'S MILITARY REPUTATION

The PLA's recalcitrance in the last half of 1974 must be viewed in the context of the marked change in the character of the Anti-Lin Biao/Confucius campaign which occurred in late summer: the increasingly vituperative assault on Lin's reputation as a military commander and strategist.

As the man who had led the PLA from Manchuria to the southern frontier in its final assault on the Nationalist army, Lin had come to be revered as something of a military genius. Although his political reputation had been destroyed by the events of September 1971 and subsequent revelations of his alleged perfidy, his military reputation had remained largely unshaken. However, publication in the August 1974 issue of the Party theoretical journal, *Hong Qi (Red Flag)*, of five articles attacking Lin's tactical acumen and strategic planning marked the beginning of an intensive media effort to prove he had never done anything right. Over the next several months, Lin was accused of undermining Mao's "correct" strategy in the major campaigns of the revolutionary and civil wars, of avoiding confrontations with the enemy, of being overly conservative, of distorting historical facts to enhance his reputation, of being inept and lacking in strategic vision, and of wanting to surrender.²⁵ In other words, Lin was stupid, deviant, a coward, and a traitor, and only Mao's genius had

enabled the PLA to overcome the burden of Lin's bungling generalship.

The attack on Lin's conduct of military operations touched a sensitive nerve among veteran PLA cadres and soldiers, many of whom had fought the campaign in the northeast under Lin's command and whose own reputations thus were inextricably linked to his. Throughout the army these men and thousands of others who had held Lin in high esteem were now required to attend mass rallies and unit meetings to hear condemned the "ever-victorious, ever-right general."²⁶ What motivated the Gang so to broaden the scope of anti-Lin criticism is not entirely clear, but it probably was intended at least in part to discredit Deng and other senior army leaders who up to that time had fought them to a virtual standoff. Whatever the rationale, the predictable result was increased PLA hostility towards the Anti-Lin/Confucius campaign in general and toward the attack on Lin's reputation as a commander in particular. Unable to defend him, many evidently simply chose not to listen; Political Commissars arriving at units to lecture on Lin's misguided strategy often found assembly halls empty.²⁷ Rumor had it that several MR commanders refused to accept a summons to meet with Mao until the Chairman made a "self-criticism" in October with regard to the Lin Biao affair.²⁸

THE DEBATE OVER DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

It soon became apparent, however, that there was more to this new phase of the campaign than just an attempt to pulverize Lin's reputation. In the early fall of 1974, a flurry of articles recounting historical debates over defense strategy between the Confucianist and Legalist schools began to appear in the Beijing and Shanghai media. In nearly every case, the author's intent seemed to be to draw clear parallels to the present by describing the historical setting as one in which China was threatened with attack from the north by an overwhelmingly stronger enemy.

Many such articles stressed the importance of strengthening defenses along the northern frontier. One historical

allegory appearing in the November 1974 issue of *Hong Qi* recounted Legalist defense policy during the Northern Sung period (960–1127 A.D.)—said to be a time when China was threatened with “aggressive wars” launched from the north.²⁹ The threat of war required the Chinese to be constantly prepared; hence, “border defense works were built on a large scale.” The article then traced centuries-earlier actions by Emperor Qin Shihuang (believed by many to represent Mao)³⁰ to counter inroads by the Huns. Qin sent people to settle along the frontier and engage in farming, and built the Great Wall as a defense against invasion.

Another article dealt with the wars waged against the Huns by Emperor Wu of Han, who was said to have “inherited the Legalist line of war of resistance vigorously pushed by Qin Shihuang” (or, in other words, to have followed the Maoist line on defense strategy). “Preparations for war were intensified, the people were moved to settle along the border, a stronger cavalry force was trained, and military strength was raised.” The commanding general on the border was criticized for “dividing his forces to hold fortified points” and for being “in the passive position of waiting to be attacked,” resulting in heavy casualties among his troops. After replacing the general and recapturing lost territory with an “out-flanking thrust,” the emperor ordered that border fortifications be built, thus “greatly strengthening the defense forces in the north,” which “laid a useful foundation for launching an all-out and thorough-going counter offensive against incursions made by the Huns.”³¹

The strategy espoused by Chao Cuo, an “inheritor of Legalist thought” during the reign of Gao Zu, first emperor of the Western Han dynasty, was the subject of a 27 December *Guangming Ribao* article. During Chao Cuo's time the country was said to be “plagued by internal disturbances in the form of divisive activities of the feudal lords which undermined the unity of the nation, and by external harassment in the form of continued provocation by the Huns which menaced the safety of the Han monarchy.”³² Under threat of attack, Chao advocated a strategy which emphasized strengthening defenses in

the immediate border area. Chao reasoned that "it would not do to rely solely on the troops sent to the frontier from inland China." He proposed instead that people should be settled on the frontier, where they would

engage in farming to develop production on the one hand and be organized in military ranks to engage in military training on the other. When the border areas were full of people who engaged in both farming and military training to develop production and improve war preparedness, frontier defense would be consolidated and it would be impossible for the Hun slaveowners to make sneak attacks on places ill-defended.

Other articles appearing during the same period took as their theme the debate between Confucianists and Legalists over the actual conduct of military operations—in particular, the question of whether an attacker should be met well forward or "lured in deep." A *Guangming Ribao* article under a PLA byline described the situation prior to the battle of Cheng Gao (203 BC) as one in which there was a "great disparity in the balance of forces," so that the weaker (Legalist) side "actively assumed the defensive" (this was Mao's "active defense").³³ The Legalist commander formulated a plan of operations which called for making "a firm stand in the front, launching diversionary actions on . . . the flanks and harassing the enemy in the rear." Especially praiseworthy, according to the author, was the commander's decision to withdraw to a strategically defensible position "suitable for both offensive and defensive purposes," as it had "mountains at the back and a plain in front" (similar to the deployment of most PLA main force armies in the Beijing and Shenyang MRs today). After withdrawing and luring the enemy in, he held out "behind strong ramparts, thus pinning down and fatiguing the [enemy] troops." In coordination with conventional operations, guerrilla warfare was waged in the enemy's rear, and his supply lines were severed. When the enemy force ran short of supplies, a general counteroffensive was launched and the "decisive battle of strategic significance" was fought.

Another article, subtly different from the Chen Gao piece, appeared in the December 1974 issue of the Shanghai theoretical journal *Study and Criticism*.³⁴ The historical example in this case was the battle of Fei Shui which, the author claimed, was "a typical example of a small force defeating a large force and of the weak defeating the strong." Here again, the political situation at the time was described as one of "confrontation between north and the south." The Legalists deployed their forces "on the frontier to strengthen national defense," in spite of the commanding general's offer to "send troops to defend the capital." When the northern enemy attacked, the Legalist side pursued a policy of "active strategic defense," striking the vanguards of the enemy forces before they could concentrate from their strung-out deployments following the initial invasion. Once the "front was overextended and the [enemy's] military forces . . . over-stretched," victory was easily won.

Both articles are cloaked in Maoist terminology and both seem outwardly to adhere closely to Maoist doctrine. Yet in fact the two accounts reflect opposing views. The first stresses the advantage of strategic withdrawal to prepared defensive positions, while the second emphasizes the upgrading of border defenses and the importance of counter-attacking early. The fact that the *Guangming Ribao* article was under a PLA byline while the second originated in the radical stronghold of Shanghai suggests that the manner of defensive employment of main force units was an issue of debate between the radicals and at least some members of the PLA leadership. Indeed, the reference in the former article to the commander's offer to send troops to defend the capital instead of sending them to the frontier to prevent an enemy penetration would seem to indicate that some PLA officials were arguing against early commitment of main force units to battle, while "striking the vanguard" of the enemy as described in *Study and Criticism* can be accomplished only if substantial forces are deployed well forward.

The impression that the central doctrinal issue in the debate was whether or not an attacker should be "lured deep" is

reinforced by an article in the January 1975 issue of the radical-controlled Party theoretical journal *Hong Qi*, in which Lin was raked for failing to understand that "offensive battles of quick decision on exterior lines . . . constituted an effective policy for changing the balance of forces in our favor."³⁵ Lin, it said, preferred the tactic of "short, swift thrust." This was explained to mean that "in all cities and towns, centers of population and important mountain tops which lay in the way of the enemy's offensive, defense works should be built and heavily defended and that 'short, swift thrusts' should be launched [from these defensive strongpoints] against the enemy. . . ."

Obviously, the tendency in this and other such articles to portray contending strategies as diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive is not entirely accurate. Elements of each strategy normally would be employed at one time or another in any defensive campaign against a Soviet attack. Nevertheless, it is difficult to escape the impression that the army was advocating a strategy based on the orthodox Maoist doctrine of "luring the enemy in deep," while the radicals (i.e., the "Maoists") were espousing a formula more akin to the "professional" strategy of "forward defense"—a key component of the "bourgeois military line" which had figured so prominently in earlier criticism of Luo Ruiqing, the former PLA Chief of Staff purged in 1965!

Perhaps more concerned with what was being said than with who was saying it, Western observers were quick to conclude from the months-long running gunbattle in the Chinese press that a fundamental shift had occurred in PRC defense strategy and that plans now called for meeting a Soviet thrust with a determined stand at or close to the border.³⁶ However, it would be another three years before the outcome of this debate and the identity of the "winner" could be determined with any certainty.

But strategy per se was not the only contentious issue. As revealed in these and similar articles appearing at the same time, the amount and nature of PLA training, the modernization of the army's outdated weaponry, and the relevance of

the militia and the doctrine of People's War to China's defense needs all were being actively debated. The importance of training and the need for modern weapons were the subject of an article by personnel of a Beijing MR armor unit—a remarkably unambiguous piece in view of the political realities of the time:

According to the reactionary logic of Lin Biao, accurate shooting is a problem of secondary importance, military training can be dispensed with, experience with weapons is unnecessary and there is no need to master operational techniques. What then do we mainly rely on to fight a battle? In Lin Biao's own words, we could naturally only rely on his so-called "ideological force" as a "substitute" for material force. This is completely an idealist fallacy. . . . "Material force can only be destroyed by material force."

. . . Especially under the conditions of modern military operations, when there are new changes in technical equipment and operational characteristics between the enemy and our side, we have an even greater need to strengthen training and master new techniques to keep up with the new situation.³⁷

Continuing opposition to the militia in some quarters of the PLA had been evident for some time, an aversion perhaps intensified by the "Urban Militia" movement. Referring to Lin Biao and unnamed contemporary persons "of his ilk," a December 1973 *People's Daily* article had charged:

They absurdly claimed that "conditions are different today" and that "the existence of the militia system has become incompatible with current new conditions" and vigorously advocated the reactionary fallacy that the militia system was "out of date."³⁸

Now, however, the militia issue was linked directly to the debate over strategy. To allegorical articles which seemed to advocate a buildup of paramilitary forces in the northeast border areas were added charges that Lin had opposed Mao's policy of "carrying out guerrilla warfare," preferring instead to fight "large, regular battles." These misguided notions were said to

be aimed "purely at replacing People's War with so-called 'regular' war conducted by the main forces. . . ."39

It seems clear that the Anti-Lin/Confucius campaign's heavy emphasis on military affairs during the fall of 1974 was intended by the radical leaders as a vehicle for attacking the PLA on every aspect of defense policy on which there was significant disagreement between themselves and the army leadership. Far from being intimidated, however, the army turned the Gang's own tactics against them. "Waving the red flag to oppose the red flag," the PLA high command seized the opportunity afforded by the campaign vigorously to air its own views on key policy issues. Apparently alarmed by this challenge from the army, the radicals moved quickly to reassert "Party" authority. Only superficially aimed at Lin Biao, a September *Hong Qi* article entitled "Our Principle Is That the Party Commands the Gun" demanded "absolute obedience to Chairman Mao's and the Party Central Committee's leadership. . . ."40 Any doubt that this warning was meant for the PLA was dispelled on 13 November by *People's Daily*:

The People's Liberation Army must subordinate itself to the leadership of the Party. Throughout the entire country, it must obey the leadership of the Party Central Committee. There never has been any change in the position of the absolute leadership of the Party over the army, and no such change will be permitted.

With the beginning of the new year it soon became evident that a compromise of sorts had been reached. At a Party plenum in early January 1975, Deng Xiaoping was elevated to the Politburo Standing Committee and appointed PLA Chief of Staff; Zhang Chuqiao was named Director of the army's General Political Department. Although criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius continued in the media, the campaign no longer was conducted as a "mass movement." Of particular significance, public demands that the army submit to Party authority no longer were seen.

Someone obviously had brought the army to heel. The evidence points to Deng. With Zhou Enlai terminally ill, only

Deng had the prestige, the political credibility, and, now, as PLA Chief of Staff, the statutory authority needed to convince senior army leaders that their interests would be safeguarded if they were to back off from open confrontation with the Gang of Four. The "stick" was the PLA's weakness in the face of the Soviet threat; the "carrot" was modernization of the armed forces, reaffirmed by Zhou Enlai at the 4th National People's Congress in January 1975 as one of the "four modernizations" to be accomplished by the end of the century.⁴¹

DID DENG XIAOPING OPPOSE THE MILITIA?

If Deng's political power had increased relative to that of the radicals, it remained insufficient to prevent a major gain by the Gang in their attempt to transform the militia into a base of power independent of the armed forces. The new State Constitution approved by the 4th National People's Congress raised the militia for the first time to the status of a national armed force equal to but separate from the regular forces of the PLA. According to Article 15,

The Chinese People's Liberation Army and the People's Militia are the workers' and peasants' own armed forces led by the Communist Party of China; they are the armed forces of the people of all nationalities.⁴²

This change in the constitutional status of the militia cannot but have made more acute the struggle between the army and the radical power-holders for control of the militia at the local level. This seems to have been particularly true in the coastal province of Zhejiang, where by early 1975 labor unrest and factional politics had boiled over into armed clashes between rival militia groups in Hangzhou, Wenzhou, and Jinhua. With factory production seriously affected, Deng ordered that militia units in those areas be disbanded. Whether or not this was accomplished is not clear. In any event, clashes continued until July, when Deng ordered PLA main force units into the factories to disarm the militia and restore production. At the same time, he directed that all militiamen in the troubled

port city of Amoy in neighboring Fujian province be withdrawn from street patrols and returned to their factories.⁴³

These actions loomed large in media criticism of Deng following his second purge in April 1976. An article in *LAD* claimed that while he was being briefed on militia developments in the spring of 1975, Deng had expressed "adamant opposition" to the Urban Militia Commands, to the diverting of workers to full-time patrol duty, and to attempts to turn the militia into a "second armed force." Other sources alleged that Deng had been opposed not only to the "Shanghai experience" but also to Mao's doctrine of People's War.⁴⁴ The implication of the criticism was clear: Deng was fundamentally opposed to the militia in both theory and practice and therefore seized upon the turmoil in Zhejiang as a pretext for disbanding it. This view has its adherents among Western analysts. Dreyer, for example, describes the outcome of events in Hangzhou as a "victory for conservative elements within the PLA, and specifically for Deng Xiaoping."⁴⁵

There is little doubt that ever since the founding of the PRC there have been some in the PLA who for one reason or another have believed the militia to be an anachronism. This is neither surprising nor, in itself, significant. Indeed, it would be remarkable if among senior PLA cadres there were not strongly held views both for and against a concept tied so closely to the controversial issue of defense strategy. However, the crucial question is whether the militia was favored or opposed by those in a position to formulate national defense policy—that is, by Deng and the other top army leaders on the Military Commission. If, as available evidence seems to indicate, the PLA was generally able to maintain its dominant influence over the rural militia during 1974 and 1975 in the face of the radicals' attempt to wrest control of it from the army, then developments during that period should reveal something of the PLA leadership's attitude toward the militia. Analysis of media reporting shows clearly that militia combat training actually increased during this time and, more significantly, beginning in 1975 PLA main force units increasingly were involved in administering this training.

Characteristic of this trend was the emphasis placed on the learning of methods for attacking tanks, aircraft, and airborne troops and on training for defense against air, chemical, and nuclear attack ("San Da, San Fang"—the "Three Attacks and Three Defenses") which had become standard fare for both the PLA and the militia by later 1974. During this period, too, older militia weapons increasingly were replaced by more modern types—a process over which the PLA presumably had direct control.⁴⁶

The overall effect of this trend must have been at least a marginal improvement in militia combat effectiveness. Deng indeed may have been "adamantly opposed" to the radicals' "Urban Militia." However, the evidence suggests strongly that once the PLA demonstrated it could successfully prevent the far larger rural militia from coming under the Gang's control, Deng and other top army leaders acted to strengthen it, not disband it.

MILITARY MODERNIZATION: A FIRST ATTEMPT

In June and July 1975, an "enlarged meeting of the Military Commission" was held in Beijing. A full record of the proceedings of this meeting has never been made public, but the evidence available leaves little doubt that Deng and Defense Minister Ye Jianying convened this conference of PLA leaders to discuss the state of the army and to lay down specific policies and guidelines for curing its ills and improving its combat readiness.

Although its full significance was not apparent at the time, an allegorical article appearing in *People's Daily* shortly after Deng became Chief of Staff seems to have laid out the broad outlines of the reforms called for at the Military Commission meeting four months later. Drawing an obvious parallel to the present, the article recounted how during "a violent struggle over how to deal with the Huns' incursions and harassments" two thousand years ago a Legalist official had argued that

there were "four important factors in operations against the enemy: the weapons must be sharp, the soldiers must be useful, the generals must know the art of war, and the sovereign must pick the right generals."⁴⁷ As translated into a programmatic formula for reform of the PLA, these "four factors" became: the upgrading of weapons and equipment, increased training and more efficient utilization of personnel, greater emphasis on the education and training of officers in the skills of command under conditions of modern combat, and the weeding-out of officers who were ineffective or who clung too tenaciously to the Maoist tenet of "man over weapons."

Only the bare bones of the policy adopted by the Military Commission regarding material modernization of the armed forces can be deduced from what subsequently has appeared in the Chinese media. It seems fairly certain that a decision was made at the meeting to increase expenditures for updating the PLA's weapons and equipment, with particular emphasis placed on modernization of the Air Force, the Navy, and the technical and mechanized arms of the ground forces. Funding for military-related research and development also is thought to have received a boost.⁴⁸

Yet the emphasis at the June-July Military Commission meeting appears not to have been on "modernization" per se so much as it was on correcting problems which probably were seen as posing a greater threat to PLA combat effectiveness over the long term than did outdated weaponry. In his speech to the meeting, Deng expressed a view probably shared by many of the officers present. The army, he said, was "a mess"—the result of its involvement in the Cultural Revolution and of subsequent "interference" in military affairs by the radicals. The spirit and vitality of the PLA had been seriously eroded. Its command and staff organizations at all levels were "overstaffed, lethargic, arrogant, extravagant and lazy." Leaders at every level were "soft, lax and neglectful" of their troops. Individual and organizational discipline was poor. The army had become separated from the people and was losing their trust and confidence. Training was inadequate, both in content and in the time devoted to it. Tactical doctrine

had not kept pace with changes in the nature of combat, and commanders were unskilled in the command and control of units on the modern battlefield.⁴⁹

As gleaned from media comment throughout the remainder of the year, measures adopted to correct these deficiencies included:

- Retirement of old and physically unfit cadres
- Rigorous standards of personal conduct and professional competence to be used as a basis for selecting leaders at all levels
- Restoration of discipline
- Revitalization of the army's political system
- Reduction of non-combat manpower, to include the return to duty with combat units of personnel on special details
- More time devoted to combat training and less to political training and mass work
- Greater emphasis on combined arms training
- Tailoring of training to terrain and unit mission
- Greater attention to study of the Soviet armed forces
- Emphasis on training commanders in modern combat operations
- Updating of tactical doctrine⁵⁰

Despite the apparent decision to begin a process of material improvement, "reform" is perhaps more accurate a term than "modernization" to characterize the overall objective of the policies adopted at this meeting. It seems clear that Deng seriously doubted the army's ability to fight, regardless of how it might be equipped, and that he viewed increased professionalism, technical competence, and discipline as prerequisites for the material modernization of the armed forces.

But the goal of making the army more "expert" would only be achieved at the expense of the "red" political activists who constituted the core of the radicals' tenuous foothold in the PLA. The radicals' response to this threat appeared almost immediately in the form of attacks on unnamed advocates of the "bourgeois military line" who refused to acknowledge the primacy of "politics" in military affairs and who believed instead that "weapons decide everything." Not strong enough to overturn the major decisions of the Military Commission meeting, the radical leaders nevertheless seemed to have had some limited success in blocking implementation of measures in areas where they exercised statutory authority. For example, it was probably by virtue of Zhang Chunqiao's position as Director of the General Political Department that they were able to force cancellation of the PLA conference on army political work, preparations for which are believed to have begun at or immediately following the June-July meeting.⁵¹

Such setbacks were the exception, however, for during the fall and early winter of 1975 the radicals could do little to stem the tide of "professionalism" which swept through the PLA. There was a dramatic upsurge in combat training during these months, and stress on individual and organizational discipline was a common theme of reports on army activities. November saw the publication of the regulations on discipline and internal army affairs which had been blocked by the Gang in late 1973.⁵²

Faced with the increasingly likely prospect that their influence in the PLA would be severely reduced by Deng's reforms, the Gang redoubled their efforts to make the militia a reliable guarantor of radical political power. This goal already had been achieved in certain local areas—again, notably in the east and northeast. However, radical political strength at the center could not be translated into effective control of the militia on a national scale so long as actual command of militia units was decentralized to province level and below. Thus, in September, Wang Hongwen attempted to establish a national militia command system (the "Militia Command of the Peo-

ple's Republic of China") with himself as commander-in-chief. The attempt was blocked—probably within the Military Commission.⁵³

In the provinces, meanwhile, renewed efforts to impose the "Shanghai experience" on the rural militia made little headway. Indeed, by the end of the year it had become obvious from continued upgrading of militia weapons and equipment, intensification of militia training and increased participation of the army in this training, a trend toward "regularization" of militia order of battle, and an increase in the number of former PLA personnel in militia command positions, that it was not the radicals but the PLA whose influence was being strengthened within the rural militia.

The evidence admittedly is circumstantial, yet there seems little doubt the PLA's deepening involvement with the militia was the result of a policy decision reached at the mid-1975 Military Commission meeting. If so, then it would be reasonable also to assume that the army's policy toward the militia must have been defined in terms of its overall planning for modernization. But the outline of this policy was to be obscured by the political turmoil which once again was about to engulf China. How the militia fit into plans to modernize the armed forces and what role it was to assume in national defense strategy would not begin to become apparent until more than a year later.

1976: RADICAL RESURGENCE—AND ECLIPSE

Zhou Enlai's death in January 1976 left Deng Xiaoping politically vulnerable. During the Ching Ming festival in early April, attempts to disperse large crowds which gathered in Beijing's Tian An Men square to mourn Zhou precipitated bloody rioting. The radicals laid responsibility for the disorders at Deng's feet, and they used the incident as a pretext for stripping him of all his posts and forcing him for the second time into political obscurity.

The impetus for PLA reform and modernization seems to have simply evaporated in the following mass campaign whipped up to criticize Deng and the economic and military policies associated with him. Political activism in the cause of "class struggle" and the "dictatorship of the proletariat" were "in"; combat training, discipline, material modernization, and everything else which smacked of military professionalism was "out."⁵⁴ With the army under intense pressure to participate "spontaneously" and publicly in the scathing denunciation of its erstwhile leader, continued advocacy of his recent policies marked one as "reactionary," "revisionist," or worse. Many in the PLA remained silent; many others who had consistently opposed him, or who now found it politically expedient to do so, spoke out against every aspect of the 1975 Military Commission meeting. This, from an article by the commander of an engineer regiment, is typical:

Deng Xiaoping ... went all out to negate the great power of People's War ... and held that victory or defeat in war is determined by the quality of weapons. ... In his eyes, atomic bombs, airplanes, artillery and tanks are precisely the decisive factor in future wars, while class struggle, studying theory, combating and preventing revisionism, and all other human factors are of no importance.⁵⁵

But the period of radical ascendancy ushered in by the purge of Deng was to be short-lived. Stripped of their mantle of political legitimacy by Mao's death on 9 September 1976, the Gang of Four were arrested less than a month later by his successor, Hua Guofeng, assisted and backed by the PLA.

The passing of Mao and the eclipse of the Gang of Four left the development of PRC military doctrine and defense strategy less constrained by the straitjacket of orthodox Maoist military thought than at any time since the Soviet-inspired modernization program of the 1950s. The way now appeared open for the advocates of doctrinal reform and material modernization to transform the PLA into a "regular" mili-

tary force. Perhaps to a greater extent than ever before, the fate of the militia system and the doctrine of People's War would be determined by an objective assessment of their military merits.

3. 1976-1980: MILITIA POLICY AND PEOPLE'S WAR DOCTRINE IN THE CONTEXT OF POST-MAO MILITARY REFORM

The fall of the Gang of Four in October 1976 cleared the way for a resumption of the military reform program engineered by Deng Xiaoping in mid-1975. However, it soon became clear that more would be involved than simply picking up at the point where Deng's policies had been derailed with him in early 1976. Even before the end of the year, evidence was mounting that competition for limited resources had made the future course and pace of PLA modernization a contentious issue between military planners and those charged with revitalizing the civilian economy, and perhaps among important constituencies within the PLA itself. By early summer of 1977, the long-festering debate over defensive strategy had flared back into prominence. The disposition of these issues—military modernization policy and defensive strategy—would determine to a great extent the fate of the doctrine of People's War and the militia and, in turn, would be reflected in subsequent developments in the militia system itself.

In the weeks immediately following the purge of the radical leaders, however, the PLA's first concern was to insure army control of the militia, in particular of those units which had embraced the "Shanghai experience." Evidence is sketchy, but it appears the provincial Military Districts moved decisively during the remainder of October and early November to disarm and, in some cases, disband militia units whose

loyalties were suspect. By mid-November 1976, many if not all of the former municipal Militia Commands probably had been abolished, with direct control of local militia units being restored to the PAFDs.¹

By the end of the month, the process was sufficiently advanced for the Military Commission to declare through the medium of an authoritative *Liberation Army Daily* "Commentator" article that the radicals' attempt to establish a "second armed force" was now "completely bankrupt." Of particular significance, this first official statement of militia policy since the overthrow of the Gang reaffirmed the pre-1973 militia system and the militia's role as "the PLA's effective assistant and powerful reserve," thereby formally reestablishing the subordination of the militia to the PLA. The article concluded with a call for building up both the army and the militia and for strengthening the "three-in-one combination" of forces (main forces, local forces, and militia) "in accordance with Chairman Mao's revolutionary line."² Thus the "traditional" armed forces system was reaffirmed and blessed, and, implicitly, so was the People's War doctrine on which it was based.

THE MILITARY BUDGET DEBATE

Within weeks, however, it became obvious that a major debate with long-term implications for Chinese defense doctrine was underway between advocates of accelerated modernization of the armed forces and those who argued that priority should be given to developing the civilian sector of the economy. The latter view was set forth publicly for the first time on 25 December, when *People's Daily* published the text of a speech said to have been delivered by Mao at a Politburo meeting in April 1956. In the portion of the speech related to defense expenditures, Mao is quoted as saying,

If we are not to be bullied in the present-day world, we cannot do without the bomb. Then what is to be done about it? One reliable way is to cut military and administrative expenditures down to appropriate proportions and

increase expenditures on economic construction. Only with the faster growth of economic construction can there be more progress in defense construction. . . . *We must strengthen our national defense, and for that purpose we must first of all strengthen our work in economic construction.*³ (Emphasis added.)

Lest there be any doubt that this reflected the policy of the new Party leadership, Beijing radio on 5 February 1977 broadcast a lecture on this specific portion of the 1956 speech in which the need to "cut military and administrative expenditures to appropriate proportions" of the state budget was restated in unequivocal terms.

Over the next several months, thinly disguised PLA opposition to the "civilian economy first" policy was voiced in numerous articles by operational units and regional staff elements. A common theme was China's vulnerability in the face of continued arms buildups by the Soviet Union and the United States. Typical articles invoked the authority of Marxist theorists (rather than Mao) to argue for rapid improvement of the army's weaponry. "Producers of better weapons . . . defeat producers of comparatively poor weapons," declared one, citing Engels. Thus, it continued, "while the enemies are making every effort to improve their weapons and equipment, we should do the same with increased efforts." Another cited Lenin: "If there are not sufficient equipment, supplies, and training, even the best army . . . will immediately be wiped out by the enemy." A third noted Engels' view that the French revolutionaries' adoption of successful new tactics was made possible by their introduction of improved artillery pieces and infantry rifles. The lesson: "improving weaponry is an important prerequisite for enabling our army to master the combat tactics appropriate to new wars. . . ."⁴

Beginning in late January 1977 and extending into February, four separate but apparently related conferences were held concurrently in Beijing: a National Conference on People's Air Defense; a conference of ranking cadres of defense plants subordinate to the Third Ministry of Machine Building (the ministry responsible for aviation-related defense produc-

tion); and two meetings convened by the National Defense Science and Technology Commission (NDSTC), one a planning conference and the other a meeting on scientific research and production. Beyond reporting that those attending pledged to "push forward People's Air Defense work, national defense industry production and scientific research, and other work in strengthening national defense," the media revealed little concerning the purpose or results of these meetings. Nevertheless, foreign observers widely concluded from the prominence seemingly being accorded defense research and development that, in the words of one State Department analyst, China was "tilting away from the People's War concept in favor of a more technological approach to defense—in virtual opposition to Maoist doctrine."⁵ This impression no doubt was reinforced by the simultaneous appearance of articles by the National Defense Industries Office, the NDSTC, and the Academy of Military Sciences—all of which stressed the need for accelerated development of military science and technology and related research and development.⁶

The evidence seems convincing that many within the PLA were concerned that the national leadership did not view modernization of China's armed forces with the urgency demanded by the Soviet threat. But was the PLA simply dissatisfied with the policy of putting economic development before military modernization, or was there an internal PLA dispute over priorities *within* the defense budget?

Media comment of late May and June, which revealed a cleavage within the PLA over the issue of nuclear weapons, provided evidence for the latter possibility. On one side were those who argued that over-emphasis on conventional weapons and the doctrine of People's War left China vulnerable to nuclear attack: "To defeat nuclear weapons, we also must develop nuclear and other kinds of weapons . . . [and] we must be prepared to fight both a conventional war and a nuclear war." China could drown the enemy in the ocean of People's War only "so long as we become fully prepared in all fields."⁷ The opposing view, revealed as established policy by the defensive tone of its proponents, held that enemy nuclear weap-

ons were not to be feared. China could win a war relying only on People's War. Nevertheless, dissenters were assured, "we are not negating the role of weapons [to which] we attach great importance."⁸

Whatever differences may have remained within the army leadership over the relationship between defense modernization and economic development and over priorities within the PLA's share of the budget probably were resolved at conferences convened in Beijing in late June 1977 by the General Staff Department and the National Defense Industries Office. On 10 July, *Liberation Army Daily* stated that "war is not only a military and political race but also an economic race." This meant, said *LAD*, that military modernization could be realized only on the basis of a strong national economy. The implications of economic reality for defense doctrine and weapons development were clear: "Today we must still rely on People's War, ... base our efforts on the equipment available, ... [and] gradually overcome our inferiority in weapons and equipment...."⁹

Clearly, in the process of developing economic policy for the Fifth Five Year Plan (1976-1980), "military modernizers" and civilian economic planners had reached a compromise. The army leadership agreed to a deferment of an ambitious program of material modernization until the economy had been put back on a solid footing. How long a delay was envisioned is unclear, but the Party leadership seems to have assured the army that its interests would not be neglected when the time was right. Enumerating the tasks facing the country in his speech to the 11th Party Congress in August, Chairman Hua Guofeng placed "promoting production and pushing the national economy forward" before "army-building and preparations against war," but then added:

We must do our utmost to strengthen research in science and technology and increase armament production for our national defense, so that our army's equipment will attain a new level.¹⁰

THE STRATEGY DEBATE—AGAIN (STILL)

Seemingly implicit in the PLA leadership's acceptance of a "make do with what you've got" policy (which required continued reliance on People's War) was its acceptance, too, of a defensive strategy based on "luring the enemy in deep" and then fighting him in coordination with the militia. However, the appearance over the next several months of authoritatively sourced articles defending this strategy suggests that not all within the PLA were convinced of its wisdom.

On 6 August, *People's Daily* front-paged a lengthy article by Vice-Minister of Defense Su Yu, entitled "Great Victory of Chairman Mao's Guidelines On War." A common thread running throughout the article was the invincibility of the masses mobilized and armed in the national defense. "We will still fight a People's War even if we have better weapons," insisted Su. "We are firmly convinced that the people . . . are the decisive factor in winning or losing a war." Su's concurrent position as First Political Commissar of the Academy of Military Sciences—the PLA's doctrinal "think-tank"—lent special significance to his use of the term "we"; Su was speaking for and reflecting the position of the PLA leadership.

In an extensive review of PLA strategy and tactics as they had evolved since the days of the Jiangxi Soviet (1931–1934), Su highlighted two strategic concepts which had figured prominently in China's recent military experience:

Passive Defense. This was the "incorrect strategy" adopted during the Nationalists' 5th Encirclement Campaign (1933–1934). Su criticized several things: the failure then to lure the enemy in and wait for an opportunity to annihilate his units, the decision to "resist the enemy outside the territory" in order not to give up ground, and the tactics of "deploying troops at every pass, setting up defenses everywhere, fighting defensive actions at every step, launching short surprise attacks and engaging in . . . attrition warfare."

Active Defense. When the communist forces had been opposed by an enemy superior in both numbers and equip-

ment, a strategy of "active defense" had proved to be the key to success. In executing this strategy, Su said, it is necessary to hit the enemy at his weakest points just as he launches his attack. This gains time to prepare the defense. Then lure the enemy in deep, concentrating an "absolutely superior force" to wipe out his units one by one. At the "opportune time," launch a counteroffensive, fighting "quick and decisive battles on exterior lines" to destroy the enemy.

The army's main objective, Su emphasized, must be the annihilation of enemy forces, not the holding or seizing of a city or area. In support, he pointed out that Mao himself had ordered the army to "give up Yanan and other places on our own initiative so as to evade the brunt of the enemy attacks."

Security of the major urban industrial and political centers of north and northeast China seems to have been a particularly sensitive issue, for Su's point about not holding the cities was made against less than a week later in an article attributed to the Military Affairs Department of the PLA's Military and Political College.¹¹ In the first year of the civil war (July 1946-June 1947), the authors recalled, the Communists "did not hesitate to pay the great price of temporarily giving up 105 cities so as to put themselves in a position affording initiative at all times...."

As the weeks went by, the arguments and counter-arguments came into sharper focus. A lengthy article by Guo Huaruo, a Deputy Commandant of the Academy of Military Sciences, described the opposition encountered by Mao in implementing the strategy of active defense (called "strategic retreat" by Guo) against the Nationalist encirclement campaigns of the early 1930s.¹² Mao's opponents, said Guo, argued against strategic retreat because:

- (1) "To retreat means to lose territory";
- (2) "Harm would be brought to the people (to let our pots and pans be smashed, as they call it)"; and
- (3) "Retreat would give rise to unfavorable repercussions."

Guo insisted Mao's opponents did not understand that

the object of strategic retreat is to conserve military strength and prepare for the counter-offensive. Retreat is necessary because not to retreat a step before the onslaught of a strong enemy inevitably means to jeopardize the preservation of one's own forces.

Only through the temporary loss of territory, Mao argued, could the Red Army hope to destroy the enemy and eventually recover all lost territory:

If you refuse to let the pots and pans of some households be smashed over a short period of time you will cause the smashing of pots and pans of all the people to go on over a long period of time. If you are afraid of unfavorable short-term political repercussions, you will have to pay the price in unfavorable long-term political repercussions.

At roughly the same time, what otherwise would have seemed unusual attention was paid by the PRC media to defense issues in Western Europe. Prominently featured were reports on Yugoslavia's "People's Defense"—a strategy similar in most essential respects to Mao's own doctrine of People's War—and detailed coverage of a West German debate over the relative merits of "frontier defense" and "regional defense."¹³ As reported by the official Chinese press, proponents of "regional defense" espoused a strategy which closely paralleled Mao's concept of "active defense": Soviet forces would be allowed to penetrate deeply into West German territory where many widely dispersed mobile combat groups would engage the invader in hundreds of battles, scattering and weakening his forces and finally wiping them out.

One can infer from arguments raised in support of the "active defense" ("luring the enemy in deep") strategy that critics of the concept probably were arguing something like this: In the face of an attack by an enemy possessing superior mobility, superior firepower, and, almost certainly, tactical air superiority, it makes little sense to withdraw the bulk of your forces from relatively good, defensible terrain (for example,

along the line Datong—the Great Wall—the Da Hinggan Range, west, northwest, and north of Beijing) into the more open country of the North China or Manchurian Plains. In the open country the enemy can exploit both his air superiority to interdict your movement and the superior mobility of his mechanized forces to outflank and destroy your best units, thus exposing Beijing and the major population and industrial centers of the northeast. (Recall that a target of two of the articles cited above was a “misplaced” concern for the safety of urban centers.)

By mid-October 1977, the PLA leadership evidently had come to the conclusion that the public controversy over defense strategy had gone on long enough. In a strongly worded and unequivocal article made all the more authoritative by its unusual treatment of the issue in the contemporary context, *Liberation Army Daily* published what seemed intended to be the final word on the subject. It began by posing the crucial question, and by invoking Mao's authority.

In the face of an attack by a powerful enemy, should we try to keep the enemy outside of the national boundary by putting up a stubborn defense, or should we lure the enemy in deep? Chairman Mao pointed out: It is still better to lure the enemy in deep. . . .¹⁴

Implicitly the article acknowledged that even Mao's strategic precepts should not be followed blindly, but should be adapted to the changed characteristics of both the enemy forces and the PLA. Perhaps with the superior mobility of Soviet tank and motorized rifle units in mind, the authors described how the strategy was to be carried out:

We should lure the enemy in deep, but not to the point of letting him advance unchecked. In this context, while luring the enemy in deep, we should coordinate warfare at key points of defense with guerrilla warfare behind the enemy lines, and destroy large numbers of the enemy in mobile operations so as to stabilize the war situation and create the conditions for a transition to the strategic counteroffensive. . . .

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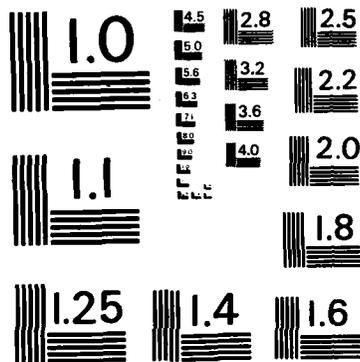
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The reference above to not letting the enemy advance "unchecked," and the author's subsequent insistence that the concept envisioned "an organized and planned strategic movement," suggest strongly that some critics regarded "luring the enemy in deep" as nothing more than a euphemism for headlong flight under pressure from a superior pursuing force.

In concluding, the article revealed to a greater extent than ever before some of the central issues of the debate, and then issued an imperative.

In a future war against aggression, in what direction should we lure the enemy in deep; at what point would it become favorable to us and unfavorable to the enemy; which key points must be strongly defended—*these are questions to be decided by the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission. The field armies, local forces and the broad masses of the militia must bear the whole situation in mind and act according to the unified operational intentions of the higher authorities; they must not act on their own.* (Emphasis added.)

In other words, the overall strategy was set. The specifics of the plans and tactics involved would be worked out by the Military Commission. Subordinate commanders were not to alter the "grand design" according to their personal preferences or views on how the strategy should be implemented.

End of the debate? Not entirely. But if some in the PLA continued to harbor doubts concerning the wisdom of fighting the Soviets with what perhaps could best be described as an updated version of People's War, it was not apparent from developments in the militia system.

THE MILITIA IN 1977: RESTORING THE OLD ORDER

In June, a major drive to "rectify" and strengthen the militia was launched, paralleling an armywide campaign to rid the PLA of those known or suspected to be ideological followers

of the deposed Gang of Four. The broad outline of the militia reform was laid out by *Liberation Army Daily* in an editorial hailing the 15th anniversary of Mao's call to "put militia work on a sound basis organizationally, politically and militarily."¹⁵ Building up the militia "organizationally," explained *LAD*, meant determining and establishing the appropriate numbers of ordinary and basic (including "armed") militia units for all organizational levels up to division; "politically" meant conducting political training among the militia, appointing political commissars and instructors to take charge of ideological work and purging the militia ranks of "bad people"; "militarily" meant arming the militia units, training them for "large-scale war," and establishing ordnance factories in every province.

That the task of reforming and strengthening the militia was regarded as a relatively long-term effort rather than a superficial "quick-fix" was suggested by references in various provincial broadcasts over the next several months to the necessity of achieving a certain percentage of the objectives by 1980. In Heilongjiang, for instance, the target was 80 percent; in Hunan, 70 percent.¹⁶ The difference between these two goals may simply have reflected the urgency with which these two provinces viewed the problem, or perhaps represented each province's assessment of what realistically could be accomplished. However, it seems more likely that these goals were set by the central authorities and reflected an emphasis on upgrading the combat effectiveness of the militia in the border areas more rapidly than in the interior provinces.

The editorial concluded with an exposition of the militia's strategic *raison d'être*:

If every one of the 80 million people knows how to shoot and fight, thus forming a gigantic net over our vast land, this in itself will be a powerful guarantee of China's security and a stern warning to social-imperialist [Soviet] and imperialist [US] aggressors. If they dare to invade our country, they are bound to be drowned in the vast expanse where everyone is a soldier.

This was a rather significant statement for the official PLA news organ to make, it would seem, at a time when "US government sources" were interpreting signs of the debate over strategy as evidence that the Chinese were shifting away from the People's War concept toward a modern military establishment, one that could achieve military parity with the superpowers by the end of the century.¹⁷

Through the rest of 1977 and on into 1978, the focus of militia work was on insuring the political reliability of unit leaders at all levels, restoring the militia to its pre-Gang status as the "shock force" of production, and improving its combat readiness. Toward these ends, emphasis was placed on recruiting demobilized soldiers to become militia cadres; strengthening the leadership and improving the work of PAFDs at all levels; integrating military training with productive labor; increased training, with special emphasis on the training of armed militia regiments, battalions, and specialized units; increasing the number of specialized units (the Xuzhou antichemical warfare company was formed in November); improving the control and maintenance of weapons; and restoring the dual leadership system.¹⁸

On the surface, the renewed stress on dual leadership of the militia seems reasonable enough. After all, wherever the "Shanghai experience" had been followed during the time of the Gang of Four, control of the militia had passed into the hands of a single authority—the radical-dominated "militia commands." Yet these had since been abolished, and the militia—essentially a civilian labor force in time of peace—presumably now was very much under local civilian Party leadership. Hence, the repeated demands that the principle of dual leadership be upheld in order to insure "the Party's absolute leadership" had a somewhat hollow ring.

Interestingly, the great majority of such demands seemed to be issued at army-militia conferences or by elements of the regional PLA command structure involved in militia work. A typical and revealing example was an article attributed to an

element of the Nanjing Military Region staff.¹⁹ The militia's role as both a combat force and a work force makes dual leadership essential, the authors first asserted. Then they enumerated the actions taken by the Gang to undermine this system.

- They attempted to separate the militia from the three-in-one combination of main forces, local forces, and militia.
- They prohibited political instruction of the militia in the history and traditions of the army and militia (a PLA responsibility).
- They forbade the commendation of "advanced" militiamen (a PLA function).
- They interfered with the work of PAFD cadres.

In short, "they repudiated the People's Armed Forces Departments' leadership over the militia." This appears to have been the crux of the issue. The PLA's concern was not so much with the radicals' effect on the militia leadership role of the local Party committees as it was that in some cases the *army's* control had been seriously eroded, or even eliminated. Historical experience, the article concluded, had demonstrated that

under the leadership of the Party Central Committee, implementing the system of dual leadership . . . is an important measure in upholding the three-in-one combination system of the armed forces, in ensuring the Party's absolute leadership, *and in guarding against usurpation of military power. . . .* (Emphasis added.)

Stripping away the obligatory obeisance to the leading role of the Party, the intended message comes through clearly: The militia is a key component of the armed forces and therefore must be under the close control and supervision of the PLA. Meanwhile, the increasing involvement in militia work of main force units and higher-level staff elements was achieving precisely that objective.

"LEARNING FROM THE PLA"

Beginning early in 1977, PLA "political work investigation teams" from Military Districts and subordinate headquarters had been sent down to the militia units to propagandize for the new regime and to conduct detailed investigations into the political reliability of unit members. Findings were reported to the political departments of the MD headquarters and presumably served as the basis for the "rectification" of militia unit leaders which began in earnest in June.²⁰

But guidance and development of the militia was not being left to the provincial military commands alone. The headquarters of the Military Regions and, to an unprecedented degree, the PLA General Staff Department itself, increasingly got involved in the planning, supervision, and support of activities aimed at improving militia combat effectiveness. The participation of GSD "work teams" was reported, for example, at a Hunan province militia conference and at a Kunming MR Meeting on PLA and militia training. In October, the attendance of a representative of the GSD's Mobilization Subdepartment at a Jilin province militia conference signaled the reactivation of this organization, a staff element which prior to the Cultural Revolution had played a key role in the formulation of PLA militia policy.²¹

However, in terms of the evolution of the militia's role in PRC defense doctrine, the establishing of "linkages" between militia units and the PLA was the single most important development during 1977. The concept first was publicized in March, when a Henan province militia conference directed that

all Military Subdistricts and ... People's Armed Forces Departments must actively consult and report to the local PLA units [and] work out plans for linking PLA units with the militia.²²

The reference to "local PLA units" suggested only local force units were involved. However, at a later meeting in Hunan, PAFDs were directed to coordinate the work of setting up linkages between the militia and "PLA units stationed in Hunan"—a formulation used when speaking of main force units.²³

By the end of the year, it was evident that the order to establish close ties between armed militia units and locally stationed units of the regular forces had originated in the Military Commission itself and that not only PLA ground forces were involved, but the Navy and Air Force as well.²⁴ All PLA units of regimental size or larger had to set up special staff groups responsible for planning and coordinating the units' militia work. Lower-level units were to set up "work groups" to actually carry out that work. In Heilongjiang, each platoon and company was made responsible for training one or two militia platoons or companies, respectively, and for stationing personnel with those units to assist them and to carry out political indoctrination.²⁵

There is little doubt that the "linkages" policy strengthened the military side of the dual leadership equation and thus helped insure that the militia would not again be proselytized by political elements which stood opposed to the interests of the army. Indeed, this may have been one objective of its originators. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the general thrust of PRC doctrinal development during this time appears to have been toward adapting People's War to China's contemporary strategic environment, and here the establishing of PLA-militia "linkages" probably has the greatest significance. Establishing a "counterpart" relationship between regular and militia units not only facilitates routine militia unit training and the selection, training, and evaluation of militia cadres, but, most important, it facilitates coordination of their operations in time of war. A report from Jinan MR, for example, described how PLA units and their militia counterparts together studied and analyzed the terrain and special characteristics of their assigned defensive areas and practiced the signals they would use to coordinate operations in combat.²⁶ Such joint training

might not make the difference between victory or defeat in the event of a Soviet attack, but unquestionably it would enhance militia combat effectiveness. If it did nothing else, the "linkages" policy demonstrated the army leadership's commitment to reliance on the militia as a key component of the "three-in-one" combination of forces.

The new State Constitution adopted at the 5th National People's Congress in March 1978 formalized the "three-in-one" concept and restored the PLA to its former position of primacy as "the workers' and peasants' own armed force"—a status accorded the militia as well as under the Gang of Four.²⁷ In so doing, the new document institutionalized the changes which had taken place within the militia system during the previous year and reflected the unprecedented degree to which control of the militia had come to be vested in the PLA.

DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE—PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

All the various threads of PRC militia policy were woven together in August of 1978. A global threat assessment in an Army Day (1 August) article by Defense Minister Xu Xiangqian provided the strategic rationale for China's military modernization program and set forth in unusually explicit terms the doctrinal principles on which China would base its national defense.²⁸ Specific measures for strengthening the militia and curing its ills were adopted at an army-dominated National Militia Work Conference which met in Beijing for two weeks at the end of July and beginning of August. The organizational principles and administrative guidelines governing the practical aspects of militia work at the unit level were promulgated by the Ministry of Defense in an updated version of the 1961 "Regulations on Militia Work."

Xu's article was the most authoritative statement of China's world view and military strategy to appear since the fall of the Gang of Four. After detailing the worldwide actions of the

Soviet Union and the United States which in his estimation heightened the likelihood of war, Xu concentrated on the direct Soviet threat to China. In the event of a Soviet attack, he said, a protracted People's War which exploited the advantage of China's vast territory and population remained the key to victory.

Experience had shown, claimed Xu, that a better-equipped enemy could be defeated if full use were made of existing equipment and if the principles of People's War were applied flexibly to modern combat. If the Soviets were to invade, their only advantage would be "slightly better" weapons and equipment. But the more modern the enemy's equipment, the more dependent he would be on fuel, ammunition, communications, transport, and supplies—hence, the more vulnerable he would be to attacks on these vital requirements by the "broad masses of militiamen." Like the regular forces, said Xu, the militia was absolutely essential; without it, the field armies would be like "a one-armed warrior."

Turning to the subject of defensive strategy, Xu revealed that debate on the issue had not been entirely snuffed out by *LAD's* blast the previous October. After reaffirming the concept of "active defense," Xu rebuked those who advocated meeting an enemy attack at or beyond the border. In order to exploit PLA strength and enemy weaknesses, the enemy must be allowed to "come in" before he is attacked. "Only by doing so can we force the enemy to scatter his forces, carry the burden on his shoulders and be encircled and trapped by all the people." Suggesting that some in the PLA remained skeptical about the idea of allowing highly mobile Soviet armored forces to penetrate deeply into Chinese territory, Xu elaborated on a key point raised in the October 1978 *LAD* piece:

However, luring the enemy in deep does not mean allowing the enemy to go wherever he likes. It means forcing him to move in the direction we want, organizing a strong defense with our priorities well placed, preventing the enemy from driving deep into our areas, leading him to battlefields prepared and organized in advance, and

... concentrating our superior forces to wipe out the enemy units one by one...

In modern combat, "no big differences exist between the front and the rear; all areas affected by the war are subject to division and isolation." Thus, said Xu, the "vast rear area" must be built into "a strategic base capable ... of fighting the war indefinitely." As part of this effort, construction of People's Air Defense projects must be speeded so that people living in vital areas could "live, engage in production, defend themselves, launch offensives, and carry out tunnel warfare and street fighting at the same time."

Additional light was shed on the thinking of PRC military planners by Marshal Nie Rongzhen's speech to the National Militia Work Conference on 4 August 1978.²⁹ Controversy over the relevance of the militia had not ended with the demise of the radical leadership, as Nie made clear:

Is the people's militia still useful in future wars under modern conditions? Will the position and role of the people's militia be lowered or raised? ... This is a major issue which involves the struggle between the two types of military thinking and the two military lines...

Nie then argued the PLA leaderships' case for the militia and the continued validity of the doctrine of People's War:

In future wars against aggression, our enemies will be equipped not only with many advanced regular weapons, but also with many nuclear weapons. With the coordination of air, naval and airborne forces, and with their predominance in arms, they will mobilize large numbers of tanks and mechanized forces to attack us quickly and penetrate deeply in order to achieve quick victory. To defeat enemies who have highly modern weapons, our most fundamental measure is to rely on a People's War.

Echoing Xu Xiangqian, Nie claimed that only by waging a People's War could the PLA turn tactical inferiority into strategic advantage. Conducting guerrilla operations in the rear of penetrating enemy columns, the militia would attack logistics units

and sever supply lines, depriving the enemy's fuel-dependent mechanized forces of their life-blood. "This alone will bring the enemy to a standstill," Nie claimed.

However, Nie pointed out, the value of the militia lies not just in its role as a guerrilla force. In a future war, he said, attrition rates would be extremely high; hence, the militia would be called on to provide millions ("or even tens of millions") of replacements to replenish the depleted ranks of the PLA. Because cities would be key targets of the enemy, the militia also would be indispensable in defending urban areas. In addition, it would shoulder much of the responsibility for securing the rear areas against sabotage and enemy air and airborne attack, and for continuing production so as to provide material support for the war effort. In such ways, he argued, the militia would provide the "solid foundation" for the waging of People's War. In the future, rather than be "outdated and useless" (as some of its critics evidently claimed), the militia and People's War would adapt to new conditions and be more effective than ever before. *Anyone who ignored their vital role would be committing a grave mistake, he warned.*

But at the same time, Nie made it clear that not all opposition to the militia was directly rooted in skepticism concerning the efficacy of People's War doctrine. As John Gittings has pointed out, the PLA has always been somewhat reluctant to divert from its own training and other activities the time and resources—both human and material—which involvement in militia work requires.³⁰ Caught between, on the one hand, exhortations from Beijing to support militia work and, on the other, demands of what they no doubt considered to be their primary mission—preparing for combat—many PLA units and staffs apparently had attempted to solve the dilemma by devoting the minimal essential attention to the militia. As a consequence, being detailed to a PAFD to serve as a full-time militia cadre apparently was regarded by many PLA officers as something less than a "career-enhancing" assignment. "Some cadres feel," Nie pointed out, "that having to do militia work means they are inferior to others and that it means a lack of faith in them by their organization. This is incorrect."³¹ He

reminded the delegates that militia work was *the most important* task of the MDs, MSDs, and PAFDs. Henceforth, these organizations would be checked and rated on whether or not their two top leaders concentrated their "main effort" on strengthening the militia and on whether or not "the vast majority of their cadres" were doing militia work.

If Nie's speech was intended to reaffirm the strategic rationale for the militia and to impress those attending the conference with the depth of the army leadership's commitment to the doctrine of People's War, a report by Yang Yong seemed intended to provide cadres at all levels with specific guidance for implementing the Military Commission's militia policy.³² In so doing, Yang indirectly revealed a number of the problems hampering efforts to improve militia readiness.

Implying that some civilian Party officials viewed with concern the degree to which the militia had come under army control, Yang insisted that the three-in-one combination of field armies, local forces, and militia must be maintained. The PLA and militia were mutually dependent, he argued, and therefore must have "unified leadership, unified command and a unified building plan."

In some militia organizations, Yang noted, discipline was poor and factionalism prevalent—a result of persistent radical influence. Elimination of this problem required that the ranks of the cadres be "purified," with special emphasis on armed militia units. In selecting new cadres, demobilized and retired soldiers should be fully utilized.

Weapons maintenance and accountability procedures also were areas of concern. Yang stressed that militiamen must constantly be educated in the care of their weapons and equipment. Every militia unit was to institute a strict system for managing its assigned inventories.

Finding a solution to the conflicting demands of production and militia training apparently remained an elusive goal. Although more intensive and rigorous training was essential, said Yang, filling production goals was the militia's primary

task. Meeting both objectives appeared to pose little conflict in the case of the ordinary militia, which was to be "suitably trained between work periods." Basic militia units, however, "should follow their military training schedule," implying that training of this category of militia could at times be conducted at the expense of production. Yang implicitly acknowledged that to the extent this occurred, support for militia work would tend to be eroded—both among the cadres responsible for maintaining production levels and among the individual militia members who stood to lose work points or wages. "Armed basic militiamen and militia cadres participating in military training should be regarded as on duty," he said, "and they should earn wages or work points and be evaluated and commended as usual."

Throughout the remainder of 1978, militia work at the local level stressed improving the training of the armed militia and specialized units and the organization of additional specialized units of all types as weapons, equipment, and cadres became available. In the case of specialized units, the availability of qualified cadres appeared to be the limiting factor. In at least three provinces—Henan, Zhejiang, and Shaanxi—local authorities stressed the necessity of obtaining additional qualified cadres from the PLA to assist in the organization and training of these units.³³

In media references to militia training, the increased integration of PLA and armed militia training was unmistakable. One significant aspect of the closer relationship was that as the PLA shifted its training focus from fighting infantry to fighting tanks, the orientation of armed militia training followed suit. Increasingly prominent, too, was the role of the General Staff Department in overseeing militia training. A GSD "work team," for example, took part in a Kunming MR meeting which directed the PLA and militia to do more training together for night and "close-quarter" combat.³⁴

There seems little doubt that by the end of 1978 the process of evolving a defense policy for the immediate post-Cultural Revolution period was complete.³⁵ Economic

imperatives demanded, at least for the time being, that material modernization of the armed forces would rate dead last in priority among the "four modernizations." Unable to narrow the gap in capabilities between itself and the Soviet Army, the PLA was compelled to continue to rely on a strategy which maximized its two greatest advantages—territory and manpower. What was that strategy? Obviously, People's War. And People's War, to be effective, required a well-trained, combat-ready militia. Moreover, some advocates appeared to argue that over the long term, placing greater reliance on the militia could actually *speed* both military and non-military modernization by freeing funds which otherwise would be allocated to PLA operations and maintenance. This was expressed in an October 1978 *Red Flag* article attributed to the Nanjing MR headquarters:

With a well-organized militia, we can reduce the regular forces without weakening the strength of our national defense, and practice the policy of maintaining a small army in times of peace and mobilizing large forces in time of war. Army expenses thus saved can be used in socialist economic construction and in the modernization of armaments.

Certainly the PLA had been undergoing a streamlining process for some time, as inept, unwilling, overaged, unfit, and redundant personnel were weeded out in keeping with Deng's 1975 resolution to "consolidate" unit and organizational leadership at all levels. Large-scale reductions in basic troop strength also may have taken place, but are difficult to substantiate. In any event, as Sydney Jammes has pointed out, personnel-related expenditures constitute a very small proportion of the PRC military budget.³⁶ Thus, even cutbacks in personnel of as much as 10-20 percent probably would not result in savings sufficient to accelerate in any meaningful way China's program of weapons modernization. In sum, the evidence suggests that the expansion and improvement of the militia during 1977 and 1978 was related not to efforts to speed modernization of the PLA through a reallocation of resources, but rather to decisions concerning strategy and

doctrine stemming from the realization that the necessary resources simply were not available.

THE MILITIA IN CHINA'S VIETNAM WAR

On 17 February 1979, Beijing's deteriorating relationship with Hanoi erupted into major conflict as Chinese forces estimated to number some 100,000 men attacked Vietnam on a broad front extending from the Lao border to the sea.³⁷ After more than two weeks of heavy fighting, during which PLA units penetrated up to 25 miles and captured several key provincial capitals, the PRC ordered its forces to withdraw. Three days later (8 March), a *Liberation Army Daily* editorial put the official stamp of "VICTORY" on what the Chinese had come to call the "self-defense counterattack" against their insufficiently filial southern neighbor.

Whether or not one agrees with Beijing's official assessment of the operation depends, of course, on what one sees as having been China's objectives and one's perception of the degree to which these were achieved. There can be little doubt, however, that the opportunity to identify problem areas and otherwise to evaluate practically every facet of their military system in a relatively low-intensity combat environment must have been regarded by PLA leaders as a positive aspect of the conflict. This process of evaluation began during the conflict itself, and by May, lessons learned from the campaign already were being incorporated into course curricula at every level of the PLA's military schools system.³⁸ Probably foremost among those areas which received close scrutiny were those which had received greatest emphasis in Beijing's post-Gang military modernization effort—for example, individual and unit training, command leadership and staff procedures, combined arms coordination, the role of unit Party committees and political commissars in the "modern" combat environment, and the combat roles of the militia.

Militia units played a major part in support of the cross-border operations of the regular forces. One Taiwan source put the number of militiamen mobilized in the "frontline" provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi at 80,000.³⁹ Concurrent with the buildup of regular forces in the border area during late 1978 and early 1979, measures also were underway to prepare the militia for combat. The pace of exchanging old weapons for new was stepped up. Training was intensified. Logistical transport teams (human porters and pack animals) and first-aid teams were organized and deployed to the immediate border area as the date of the attack neared. Once the operation began, some militia units participated directly in combat alongside regular units of the PLA. Among the militia actions publicized in the weeks following were these:

- The first batalion of a certain regiment of the militia division of Daxin County (Guangxi) recaptured an island in a border river which earlier had been seized and fortified by Vietnamese security forces.
- A militia unit fighting together with a local force border defense unit repulsed a cross-border probe by the Vietnamese.
- A militia artillery company (82mm mortar) fired over 1,100 rounds during a two-day period in support of an assault by PLA units on a hilltop position.
- A militia road repair battalion built a 9-kilometer road in 24 hours over rough terrain, enabling a Chinese armor unit to outflank an enemy position.
- Two militia heavy machinegun squads killed 24 enemy troops in one action while firing in support of the PLA.

In addition, logistic support of the regular forces was a major militia contribution. Militia units moved ammunition and supplies forward and wounded and prisoners to the rear, guarded lines of communication and key facilities, provided first aid to the wounded, and served as guides for regular units in the trans-border area.⁴⁰

One can only surmise how well the militia fared in the post-campaign critique believed to have been prepared by General Yang Dezhi (now PLA Chief of Staff). Given the adverse conditions of rugged terrain and bad weather which prevailed throughout most of the battle area, the efforts of ordinary and basic militia units in maintaining an adequate flow of rations, fuel, and ammunition to front-line PLA units at even moderate levels of conflict must have been herculean in proportion. Although some breakdowns of the supply system may have occurred (they always do), this aspect of the militia's role probably was evaluated positively.

The combat performance of armed militia units is more difficult to assess. In support of her general thesis that the militia is not combat-effective, Dreyer points to unspecified "indications that militia confusion in a number of battle scenarios had posed problems for the PLA."⁴¹ This is a rather damning statement and warrants further discussion. First, "confusion" is a not uncommon phenomenon on any battlefield; indeed, there are indications that PLA confusion on a number of occasions during the offensive also posed problems. Perhaps more to the point, the combat actions involving armed militia units are believed to have taken place predominantly within the immediate border region; most seem to have been "defensive" in nature and to have been carried out in conjunction with local force units. Thus, any miscues by the militia probably would have been quite limited in their effect.

Actually, the potential for greatest impact on Chinese defense doctrine lay not in perceptions of militia performance but rather in assessments of PLA effectiveness against a relatively more modern enemy force. In the wake of the border war, it became evident that at least some within the PLA officer corps believed that deficiencies in PLA weapons and equipment revealed by the conflict would result in much greater emphasis being placed on modernizing the armed forces. To the extent that such a reordering of priorities was to occur, opposition to People's War doctrine—and to the militia—would tend to increase.

Paradoxically, however, the PLA's performance in battle—whatever material shortcomings may have been revealed—perhaps militated against any increase in the pace of military modernization. The demonstrated ability of the army to successfully engage a well-trained, well-equipped, and battle-tested force probably caused many civilian planners to regard the updating of PLA weapons and equipment as somewhat less urgent than they had previously. This line of reasoning no doubt would have drawn support from the failure of the Soviet Union to intervene on the northern border and by the overall cost to the economy of the three-week operation.⁴²

"EMANCIPATING THE MIND"

Any arguments which may have been set forth for speeding military modernization were swept aside during the economic planning meetings leading up to the second session of the 5th National People's Congress in June 1979. By early summer it had become clear from statements by senior army leaders that the PLA remained officially committed to deferment of a major program of material modernization until economic conditions permitted. Also apparent was that the PLA leadership had come to regard as the greatest obstacle to their policies not those on the "outside" who would deny the PLA sufficient funds to modernize quickly, but rather those within the army itself who prevented it from achieving as much as possible under existing constraints. In short, efforts to develop the governing principles of "People's War under modern conditions" were being obstructed by those who refused to "emancipate the mind" in order to "seek truth from facts" (the new ideology of Deng Xiaoping). Instead, these obstructionists clung tenaciously to the precepts of orthodox Maoist dogma—insisting on copying exactly "whatever" Mao said and refusing to consider "whatever" he did not say.

An assault on "the two whatevers" had begun in December of 1978. In an article commemorating Mao's 85th birthday,

General Yang Yong reaffirmed Mao's military thought as "the correct military line adopted by the Chinese Communist Party." It was, he said, "a magic weapon—and an invincible banner."⁴³ Yang emphasized, however, that Mao's genius as a military thinker lay in the fact that he "never followed a rule mechanically," but rather adapted it to the realities of the moment. Implying that the revered late Chairman would have faulted the dogmatism of the "whateverists," Yang reminded them that Mao himself "always held that all guiding rules of war developed with the development of history and war and he never regarded his thinking as unchangeable."

Lecturing at the PLA Military Academy in January 1979, Su Yu revealed the extent to which traditionalists were hobbling the evolution of Chinese military doctrine:

Comrade Mao Zedong's basic principles for directing wars are still applicable under today's objective conditions, but they must be applied flexibly in the light of actual conditions. Some of his principles no longer fit the actual conditions of future wars, and we should have the courage to break through them. As to questions which comrade Mao Zedong, limited by historical conditions, did not mention and discuss but which must be solved and answered in future wars, we must have the courage to break new paths and make new developments. By doing so we are not going against Mao Zedong's military thought. . . . For example, we can no longer cope with a concentrated tank attack with rifles, machineguns, handgrenades and dynamite charges. We must have sufficient antitank artillery and guided missiles. For another example, if we are to fight a large-scale mobile war with an enemy on the plains, we must solve the problem of gaining local air superiority. . . . For a long time, people have not dared to talk, or to talk openly, about these questions.⁴⁴

The need to retain the essence of Maoist doctrine while adapting its specific operational principles to the realities of the modern battlefield was a consistent theme in speeches and in articles of senior PLA leaders throughout 1979. By the

fall of that year, a marked increase in the emphasis placed on urban defense suggested that this was one area where orthodox Maoism was being redefined.

CITY DEFENSE

Whereas Mao consistently opposed attempting to hold cities in the face of an attack by a superior force, army and militia conferences during the last half of 1979 and into 1980 devoted increasing attention to discussion of the "strategic importance" of city defense. Militia operations in defense of urban areas already were an integral part of the People's Air Defense concept, but this aspect of PAD doctrine had never appeared to be more than incidentally tied to an overall concept of operations for the defense of China. Rather, it seemed to be more a matter of making a virtue of necessity—i.e., as long as cities are going to be abandoned to the enemy, he should be made to pay as high a price as possible for their occupation.

Now, however, city defense was being discussed as a separate concept, related to but distinct from PAD, indicating that defense of urban areas had been accorded new prominence in PRC defense plans. Population centers in the strategic northern and northeastern border provinces now seemed to be integrated into the general defensive plan to serve as tenaciously defended anchors for rural networks of prepared defense positions and obstacles. As described in one Jilin province report, the new concept incorporated existing plans for city combat by the militia based on the PAD tunnel complexes, but went a step further. Fortified positions specifically intended for defense against enemy ground forces were to be constructed in the urban areas and would be tied in with three types of defensive networks in the countryside—forest, road, and irrigation ditch—which would "crisscross like a checkerboard."⁴⁵ The militia apparently still is tasked to shoulder the main burden of defending these urban strongpoints, but main

force units are known to have been involved in their planning and construction.

This new emphasis on city defense should not be viewed as evidence that the strategy of "luring deep" has fallen victim to its critics' persistent sniping. On the contrary, the integration of urban and rural defense is a concrete manifestation of the PLA leadership's commitment to adapting hitherto sacrosanct Maoist doctrine to the realities of contemporary Chinese defense planning. In this specific instance, the reality is the attacker's vastly superior battlefield mobility. The overall objective is still to "lure the enemy deep," but where the topography is favorable, the concept of "city defense" will be employed to canalize, disrupt, and delay the enemy's advance. In theory, this will reduce the possibility that major PLA main force elements will not be able to withdraw rapidly enough to avoid being outflanked or encircled by Soviet armor spearheads.

Whether this or other aspects of China's defense strategy can be implemented effectively by the PLA cannot, of course, be judged before the fact with any certainty. Much would depend on the degree to which the employment of Soviet forces conformed to Chinese expectations. What is clear, however, is that the combat role of the militia remains a key element of PRC defense planning as the PLA endeavors to develop the doctrinal principles of "People's War under modern conditions."

4. CONCLUSIONS: PEOPLE'S WAR AND CHINA'S EVOLVING DEFENSE STRATEGY

The evidence cited in the preceding chapters makes clear that some authorities on Chinese military affairs have been too quick to write obituaries on the doctrine of People's War. Analysis of the evolution of PRC militia policy in the years from 1973 to 1981 leaves little doubt that People's War doctrine, with its component strategy of "luring deep," remains the keystone of planning for the ground defense of China, and that the militia is regarded by the Chinese leadership as a crucial instrument of that doctrine.

Admittedly, we cannot ignore evidence that problems persist in such areas as militia equipment, training, organization, motivation, and compensation. Nor can we dismiss out of hand evidence of persistent criticism of the militia and of the "luring deep" strategy from within the PLA itself. However, such evidence must be placed in perspective. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, the role of the militia and People's War doctrine in Chinese defense strategy is decided within the Military Commission and not by individuals or organizations at any subordinate level of the PLA. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the vigorous defense and exposition of both these concepts, seen repeatedly since 1977 in speeches and articles by MC members and in authoritative *Liberation Army Daily* editorials, is official policy.

But the commitment of the post-Mao leadership to continued reliance on these "traditional" elements of Chinese Communist military style cannot be gauged entirely by the frequency or stridency of official statements. Indeed, one need not delve too deeply into the recent history of Chinese politics to find numerous examples of policies whose implementation

at the organizational level has been thwarted or hindered by those who acclaimed them loudly in Beijing. Evidence to justify a conclusion that Chinese defensive strategy continues to rely on People's War and the militia must be sought, therefore, at the organizational level and especially within the armed militia.

Much of this evidence is apparent in measures which have been implemented to improve the militia's combat effectiveness. The overall effect of these measures has been:

- Acquisition of more, and more modern, equipment. Of particular significance is the replacement of older weapons with newer, more effective models, such as the Type 68 rifle and the 82mm mortar. This not only has given armed militia units greater firepower, but has eased the logistical burden of supporting militia units in combat by making militia ammunition requirements more compatible with those of the PLA.
- More "regular" organization and stronger leadership. The trend toward rationalization of armed militia order of battle and the accelerated organization of specialized support units has made the armed militia a more balanced and effective force. The proliferation of specialized units has given the militia an improved capability for independent combat operations and thus, in itself, is a strong indication that a major operational role is envisioned for the armed militia in time of war. At the same time, the emphasis on recruiting demobilized servicemen to fill armed militia cadre positions almost certainly has had a salutary effect on unit leadership and training.
- Improved training. Militia combat training has reflected the trend toward greater realism evident since 1975 in the training of the regular forces of the PLA. Of even greater significance has been the increasing integration of PLA and militia unit training, the administration of militia training by PLA main force units, and the concomitant increase of direct General Staff Department

involvement in the formulation and supervision of the militia's combat training program.

- Closer PLA-Militia cooperation. The establishing of close counterpart relationships ("linkages") between armed militia units and nearby units of the PLA (including, most notably, main force ground units) has had two important results in addition to the upgrading of militia training noted above. First, the ability of militia and regular units to coordinate their operations in time of war has been improved. Second, tying the armed militia more closely to the PLA has made the militia more responsive to PLA direction and, consequently, less susceptible to manipulation by political elements opposed to the army's interests.

The militia buildup manifested by these measures clearly was possible only with the active support of the PLA leadership. There seems little doubt that the basis for this support, and the rationale for the post-Mao leadership's militia policy, can be traced to the decisions of the mid-1975 enlarged meeting of the Military Commission and to the outcome of the budget debates of early 1977. The 1975 MC meeting translated into policy Deng Xiaoping's assessment that extensive political, doctrinal, and organizational reforms were required before the PLA could undertake any major program of material modernization. Those in the PLA who nevertheless anticipated a rapid expansion of ground force weapons procurement after the fall of the Gang of Four had their hopes dashed in the budget battles of 1977, when the reordering of economic priorities made unmistakably clear that a substantial upgrading of PLA weapons and equipment would have to be deferred for an extended period.

The need for an alternative to accelerated PLA modernization probably was apparent, therefore, by early 1975, by which time much of Deng's PLA reform program already had been implemented. (The 1975 MC meeting seems to have been convened more to endorse and codify measures already

instituted than to decide on courses of action.) What was needed was an interim solution—a defense policy which would compensate as much as possible for the weakness of the PLA relative to the powerful Soviet forces poised on the northern frontier, and do so at the least possible cost. As subsequent events have revealed, the solution adopted was to reinvigorate Mao's concept of People's War—the doctrine which exploits China's two greatest military assets, space and manpower. In essence, a buildup of the armed militia—the principal operational instrument of People's War doctrine—offered the greatest potential for a rapid and relatively low-cost increase in Chinese defense capabilities.

However, much more was entailed in implementing this policy than simply strengthening the militia's combat capabilities. First, if greater reliance was going to be placed on the role of militia units in independent combat operations and in augmenting the regular forces, the PLA had to insure that local militia organizations were immediately responsive to the operational requirements of the PLA commander in their respective areas. Second, and probably of equal or greater importance in the eyes of many senior army leaders, was the need to restore PLA predominance in those areas where the radicals' Urban Militia campaign had succeeded in weakening or breaking the army's grip on local militia leadership organs. Further, the PLA needed to strengthen its influence over those organs to such an extent that the political power inherent in control of the militia could not be turned against the army. As long as the Gang of Four remained in power, however, the army's ability to strengthen its grip on the militia leadership and control system was circumscribed. Not until changes in the staffing and organization of local Party militia control organs became possible on a broad scale in 1977 did any real progress occur in this area.

An important yet generally overlooked consequence of the PLA's unprecedented involvement in the operational aspects of militia work and its efforts to tighten control over local militia administration is that the armed militia, in effect, has

become a de facto arm of the PLA. This is a remarkable development—not only because the militia never before has been tied so closely to the regular force structure, but also because it reflects a fundamental shift in the historical relationship between emphasis on “militia-building” on the one hand, and emphasis on PLA professionalism and expertise on the other. In the past, the advent of one has coincided with or foreshadowed the eclipse of the other. That both now are stressed simultaneously demonstrates more clearly than anything else the prominence of the militia in contemporary PRC defense policy.

Yet this policy is not immutable. Indeed, the continuing evolution of China’s relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, the ebb and flow of domestic politics, and the degree of success which current economic policies achieve almost certainly will alter Beijing’s perception of the pace and direction which its military modernization program must take if national security needs are to be met. As modernization proceeds, the development of PRC military doctrine and defensive strategy will be influenced accordingly. The resulting changes in China’s defense posture are not likely to occur abruptly or in ways which are readily discernible by foreign observers. Interpretations of the evidence will vary. But by watching closely the amount of attention Beijing pays to the combat readiness of the armed militia and to the operational “linkages” between the armed militia and the regular forces of the PLA, analysts will be rewarded with early and clear insights to future changes in PRC ground forces doctrine and military modernization policy.

The evidence of the past six years indicates that the Chinese will continue to stress the combat role of the militia until they make the hard decision to shift from “window-shopping” in the arms bazaars of the West to actually investing both at home and abroad the considerable sums required to substantially upgrade their ground forces’ hardware. From the time when that decision is made, the days of the armed militia as a key player in PRC defensive strategy will be numbered. For

those who observe Chinese military affairs through the lens of the militia, evidence of the new direction in Beijing's defense planning will be unmistakable.

APPENDIX A. PEOPLE'S WAR DOCTRINE

As Ralph Powell points out, the term "People's War" can be used to refer to either one of two distinctly different Maoist military doctrines.¹ One of these is the doctrine associated with Chinese encouragement of and support for revolutionary movements in the Third World. The most explicit exposition of this doctrine probably was that made by Lin Biao in his September 1965 treatise "Long Live the Victory of People's War!"²

The People's War doctrine with which this paper deals, however, is that which sets forth the principles which, since 1949, have guided planning for the ground defense of China. These principles were laid out by Mao in three articles written between December 1936 and May 1938.³ In these articles, Mao summed up the experience gained by the Communists in the counter-encirclement campaigns against Nationalist forces in the early 1930s and in the months following the outbreak of war with Japan in July 1937. Many of these maxims did not originate with Mao, having been distilled from several sources: traditional Chinese works on the laws of warfare, such as those by the fourth century B.C. strategists Sun Tsu and Wu Ch'i; from contemporary revolutionary doctrine imparted to the Chinese Red Army by Soviet advisors, such as Borodin; from principles of "regular" warfare taught by foreign advisors to the Kuomintang (KMT), such as the German general Von Seeckt; and from a good dose of common sense. Nevertheless, the principles set forth by Mao during this period have come to be regarded widely, both within China and abroad, as a uniquely Chinese codification of the laws of war and as the very essence of Maoist military doctrine.

The following extracts from Mao's three articles (with their abbreviated titles) highlight those aspects of People's War doctrine relevant to the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study:

1. *Strategic Retreat/Luring the Enemy in Deep:*

A strategic retreat is a planned strategic step taken by an inferior force for the purpose of conserving its

strength and biding its time to defeat the enemy, when it finds itself confronted with a superior force whose offensive it is unable to smash quickly. (PSCRW)

As for loss of territory, it often happens that only by loss can loss be avoided; this is the principle of "Give in order to take"....

... If you refuse to let the pots and pans of some households be smashed over a short period of time, you will cause the smashing of the pots and pans of all the people to go on over a long period of time. (PSCRW)

... Whenever we are forced into a disadvantageous position which fundamentally endangers the preservation of our forces, we should have the courage to retreat, so as to preserve our forces and hit the enemy when new opportunities arise. In their ignorance of this principle, the advocates of desperate action will contest a city or a piece of ground even when the position is obviously and definitely unfavorable; as a result, they not only lose the city or ground but fail to preserve their forces. We have always advocated the policy of "luring the enemy in deep," precisely because it is the most effective military policy for a weak army strategically on the defensive to employ against a strong army. (OPW)

2. Mobile Warfare Versus Positional Warfare:

Mobile warfare is the form in which regular armies wage quick-decision offensive campaigns and battles on exterior lines along extensive fronts and over big areas of operation. At the same time, it includes "mobile defense," which is conducted when necessary to facilitate such offensive battles; it also includes positional attack and positional defense in a supplementary role. (OPW)

Mobile warfare is primary, but we do not reject positional warfare where it is possible and necessary.... Positional warfare should be employed for the tenacious defense of particular key points in a containing action during the strategic defensive.... (PSCRW)

To achieve success, the Chinese troops must conduct their warfare with a high degree of mobility on extensive battlefields. . . . This means large-scale mobile warfare, and not positional warfare depending exclusively on defense works with deep trenches, high fortresses and successive rows of defensive positions. It does not mean the abandonment of all the vital strategic points, which should be defended by positional warfare as long as profitable. But the pivotal strategy must be mobile warfare. (OPW)

3. Coordination of Regular and Guerrilla Warfare:

. . . A guerrilla unit has to perform whatever task is assigned by the commander of the regular forces, which is usually to pin down some of the enemy's forces, disrupt his supply lines, conduct reconnaissance, or act as guides for the regular forces. (PSGWJ)

When extensive regular warfare and extensive guerrilla warfare are going on at the same time, their operations must be properly coordinated; hence the need for a command coordinating the two, i.e., for a unified strategic command by the national general staff and the war zone commanders. (PSGWJ)

APPENDIX B. COMPOSITION OF THE MILITARY COMMISSION

How Military Commission membership is determined is not entirely clear. In his address to the PLA Political Work Conference in May 1978, Party Chairman Hua Guofeng noted that it was the first such conference "since the *election* of the Military Commission at the 11th Party Congress" (emphasis added).¹ Taken at face value, Hua's remark would seem to indicate that membership does not accrue to an individual simply by virtue of his holding a particular position within the PLA command structure.

But for those in certain positions at least, "election" to the MC probably is a rather pro forma process. This group likely includes the membership of the Politburo Standing Committee, the Chief of the PLA General Staff (and probably the First Deputy Chief of Staff), the Director and possibly the senior Deputy Director of the General Political Department, the Director and Political Commissar of the General Logistics Department, the Commanders and Political Commissars of the Air Force and Navy and of the specialized arms, and the Director of the National Defense Science and Technology Commission. One Taiwan source also includes the Commanders and PCs of the Military Regions.² Owing to their proximity and their responsibility for the security of the capital area, this indeed may be true for the Beijing MR leaders. However, it is less likely to be true for the leaders of the other MRs, whose principal interests and responsibilities are regional rather than national in scope and whose distance from the capital makes participation on central leadership bodies relatively more difficult.

There is one exception to this last point: the most influential and revered of the PLA's leaders appear to be accorded Military Commission membership regardless of where they may be posted or what their duty assignment may be. Thus, Xu Shiyou was an MC member while serving as commander of Guangzhou MR, and Su Yu, First Political Commissar of the Academy of Military Science, was

appointed an MC Standing Committee member while the Academy's commandant, Song Shilun, was not.³

Those key PLA leaders not accorded regular MC membership nevertheless are provided opportunities to air their views and participate in deliberations concerning military policy issues of great importance. These special sessions, termed by the Chinese "enlarged meetings of the Military Commission," appear to be convened only infrequently on an "as required" basis. Little is known about these meetings, but it is likely that those invited to participate include the top leaders of most if not all of the following: central military organizations and agencies; MRs, MDs, and Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin Garrison Commands; main force armies; and State agencies involved in military research and development, and production.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. "Doctrine," as used here, refers to the aggregate of principles setting forth theoretical rules or guidelines for the conduct of military operations in particular circumstances. In this sense, "doctrine" is an abstract term. A "strategy," on the other hand, is the concrete plan which results from application of doctrinal concepts to a specific military situation—in this case, the plan for defense against an attack into China by Soviet ground forces.

2. See Appendix A for a further discussion of "People's War."

3. For a brief discussion of the constitutional and political implications of this development, see David Bonavia, "No Talking in the Ranks," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 December 1981, p. 26.

4. Harvey Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System* (London: Thornton Cox, 1977), p. 10.

5. MC membership is discussed at Appendix B. Until recently, the Minister of National Defense normally served concurrently as MC First Vice-Chairman. However, the duties of this key MC post apparently were taken over by Party Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping sometime before the ailing Xu Xiangqian was replaced as Defense Minister by Geng Biao in March 1981. With Deng now running the PLA, the practice of "dual-hatting" the Defense Minister appears to have been dropped, at least for the present.

6. Ranks were used in the PLA only during the years 1955–1965. Nevertheless, assignments of senior PLA cadres today in most cases reflect continued observance of the pattern of relative seniority which existed during that time. Just six men have held the post of Defense Minister since it was established in 1954: Peng Dehuai (1954–1959), Lin Biao (1959–1971), Ye Jianying (1975–1978), Xu

Xiangqian (1978–1981), Geng Biao (March 1981–November 1982), and Zhang Aiping (November 1982–present). The first four were made Marshal of the PRC in 1955, while Zhang was made a Colonel General. Geng was not a military man at that time.

7. See, for example, Samuel B. Griffith, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), Appendix B (Defense Organization); and, Rinn Sup Shinn and Donald P. Whitaker, *Area Handbook for the People's Republic of China* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 629.

8. See reference to "General Political Department, Military Commission" and "General Rear Services Department, Military Commission" in *Sichuan Ribao (Sichuan Daily)* 21 January 1960, p. 1; subordination of the General Departments to the MC also is apparent in the classified PLA document released by the US Department of State in 1963, and translated in J. Chester Ch'eng, ed., *Kung-tso T'ung-hsun (PLA Bulletin of Activities), The Politics of the Chinese Red Army* (Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1966), No. 1, 1 January 1961 (hereafter, *Bulletin of Activities*).

9. *Jiefangjun Bao (Liberation Army Daily*, the official PLA newspaper published by the General Political Department, hereafter, *LAD*), 13 July 1977, p. 3; and Richard E. Gillespie and John Sims, "The General Rear Services Department," in William W. Whitson, ed., *The Military and Political Power in China in the 1970s* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 194.

10. Adapted from Glenn G. Dick, "The General Political Department," in Whitson, ed., *The Military and Political Power*, pp. 174–175. Dick also lists the following as GPD functions: (1) providing retired officers with suitable civilian employment, and (2) caring for family members of those killed in the line of duty. These two functions now are the responsibility of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

11. Some analysts have also included the Signal Corps and Antichemical Warfare Corps. These did exist as separate entities until at least 1968, but sometime subsequent to 1969 were relegated to subdepartment status under the GSD. See references to "Signal Subdepartment, GSD" and "Antichemical Warfare Subdepartment, GSD" in *Renmin Ribao (People's Daily*; hereafter, *RMRB*), 12 April 1976, p. 4, and 14 September 1976, p. 2, respectively. The Capital Construction Engineering Corps was formerly a subdepartment un-

der the GLD. It was elevated to a special arm in 1978 (Beijing broadcast, 13 April 1978).

12. *LAD*, 22 May 1956, and 18, 21 March 1958.

13. There are 29 MDs. Guangdong province is divided into Guangdong MD and Hainan MD; Urumqi MR, which includes Xinjiang Autonomous Region and a portion of western Tibet, is divided into three MDs. Jinan MR is unique in that its boundaries are the same as its only subordinate MD, Shandong province.

14. Nelsen believes that in time of war each MR would become an "operational war zone" and cites Guangzhou MR's "command" of the PRC's 1974 seizure of the Paracels (Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System*, p. 10). The Paracels operation probably is not a good example, for in that unique instance—an offensive projection of force into a relatively distant, non-contiguous area—Guangzhou MR was the nearest and therefore most logical location for staging and controlling the operation. A better example, and one which tends to support the argument for "fronts," is the 1979 PRC attack into Vietnam. In that case, the two "frontline" MRs (Guangzhou and Kunming) appear to have been placed under the overall tactical command of a single local commander, possibly Kunming MR commander Yang Dezhi, with the GSD retaining strategic command and direction of the campaign. See Russell Spurr, "Rumblings Along the Frontier," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 February 1979, pp. 32–33.

15. Strength figures compiled from *The Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, issues for 1975 through 1980).

16. The Chinese term for these large formations is *jun*. Foreign writers translate this either as "corps" or "army." The latter term is used here because it conforms most closely to contemporary Chinese Communist usage.

17. *Handbook on the Chinese Armed Forces* (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, 1976), pp. 2–6 through 2–13; hereafter, *Handbook*.

18. Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System*, p. 17.

CHAPTER 1

1. "An Outline for Educating Our Militia in Combat Readiness (First Draft)," an internal PLA document prepared by the political department of an unidentified Military Subdistrict headquarters, dated 2 January 1979, translated in *Issues and Studies* (Taipei), January 1980, p. 100.
2. "Regulations on Militia Work" (Beijing: Ministry of National Defense, 1978), translated in "Documents," *Issues and Studies* (Taipei), February 1980, p. 76.
3. Robert L. Worden, *Chinese Militia in Evolution* (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, 1980), p. 12; *RMRB*, 13 December 1973, p. 3; and Zhejiang broadcast, 28 December 1979.
4. *Guangming Ribao* (hereafter *GMRB*), 18 June 1973, p. 1; *RMRB*, 13 December 1973, p. 3.
5. *Handbook*, pp. 5-21 and 5-25.
6. "Nie Rongzhen speech at National Militia Conference," in FBIS/PRC, 9 August 1978, pp. E4-E7.
7. *Ibid.*, p. E6.
8. "Minbing Gongzuo Tiaoli Xiugai Gao" (Draft Revision of Regulations on Militia Work), Baoshan MSD Headquarters, Yunnan MD, 1 April 1971.
9. "Regulations on Militia Work" (Arts. 7 and 10), pp. 78-79; *LAD*, 4 August 1973.
10. "Regulations on Militia Work" (Arts. 9 and 10), pp. 78-79.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System*, pp. 179-180, and Harlan Jencks, "The Politics of Chinese Military Development: 1945-1977" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1978), 495.
13. See Yu Yang, "People's Militia Powerful in Cultural Revolution," *Feijing Yanzhou*, 10 (10 September 1963), pp. 61-66, in *JPRS* 46920, p. 9.
14. Gansu broadcast, 6 December 1977; *Tianjin Ribao*, 29 November 1979, p. 3, in *JPRS* 75320, 17 March 1980. The term "independ-

ent militia" refers to the armed militia and was in common use from 1971 until about 1974. It is used only infrequently today.

15. "Regulations on Militia Work" (Art. 9), p. 78.

16. Based on "Regulations on Militia Work" (Art. 13), p. 79, and on information obtained personally by the author in the course of travel in China and from refugees, immigrants, travellers to China, and leftist sources in Hong Kong.

17. *LAD*, 11 August 1973.

18. "Regulations on Militia Work" (Art. 10), p. 79. The Chinese media frequently make no distinction between field artillery, antitank artillery and AAA, referring to all three simply as "artillery." Moreover, mortars and recoilless rifles, classified as infantry weapons in Western armies, generally are included in the "artillery" category. As a general rule, references to militia "artillery" in urban areas can be taken to mean AAA; in rural areas, such references normally are to mortar/recoilless rifle elements.

19. See, for example, Beijing broadcast, 12 November 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 21 November 1974, p. M8; Xinjiang broadcast, 8 November 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 14 November 1973, p. M2; and Beijing broadcast, 24 September 1978 (remarks by Liaoning MD commander).

20. *Nanfang Ribao (Southern Daily)*, 26 November 1973, p. 2.

21. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 10), p. 79, and *Tianjin Ribao*, 29 November 1979, p. 3, in *JPRS* 75320, 17 March 1980.

22. *Jiefang Ribao (Liberation Daily—Shanghai)*, 6 June 1979, p. 1, and *Tianjin Ribao*, 20 August 1979, p. 3, in *JPRS* 74433, 23 October 1979, p. 18.

23. See *Handbook*, p. 7-7, for a diagram of the PLA Air Force air defense organization.

24. "Militia Radar Operators Active on Fujian Front," Beijing broadcast, 23 August 1976, in *FBIS/PRC*, 26 August 1976, p. G2.

25. Jiangsu broadcast, 28 March 1979, in *FBIS/PRC*, 1 April 1979, p. O3, and Beijing broadcast, 23 June 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 24 June 1974, p. K1.

26. Guangzhou broadcast, 23 March 1976, in *FBIS/PRC*, 24 March 1976, p. H6.

27. "PRC Fishing Vessels Equipped with Machineguns," *NAVSCAN: Foreign Naval Literature Review* (Washington: Department of the Navy), 15 July 1976, p. 3; and *Quanminjiebing (Everyone a Soldier— Militia Supplement to LAD)*, 25 September 1979.
28. Beijing broadcast, 29 September 1978, in FBIS/PRC, 3 October 1978, p. E2.
29. Jilin broadcast, 12 September 1978; Richard Harris, "China's Children, Trained from the Cradle to Defend the Motherland," *Times* (London), 15 May 1975, p. 18 (refers to Nanjing Railway Vehicle Works); Roxane Witke, "Wu Kuei-hsien: Labor Heroine to Vice-Premier," *The China Quarterly* (London), December 1975, p. 732 (refers to First National Textile Mill, Xianyang, Shaanxi).
30. Anhui broadcast, 19 December 1977.
31. *Zhonggong Nianbao, 1974 (Yearbook On Chinese Communism—Taipei: Institute for Study of Chinese Problems, 1975)*, pp. 5–47 (hereafter, *ZGNB*).
32. *The Military Balance, 1980–1981* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981), p. 63.
33. *Handbook*, pp. 2–15; Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System*, p. 178; Jencks, p. 494; Wang Sheng (Director, Taiwan General Political Warfare Department), "Dilemmas Faced by Hua Guofeng," *Asian Outlook* (Taipei), February 1977, pp. 34–44, cited in Worden, p. 19; and June Dreyer, "The Chinese Militia: Citizen-Soldiers and Civil-Military Relations in the People's Republic of China," in Jonathan R. Adelman, ed., *Communist Armies in Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, forthcoming).
34. Dreyer, *Citizen-Soldiers*.
35. On the role of the Mobilization Subdepartment, GSD, see Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System*, p. 178, and Jilin broadcast, 15 October 1977. For that of the Mass Work Subdepartment, GPD, see Fujian broadcast, 21 January 1978; Jiangsu broadcast, 22 January 1978; and Beijing broadcast, 31 July 1979. For evidence that the role of these two organizations in militia work is preeminent within the PLA General Departments, see the 5 September 1977 *LAD* article on militia work co-authored by the Mass Work and Mobilization Subdepartments of Guangzhou MR. The Mobilization Subdepartment, GSD, edited the *Military Training Handbook for Militiamen*, published in 1960 by China Youth Press (Beijing).

36. The GSD convened a National Militia Communications Work Forum in September 1979 at which leaders of the Signal Subdepartment played a key role (Jiangsu broadcast, 27 September 1979). A symposium on militia antiaircraft gunnery was convened by the GSD in October 1979 (Hunan broadcast, 2 November 1979). The GLD was said to have inspected militia armories in Tianjin in October 1980 (Tianjin broadcast, 20 October 1980, in FBIS/PRC, 24 October 1980, p. R3).

37. For example, Zhejiang Radio reported that Liao Rongbiao, then a Nanjing MR deputy commander, "gave instructions" at a provincial militia conference in October 1973. (When a media account says someone "gave instructions," it usually means he was the senior official present with direct responsibility for the matters under discussion.) Liao also attended a militia conference in Anhui MD in September 1971 (Zhejiang broadcast, 18 October 1973).

38. "All branches of military service, all units, and all military academies should link up with the militia organization in their vicinity and actively conduct militia work. . . ." in "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 38), p. 85.

39. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 38), p. 85; *LAD* drives the point home, emphasizing that "the result of militia work is an important yardstick for measuring the work in provincial Military Districts and Military Subdistricts (including garrison units)," (13 April 1978).

40. PAFDs also are found in universities and technical schools, but since schools do not form armed militia units, these PAFDs are not included here ("Draft Revision to Regulations On Militia Work"). Nelsen mistakenly states that PAFDs exist at MR level and below (*The Chinese Military System*, p. 178). (For evidence that the county is the highest administrative level at which PAFDs are found see *Handbook*, p. A-22, and Zhejiang broadcast, 7 October 1978.) He indicates, also, the PAFDs at county level and below are subordinate to the MSDs only for "administration and staff supervision" (*ibid.*, p. 179). In fact, county PAFDs are PLA headquarters under the MSDs in the provincial chain of command, as evidenced by a 12 February 1977 *RMRB* account of an award ceremony for a county PAFD cadre who had lost his life in the line of duty. As reported by *RMRB*, the cadre had been assigned to the "Hongyuan Xian [county] People's Armed Forces Department, Sichuan Military District." The award posthumously conferred upon the recipient the title "Model People's Armed Cadre" (mofan renmin wuzhuang ganbu) and was

presented by the MR commander on the order of the Military Commission. The ceremony was attended by representatives of all PLA units subordinate to or located in Chengdu MR. These circumstances indicate the cadre was an active-duty PLA officer and support the argument that the county PAFD is a PLA command.

41. "Draft Revision to Regulations On Militia Work."

42. The author has seen signboards at urban district PAFD headquarters identifying these as PLA organs; for example, "PLA Shanxi Province Taiyuan City South District PAFD" (jiefang jun shanxi sheng taiyuan shi nan cheng qu wuzhuang bu).

43. The author was told by a member of a PLA delegation visiting the United States in 1980 that active-duty PLA personnel are not assigned to PAFDs below county level.

44. Shanghai broadcast, 27 June 1967.

45. *LAD*, 13 April 1978.

46. *Bulletin of Activities*, p. 526.

47. Qinghai broadcast, 12 May 1979, in FBIS/PRC, 15 May 1979, p. T1.

48. *Ibid.* Also, Jiangsu broadcast, 10 October 1979, and Hubei broadcast, 25 August 1979.

49. Liaoning broadcast, 13 September 1978.

50. Liaoning broadcast, 28 May 1979, and Qinghai broadcast, 2 June 1979.

51. Zhejiang broadcast, 7 October 1978.

52. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 13), p. 79.

53. *ZGNB* (1974), pp. 5-43.

54. Anhui broadcast, 25 November 1979.

55. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Arts. 13 and 14), pp. 79-80. This interpretation of the cited articles differs from that of DIA, which believes references therein to "the Party committee" mean the local *civilian* Party committee. If this were true, it would indicate a much greater degree of civilian Party control over the militia than appears to be the case. I believe the references in Article 13 and 14 are to the *unit* Party committees for three reasons: (1) The term "local Party

committee" is used widely throughout the "Regulations" and presumably would be used here if that were the organization intended; (2) Articles 15 and 16 contain consecutive references to "the Party committee" and "the local Party committee" in defining authority over militia cadres where context makes clear the first reference is to the unit committee and the second to the civilian committee; and (3) The prescribed relationships of leading militia cadres to their *unit* Party committees (my interpretation) parallel those found in PLA units and is standard PRC organizational practice. (For DIA interpretation, see Worden, *Chinese Militia in Evolution*, p. 9.)

56. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Arts. 26 and 27), p. 82, and *RMRB*, 12 February 1977, p. 1.

57. *Tianjin Ribao*, 29 November 1979, in *JPRS* 75320, 17 March 1980; "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 26), p. 82; and Anhui broadcast, 25 November 1979.

58. Jilin broadcast, 1 September 1978.

59. Anhui broadcast, 23 May 1980.

60. For example, an Anhui broadcast of 19 December 1977 claimed that the Anhui MD had trained a total of 2,540,000 militiamen and militia cadres throughout the province during the year.

61. Zhejiang broadcast, 26 February 1980, and Beijing broadcast, 8 August 1978, in *FBIS/PRC*, 11 August 1978, p. E8.

62. Beijing broadcast, 8 August 1978, in *FBIS/PRC*, 11 August 1978, p. E10; Liaoning broadcast, 13 September 1978.

63. Information obtained by author during a conversation with a former militiaman in Hong Kong, March 1980.

64. Jinan broadcast, 1 June 1980, in *FBIS/PRC*, 7 June 1980, p. O2.

65. Worden, pp. 32-33; *Tianjin Ribao*, 29 November 1979, p. 3, in *JPRS* 75320, 17 March 1980; and *CONMILIT* (Hong Kong), July 1979, p. 35, in *JPRS* 74360, 12 October 1979, p. 35.

66. Chou Tze-ch'iang, "An Anatomy of the Chinese Communist Militia," *Issues and Studies*, June 1972, p. 55.

67. "The Type 63 Automatic Rifle," *CONMILIT* (Hong Kong), July 1979, p. 35, in *JPRS* 74360, 12 October 1979, p. 35. *CONMILIT* states that the Type 68 has been incorrectly designated by Western

sources, and that the Chinese designation of the rifle is "Type 63." ("Type 68" is used herein to avoid confusion.)

68. Beijing broadcast, 8 April 1978, in FBIS/PRC, 14 April 1978, p. E15, and David Bonavia, "New Role for the Militia," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 July 1976, p. 29.

69. *People's Handbook (1965)* (Beijing), p. 217, cited in Chou Tze-ch'iang, "An Anatomy of the Chinese Communist Militia," p. 54.

70. Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System*, p. 182.

71. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 10), pp. 78-79, and "China Militia Buildup Reported," *Japan Times* (Tokyo), 28 May 1976, p. 4.

72. "Regulations On Militia Work" (Art. 31), p. 83; for references to militia armories and AAA depots, see Guangdong broadcast, 15 August 1979, and Liaoning broadcast, 24 May 1980.

73. Jiangsu broadcast, 15 September 1978, and "Regulations On Militia Work" (Arts. 31 and 32), p. 83.

74. See, for example, Beijing broadcast, 12 February 1976, in FBIS/PRC, 13 February 1976, p. M2 (refers to Xinjiang).

75. *Beijing Review*, No. 46, 17 March 1978, p. 3.

76. Personal interview with the Deputy Director of the Taiyuan (Shanxi) Heavy Machinery Plant, March 1980.

77. Beijing broadcast ("PLA Life"), 8 November 1978, and Jiangsu broadcast, 26 February 1979.

78. In the two cases in 1979 where the leaders of MR-level PAD Leadership Groups could be identified or deduced with any degree of certainty, both were MR deputy commanders (Fuzhou and Nanjing); the Deputy Director of the Fuzhou MR Operations Subdepartment is a member of that MR's PAD group and played a prominent role at a Jiangxi provincial PAD conference (Jiangsu broadcast, 1 March 1979; and, Jiangxi broadcast, 13 November 1979).

79. A deputy commander of Henan MD is reported to have organized training exercises in these combat techniques for PAD cadres and urban armed militia units (Beijing broadcast, 8 November 1978; also see Jiangsu broadcast, 1 March 1979).

80. Jiangxi broadcast, 13 November 1979, and Anhui broadcast, 12 December 1979.

81. Jiangxi broadcast, 13 November 1979.

CHAPTER 2

1. *ZGNB* (1975), pp. 2-46, 47. Municipal "Militia General Commands" were established on the level of the PLA municipal garrison commands. Below these were district-level Militia Commands (Heilongjiang broadcast, 14 November 1973).

2. *LAD*, 26 November 1976, cited in Shanghai broadcast, 28 November 1976.

3. Shandong broadcast, 13 January 1977.

4. Mao's nephew, Mao Yuanxin, was political commissar of Shenyang MR, secretary of the Liaoning province Party committee, and vice-chairman of the provincial Revolutionary Committee. After the purge of the Gang of Four, he was denounced as "the Overlord of Northeast China." He has not appeared since October 1976; unconfirmed reports indicated he may have been arrested in Beijing along with the Gang (or shot).

5. Beijing broadcast, 18 December 1976, and Jilin broadcast, 16 September 1978.

6. Jilin broadcast, 12 October 1977, and Liaoning broadcast, 18 June 1976.

7. Liaoning broadcast, 13 December 1977.

8. Heilongjiang broadcast, 10 November 1973, *FBIS/PRC*, 13 November 1973, p. G1; and Heilongjiang broadcast, 19 June 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 20 June 1974, p. L1.

9. The 10th Party Congress in August 1973 saw PLA representation on the Central Committee reduced to 23 percent from the 46 percent elected to the 9th Central Committee (1969). Over the period 1971-1976, the percentage of military men holding provincial Party secretary posts dropped from 60 to 30 percent. ("Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation") *The China Quarterly*, October/December 1973, p. 806.

10. A 10 April 1977 Beijing broadcast revealed that by September 1973 both Wang and Zhang Chunqiao held "important Military Commission positions."
11. Beijing broadcasts, 3 and 4 February 1977, and 10 April 1977.
12. *ZGNB* (1975), p. 6-2.
13. *ZGNB* (1976), p. 2-42.
14. See, for example, Inner Mongolia regional broadcast, 15 November; Jiangxi broadcast, 1 December; Shaanxi broadcast, 18 November; Hebei broadcast, 15 November; and Sichuan broadcast, 23 December 1973.
15. Anhui broadcast, 18 December 1973.
16. "Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation," *The China Quarterly*, January/March 1974, p. 206.
17. *RMRB*, 7 August 1973.
18. PRC Central Directive 24-76, translated in *Zhonggong Yanjiu* (*Studies in Chinese Communism—Taipei*), Vol. 11, No. 7 (15 July 1977), p. 120, as cited by Alan P.L. Liu, "The 'Gang of Four' and the Chinese People's Liberation Army," *Asian Survey*, September 1979, pp. 822-823.
19. Shanghai broadcast, 18 March 1974.
20. *Nanfang Ribao*, 21 November 1974, cited in *ZGNB* (1975), p. 2-47.
21. *RMRB*, 17 October 1974.
22. Guangzhou broadcast, 16 December 1974, and *Nanfang Ribao*, 17 December 1974.
23. *RMRB*, 30 December 1976.
24. *RMRB*, 8 October 1974.
25. "The Lin Biao Trauma," *China News Analysis* (Hongkong), No. 974, 20 September 1974, pp. 3-4. See, for example, "People's Daily Criticizes Lin Biao's Combat Tactics," FBIS/PRC, 12 September 1974, pp. E2-E3; "Criticism of Lin Biao and His Military Line," *Survey of PRC Press* (American Consulate General, Hong Kong—hereafter, *SPRCP*) 74-51, 17 December 1974, pp. 43-49; and

"Criticism of Lin Biao's Military Line," *SPRCP*, 75-4, 21 January 1975, pp. 43-52.

26. Heilongjiang broadcast, 28 August 1974; Jhejiang broadcast, 14 September 1974; Sichuan broadcast, 8 September 1974; and, Yunnan broadcast, 31 August 1974.

27. *Daily Telegraph* (London), 17 December 1974.

28. Liu, p. 823.

29. Luo Siting, "On the Struggle Between Patriotism and National Betrayal During the Northern Sung Period," *Hong Qi*, November 1974, in *Survey of PRC Magazines* (American Consulate General, Hongkong—hereafter, *SPRCM*) 799-800, 25 November-6 December 1974, pp. 26-38.

30. See, for example, Edward A. Rice, "A Radical Break with the Past," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1974, p. 16.

31. Li Shi, "A Just War of Resistance for Self-Defense Against the Slave-Owning Aristocracy of the Huns," *Guangming Ribao* (Beijing), 7 December 1974, in *SPRCP* 5761, 27 December 1974, pp. 89-98.

32. "On Chao Cuo's Strategic Thinking About Guarding Frontiers, Building Fortresses, and Engaging Peasants in Basic Training," *Guangming Ribao*, 27 December 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 30 January 1975, pp. E8-E9. The reference to "devisive activities by feudal lords" may have been aimed at PLA regional commanders who opposed the doctrinal principles espoused in this article.

33. Zhang Guozhan, "The Battle of Cheng Gao Between Chu and Han and the Antagonism of Thinking of the Confucian and Legalist Schools on Military Affairs," *Guangming Ribao*, 31 October 1974, in *SPRCP* 5755, 16-20 December 1974, pp. 53-56.

34. Li Xingbin, "On the Battle of Fei Shui," *Study and Criticism*, No. 12, 14 December 1974, in *SPRCM* 806, 20 January 1975, pp. 12-20.

35. Zhan Libo, "A Critique of Lin Biao's 'On Short, Swift Thrust,'" *Hong Qi*, January 1975, in *SPRCM* 807-808, 27 January-3 February 1975, pp. 45-52.

36. See, for example, "China's New No-Retreat Plan for Soviet Border," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 November 1974, pp. 1, 7; and

"Elite Force With a Vital Role," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 June 1976, p. 17.

37. *Guangming Ribao*, 12 September 1974, in *SPRCP* 5710, 14 November 1974, pp. 7-8.

38. Jing Ping, "The Militia Is an Important Force for Strengthening the Proletarian Dictatorship" *Renmin Ribao*, 13 December 1973, in *SCMP* 74-2, 7-11 January 1974, pp. 81-84.

39. Zhan Libo, p. 50.

40. *Hong Qi*, September 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 23 September 1974, pp. E1-E7.

41. "Documents of the First Session of the 4th National People's Congress," *Special Supplement to China Reconstructs* (Beijing), No. 3, March 1975, p. 21. The "four modernizations" were first set forth as national policy at the 3rd NPC in late 1964.

42. *Peking Review*, 24 January 1975, p. 15.

43. Hangzhou broadcast, 25 July 1975, and Beijing broadcast, 18 June 1976, in *FBIS/PRC*, 21 June 1976, pp. G3-G4.

44. *LAD*, 26 June 1976, and Yunnan broadcast, 18 June 1976.

45. Dreyer, "The Chinese People's Militia," p. 27.

46. See, for example, *LAD*, 10 November 1974 ("San Da, San Fang"); Yunnan broadcast, 11 January 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 17 January 1974, p. E1; Hunan broadcast, 19 June 1974, in *FBIS/PRC*, 24 June 1974, p. H3; Hainan broadcast, 25 July 1975, in *FBIS/PRC*, 28 July 1975, p. H4; and Guangdong broadcast, 29 December 1975, in *FBIS/PRC*, 7 January 1976, p. H11.

47. "Fortification of the Frontier," *Renmin Ribao*, 16 February 1975.

48. CIA Director George Bush testified to a joint congressional subcommittee in 1976 that PRC expenditures for military procurement experienced a "distinct rise" in 1975 ("Chinese Military Production Resumes Growth," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 11 October 1976). See also Liu, p. 827.

49. *Hong Qi*, February 1978, in *FBIS/PRC*, 22 February 1978, and *LAD* editorial, 30 January 1978.

50. Of particular interest is Hong Cheng, "Chi Jiguang's Thoughts on Running the Army," *Lishi Yanjiu (Historical Research—Beijing)*, 20 December 1975, in *SPRCM* 858, an historical allegory which lays out in explicit detail measures adopted 400 years ago to reform and strengthen a Chinese army of the Ming Dynasty. The similarity to measures implemented in the PLA after 1976 suggests strongly that the article in fact revealed key aspects of the program approved at the 1975 Military Commission meeting.

51. *LAD*, 18 February 1978.

52. Beijing broadcast, 10 April 1977.

53. Beijing broadcast, 8 March 1977.

54. See Hongkong *Wen Wei Pao*, 24 April 1978, quoting *LAD* on the effect of Deng's purge on the PLA training program.

55. Beijing broadcast, 4 August 1976, in *FBIS/PRC*, 10 August 1976, p. E5.

CHAPTER 3

1. Broadcast reports of mid-month militia rallies in Nanchang (Jiangxi) and Hangzhou (Zhejiang) made no mention of the Militia Commands which formerly controlled the militia in those cities. (See, for example, Zhejiang broadcast, 21 November 1976.)

2. *LAD*, 27 November 1976, cited in Shanghai broadcast, 28 November 1976. *LAD* "Commentator" articles are authored by MC-level PLA leaders or by specially commissioned writing teams within the PLA high command. In either case, however, they are reviewed and approved by the MC Secretary-General, thus insuring they reflect the official view of the MC.

3. Mao Zedong, "On the Ten Major Relationships" (15 April 1956), cited in Beijing broadcast, 25 December 1976, in *FBIS/PRC*, 27 December 1976, pp. E1-E16.

4. Beijing broadcast, 12 April 1977, in *FBIS/PRC*, 15 April 1977, pp. E22-E23; Beijing broadcast, 14 April 1977; and *Washington Post*, 16 April 1977.

5. Michael D. Eiland, "Military Modernization and China's Economy," *Asian Survey*, December 1977, p. 1145. See also: "Arms Spending Debate Held Test of Chinese Unity," *Washington Post*, 16 April 1977, and "Chinese Leaders Eye Military Updating," *Washington Post*, 8 February 1977.
6. Beijing broadcasts, 20 January 1977 (NDSTC and NDIO), and 4 February 1977 (AMS).
7. Beijing broadcast, 21 June 1977.
8. Beijing broadcast, 3 June 1977.
9. LAD, 10 July 1977.
10. "Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation," *The China Quarterly*, December 1977, pp. 870 and 876.
11. "A Great Strategic Policy Decision," *Guangming Ribao*, 11 August 1977, in *SPRCP* 6419, p. 167.
12. Guo Huaruo, "Great Strategic Switch of the Red Army from Guerrilla Warfare to Mobile Warfare," *Lishi Yanjiu (Historical Research—Beijing)*, 20 October 1977.
13. See, for example, Beijing broadcast of 28 September 1977, in FBIS/PRC, 28 September 1977, pp. A22–A24, and, "Xinhua News Bulletin," NCNA Hong Kong, 21 September 1977, pp. 12–14.
14. LAD, 13 October 1977.
15. LAD, 19 June 1977.
16. Heilongjiang broadcast, January 1978, and Hunan broadcast, 14 March 1978.
17. See Drew Middleton, "Chinese Seeking Modern Weapons from the West," *New York Times*, in *Stars and Stripes (Pacific Edition)*, 29 November 1977, p. 11.
18. ZGNB (1978), pp. 2–43 and 2–45; Jiangsu broadcast, 15 August 1977; Gansu broadcast, 6 December 1977; and Heilongjiang broadcast, 11 January 1978.
19. Jiangsu broadcast, 14 February 1978.
20. The Jiangxi MD was reported in April to have organized 83 such teams. Jiangxi broadcast, 6 April 1977, in FBIS/PRC, 7 April 1977, pp. G1–G2; see also ZGNB (1978), pp. 2–46.

21. Hunan broadcast, 24 May 1977; Jilin broadcast, 15 October 1977; and Yunnan broadcast, 21 October 1978.
22. Henan broadcast, 28 March 1977.
23. Hunan broadcast, 28 June 1978.
24. Hainan Island broadcast, 26 November 1977, in FBIS/PRC, 29 November 1977, pp. H4-H5.
25. Ch'iu Shih-tung, "The Current Phase of Chinese Communist Militia Work" *Issues and Studies*, June 1979, p. 86, and Hunan broadcast, 28 June 1978.
26. Shandong broadcast, 29 September 1978.
27. *Beijing Review*, 17 March 1978, pp. 8-9.
28. Xu Xiangqian, "Heighten Vigilance, Be Ready to Fight," *Hong Qi*, 1 August 1978.
29. Beijing broadcast, 7 August 1978, in FBIS/PRC, 9 August 1978, pp. E1-E10.
30. John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 218.
31. It may be "incorrect," but the perception seems to persist. When I queried a PLA cadre on the subject in October 1980, he replied: "In the PLA, we try to regard those assignments [as "full-time" militia cadres] as important as any other."
32. Beijing broadcast, 8 August 1978, in FBIS/PRC, 11 August 1978, p. E8.
33. Henan broadcast, 30 March 1978; Shaanxi broadcast, 10 November 1978; and Zhejiang broadcast, 28 December 1979.
34. *LAD*, 10 December 1978, and Yunnan broadcast, 21 October 1978.
35. The Cultural Revolution is here considered in the broadest sense as the ten-year period of radical ascendancy—1966-1976.
36. US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, "The Chinese Defense Burden, 1965-74," by Sydney H. Jammes, in *China: A Reassessment of the Economy*, Joint Committee Print (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 460-461.

37. *Strategic Survey, 1979* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1980), p. 85. The IISS estimated total Chinese strength in the immediate border area at 180,000 men.

38. PLA Military Academy staff member, Beijing, May 1979.

39. *ZGNB* (1979), pp. 2-38, 39.

40. *Ibid.*, and Beijing broadcasts (3), 17 and 28 March, 1979; and Tibet broadcast, 18 July 1979.

41. June Teufel Dreyer, "The Chinese People's Militia: Transformation and Strategic Role" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, 21 March 1980), p. 33.

42. Radio "Ba Yi," a clandestine Soviet broadcast facility which attempts to portray itself as a dissident PLA station broadcasting from within China, claimed the border war cost the Chinese slightly less than \$2 billion. While the nature of the source demands such figures be viewed with extreme caution, "Ba Yi" has proved at times in the past to be well-informed on current issues in the PRC.

43. Yang Yong, "Great Marxist Creative Spirit—Commemorating Chairman Mao's 85th Birthday," *RMRB*, 26 December 1978.

44 Beijing broadcast, 19 January 1979.

45. Jilin broadcast, 25 March 1980. See also attention given to study of the defense of Stalingrad in *Jiefang Ribao (Liberation Daily)*, Shanghai, 1 November 1979.

APPENDIX A

1. See Ralph L. Powell, "Maoist Military Doctrines," *Asian Survey*, April 1968, pp. 239-262, for a discussion of the theoretical and ideological principles underlying each of these respective doctrines.

2. Lin Biao, *Long Live the Victory of People's War* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).

3. "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War" (PSCRW) (December 1936); "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan" (PSGWJ) (May 1938); "On Protracted War" (OPW) (May

1938), *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), pp. 77-263.

APPENDIX B

1. FBIS/PRC, 7 June 1978, p. E2.
2. Fan Ching-yuan, "Problems of Military Leadership in Mainland China," *Issues and Studies*, November 1978, pp. 36-37.
3. Xu was transferred to Beijing early in 1980 and subsequently was elevated to the Military Commission's Standing Committee.

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