

# Why the Military Obeys the Party's Orders to Repress Popular Uprisings: The Chinese Military Crackdown of 1989

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*The purpose of this study is to explain the political role of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) during the June 1989 Tiananmen Incident. In light of the fact that a number of retired and active service PLA officers opposed the use of force before June 4 and some even refused to enforce martial law during the crackdown operation, why did no PLA unit defect from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? The author argues that two factors jointly resulted in the obedience of the PLA to the CCP's orders to repress student protesters in June 1989. First, although a number of retired and active service PLA officers publicly opposed the use of force against students, these military men were both unwilling to see the collapse of communist rule and hesitant to be involved in a direct conflict with Deng Xiaoping. These attitudes diluted PLA dissatisfaction with the party's repression orders. Second, alerted that some officers would probably be unreliable if ordered to repress protesters, Deng took action to prevent PLA members from forming any unofficial coordination network which might be used to organize a coup. The measures taken by Deng controlled and manipulated the exchange of information between servicemen during the incident and thus served as additional security mechanisms to prevent the defection of any PLA unit. While the first factor was noticed by outside watchers, the second factor lacked systematic analyses.*

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The purpose of this study is to explain the political role of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) during the June 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Although this incident has been analyzed extensively, an important question regarding the role of the PLA in the incident has never been systematically examined. In light of the fact that a number of retired and active service PLA officers opposed the use of force before June 4 and some even refused to enforce martial law during the crackdown operation, why did no PLA unit defect from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)?

The author argues that two factors jointly resulted in the obedience of the PLA to the CCP's orders to repress student protesters in June 1989. First, although a number of retired and active service PLA officers publicly opposed the use of force against students, these military men were both unwilling to see the collapse of communist rule and hesitant to be involved in a direct conflict with Deng Xiaoping. These attitudes diluted PLA dissatisfaction with the party's repression orders. Second, alerted that some officers would probably be unreliable if ordered to repress protesters, Deng took action to prevent PLA members from forming any unofficial coordination network which might be used to organize a coup. The measures taken by Deng controlled and manipulated the exchange of information between servicemen during the incident and thus served as additional security mechanisms to prevent the defection of any PLA unit. While the first factor was noticed by outside watchers, the second factor has heretofore lacked systematic analyses.

This article consists of four sections, the first of which addresses the main theoretical argument. The author argues that the military disobeys the party's orders if and only if the military (or part of the military) has strong incentives to disobey the party's orders and perceives that such disobedience will succeed. If any one of these two factors is absent, the military will obey the party's orders to fire on protesters. In the second section of this article, the author briefly summarizes the Chinese military crackdown

in 1989 and indicates the reluctance of some PLA elements to enforce martial law. The last two sections respectively analyze the PLA's incentives to obey (or disobey) the CCP's orders and examine the PLA's perception of the likelihood of successful disobedience.

### **Reasons the Military Obeys (or Disobeys) the Party's Orders to Suppress Popular Uprisings**

Before the mid-1980s, several models of party-military relations in communist countries existed.<sup>1</sup> These were the totalitarian model,<sup>2</sup> the interest group model,<sup>3</sup> the institutional congruence model,<sup>4</sup> the participatory model,<sup>5</sup> the developmental model,<sup>6</sup> the contingency model,<sup>7</sup> and the historical developmental model.<sup>8</sup> A summary of these views is that the party pre-

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<sup>1</sup>For reviews of these studies, see Zoltan D. Barany, "Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems: Western Models Revisited," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1991): 82-86, 92-93; Robert V. Barylski, *The Soldier in Russian Politics: Duty, Dictatorship, and Democracy under Gorbachev and Yeltsin* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 9-33; Dale R. Herspring, "Concluding Thoughts," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 326-30; and Dale R. Herspring, *Russian Civil-Military Relations* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996), xvi-xx. Barylski not only reviewed major party-military studies but also provided an excellent description of the historical development of the study of party-military relations.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957); Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: An Essay in Comparative Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

<sup>3</sup>Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>4</sup>William E. Odom, "A Dissenting View on the Group Approach to Soviet Politics," *World Politics* 28, no. 4 (July 1976): 542-67; William E. Odom, "The Party-Military Connection: A Critique," in *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, ed. Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1978), 27-52.

<sup>5</sup>Timothy J. Colton, "The Party-Military Connection: A Participatory Model," in Herspring and Volgyes, *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, 53-75.

<sup>6</sup>Dale R. Herspring, "Introduction," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 207-12.

<sup>7</sup>David E. Albright, "Civil-Military Relations: Developmental Contingencies," *ibid.*, 292-309; David E. Albright, "A Comparative Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," *World Politics* 32, no. 4 (July 1980): 553-76.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan R. Adelman, "Toward a Typology of Communist Civil-Military Relations," in *Communist Armies in Politics*, ed. Jonathan R. Adelman (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1982), 1-13.

served the loyalty of the military by building up complex control and accommodation mechanisms. These mechanisms included civilian and military intelligence services, political commissars, party cells, the security police and/or the militia, political education, careful selection and promotion of officers, and the inclusion of senior officers into the party leadership. Although there was debate among these studies before the mid-1980s over the nature of party-military relations and the differences between Soviet-installed and homegrown communist regimes, these studies agreed that the military was subordinate to the party.<sup>9</sup>

These studies did not satisfactorily reflect the roles of communist armies in 1989,<sup>10</sup> however, because they presumed that party-military relations were immune from the impact of massive uprisings.<sup>11</sup> Remaining subordinated to the party under normal conditions, the military may suspend such subordination to the party in crisis conditions, even if this relation is institutionalized before popular uprisings occur. When popular uprisings have weakened the party's control over society, the party, when deciding not to make concession to protesters, heavily relies on the military to repress the uprisings. Meanwhile, because the party's political control is weakened by popular uprisings, the military becomes more autonomous in deciding whether it should carry out the party's orders. Therefore, once popular uprisings occur, military obedience (or disobedience) becomes an issue which deserves our attention.

The author contends that the military disobeys the party's orders to repress popular uprisings if and only if the armed forces have strong incentives to disobey the party and perceives the likelihood of successful disobedience to be strong.<sup>12</sup> If any one of these two factors is absent, the mili-

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<sup>9</sup>Bradley R. Gitz, *Armed Forces and Political Power in Eastern Europe: The Soviet/Communist Control System* (New York: Greenwood, 1992), 12.

<sup>10</sup>Zoltan D. Barany, "Democratic Consolidation and the Military: The East European Experience," *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 1 (October 1997): 22.

<sup>11</sup>For the convenience of discussion, the author defines "crisis conditions" as the situations in which popular uprisings occur and weaken the party's political control over society to a certain extent and "normal conditions" refer to the absence of popular uprisings.

<sup>12</sup>The occurrence of popular uprisings under communist rule is an important issue. The formation of popular uprisings in communist regimes results from the joint effects of structural and catalytic factors. The former causes social discontent while the latter transforms

**Table 1**  
**The Military's Response to the Party's Repression Orders**

The military's incentive to disobey the party	The military's perception of the likelihood of successful disobedience	The military's response to the party's orders to repress protesters
Weak	Weak	<i>Obedience (Type 1)</i>
Weak	Strong	<i>Obedience (Type 2)</i>
Strong	Weak	<i>Obedience (Type 3)</i>
Strong	Strong	<i>Disobedience</i>

tary will execute the orders, voluntarily or reluctantly (see table 1). Table 1 shows that there are three types of military obedience and one type of military disobedience. The military (or part of the military) has strong incentives to disobey the party's repression orders in crisis conditions when the military expects to obtain a better outcome by disobeying the orders than by obeying the orders. While the party believes that coercion can maximize its interests, the military believes that interests of the armed forces are best serviced if the party selects concession. In this case, the military will be an unreliable instrument to carry out the party's repression orders.

The divergent interests between the party and the military usually imply that the military's interests are distinguishable from the party's before crisis conditions occur. Because most officers in communist countries are communist party members, important is to explain why such individuals prefer their roles as professional soldiers over their roles as party members. Pre-crisis party-military relations help us understand why the military remains reliable or becomes unreliable in crisis conditions. Although pre-crisis party-military relations are context-sensitive, some possible factors that affect the military's incentives to obey (or disobey) the party's repression orders can be identified. For example, if the military enjoys privileges

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social discontent into political protests. The catalytic factors are either protest activities planned in advance by dissident groups or "nonpolitical incidents," which are mass gatherings that are originally held for nonpolitical purposes but later turn into anti-government protests incidentally. See Chien-wen Kou, "Popular Uprisings under Communist Rule and Possible Preventive Strategies the Communist Party May Adopt: A Theoretical Analysis," *Wenti yu yanjiu* (Issues and Studies) (Taipei) 38, no. 12 (December 1999): 61-64.

and influence before crisis conditions occur, the military will have incentives to obey the party's repression orders. The manner in which the party comes to power helps explain the degree to which the military enjoys privileges and political influence.<sup>13</sup> Due to the party-military partnership that is established during the fight for power, homegrown communist parties have trusted their armies as their most powerful guards. Additionally, many party leaders are military leaders, meaning that they are dual-role elite. In this case, militaries should also have incentive to defend communist rule during crisis conditions.

On the contrary, if the party politically discriminates against the military before crisis conditions appear, the military will lack incentive to obey the party's orders to repress popular uprisings. The military usually believes that the forces will be better off after a regime change, particularly when the military perceives that popular uprisings pose no threat to the military's own institutional interests. Preferring to end communist rule, the military thus will not reliably execute the party's repression orders.

Another possible source of military unreliability is when military leaders are entangled in severe power struggles that occur among party leaders before popular uprisings occur. When the party is undergoing a severe power struggle, civilian party leaders may treat popular uprisings as an opportunity to defeat their power competitors by advocating conflicting strategies to handle the crisis conditions, even though they may have no intention of conceding to these external demands.<sup>14</sup> The participation of military leaders in power conflict among civilian party leaders contributes to the unreliability of some military elements. In order to support their preferred civilian party leaders, military leaders are divided on the best way to end the crisis. In this scenario, part of the military will not reliably carry out the party's orders due to a power struggle within the party, rather than a

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<sup>13</sup>Albright and Adelman made similar points. See Albright, "Civil-Military Relations," 302-3; Adelman, "Toward a Typology of Communist Civil-Military Relations," 5-10. This explanation assumes that party-military relations have not been changed significantly since the establishment of communist rule. However, this illustrates the political status of the military only when a communist regime is still under the control of the revolutionary generation leaders.

<sup>14</sup>If civilian party leaders do not believe in their capacity to control or direct popular uprisings, they will temporarily ally their conflict and handle the uprisings first.

confrontation between the party and uprising participants. Since all competing party leaders agree on the importance of the future of communist rule and national unity, a faction may change its initial strategy in order to respond to popular uprisings after defeating its rival factions within the party.

How can one ascertain whether the military will reliably (or unreliably) carry out the party's repression orders? This article suggests that the attitude of strategically situated commanding officers is the best indicator of military unreliability. Some examples of such officers include the defense minister, the chief of the general staff, the commanders of the three services, the commanders of military regions, and the commander of the capital garrison. The military is a hierarchical organization, thus the high command's attitude toward the party's response to popular uprisings demonstrates whether the entire military is reliable in crisis conditions. Public disagreements by the military high command regarding the party's orders clearly reveal the military's reluctance to execute the party's orders. However, in order to avoid tautology, the author will demonstrate in the case study of the PLA that senior officers' disagreements can be found before the military executes the party's orders during critical moments.

If all key commanding officers support the party in crisis conditions, the military is totally subordinate to the party and certainly obeys the party. If these individuals all oppose the party's orders, the military will not reliably execute the party's orders. In these two scenarios, although some officers and soldiers may oppose the high command's position, such objections are unlikely to affect the behavior of the entire military.<sup>15</sup> A more frequent situation is that some commanding officers become unreliable to the party, some remain loyal, and the others take a wait-and-see position. In this situation, consultations and conflicts among military leaders may occur before the military's final response to the party's decision forms. Al-

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<sup>15</sup>In this study, the military and the communist party are internally unitary if the military's command hierarchy and the party's administrative system are each preserved under crisis conditions. Members in these two organizations may express diverse opinions and even severely criticize their leadership. However, the regional branches and functional departments of these two organizations execute their top leadership's final decisions, although sometimes with reluctance. In other words, internal unity does not imply the absence of debates or conflicts within the party or the military.

though some commanding officers are still loyal to the party, the party cannot ensure military obedience without taking steps to preserve the loyalty of the entire military. More important, the party usually cannot identify all unreliable officers because some officers may not openly express their objections to the party's orders. In this case, how the party prevents coordination among unreliable officers for military disobedience is crucial in determining the behavior of the military in crisis conditions.

In the condition that there is no foreign patron country, the military's perception of the likelihood of successful disobedience is affected by both popular uprisings and coordination among unreliable officers. Since the first factor—popular uprisings—is specified as a premise of the theoretical argument of this article, the author focuses on the second factor—coordination among unreliable officers.<sup>16</sup> Military action is highly risky and the success of such action heavily depends on effective coordination among participants. In communist countries, although uprising participants are unarmed, military action in crisis conditions is still risky. This is because the military's subordination to the party may become uncertain after popular uprisings have weakened the party's political control over society. Therefore, whether unreliable officers, if they exist, can develop communication networks to coordinate their action against the party strongly affects their subjective assessment of the possible consequence of disobedience. Then, their assessment will affect their final decision regarding whether or not to obey the party's orders. If unable to form coordination networks, unreliable officers will perceive that their disobedience will be more likely to be crushed eventually by the party and thus are less likely to disobey the party's orders to repress popular uprisings. In this case, most unreliable officers will reluctantly carry out the party's orders. On the contrary, if unreliable officers form effective coordination networks, they will perceive that their disobedience will be less likely to be crushed by the party and thus are more likely to disobey the party's orders.

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<sup>16</sup>In this article, the author assumes that popular uprisings weaken the party's control over society but lack the momentum to overthrow communist rule if the military remains loyal to the party and executes the party's order to repress the uprisings. This shows the crucial role of the military in determining the outcome of popular uprisings.



Unreliable officers may build their coordination networks in two ways. First, when most strategically situated commanding officers are politically unreliable, they can control the existing military command system and use the system to direct the entire military. Second, unreliable officers may build a new coordination system independent of the existing military command hierarchy. The first possibility is unlikely to occur, while the second possibility is even less likely.

From the perspective of unreliable officers, popular uprisings weaken but cannot entirely destroy the party's political control over the military. Before popular uprisings occur, the party considers political loyalty when promoting officers, so part of the officer corps benefit from their political loyalty to the party and are thus usually appointed to control important military posts. These officers should share strong common interests with the party—they fall if the party falls. In addition, although popular uprisings weaken the party's authority, the party still can use its residual power to prevent coordination among unreliable officers—if the party does not disintegrate. The party has many options to prevent disloyal officers from forming coordination networks. For example, the party may replace possible unreliable officers, allow the security police to closely monitor the loyalty of important commanding officers, and select troops from different military units to execute a mission. Hence, one can conclude that coordination among unreliable officers is risky and difficult in communist countries. Their success in building coordination networks heavily relies on the party's failure to take appropriate measures to prevent military disobedience.

While unreliable officers, if they exist, need to form coordination networks for collective disobedience, the party tries to prevent them from forming such networks. From the perspective of the party, unreliable officers may take advantage of this opportunity to disobey the party in crisis conditions. When the party leadership orders unreliable military units to repress the opposition, these soldiers may turn their guns on the leadership. Hence, crucial is for the party to distinguish reliable officers from unreliable ones and to prevent coordination among the latter under crisis conditions. If successful in doing these two things, the party will then ensure the subordination of the military to the party in crisis conditions. In this case,

some individual servicemen may disobey the party yet an entire unit, particularly those large in size, is extremely unlikely to refuse to execute the party's orders. If the party cannot prevent coordination among unreliable officers, these dissenters will disobey the party once the timing is right—when a signal event reveals that the party's control over the military has been strongly weakened by popular uprisings.

The author further argues that the party should take measures to control the information that servicemen can receive prior to a crackdown operation. As mentioned above, although the party tries to measure the loyalty of military officers, uncertainty about their dedication always exists. In order to prevent possible mutiny, the party must control and manipulate the exchange of information among officers and soldiers. The goals of these measures are to reduce the party's uncertainty about the unreliability of key commanding officers and to increase the uncertainty that possible disloyal officers have regarding the intentions of other officers. However, there is no general answer to the question of what exact measures the party should take because the measures are context-sensitive. The author will discuss why and how the party successfully prevents military disobedience using a case study of the PLA.

### **The Tiananmen Crisis and the Reluctance of Some PLA Elements to Enforce Martial Law**

The Tiananmen student movement was one of the largest mass political protests since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. On April 18, 1989, students in Beijing marched to Tiananmen Square to express their grief over former CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang's (胡耀邦) death. The government's refusal to enter into dialogue with these students led to radical protests. In this period, millions of people participated in street protests throughout China. Student protests affected eighty major cities and 60 percent of colleges and universities.<sup>17</sup> In April-

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<sup>17</sup>Alan P.L. Liu, "Aspects of Beijing's Crisis Management," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 5 (May 1990): 505-21.

June 1989, at least 193 autonomous groups formed in all provincial districts.<sup>18</sup> These activities challenged the leading role of the Communist Party, a fundamental operating principle of communist political systems which did not allow social associations to be independent of state control. The students had no intention, however, of challenging the CCP's status as the ruling party of the PRC.

Nevertheless, the students lacked the strength to force the CCP to give up power. Effective coordination among protesters was absent because there was no authoritative dissident leader or organization. Except for Wang Dan (王丹), the student leaders were totally unknown before April 1989. Famous dissident intellectuals such as Fang Lizhi (方励之) did not lead the protests. Furthermore, the students failed to obtain the support of the Chinese peasants. Most peasants had benefited from economic reforms and their daily concerns were, moreover, different from those of students. They also lacked information about the student protests due to communication and transportation difficulties.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the Tiananmen Incident satisfied the premise of my argument—popular uprisings weaken the communist party's control over society but lack the momentum to overthrow communist rule if the military executes the party's order to repress the uprisings.

Student demonstrations deepened the existing schism between reformers and conservatives in the CCP leadership and intensified a struggle between party leaders angling to succeed Deng.<sup>20</sup> Both factions intended

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<sup>18</sup>For the names of these organizations, see the Institute for the Study of Chinese Communist Problems (ISCCP), ed., *Huo yu xie de zhenxiang: Zhongguo dalu minzhu yundong jishi. 1989* (The truth of fire and blood: A documentary on the pro-democracy movement in mainland China in 1989) (Taipei: ISCCP, 1989), 5.86-5.127.

<sup>19</sup>See Richard Baum, "The Road to Tiananmen: Chinese Politics in the 1980s," in *The Politics of China 1949-1989*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 452; Andrew J. Nathan, "Chinese Democracy in 1989: Continuity and Change," *Problems of Communism* 38, no. 5 (September-October 1989): 28; Tianjian Shi, "The Democratic Movement in China in 1989: Dynamics and Failure," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 12 (December 1990): 1202-4; and David Zweig, "Peasants and Politics: China after Tiananmen," *World Policy Journal* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 633-36.

<sup>20</sup>See Cheng Chu-yuan, *Dalu zhengjing jubian yu Zhongguo qiantu* (Political and economic ferments in mainland China and the future of China) (Taipei: Wunan, 1992), 88. This book was first published in English by the Westview Press in 1990.

to take advantage of the crisis to remove their respective rivals. Some reformers, led by CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang (趙紫陽), advocated dialogue with students while conservatives, led by Premier Li Peng (李鵬), encouraged the regime to suppress the movement.<sup>21</sup> On April 24, Li took advantage of Zhao's absence—during his state visit to North Korea—and arranged for a hard-line situation report to be presented to the CCP Politburo Standing Committee regarding the crisis. With Deng's approval, the April 26 editorial of the *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily) defined the student protests as "turmoil." However, on May 4, Zhao in his Asian Development Bank (ADB) speech challenged the *Renmin ribao* editorial by advocating dialogue with the students. On May 6, Zhao loosened press control to expose hard-liners to public criticisms. Li Peng and other hard-liners immediately discredited Zhao's ADB speech by labeling it as merely his personal opinion. On May 16, Zhao told Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that Deng was the decision-maker on most important issues. This revelation led the students to protest fiercely against Deng. Additionally, party discipline was in danger of overall collapse after Zhao loosened press control.<sup>22</sup> In order to protect his personal authority and the regime's integrity, Deng allied himself with conservatives to oust Zhao. On May 19, Li Peng and Yang Shangkun (楊尚昆) announced the party's decision to declare martial law in part of Beijing. After Zhao was ousted, Deng ordered 350,000 troops to enforce martial law. On June 4, the PLA ended student protests in Tiananmen Square with bloodshed.

Although no PLA unit defected from the CCP during the crackdown

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<sup>21</sup>In this article, the author uses "conservatives" and "reformers" to label the two factions that were in conflict over reforms within the CCP. The former advocated slowing down reforms while the latter sought acceleration. The author uses "hard-liners" and "soft-liners" to classify the attitudes of CCP leaders toward the Tiananmen crisis. Hard-liners supported the imposition of martial law while soft-liners opposed martial law. Zhao and his supporters were reformers and soft-liners. Deng was the architect of reform but was also a hard-liner. Although Zhao refused to suppress the students, he did not want to end communist rule. Consequently, he proposed dialogue with the students but did not want to make substantial concessions to them. This impeded the formation of a coalition between the soft-liners and the students.

<sup>22</sup>See Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 276; *Cheng Ming* (Hong Kong), no. 165 (July 1991): 23.

operation, many PLA members showed their reluctance to enforce martial law. After martial law was imposed on May 20, a number of retired PLA officers expressed their objections. These officers included the only two living PLA marshals—Nie Rongzhen (聶榮臻) and Xu Xiangqian (徐向前)—and seven veteran generals—Zhang Aiping (張愛萍), Yang Dezhi (楊得志), Ye Fei (葉飛), Xiao Ke (蕭克), Chen Zaidao (陳再道), Song Shilun (宋時輪), and Li Jukui (李聚奎).<sup>23</sup> Although these retired officers no longer held military posts in 1989, the hard-liners feared that these generals might use their personal connections and prestige to influence active service officers. This phenomenon of an "underground headquarters" has happened at least twice—the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976 and the reinstatement of Deng in 1978.<sup>24</sup> The fact that most of their revolutionary generation colleagues had died before 1989 reinforced the informal influence of these nine veteran officers.<sup>25</sup> Some other retired officers also opposed martial law, but their names and ranks are unknown.<sup>26</sup>

A number of active service officers were also reluctant to enforce martial law before June 4, although only a few of their names and ranks can be identified. Defense Minister General Qin Jiwei (秦基偉) was one such officer.<sup>27</sup> The Defense Ministry under Qin's charge did not announce organizational support of martial law in late May as most departments of the

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<sup>23</sup>*Guangming ribao* (Beijing), May 22, 1989; *Lianhe bao* (United Daily News) (Taipei), May 23, 1989.

<sup>24</sup>He Pin, *Zhongguo jiefangjun xianyi jiangling lu* (Directory of active-duty generals of the Chinese PLA) (Canada: Mirror, 1996), 28-29.

<sup>25</sup>In the 1950s, the CCP appointed ten marshals, ten senior generals, and fifty-seven colonel generals. See Liu Guoxin, Liu Xiao, and He Yaomin, eds., *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo lishi changbian* (A detailed history of the PRC), volume 1 (Guilin, Guangxi: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1994), 441. Only twenty-three of the seventy-seven ranking officers were still alive in April 1989 and two of them died a few months later. Hence, the objections of these nine veteran officers revealed disagreements among retired officers on the question of using force to quell students and posed a potential threat to the reliability of the PLA to enforce martial law.

<sup>26</sup>Baum, *Burying Mao*, 267; Chen Yizi, *Zhongguo: Shinian gaige yu bajiu minyun* (China: Ten-year reform and the pro-democracy movement of 1989) (Taipei: Lianjing, 1990), 163.

<sup>27</sup>On May 16, Qin offered his support to Zhao, but Zhao refused to engage in military conflict with his rivals. See Ross Terrill, *China in Our Time: The People of China from the Communist Victory to Tiananmen Square and Beyond* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 256. Two other sources also reported Qin's reluctance to enforce martial law. See Willy Wo-lap Lam, *China after Deng Xiaoping: The Power Struggle since Tiananmen* (New York: John Wiley, 1995), 204; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 8, 1989, 16.

State Council did.<sup>28</sup> The Beijing Military Region (MR) also was reluctant to enforce martial law.<sup>29</sup> The Beijing MR was the last military region to declare support of the martial law decree and did not do so until several divisions of other military regions had arrived in Beijing.<sup>30</sup> Since Beijing MR troops would bear the brunt of martial law enforcement, the Beijing MR leadership's seemingly slow articulation of allegiance to martial law demonstrated its reluctance to accept the mission. During the crisis, the loyalties of the Beijing MR leadership were divided between General Yang Baibing (楊白冰 director of the General Political Department, GPD) and Defense Minister Qin.<sup>31</sup> Beijing MR Commander Lt. Gen. Zhou Yibing (周衣冰) and Deputy Commander (and concurrent Commander of the Beijing Garrison) Lt. Gen. Yan Tongmao (閻同茂) were reportedly unwilling to use force against students.<sup>32</sup> A poster that called for Li Peng to step down was pasted up inside a mess room of the Beijing MR Headquarters.<sup>33</sup>

Officers of the 28th and 38th group armies—two units under the command of the Beijing MR—also displayed hesitancy to enforce martial law during the crisis. The 28th Group Army Commander Lü Xiangsheng (呂祥勝) was reportedly relieved of duties because his troops did not march to

<sup>28</sup>On May 26, Xinhua (New China News Agency) reported the departments of the State Council that expressed their support to Deng. See *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), May 27, 1989.

<sup>29</sup>A Chinese scholar, who was in Beijing in late May and currently works for the Chinese government, also told this author on December 4, 1996 that the command of the Beijing Military Region was unwilling to repress students during the crisis.

<sup>30</sup>The leadership of the three PLA general departments jointly wrote a letter to encourage martial law troops to obey the CCP on May 22, 1989. The CCP standing committees of the Air Force, the Navy, six of the seven military regions, and the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense expressed their allegiance to the martial law decree on May 22 or 23. The CCP standing committees of the Beijing Military Region and the Second Artillery made similar announcements on May 25. See *Renmin ribao*, May 23-26, 1989. The CCP standing committees of the Academy of Military Sciences and the National Defense University also declared their support for martial law on May 25. See Xinhua domestic service (Beijing), May 25, 1989, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: China* [hereafter *FBIS-CHI*]-89-101 (May 26, 1989): 24.

<sup>31</sup>Michael D. Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China: Leadership Institutions and Beliefs* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 1992), 81-82.

<sup>32</sup>*Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 8, 1989, 16; *ibid.*, September 21, 1989, 21.

<sup>33</sup>Timothy Brook, *Quelling the People: The Military Suppression of the Beijing Democracy Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 81; *Cheng Ming*, no. 140 (June 1989): 89.

the designated destination on time and thus delayed the enforcement of martial law.<sup>34</sup> The most concrete example was the disobedience of the 38th Group Army Commander Maj. Gen. Xu Qinxian (徐勤先). Xu did not move his troops to enforce martial law because he claimed that he was ill after May 20.<sup>35</sup> Xu's unwillingness to obey orders was a surprise to the hard-liners since his father, Xu Haidong (徐海東), was a revolutionary military leader and one of the only ten PLA senior generals appointed in the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> If the hard-liners could not count on Xu—a son of their old comrade—to enforce martial law, whom should they trust? Since the 38th Group Army was one of the best-trained and best-equipped units and was located in Baoding (保定), 120 kilometers south of Beijing, its hesitance to enforce martial law posed a potential threat to the hard-liners and showed divisions within active duty officers over the order. In addition, a number of lower-ranking officers and soldiers from the Beijing Garrison even joined student demonstrations.<sup>37</sup>

As discussed above, some elements of the PLA were reluctant to enforce the martial law decree, although to what extent the disaffection spread in the PLA remains unknown. This observation is consistent with some comments made by the hard-liners and outside observers regarding the role of the PLA in the Tiananmen crisis. For example, Yang Shangkun admitted on May 24, 1989 that commanding officers at the military region level would enforce martial law, but he was unsure of the loyalty of commanding officers at the group army level and below.<sup>38</sup> In late 1989, GPD Director

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<sup>34</sup>*Ming Pao yuekan* (Ming Pao Monthly) (Hong Kong), no. 294 (June 1990): 9.

<sup>35</sup>Lam, *China after Deng Xiaoping*, 205; Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China*, 82.

<sup>36</sup>Han Wenfu, *Deng Xiaoping zhuan* (The biography of Deng Xiaoping) (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1993), 794; Nicholas D. Kristof, "How the Hard-Liners Won," in *Tiananmen: China's Struggle for Democracy: Its Prelude, Development, Aftermath, and Impact*, ed. Winston L.Y. Yang and Marsha L. Wagner (Occasional Papers/Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, no. 2, 1990), 179.

<sup>37</sup>Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China*, 82.

<sup>38</sup>See Yang's speech to the CMC enlarged emergency meeting on May 24, 1989, in *Ming Pao* (Hong Kong), May 29, 1989; quoted in *Ziyou zhi xie, minzhu zhi hua: Zhongguo dalu minzhu de kanke lu* (The blood of freedom and the flower of democracy: Mainland China's rugged road toward democracy), ed. King-yuh Chang (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, 1989), 381.

Yang Baibing revealed that 110 officers and 1,400 soldiers refused to take orders or left their posts during the crisis.<sup>39</sup> These officers included 21 officers with the rank of divisional commander or above, 36 officers with the rank of regimental or battalion commander, and 54 officers with the rank of company chief. Between 1,500 and 3,000 officers were investigated for possible breaches of discipline after the military crackdown operation.<sup>40</sup>

### **Obedience or Disobedience: Conflicting Incentives among PLA Elements**

If some PLA elements were unwilling to enforce the martial law decree, why did such reluctance not turn into the defection of at least part of the PLA from the CCP? This article argues that the PLA was divided both over economic reforms and over whether the PLA is ultimately the army of the people or of the CCP. While some factors encouraged PLA members to disobey the CCP, others strongly discouraged them to do so. In the end, the PLA as a whole was short of strong incentives to defect from the CCP.

Two factors resulted in the objections of some PLA elements to the imposition of martial law. The first was that the PLA had been divided over reforms before 1989. Although promoting military modernization, Deng's reforms brought new problems to the PLA. A side effect of the reforms was the deep involvement of the PLA in business activities. Many PLA members took time from their regular military duties to make money and no longer had the desire to be servicemen.<sup>41</sup> Due to the lack of oversight of PLA enterprises, many units and servicemen used illegal means to make money.<sup>42</sup> The decline of servicemen's socioeconomic status in the 1980s

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<sup>39</sup>*South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), December 28, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI-89-227* (December 28, 1989): 23-24.

<sup>40</sup>Jonathan Mirsky, "Peking Launches Purges of Army to Head off Threat of Mutiny," *The Observer* (London), February 28, 1989.

<sup>41</sup>Lin Chang-sheng, "The Impact of the Involvement of the PLA in Economic Activities," *Zhongguo dalu yanjiu* (Mainland China Studies) (Taipei) 36, no. 6 (March 1993): 69.

<sup>42</sup>Illegal activities included taking bribes, assisting stowaways, smuggling products, producing false medicines, and selling arms and supplies to civilians. See Thomas J. Bickford,



also caused some PLA members to feel discontented with economic reforms.<sup>43</sup> These phenomena hindered servicemen morale, combat readiness, and training. While some PLA members were willing to accept reforms and tried to ameliorate any side effects, others wished to rescind a portion of the reforms.<sup>44</sup> Disputes over reforms among CCP leaders increased the tension between pro-reform and anti-reform servicemen. Since Zhao Ziyang and his supporters advocated dialogue with students, the party's decision to impose martial law spelled failure for them. If conservatives could successfully handle the crisis via coercion, Zhao and his supporters would be permanently weakened. Hence, those PLA members who were sympathetic to Zhao lacked incentive to enforce martial law.

A second factor causing some PLA elements to be unwilling to enforce martial law was the conflicts among servicemen over their duty to be the army of the people versus their duty to be loyal to the CCP. Since the founding of the PLA, members have been indoctrinated with the view that the PLA is the army of the people and that the PLA must be subordinate to the CCP. Because people-PLA relations were as important to servicemen as CCP-PLA relations, officers and soldiers could simultaneously remain loyal to both the people and the CCP only if the CCP represented the people.<sup>45</sup> When the CCP and the people were in conflict, some servicemen might become confused about whether they should obey the CCP's orders to repress the people or help the people against the CCP.

The contradiction between the two views intensified after the CCP leadership became divided—no one knew the party's official position as long as the party leadership remained in conflict. This gave servicemen

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"The Chinese Military and its Business Operations," *Asian Survey* 34, no. 5 (May 1994): 469.

<sup>43</sup>Servicemen used to have a very high socioeconomic status. See Roxane D.V. Sismanidis, "National Defense," in *China: A Country Study*, ed. Robert Worden et al. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1988), 557. However, their advantages disappeared after years of the reforms. Many soldiers complained of the difficulties in finding a wife. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 18, 1988, 31.

<sup>44</sup>June Teufel Dreyer, "The People's Liberation Army and the Power Struggle of 1989," *Problems of Communism* 38, no. 5 (September-October 1989): 43.

<sup>45</sup>Jeremy T. Paltiel, "PLA Allegiance on Parade: Civil-Military Relations in Transition," *The China Quarterly*, no. 143 (September 1995): 787.

more freedom to decide upon the appropriate relationship between the people, the CCP, and the PLA. Those who agreed with the priority of the army of the people could justify their reluctance to repress students by claiming that they were with General Secretary Zhao. Accordingly, in order to prevent possible defection of some PLA troops, Zhao's ouster would have to precede Deng's ordering the PLA to enforce martial law.

Although some PLA elements opposed the use of force against students, the PLA as a whole seemed to lack strong incentives to defect from the CCP for several reasons. First, some PLA members believed that the failed reform of economic institutions was what had caused the Tiananmen crisis, and were dissatisfied with Zhao's intention to take advantage of student protests to further his own political future.<sup>46</sup> These individuals were unlikely to refuse to enforce the martial law decree. Those servicemen who believed that their duty to be loyal to the CCP was more important than their duty to be the army of the people were also unlikely to support the defection of the PLA from the CCP.

Second, due to the dual-role elite and long-term civil-military partnership that was established by winning a civil war, the PLA had enjoyed political prestige and influence within the CCP. For example, the CCP Central Military Commission (CMC) has been the decision-making body for military affairs.<sup>47</sup> Except for the CMC chairman (who is usually the CCP general secretary),<sup>48</sup> all other members of the CMC for the past several decades have been senior generals heading important departments of the PLA. This high political status is also reflected by the fact that the People's Armed Police (PAP) and the People's Militia were not designed to counterbalance the PLA and that top PLA leaders held the memberships of the CCP Central Committee.<sup>49</sup> Although the socioeconomic status of servicemen declined

<sup>46</sup>Xu Sheng, "The Party and the Military in Chinese Communist Politics," in *Jiefangjun de xianzhuang yu weilai* (The status quo and the future of the People's Liberation Army), ed. Lin Chang-sheng (Taipei: Guiguan, 1992), 191.

<sup>47</sup>David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China: The Political Work System in the People's Liberation Army," *The China Quarterly*, no. 127 (September 1991): 534.

<sup>48</sup>Deng is the only exception. He was the CMC chairman in 1981-89 but Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang served as the CCP general secretary in this period.

<sup>49</sup>For a discussion of the relationship between the PLA and the PAP, and between the PLA

in the 1980s, the drop resulted from the emphasis on economic development rather than party discrimination against the armed forces. In addition, since most top commanding officers in 1989 joined the PLA before or during the civil war of 1945-49, they were not likely to overthrow the regime they fought to bring into power.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, the PLA, particularly senior officers, shared the CCP's interests in preserving communist rule. This explains why PLA members were divided over whether or not to repress student protests but did not question the need to continue communist rule.

Furthermore, most PLA senior officers were hesitant to be involved in a direct conflict with Deng, the chairman of the CCP CMC and the paramount leader of the CCP. As the CMC chairman, Deng was the one person who had the legal right to mobilize troops.<sup>51</sup> General Secretary Zhao, who was also the CMC first deputy chairman, had no right to direct troops. Any officer who disobeyed Deng's decisions violated military discipline. Those PLA members who opposed the use of force against students had to face a mutually exclusive contradiction between being good servicemen and following their political consciences. If unwilling to violate military discipline, they had to enforce the martial law decree. Additionally, all top commanding officers in 1989 were supporters of Deng.<sup>52</sup> They were either Second Field Army officers or those who had maintained close personal

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and the People's Militia, see Chien-wen Kou, "The Variety in the Behaviors of Communist Armies During Political Crises: China, Romania, Poland, and the Soviet Union in the Late 1980s and Early 1990s" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1999), 86-91.

<sup>50</sup>These officers include CMC deputy secretaries-general; defense minister; heads of the three PLA general departments; commanders and political commissars of the seven military regions, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Second Artillery Corps; minister and political commissar of the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense; and presidents and political commissars of the Academy of Military Sciences and the National Defense University. In 1989, only Lt. Gen. Liu Jingsong (劉精松), commander of the Shenyang Military Region, joined the PLA after the civil war.

<sup>51</sup>Without authorization from the Central Military Commission, a division, a group army, and a military region cannot move more than a platoon, a company, and a battalion, respectively, within their jurisdiction areas. See Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China*, 123-24. Such a small number of troops apparently could not control the situation in Beijing.

<sup>52</sup>See Dreyer, "The People's Liberation Army and the Power Struggle of 1989," 41; and Ellis Joffe, "The Chinese Army: Coping with the Consequences of Tiananmen," in *China Briefing, 1991*, ed. William A. Joseph (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1992), 42-43.

relationships with Deng for years. Long-term subordination and revolutionary friendships made them hesitant to oppose Deng's decisions, although some were still reluctant to support the martial law decree.

### **The Lack of Coordination among Those PLA Elements Unreliable to Enforce Martial Law**

If the PLA as a whole did not have strong incentive to disobey the CCP's repression orders, why did the hard-liners, led by Deng, order 350,000 troops from about a dozen group armies of at least four military regions to enforce martial law? The author argues that, due to the worry that some unreliable servicemen had not been identified, the hard-liners adopted several additional security mechanisms to ensure the obedience of the PLA to the CCP's orders. These measures prevented officers from forming unofficial coordination networks which might be used to launch a coup against Deng. This helps explain why no PLA unit disobeyed the order to enforce martial law, although some individual servicemen refused to execute the order.

Facing objections to martial law from a number of veteran and active duty officers, Deng was alerted to the possibility of military disobedience during the coming crackdown operation. Deng first reduced uncertainty about the reliability of top commanding officers by attempting to identify their attitudes toward the martial law decree. On May 19, 1989, Deng convened the leaders of the seven military regions in Wuhan and convinced them that he was still in charge.<sup>53</sup> Every MR leader in this meeting received a clear message regarding the necessity of taking sides—either with Deng or with Zhao. A few days later, top military commanders began to announce their support for Deng.<sup>54</sup> The CCP also asked local political and

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<sup>53</sup>Lowell Dittmer, "The Tiananmen Massacre," *Problems of Communism* 38, no. 5 (September-October 1989), 10; *Standard* (Hong Kong), May 22, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI-89-097* (May 22, 1989): 5.

<sup>54</sup>See note 30 above.

military leaderships to support the martial law decree.<sup>55</sup> Major mass organizations, state enterprises, provincial party committees, provincial military districts, and central party and government departments announced their support after May 20.<sup>56</sup> In this phase, PLA units did not coercively remove protesters who blockaded the streets toward Tiananmen Square.

Deng's second step was to persuade those senior officers who previously opposed the imposition of martial law to accept the repression decision and, if persuasion did not work, to disconnect their influence networks. For example, Defense Minister Qin Jiwei kept silent in June although he disagreed with the imposition of martial law. Some veteran officers also stopped their opposition under pressure from Deng and other octogenarians. Three of the seven retired generals—Xiao Ke, Song Shilun, and Yang Dezhi—who opposed the imposition of martial law withdrew their objections after being pressured by Deng and Chen Yun (陳雲).<sup>57</sup>

Those officers who opposed the martial law decree and did not soften their objections would be kept under surveillance or be arrested. The Central Guard Bureau, a unit of the General Office of the CCP Central Committee, reportedly kept a watchful eye on the veteran generals who opposed the imposition of martial law—such as Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen, Zhang Aiping, and Chen Zaidao.<sup>58</sup> Important unit commanders who continued their objections—such as 38th Group Army Commander Xu Qinxian—were arrested before June 4 in order to deter other disloyal officers from disobedience.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>*Ching Pao yuekan* (Ching Pao Monthly) (Hong Kong), no. 143 (June 1989): 24.

<sup>56</sup>Xinhua and local mass media reported between May 19 and May 26 that provincial leaderships supported the martial law decree. See news reports in *FBIS-CHI*, May 22-30, 1989. Also see Wu Mouren et al., eds., *Bajiu Zhongguo minyun jishi* (Daily reports on the movement for democracy in China, April 15-June 24, 1989) (self-published, 1989), 352, 383-84, 403, 421, 443; Chang, *Ziyou zhi xie, minzhu zhi hua*, 285-318.

<sup>57</sup>*Zhongguo zhi chun* (China Spring) (New York), no. 145 (October 1995): 9. They attended the CCP Central Advisory Commission (CAC) Standing Committee meeting on May 26. At the meeting that was presided by Chen Yun, the CAC made the decision to support the martial law decree. For the attendants and the resolution of the meeting, see *Renmin ribao*, May 27, 1989.

<sup>58</sup>*Ming Pao yuekan*, no. 286 (October 1989): 4.

<sup>59</sup>*South China Morning Post*, December 28, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI-89-227* (December 28, 1989): 23-24.

Deng's last step was to create a situation of checks and balances among martial law troops. Although not providing the exact same information, two studies revealed that Deng ordered units from about twelve group armies of at least four military regions and from the 15th Airborne Army (under the command of the PLA Air Force) to enforce martial law.<sup>60</sup> About half of the 350,000 troops that were involved in the crackdown were from non-Beijing MRs.<sup>61</sup> This was an unusual way for the CCP to deal with an internal event because China normally moved units across borders of its MRs only in wartime. The last such movement was in the China-Vietnam War in 1979.<sup>62</sup>

The most plausible explanation for this military deployment is that Deng sought to weaken the strategic importance of the Beijing MR in the crackdown operation to prevent the possible defection of some troops under the MR's command. Units from other MRs served as a force to both quell student protests and deter Beijing MR troops from possible defection. This explanation was supported by the report that some non-Beijing MR units were stationed about one kilometer away from the Beijing MR Headquarters.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, Deng controlled the information about student demonstrations that martial law troops received. The CCP prohibited soldiers from reading local newspapers and watching local TV for weeks.<sup>64</sup> Martial law troops also took political education for weeks before the crackdown.<sup>65</sup>

Deng's control and manipulation over the circulation of information among martial law troops successfully prevented servicemen from forming

<sup>60</sup>See ISCCP, *Huo yu xie de zhenxiang*, 128-30; and Swaine, *The Military and Political Succession in China*, 80-107. For a comparison of these two studies, see Kou, "The Variety in the Behaviors of Communist Armies," 111.

<sup>61</sup>Brook, *Quelling the People*, 73.

<sup>62</sup>*The Economist* (London), June 10-16, 1989, 20.

<sup>63</sup>*Cheng Ming*, no. 140 (June 1989): 89. A student participating in the Tiananmen movement told the author on October 30, 1996 that he heard of the same story during the crisis from a friend whose father was a PAP officer.

<sup>64</sup>Brook, *Quelling the People*, 70; United Daily News, ed., *Tiananmen yijiubajiu* (Tiananmen in 1989) (Taipei: Lianjing, 1989), 425; *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), May 21, 1989.

<sup>65</sup>Cultural Department of the PLA General Political Department, ed., *Jieyan yiri* (One day of martial law), volume 2 (Beijing: Jiefangjun wenyi chubanshe, 1989), 286; Beijing Television Service, May 25, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI-89-101* (May 26, 1989): 32.

unofficial coordination networks which could be used to launch a coup against the hard-liners. Since mutual trust was essential to "illegal" coordination among unreliable officers, the lack of personal intimacy between unit commanding officers made it much more difficult for these officers to develop coordination networks across units. Uncertainty about their colleagues' political attitudes deterred these officers from disobeying Deng's orders. The leaders of an unreliable unit perceived that any defection move of their unit could be counterbalanced by others. Since each unit consisted of a very small proportion of the martial law troops, any single unit was unlikely to defeat a joint attack by other units. If their disobedience could not bring down the current CCP leadership, all dissenters would be court-martialed. Accordingly, the likelihood of successful disobedience was very low and the potential cost of disobedience was very high. This helps explain why no unit defected from Deng in 1989.

### **Conclusion**

Although most information on the Tiananmen crackdown remains secret, available information shows that the role of the PLA in the incident is most likely to be the first of the three types of military obedience mentioned in the first section of this article. The PLA has weak incentive to disobey the CCP's orders to suppress student protests and perceived the likelihood of successful disobedience to be weak. In 1989, the PLA was divided over the martial law decree, although available information could not prove that the disaffection of servicemen to the martial law decree was widespread. Some PLA members were reluctant to enforce martial law due to their sympathy to Zhao Ziyang and their belief that the duty to be an army of the people was more important than the loyalty to the CCP. However, the disaffection of these servicemen did not turn into a strong enough incentive to lead to defection from the CCP for several reasons: due to dual-role elite and long-term civil-military partnership, the PLA had enjoyed political prestige and influence within the CCP; there existed no strong incentive for top military commanders to bring down the regime they fought for decades ago; and military discipline and Deng's prestige as the para-

mount leader made these commanders less likely to disobey the CCP's orders.

Nevertheless, the conclusion that the PLA lacked strong enough incentive to defect from the CCP cannot explain why Deng ordered troops from a number of group armies of different military regions to enforce martial law. The most likely answer to this question is Deng's intention to prevent military disobedience. Alerted by some retired and active service officers' objections to using force against students, Deng took into account possible military disobedience. Although he attempted to identify the loyalty of strategically situated commanders before the crackdown operation, uncertainty about the reliability of military officers still existed since some key officers might not openly express their objections to martial law. Hence, under the condition of incomplete information, Deng adopted several measures to prevent coordination among servicemen. His measures hampered the ability of PLA members to form unofficial coordination networks. If some servicemen did attempt to defect from the CCP, they would perceive that their disobedience would not succeed due to the lack of coordination. Thus, most chose to follow the order to enforce martial law.

This study provides insight into future CCP-PLA relations under the condition of mass uprisings. In 1989, Deng's prestige as the paramount leader of the CCP and long-term personal friendship between Deng and senior officers both contributed to the obedience of the PLA to the CCP's order to repress students. However, after the death of revolutionary generation leaders, the decision-making pattern of the CCP has gradually shifted from one of strongman style to collective leadership style. If the CCP leadership is divided over the way to handle mass demonstrations in the future, no younger generation leader can play the role of paramount leader, as Deng did in 1989, in order to settle down internal conflicts. In this case, the PLA will be more confused about the CCP's official position. Additionally, the long-term personal friendship between PLA leaders and top CCP leaders built upon the fighting for the establishment of the PRC also disappears with the death of revolutionary generation leaders, although the institutional partnership between the CCP and the PLA remains. If the institutional relations between the CCP and the PLA are weakened by popu-



lar uprisings in the future, CCP leaders will have fewer advantages than Deng had in 1989 to ensure the obedience of the PLA to the CCP's orders.

This article also sheds new light on party-military relations during crisis conditions, using an initial case study to test part of the argument. Other cases can also be analyzed with this argument, such as the role of the Romanian People's Army in the 1989 Romanian revolution. If the basic premise of the argument—the party decides to repress popular uprisings—is suspended, one may use the argument to explain why the military obeys the party's decision to end communist rule under the pressure of mass protests. The role of the Polish People's Army in the democratization of Poland in 1988-89 will be an ideal case to be examined.

## Some Historical Perspectives on the Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism

HANS VAN DE VEN

*This article argues for a historically aware approach in current discussions about Western diplomatic policy toward China, a field that has become dominated by the realist and culturalist approaches. The initial focus is on the diplomacy of Chinese nationalism during the Republican period, noting similarities with current Chinese diplomacy. Next is a discussion of the role of diplomatic issues in domestic factional policies. The final substantial section explores cultural and ideological underpinnings of Western as well as Chinese diplomacy, locating these in European scholarly and religious discourses about the nature of nations and their maturation. The conclusion argues for the abandonment of idealist notions about either China or the "international community"; the rejection of paternalistic attitudes toward China; a greater awareness in international diplomacy of the importance of Chinese domestic factional relations; and for the abandonment of the imperialist lens through which Chinese policy-makers continue to see the West.*

**KEYWORDS:** diplomacy; nationalism; new international relations; Taiwan; China

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The current writings by experts on China's international relations exhibit a sense of nervous foreboding. In one of the most balanced and nuanced analyses of post-1949 Sino-American relations, for instance,

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