THE STRUCTURAL INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY IN CHINA’S FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING

ZHONGWEI SONG
University of New South Wales

Foreign policy-making is a process in which decision-makers determine, by assessing both domestic and international variables, what their nation should do at present and where it will stand in the future. The military elites of various countries all have some inclination to exert military influence over the implementation of the foreign policies of their respective governments.1 The common rationale seems to be that, although politics may be beyond the scope of military competence, a professional military needs to promote a political line, owing to its role in the formation and implementation of national security policy (Perlmutter 1977, 8). To this end, the military often resorts to two common forms of influence, one direct and the other indirect. Direct influence comes from formal and explicit recommendations or control over operations, while indirect influence is often felt when the military controls civilian decisions through a monopoly of information or control of options (Betts 1977, 5). In other words, through either direct or indirect influence, or both, the military, both as an interest group and as a symbol of national interest, seeks to make decision-makers do what they would otherwise probably not do.

Given its intricate political involvement in China’s politics, its complicated relations with the party and the state, its transition to a professionalised army and the challenge of accepting a civilian leadership with little military experience, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is particularly likely to seek to exert influence on the shaping of China’s foreign policy. Despite all obvious signs of the significant influence of the PLA,2 however, one of the most difficult questions remains to be answered—in what ways has the military influenced China’s foreign policy-making (Barnett 1977, 96)? In explaining why the military, instead of rebelling with all its political strength, obeys a civilian master, Finer astutely points out that the military suffers from two crippling weaknesses: its technical inability to administer a sophisticated community and its lack of a moral right to rule (Finer 1988, 12). In the context of military influence on policy-making, this statement...
compels one to think seriously about what technical but legitimate means, besides those which clearly constitute either direct or indirect influence, the military can use to compensate for these inherent weaknesses if it wants policymakers to accept its policy preferences. While fundamentally different from western armies in many respects, the Chinese armed forces have obviously used both direct and indirect influence in a fashion similar to their western counterparts. However, considering that politico-military and civil-military relations have long been described as a fusion of military and political leadership within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with Chinese military leaders performing a dual role, military influence deriving from this infrastructure deserves particular analysis. This paper will argue that, despite the PLA’s long-standing use of direct and indirect influence to pursue the military’s foreign policy preferences and demands, there is another equally important dimension of military influence: structural influence, which the Chinese military has long utilised to offset its administrative incompetence and achieve policy-making legitimacy.

Built on entangled army-party-state relations, structural influence is generated by the elite exceeding their military and political roles, and reinforced by military organisations such as intelligence departments or military research institutes that legitimately control both military and civilian agents of decision in the foreign policy system. This dual mechanism furnishes military personnel with dual roles, allowing them to handle both military and military-related civilian jobs across sectors. The impact of the military on the foreign policy-making process becomes significant due to structural influence from the military’s dual role that is able to combine both direct and indirect influence within the formal institutional framework and the informal political structure of key leaders at the top. The significance of structural influence in Chinese politics lies in the fact that it blurs the borderline between direct and indirect influence because of its ability to penetrate and control the civilian premises almost effortlessly. The military has often used it to circumvent or simply overpower the diplomatic sector, thus guaranteeing its own influence on foreign policy-making.

In this paper, which is more suggestive than exhaustive, I will discuss the origins and development of the PLA’s structural influence. Further, I will investigate how the military was able to expand its dual role during the Korean War and how military personnel have continued this tradition of duality by relying on the in-built infrastructure of military intelligence bodies and research organisations, particularly in the post-Mao period. However, I will not cover the military’s structural influence during the 1960s and 1970s. This deliberate omission is largely due to the consideration of the consequences of the launch of the Cultural Revolution, and China’s pursuit of a foreign policy aimed at fighting both superpowers during that period. The former changed the balance of power within the Chinese leadership and wreaked havoc on China’s foreign policy. The latter,
which seriously threatened China’s national interests, provided the faction-ridden Chinese policy-making elite with the impetus to openly dispossess each other of their policy-making authority. The internal struggles caused a chain of actions and reactions in the dynamics of domestic politics. Given the dysfunction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the military takeover of the government at various levels, structural influence became of little importance or use. This was not because it disappeared, but because the military, faction-ridden as it was, had more direct ways to influence policy-makers than through structural circumvention.

PARTY-ARMY RELATIONS AND THE PLA’S STRUCTURAL INFLUENCE

The PLA’s importance in China’s polity in general and foreign policy-making in particular is inextricably linked to its relationship with the CCP and, in later years, the state. This relationship goes back to the early 1920s. During the first period of Communist cooperation with the Kuomintang (KMT) in 1924–27, a new military mechanism was jointly established modelled on the Soviet Red Army’s political commissar system. This mechanism, which first operated at Whampoa Military Academy—a cradle of the CCP’s military activity—was later introduced to the KMT’s National Revolutionary Army (NRA) and other troops. However, as Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) was only interested in inheriting the old military privatisation system in order to control the army by himself, the CCP had to shoulder responsibility for the conduct of political tasks within the military (History Research Department 1997, 5). Based on the Soviet Red Army’s experience, all officers of the army were required to be KMT members. This novel system also set up twin committees in party departments at various levels—one executive committee and one supervisory committee. These two committees served to guarantee that the army belonged to the party and that party representatives and political departments were an integral part of the army. Mao Zedong hailed the system as unprecedented in Chinese history because it changed the army completely (Mao 1991, 380). Having assumed the position of Director of the Political Affairs Department at Whampoa, Zhou Enlai ensured that Communists in the NRA carried out nearly all political tasks during that period.

After the founding of the CCP’s own army on 1 August 1927, the CCP reiterated that it should carry out wide-ranging political tasks, and that a party-representative system must be established in the army to strengthen party branches at rank and file level (Selected Works and Documents of the CCP Central Committee 1989, 340). From then on, party-army relations were characterised by the dual responsibilities of the elite. As Chen Hsiao-Shih sees it, “Party-military
relations in the party control model in fact refer to *civil relations within the party* (Chen 1990, 7). Variously described as “the Party in uniform”, “the dual-role elite” and a case of “symbiosis”, this feature of politico-military relations is rooted in “the guerrilla experience of the Chinese Communist Party” and “was sustained over six decades by the political longevity of the Long March generation” (Paltiel 1995, 784).

In political terms, the strength of the CCP stems largely from its military might. As Mao Zedong later put it, power comes out of the barrel of a gun. Without its army the CCP would not have established the soviet districts where it could gradually develop into a party strong enough to compete with the KMT; nor would it have survived the Long March, having been encircled and pursued by powerful KMT troops. In terms of the historical relationship between the CCP and the PLA, Yang Shangkun, the late president of the National People’s Congress (NPC) and military ironman commented in 1990 that: “The victory of the Chinese revolution was only won after many battles had been fought over scores of years. Therefore, there is a great proportion of historical military documents and materials in those of the Party” (Yang 1990, 4). Only with the army did the CCP eventually take power after enduring the War of Land Revolution (1927–37), the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression (1937–45), and the War of Liberation (1945–49).

Fraught as CCP history is with military struggles and wars against enemies both at home and abroad, the PLA forms an inseparable part of that history: many national leaders were strongly connected to the military (Griffith 1967, 4). Traditionally, political leaders have been able to hold military positions while military commanders have also been allowed to play substantial roles in political decision-making. The complexity of the PLA’s influence on policy-making derives necessarily from both its relations with the party and its role in times of war. In other words, the formation of such a politico-military leadership largely originated in the civil war experience that “formed political leaders skilled in both civil affairs and military command” (Paltiel 1995, 784). Organisationally, this inevitably facilitated PLA influence on both policy-making in general, and foreign policy-making, in the coming years. The potential for overall military influence in policy-making was evident when the CCP snatched power at the end of the civil war in 1949. With a new government in power after years of civil war, the situation was open to military intervention. In identifying military intervention as defined by Samuel Huntington, Finer recognises that the size of a country’s armed forces is of major importance in determining whether it can police that country and how it can govern after it has taken over (Finer 1988, 225).

The assumption of power by the PLA in the late 1940s and the early 1950s appeared, in many respects, to resemble military intervention in that initial communist rule in China was decentralised and dominated by the military
The country was divided into six huge regions governed by military and administrative committees. These military power centres proceeded to occupy key roles at the very apex of the politico-military structure in Beijing shortly before Liberation (Whitson 1973, 521–31). Enjoying unprecedented power, as William Whitson has observed, all senior commanders of each of the field armies secured their positions in the Central Military Commission (CMC), which was at the core of policy-making. Take for example the third plenary meeting of the Central People’s Government of China which was held on 19 October 1949. At that meeting Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Peng Dehuai, and Cheng Qian were appointed as vice chairmen of the Chinese CMC; with He Long, Liu Bocheng, Chen Yi, Lin Biao, Xu Xiangqian, Ye Jianying, Nie Rongzhen, Gao Gang, Su Yu, Zhang Yunyi, Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiannian, Rao Sushi, Deng Zihui, Xi Zhongxun, Luo Ruiqing, Sha Zhenbing, Zhang Zhizhong, Fu Zuoyi, Chai Tingkai, Long Yun and Liu Pei as members of the commission; and Xu Xiangqian as Chief of General Staff of the PLA and Nie Rongzhen as vice Chief of General Staff (Wang 1993, 326). Although the military had no intention of seizing power from the CCP (given the integration of the party and the army), but merely aimed to ensure an orderly political transition, the situation represented a full military takeover of the government. To further explain the situation, Ellis Joffe has analysed the essence of the politico-military structure, arguing that “[t]he regionally-anchored power of these elites, which functioned at the center, enabled them to engage in a process of bargaining with the central leadership and among themselves” (Joffe 1994, 48).

As this bargaining power originated in the dual-role structure of the CCP’s party-army relations, China’s diplomatic system [waijiao xitong] also evolved from a tradition of duality, to which military intelligence bodies were an asset. In 1929, the CCP established an organisation, the Central Party’s Special Agency [zhongyang teke] whose main objectives were to safeguard the Central Party and clandestinely conduct the struggle against the KMT. This special taskforce was the embryonic form of a dual role in both military intelligence and foreign liaison. Under the direct leadership of Zhou Enlai, and by relying on the CCP’s organisations and revolutionary masses, this teke aimed to penetrate the KMT’s police bodies and special agencies in order to discover its attempts or schemes to undermine the CCP. In so doing, it sent out warnings to underground organisations of the party and protected the party’s leadership, central organisations and revolutionary activities (Fang and Dan 1996, 30). After 1933, the CCP and the Red Army suffered heavy losses due to Wang Ming’s radical “rightist” policies. As a result, many of the CCP’s secret bodies and organs in enemy areas were completely weeded out. In order to break the KMT’s press block and let more people outside the “red area” understand and sympathise with the Party and the Red Army, the CCP decided, on reaching Yan’an in 1935, to expand the special agency into a foreign
liaison department \([duwai liantuo jiu]\).\(^5\) As some China specialists have recognised, a government apparatus for foreign affairs was largely irrelevant from the time of the establishment of the Chinese Soviet Republic in 1931 through to the end of the Long March in late 1935. As Donald Klein observes:

> Edgar Snow, on the basis of his 1936 visit to north Shenxi, speaks of a “foreign office”, but he does so in quotation marks. Although he is not specific, one surmises that the apparatus was more of an intelligence operation than a foreign ministry (Klein 1971, 307).

On that trip, Li Kenong was officially introduced to Snow—the first western reporter to be invited to visit the red area—as director of the Red Army’s Political Safeguard Department and concurrently “Foreign Minister”. After the successful reception of Snow, Mao Zedong decided to allocate the best “building” to Li and ordered him to put up a sign for the Foreign Ministry (Fang and Dan 1996, 142–48). In other words, during the early Yan’an period, the military intelligence body at the highest level was also an apparatus used to take care of foreign affairs, albeit in a very limited and preliminary manner.\(^6\)

When the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established, Beijing’s diplomatic contingent was hollow in structure and weak in expertise. In the first two years, the Chinese government only managed to appoint sixteen ambassadors, including Wang Jiaxiang (a Central Committee member) and Zhang Wentian (a Politburo member), two famous CCP leaders, together with another four party veterans and ten high-ranking PLA officers (Shen and Shen 1995, 1–3). Long March survivors occupied ten of the sixteen ambassadorships, while most counsellors and secretaries had been PLA commanders at various levels ranging from regiment to brigade. One ambassador was a Corps commander. With Long Marchers accounting for two-thirds of the diplomats in thirty Chinese embassies in the 1950s,\(^7\) the foreign affairs system was merely an extension of military influence on the new government. Little wonder diplomats in Chinese embassies and consulates general have been regarded as a diplomatic army, an army of the PLA without the uniform.

**MILITARY DUAL-ROLE EXPANSION DURING THE KOREAN WAR**

War usually provides opportunities for a military to expand its influence (Finer 1988, 64). Just as the civil wars nurtured the growth of its military power, the Korean War helped further expand the PLA’s influence into foreign policy-making.
Although Chinese leaders had no intention of entering the Korean War, they showed great concern over the event. On 1 July 1950, in response to Kim Il-sung’s request and for China’s own security, Chinese leaders scrambled to recruit staff for the Chinese Embassy. Zhou Enlai ordered Li Kenong, then vice Foreign Minister and director of the CMC’s Intelligence Department, to select “diplomats-to-be” from the PLA, the only available and reliable source. The criteria for these “diplomats” were strict. Zhou hand-picked Chai Chengwen, director of the Intelligence Department of the Southwest Military Region, to be charge d'affaires ad interim during Ambassador Ni Zhiliang’s absence. Five staff were chosen from the Military Attaché’s Training Center in the Intelligence Department of the CMC.

All war-tempered and militarily experienced, these officers had excellent analytical abilities in terms of warfare. However, despite their flawless military records, they had no diplomatic experience or knowledge of the functions of an embassy. They did not even know the meanings of various diplomatic titles. Nevertheless, they were the cornerstone of the embassy with the addition of two translators, two telegram operators and some transferes from China’s Commercial Affairs Department in Pyongyang. Officially in operation from 10 July, the Chinese Embassy was no more than a military observation panel (Chai and Zhao 1992, 30). In mid-September five more high-ranking officers were sent to the embassy. Kim was relieved at the establishment of the embassy because it clearly indicated Beijing’s attitude to the war (Chai and Zhao 1992, 29–37). Consequently, with the assistance of the PLA, new diplomats with a military background were produced, forming the mainstay of the emerging Chinese diplomatic force.

The PLA’s continual involvement in the negotiations further legitimised the position of military personnel with dual roles in China’s foreign policy system. In describing the Korean War, Walter Hermes has argued that more important battles were fought at the truce talks than on the battlefield (Hermes 1966, ix). Just as General Du Ping viewed them as an admixture of military and diplomatic struggle, Henry Kissinger confirms that “[d]espite its substantial material inferiority, China had managed a stalemate with the American superpower through a combination of military and diplomatic maneuvers” (Kissinger 1994, 491). The importance of the military’s participation in the negotiations was far-reaching because it set a precedent for the involvement of the military in any issues related to national defence, security and traditional interests.

The successful beginning to the negotiations was partly attributed to the dual-role tradition of the PLA, which enabled it to link military issues with politics and diplomacy and thus provide the negotiating team with the required expertise, and partly to the three-tiered structure of the team (Xiong 1997, 31–32). The successful operation of the latter relied on the competency and specialised nature of the former. Subsequent successes helped to build a tradition whereby those
with extensive military experience and diplomatic qualifications were employed to conduct military-oriented diplomacy.

In the three-tiered team structure, the first tier comprised Chinese and North Korean army representatives who were responsible for negotiating directly with their UN counterparts at the truce talks. The second consisted of Li Kenong and Qiao Guanhua, who served as a bridge between the first tier and the Chinese authorities in Beijing, provided guidance for team members, and controlled the progress of the negotiations. The third tier was the CPV (Chinese People’s Volunteer) headquarters, which determined the general situation and coordinated fighting on the battlefield with negotiations. This three-tiered structure shows, to a certain extent, the operation of the PLA’s structural influence. With dual-role personnel capable of working across sectors, it reinforced team strength, guaranteed the accomplishment of Beijing’s grand strategy, eliminated possible negotiating mistakes and successfully integrated the political, military and diplomatic elements of the war.

Li Kenong’s dual role was highlighted by his participation in the armistice negotiations for the Korean War. Since the outbreak of the war, Li Kenong had been extremely busy, from the perspectives of both the CMC and the Foreign Affairs Department (Fang and Dan 1996, 356). On receiving the signal from Malik about armistice negotiations, Zhou began preparing for the truce talks. Given that both Chinese and North Korean representatives, despite being experienced, war-tempered commanders, had little diplomatic experience, Zhou decided to send a team which was also experienced in intelligence and diplomacy to back up the front-desk negotiators. A typical dual-role figure in the CCP, Zhou Enlai was the embodiment of diplomatic and military integration. In his capacity as both Prime Minister and CMC vice chairman, Zhou possessed great authority in policy-making. His influence in both the government and the armed forces was probably second only to Mao’s. His dual role was largely responsible for the longstanding situation whereby a great many of the military elite, with both diplomatic and military experience, have exerted substantial influence in foreign policy-making. Xiong Guangkai is just one of the typical dual-role military generals of the new generation, who are often found at the centre of Beijing’s diplomatic sector. There was a strong bond between Zhou and General Xiong which meant that the dual-role tradition was passed on to the new generation, thus perpetuating the PLA’s influence on foreign policy-making. General Li Kenong was the key bridging figure. Working directly under Zhou since the late 1920s, Li had been one of his most important assistants, and at the same time was regarded as the guru of Chinese intelligence. Zhou believed that Li was the best choice as general representative for the negotiations. To assist him, Zhou assigned Qiao Guanhua, a brilliant professional diplomat. Before the two set off, they were interviewed for a long time by Mao. This was unprecedented (Fang and Dan 1996, 357).
Once the truce talks began, Li was in control of all aspects of the negotiations behind the scenes, although General Nam of the North Korean army took charge of up-front negotiations.\footnote{12} All front-desk negotiators had to report to Li after each session, and based on these reports he issued instructions on how to proceed. Like the Chinese, the American side attached great importance to the truce talks. To buttress the military members of the truce teams, General Ridgway tried to have Ambassador John J. Muccio and American Political Adviser William J. Sebald stationed at nearby Munsan-ni. He suggested that if these two well-known diplomats were within reach they could provide political guidance. However, American military leaders in Washington reacted strongly to this suggestion because they wanted to avoid giving the impression that the talks would go beyond the military stage. With instructions to conduct the truce talks from both military and political angles, and to work under Li’s political and diplomatic guidance, the communist team gained the upper hand once the talks started.

The most telling example of the PLA’s influence was the initiatives taken by Li’s members in searching for a satisfactory demarcation formula through the military duality and three-tiered team structure. From the time agreement was reached on the truce talks until the end of the actual conflict, the negotiations continued on and off for a frustrating two years and seventeen days, mainly focusing on three issues: where the war should be stopped; how the armistice should be supervised; and how POWs should be exchanged. While armistice supervision and POW exchange were politically oriented issues, negotiating an armistice line was primarily a military matter. Concern about the line’s defensibility came from both sides. It was an issue that was bound to be difficult to resolve.

Before the truce talks, the Chinese and North Korean negotiators were instructed to conduct them according to the following three principles: 1) based on mutual agreement both sides should issue orders for the cessation of military hostilities in Korea; 2) the 38th Parallel should be established as the military demarcation line from which the armed forces of both sides should withdraw 10 kilometres and the POWs should be exchanged at the same time; and 3) the armed forces of all foreign countries should be withdrawn in order to realise a cease-fire and armistice within a short period (Fang and Dan 1996, 362–63). In hindsight, these principles appear very rigid, leaving little room for Li’s members to manoeuvre. Given the military stalemate and the superior firepower of the UN forces, it was simply not possible to implement the three principles. Not surprisingly, as the talks proceeded, Admiral Joy, the chief negotiator for the UN forces, ruled out the parallel as the demarcation line. Instead, he advanced a theory of three battle zones—the ground zone, the sea zone, and the air zone—introducing the concept of compensation. He considered that because the air and sea power of the UN Command were confined by a cease-fire, the CVP and North Korean army would gain more. As a result, a truce would give them freedom of movement and
enable them to rebuild within their sector. He therefore concluded that the Chinese and North Koreans should compensate the UN Command by making concessions on the ground (Hermes 1966, 36). Given the military equilibrium, Joy’s theory was swiftly rejected. Consequently, neither side was interested in any proposals or arguments raised by the other, and the talks reached a stalemate.

The difficulties in moving the talks along were two-fold: the constraints of the three principles, and pressure from Beijing and the Soviet Union. These constituted obstacles to any suggestion of digressing from the 38th Parallel principle. Constrained by the three uncompromising principles, the Chinese and North Korean negotiators had to stick to their initial demand for the 38th Parallel as the armistice line, whereas the UN Command negotiators constantly stressed one concession their counterpart should make regarding the concept of compensation: the armistice line could only be established once the “line of contact” was adopted. This demonstrated that the talks would lead nowhere without political concessions or diplomatic flexibility. In order to achieve a breakthrough Li and his staff took the matter into their own hands. By putting themselves in the Americans’ shoes, they came to understand why the Americans refused to accept their proposal. They discovered the reasoning behind the concept: the Americans were afraid of being disadvantaged if there was no compensation since they had occupied more space north of the 38th Parallel (Fang and Dan 1966, 366–82).

Having compared the 38th Parallel with the “line of contact” as possible armistice lines, Li concluded that adopting the “line of contact” as the armistice line would actually be beneficial to North Korea not only psychologically and economically, but also in terms of area. He prepared a detailed proposal arguing for the benefits of adopting the “line of contact” instead of adhering to the principle of the 38th Parallel. By the time the Americans appreciated that the Chinese and North Koreans would be prepared to discuss the “line of contact”, Mao had approved Li’s proposal. However, as much to the regret of the Americans as to Li’s team, this promise of progress failed to be realised due to a fateful series of incidents which occurred before Li could have the proposal presented at the talks. These incidents forced the Chinese and North Korean negotiators to cancel the meetings. Had they not occurred the war might have ended much earlier. Although short-lived, the initiatives taken by Li and his staff help to show how the dual-role military personnel performed rationally and flexibly throughout the negotiating process.

The origins of the PRC’s military intelligence and the historical relationship between military intelligence organisations, dual-role personnel and the diplomatic sector have thus provided the military with access to the foreign policy-making process. Moreover, the PLA’s military and political capacity on the battlefield and in the truce tent institutionalised its role in politics and perpetuated the tradition of its involvement in negotiations whenever issues relating to national security
were involved. As a result, the dual role of military personnel and the three-tiered negotiating approach in China’s foreign policy system came to be accepted with little controversy.

**MILITARY STRUCTURAL INFLUENCE IN THE POST-MAO ERA**

The Korean War served as a transitional period in which the Chinese diplomatic contingent, with the assistance of the military, gradually came out of the PLA’s shadow. Compared with the early 1950s and the Cold War period as a whole, military influence over the technical operations of the diplomatic sector has now diminished, given that the diplomatic system has now become a sophisticated bureaucracy and the constraints on the role of the military in foreign policymaking. However, the impact of the war on China’s conduct of foreign policy was, and remains, enormous.

In summing up the experience of the military’s involvement in the Korean negotiations, General Du Ping has underlined five fundamental points that he believes to be instructive. Firstly, the process of negotiation tends to be not only protracted, but fraught with twists and turns, particularly when the foe is powerful. Under such circumstances, military strength is a decisive factor which, combined with tenacity and continuity, will contribute to a successful outcome. As the Korean War shows, the prolonged negotiations only began to bear fruit once Chinese military prowess had been steadily augmented. Secondly, adherence to basic principles should be combined with a willingness to compromise, in order to be able to move the negotiations forward. Thirdly, to be able to compromise without compromising basic principles, the Chinese need strict organisational discipline. Fourthly, it should be remembered that there is a separate battle to be waged in the news media. Finally, he stresses that negotiations should be conducted in tune with the military struggle. Without military power, one cannot gain the upper hand in negotiations (Du 1991, 655–59). Each of the above aspects requires the military’s constant backup and permanent presence.

As a Chinese military theorist has recently suggested, although many new characteristics may emerge in future military diplomacy, and negotiating strategies may vary, those successfully applied in Panmunjon and their underlying philosophy still have great significance (Xiong 1997). This implies that the dual-role system and the supporting three-tiered team structure, which provided Li’s team with great freedom and authority in the Korean War, should be regarded as an approach which is highly relevant to future diplomatic negotiations. It is clear that, without the extent and depth of this entrenched tradition, the PLA’s structural influence on foreign policy-making could not have been sustained in Mao’s era. Nor could it have grown in the post-Deng era.

To better understand the PLA’s structural influence, three major changes deserve analysis. First of all, the foreign policy system has been decentralised. One sharp contrast between Mao’s era and the post-Mao period lies in the leaders’ approaches to decision-making. Mao was inclined to make decisions by himself. The decision to enter the Korean War exemplifies Mao’s dominant style and persuasive power which enabled him to maintain public consensus until his death. In addition, China’s national security research bureaucracy was then still embryonic. It did not begin to take shape until the mid-1960s, and immediately suffered a setback because of the Cultural Revolution. Without such a mechanism and an environment of bureaucratic competition, the PLA’s views were able to exert considerable influence over leaders’ decisions in the 1950s.

The style of decision-making, however, changed in Deng’s era. The most important channel through which military views influenced foreign policy in the 1980s was through Deng himself as he took over senior foreign policy-making duties from Mao and Zhou. However, “the policies followed have represented in broad terms and agreed upon consensus among senior Chinese leaders who are advised and influenced by a wide range of experts and interest groups in China” (Sutter 1993, 17). As Barnett pointed out and Shambaugh later confirmed, during this period decision-making at the apex of the system shifted from the Politburo to the Central Committee Secretariat and State Council. The decision-making process became more collective and less prone to the whims of an individual leader or the machinations of factions (Shambaugh 1987, 284; Barnett 1977). As a result, the decentralised foreign policy system has increased the influence of those powerful military personnel with dual roles, who are able to participate directly in decision-making by welding information and research outcomes together and putting new policies into action in relation to China’s foreign policy. Their perceptions and actions can affect the leadership’s ability to make decisions and policies.

Secondly, China’s foreign policy system has become more “civilianised” with the PLA’s increased professionalisation, the streamlining of its organisational structure, the significant drop in military representation at Central Committee and Politburo levels and, above all, the resurrection of several civilian research institutes in the post-Mao era. Although long separated from the military components of the foreign policy community, the civilian component is dominant and is becoming more so over time (Shambaugh 1987, 285–86). Despite this, the diplomatic system is still susceptible to military pressure due to its military roots. Admittedly, the “civilianisation” of military research organisations, particularly national defence research organisations, is an on-going process in China, but few true “civilians” have been given positions designated as having dual-role responsibilities. It can be argued that one feature of the past relationship between the military and the foreign policy community remains unchanged—the dual roles of some military personnel, who still grasp hold of the traditional bond between
the two sectors in certain spheres of foreign policy-making. The active role of dual-role military personnel is also closely linked to the military’s intelligence infrastructure. In explaining the importance of intelligence, a military expert stated that: “Owing to the increasing internationalization of information technology development and the integration of social, political and economic development, people now have to employ stealthier, more indirect and more ‘surplus’ combat means when applying war means to resolve bilateral political contradictions” (Jiefangjun Bao, 16 April 1996). This statement shows the clear-cut stance of the military, which links the importance of military intelligence to bilateral relations between states. After all, “a nation’s need for accurate and timely intelligence corresponds to the level of global or regional instability and the scope of its interests worldwide” (Eftimiates 1994, 5). China is no exception.

Thirdly, the generation of “general (in military terms) ambassadors” [jiangjun dashi] was replaced by a new diplomatic generation of “interpreters”. Unquestionably, the “general ambassadors” forged a very close relationship with the PLA. Their style and way of thinking were formed in such a way that their conduct of diplomacy was obviously influenced by their military experience and connections. This generational transition in the diplomatic sector took place at the beginning of the 1980s (Shen and Shen 1995, 2), coinciding with the PLA’s transition to professionalism, in a process of military modernisation in which young and highly-educated military officers were promoted to replace elderly generals. While the disappearance of these “general ambassadors” signals that military-style diplomacy has diminished, it also indicates that the traditional means of exercising military influence has changed to the extent that the role of military duality has become more versatile and flexible. Its vitality and versatility in the 1990s are largely dependent on the two above-mentioned phenomena: the decentralisation of the foreign policy system; and the “civilianisation” of military research organisations, particularly national defence research organisations.

The functions of dual-role military personnel will remain important for a long time to come, given the unique structure which has been built on the army-party-state relationship. The mantle of structural influence will surely be passed on to the next generation of dual-role military personnel, as it was handed down by previous generations. For instance, General Wu Xiuquan, General Xu Xin and their successor Major General Xiong Guangkai are typical of military personnel who have dual roles and can break through the bureaucratic constraints imposed by the foreign policy system and pass on military views to the top. Their opinions are drawn from the PLA’s intelligence system, and the common feature of their roles is that all three have been deputy chief of staff of the GSD, and held the directorship of the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies.

A long-marcher, General Wu was the interpreter for Otto Braun (Li De), a German representative sent by the Comintern. Since the founding of the PRC,
General Wu had been the first Chinese general and representative at the United Nations Security Council. In the 1950s, he worked in the Foreign Liaison Department and engaged in political diplomatic work. Like General Li Kenong, General Wu is well known for his military experience and diplomatic skills. Both are acclaimed for their contributions to China’s foreign policy during the Korean War period. In the 1960s, General Wu was in charge of East European Affairs, thus coming to know Xiong, then a military attaché in East Germany. After Deng was appointed to the CMC as vice chairman and chief of staff of the GSD in 1975, he immediately asked Zhou Enlai to transfer General Wu to the GSD as deputy chief, and General Wu later remained his close personal adviser (Shambaugh 1987, 288; Wu 1985). Xu Xin, the assistant chief of staff, succeeded General Wu on his retirement. A PLA veteran, Xu graduated from the Soviet Union’s military academy and served in the Korean War (Eftimiades 1994, 75). In 1988, Xu was promoted to be general and director of Erbu, and in 1990 he completed graduate work at Johns Hopkins University’s School for Advanced International Studies in the United States (Eftimiades 1994; Swaine 1992, 255). After his election as an alternate member of the CCP in October 1992, Xiong Guangkai replaced General Xu as deputy chief of staff.

Like General Wu Xiuquan, Xiong is a professional “military diplomat”, as he was an assistant to the military attaché, and later the military attaché, in both East and West Germany for a considerable period. Like General Xu, Xiong is a scholar of international politics, holding positions of professor at both Guofang University and Nanjing International Relations College. Much like the late General Li Kenong, the first deputy minister for foreign affairs who was concurrently director of the CMC’s military intelligence department in 1950, Xiong is also knowledgeable about, and experienced in dealing with, handling westerners. Shortly after he was appointed Lieutenant General in 1995, Xiong led a PLA delegation, in the capacity of assistant to the staff-in-chief, to the United States. During this period, Sino-US relations deteriorated severely over the government’s approval of a visit to the United States by President Lee of Taiwan. The Foreign Affairs Ministry was caught off guard by the American decision. The frustration of the military over this turn of events can be easily imagined given its hard-line attitude towards the United States since 1989. After his trip Xiong worked to invite the American media to visit China in an attempt to create a cordial atmosphere for talks between President Jiang and President Clinton in late October 1995. Because it would not have been appropriate for him to invite them in the name of the PLA’s GSD, Xiong invited the American media on behalf of the International Strategic Studies Association of China (ISSAC) (Ze 1995, 38).

Normally, foreign affairs matters involving Jiang are handled by the Central Foreign Affairs Leading Group, and specific arrangements by the relevant
department of the Foreign Affairs Ministry and Jiang’s office. However, Xiong took the unprecedented approach of going over the head of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. With the cooperation of the CMC’s office, he arranged for Jiang to be interviewed by reporters from News Bulletin and the US News and World Report. According to a Hong Kong journal he did not even bother to inform the civilian departments in charge of foreign affairs. Furthermore, he prepared the text of Jiang’s speech for the interview (Ze 1995, 38). Although Xiong’s encroachment on the Foreign Affairs Ministry’s turf offended many senior diplomatic staff, he had achieved what he had set out to do. As the third director of the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies, Major General Xiong has juggled two roles and, by so doing, promoted and preserved the tradition of exerting military influence over China’s foreign policy. Because of his performance in both the military and diplomatic sectors, Xiong was regarded by General Wu as the cream of the intelligence personnel of the “third generation”.

**SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR THE DUAL-ROLE TRADITION**

In order to understand policy-making in China, it is necessary to answer two questions: what roles do military individuals, groups, and institutions play; and what are the relationships between them within the political system? (Barnett 1985, 2). The existing theories and declassified documents have provided a reasonably coherent picture of how the PLA can still influence China’s foreign policy-making, from which we can postulate that the military, apart from up-front pressure from its elite, has a further means of influence derived from the civil-military structure. The PLA’s structural influence would be much less significant without the military’s in-built infrastructure of military intelligence departments and research institutes or strategic studies organisations. Only through these facilities can dual-role military personnel skilfully span both the military and the diplomatic sectors to exert the PLA’s influence. In other words, the interconnection and collaboration between these military intelligence departments and research institutions have greatly enhanced the dual roles of those individuals who have “split jobs” in both the military and diplomatic sectors.

**Military intelligence bodies**

“The PRC’s intelligence apparatus is more than just a support department for policy-makers”, in that it is “inextricably linked to the foreign policy decision-making process and internal methods of economic development and political control” (Barnett 1985, 4). The PLA has a tradition of influencing policy-makers,
given its synchronisation and integral development with the CCP during wartime. In effect, the PLA’s roots in the sphere of military intelligence are not only deeply embedded in, but tied in with, the origins and development of the foreign relations sector. This explains its ascendancy in the foreign affairs arena. While China’s main civilian intelligence agency is now the Ministry of State Security [guojia anquan bu], military intelligence is the responsibility of the “Second Department” [Erbu]—the Military Intelligence Department (MID) of the PLA’s GSD, which is said to be the second largest intelligence organisation in the PRC. The GSD is charged with implementing the policies of the CMC and with the day-to-day running of the PLA, the primary recipients of the intelligence provided by the GSD.

As indicated above, Erbu’s history is much longer than that of the Foreign Affairs Department. During the Red Army period (1927–35), the War against Japanese Aggression (1936–45) and the National Liberation War (1945–49), the former played an extremely important role under the stewardship of Li Kenong. At the beginning of the 1950s, together with intelligence offices of various military regions, Erbu preformed information collection, dissemination and analysis, and its assessment and analytical work directly influenced Mao and his lieutenants. While intelligence is defined as “the collection of information and its collation, analysis and dissemination”, many operations of intelligence organisations, by their very nature, will remain shrouded not only from the public but from most diligent researchers (Shambaugh 1987, 287). However, by looking at its designated responsibilities it becomes clear that the department has played an important role since the 1980s, and that the information that it has provided for leaders has been pivotal in making important strategic changes in foreign policy. According to Nicholas Eftimiades—an intelligence specialist and Sinologist—the responsibilities of Erbu fall into eight categories: Order of Battle, Military Geography, Military Doctrine, Intentions, Military Economics, Biographic Intelligence, Nuclear Targeting, and Military Intelligence Watch Centers (Eftimiades 1994, 76). Judging by the PLA’s influence on Sino-US relations in general and the Taiwan issue in particular, the PLA’s intelligence arm has indeed placed the military in a position where it is capable of directing the leadership through traditionally defined means.

Despite the fact that the military forces do not appear to have the overseas presence necessary to be the nation’s primary collector of foreign information, many Erbu personnel have served under cover as consular officers and the number of intelligence collectors in its ranks would no doubt be quite high (Eftimiades 1994, 77). In addition to the authority of the officers sent by GSD and GPD to the foreign affairs department to present their suggestions on policy-making, the two strategic studies institutes of the Defense Ministry and Guofang (National Defense) University are also responsible
for the provision of war information and analysis to Erbu. Eftimiades has also forecast that:

At present the bulk of the MID (Military Intelligence Department) is still dedicated to the tactical intelligence task of identifying and assessing potential military threats on China’s borders. This focus is likely to continue to change—in light of the diminished Russian and American military presence in Asia—as the PRC attempts to secure a more prominent position in regional affairs; collection and analysis of politico-military, and military-economic information will have to increase to support Beijing’s regional aspirations (Eftimiades 1994, 76).

A clear trend has emerged in the 1990s whereby the military is seconding more staff to the overseas organisations of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Meanwhile, after the resumption of military exchanges with the United States, the military has also gained a decisive say in China’s US policy. Given the complex and tenuous nature of Sino-US relations, and the PLA’s eagerness to have military cooperation and exchange with the United States, coupled with the issue of Taiwan, the PLA is likely to play an important role in relation to both intelligence and foreign policy-making. The legacy of military influence seems set to continue for a long period, and the ripples of military influence are still extending outwards.

**Military research organisations**

With Beijing’s top decision-making system more collectivised and more consultative channels available at lower levels, the foreign policy network has become more decentralised and the range of opinions reaching top leaders more diverse. This constitutes a sharp contrast to the 1950s. It is now undoubtedly true that the findings of these research organisations at various levels will reach political and military leaders and influence their thinking on foreign policy issues. In both theory and practice, various research organisations, civilian and military, have played a significant role in policy-making in relation to national security strategy.

In terms of the scope of its research, an intelligence organisation is similar to a national security research organisation. The only major difference seems to lie in the fact that the former is more secretive and military-focused, while the latter is more open and military-related, operating on the principle that the opponent’s tactical advantages can be offset by strategic planning, deception and moral justness. However, in China there is a distinction between “military research” [junshi kexue yanjiu] and “defence research” [guofang kexue yanjiu]. The former primarily constitutes research on military science, and is carried out exclusively
by PLA research institutes. The latter refers to all kinds of defence-related research which is carried out by research institutes, military or non-military (Wang 1996, 892). To the military research community, these two kinds of research are interdependent and interrelated, as both areas are the responsibility of military research organisations.20

In China’s so-called National Security Research Bureaucracy (NSRB) (Shambaugh 1987) there are an increasing number of institutes and centres affiliated to the PLA. These units all belong to the International Strategic Studies Association of China (ISSAC). Engaged in research on national defence and security and military science, ISSAC exerts great influence over policy-making. At present, there are six major military institutes within this body, specialising in military strategy analysis at both global and regional levels. These are the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies in the General Staff Department (GSD); the Peace and Development Research Center in the General Political Department (GPD); the National Defense and Military Strategy Research Institute in the Defense Ministry; the Strategic Research Institute of Guofang University; the Beijing Systems Engineering Research Institute and National Defense Science, Industry and Information Center of the National Defense Science and Industry Commission; and the CMC’s International Military Strategy Research Center.21

According to Shambaugh, the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies has become the principal research unit of national defence. Its importance derives from its links to the PLA and to dual-role military personnel. In fact, its director, Xiong Guangkai, has also served as deputy chief of staff in the GSD and director of Erbu. Judging from the fact that all its directors, from Generals Wu Xiuquan, Li Da, and Xu Xin to General Xiong Guangkai, have held the position of deputy chief of staff in the GSD, the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies can safely be considered to be an extension of the GSD intelligence division. In some respects it acts as a front organisation to conceal its sensitive military intelligence nature. Its members at various institutes and centres always express their views on China’s military modernisation, weaponry, global situation and international politics in the guise of “outsiders”. All of its members are active military personnel who are either generals or majors in military ranking (Ze 1995, 38). Some were military attachés and sons of veteran generals and marshals. These include Chen Xiaolu, a military attaché in Beijing’s Embassy to Great Britain, and Chen Zhiya, a military attaché to the United States, sons of General Chen Gen. This is in line with a report in the overseas edition of Liaowang which dubbed the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies a “military salon” for the informal exchange of ideas among “young and middle-aged military science researchers, teaching personnel of military academies or colleges, managerial personnel of the scientific and technological industry for national defense, staff-grade officers of the PLA general offices, field troop commanders,
and working personnel active on the military journalism front” (Shambaugh 1987, 297).

In addition to international strategic research and the study of military intelligence, ISSAC members assume tasks that are not suitable for military leaders in uniform, such as contact with the western media and business people. ISSAC also sends researchers to overseas research institutes in the name of non-official academic organisations. The views of ISSAC members are clearly heard by central military leaders and foreign policy elites. In short, the organisations in the ISSAC system constitute an aggregate strength of the military in international strategic studies and research. Occasionally they entrust governmental organisations or academic institutes, such as the State Council’s Policy Research Institute, the Taiwan Research Institute of the Social Science Academy, and the International Relations Institute of Beijing University, to conduct research.

One of the characteristics of these institutes or centres is that they tend to conduct joint research on subjects of common interest. Generally speaking, the analytical products of these organisations reflect the motivations behind, and policy dispositions of, official Chinese foreign policy (Shambaugh 1987, 287). In studying the strategies to be employed to solve the disputed territorial claims to the Spratly Islands, for example, the Strategic Research Institute of Guofang University, together with the university graduate school, claimed in writing for the first time as early as the 1980s that China’s sovereignty over the whole Spratlys in the South China Sea was in danger. They reminded the Chinese government that, according to an international convention, once a piece of land has indisputably been occupied by a nation-state for a period of more than fifty years, the land is internationally recognised as part of the territory of the occupying nation. Based on this interpretation, these two organisations warned that the chain of islands in Nansha had already been occupied for thirty years by some Southeast Asian claimants. This warning caused a sense of imminent crisis among decision-makers. In seeking to prevent the crisis, Zhang Zhen and Liu Huaqing joined forces and pushed the Law of the Sea through the Eighth NPC (Yan 1994, 26). According to this Law, Nansha is China’s sacred territory as it has always been, and an area of two hundred miles around Nansha constitutes China’s territorial waters. The passing of this law greatly stimulated the naval modernisation of the PLA and the PLA’s strategic thinking. Meanwhile it signalled a hard-line approach by Beijing, and occasioned a great deal of diplomatic upheaval, eventually straining China’s relations with the ASEAN countries.

On the issue of Taiwan, in 1994 the CMC’s International Strategic Research Center and the Strategic Research Institute of Guofang University produced a series of strategic plans to be implemented in the event of various contingencies taking place in Taiwan. These strategic plans contributed to the 1996 crisis in the Taiwan Straits. Their strategic planning was also facilitated by related research in
military science. According to Hong Kong’s *Front-Line Magazine*, the coded No. 1 Task of the PLA’s military research—‘Attack on Taiwan through Computer Simulation’—was completed in mid-1994. This meant that the defence of Taiwan had already been penetrated by a computer-based PLA offensive (Qu 1994, 36).

Between 22 and 25 December 1996, the Defense Ministry and the GSD jointly organised a symposium—‘Reports on Strategies and Policies in Relation to Taiwan’. Major military leaders, military research organisations and intelligence units participated in the forum. As a rule, after a military think-tank completes its analysis, the Strategic Studies Office of the CMC and its policy research centre will convene decision-making meetings. Once consensus is reached, military leaders such as Liu Huaqing, a member of the Politburo, or Xiong Guangkai, military representative of the Taiwan Leading Team, report the mainstream ideas of the military to the higher authorities. In this context, the generals’ concerns over China’s foreign policy appeared to have been based on these authoritative, analytical reports, which summed up the mainstream ideas of the army.

In terms of China’s strategic relations with both the United States and Russia, the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies of the GSD, the International Strategic Research Office of the CMC, and the National Defense and Military Strategy Research Institute of the Defense Ministry played a pivotal role in strategic planning after American unipolarity became prominent in the wake of the Gulf War. Based on the perception that the steady and smooth development of bilateral relations between China and Russia could help to contain American hegemony and enhance their own status in international politics (Jing and Yao 1997, 90), they jointly presented a brand-new strategic concept—‘Resist the United States through Russia’—which later became the national strategy (Yan 1994, 27). This strategy is a new concept which is different in nature from the Cold War triangular relationship between the Soviet Union, the United States and China because it “is aimed at strengthening a close relationship with Russia in military, science and technology, and trade in the new international situation”. It is argued that, “[b]y complementing each other and having mutual benefits our modern national armaments, the state of the art technology, can be enhanced to speed up modernisation of our army’s preparedness and strategic weaponry to confront the American hegemonist and its power politics” (Yan 1994, 27). This proposal was accepted by Chinese leaders. Since 1992, leaders (including military leaders) of the two countries have frequently met in the two capitals. China has resumed military contact with Russia, the number of visits by military leaders of both countries has increased dramatically, mutual trust in the military sphere has been enhanced, and arms sales and cooperation in military technology have been initiated.

During his visit to Russia in 1994, Liu Huaqing pointed out in unequivocal terms that relations between the two armies had developed satisfactorily in the
past, and that in the face of a complex and capricious international situation China attached extreme importance to its relations with Russia. During Liu’s visit, the Russian Defense Minister mentioned for the first time that bilateral relations between Russia and China had become more and more a constructive partnership (Jing and Yao 1997, 118–19). This later came to be commonly accepted as a feature of the Sino-Russian strategic relationship. The new strategic triangle was complete. This strategy was also supported by less eminent institutes. Recently, the Strategy and Management Institute, another influential military think-tank, has published a strategic report forecasting that Sino-US relations will be marked by twists and turns. It claims that China should strengthen its strategic relationship with Russia and countries in Southeast Asia. In terms of the far-reaching significance of this strategy vis-à-vis China’s foreign policy, the role of these military research institutes should not be underestimated.

Technically, the PLA’s tradition of involving itself in China’s foreign policy has been enhanced by today’s information era. Military intelligence bodies, research organisations and military intelligence personnel with dual roles have all participated in decision-making processes at various levels and during various phases. The importance of China’s military intelligence organisation lies in the scope of its responsibilities, which virtually encompass the entire domain of military issues and issues relating to national defence and foreign policy. The responsibilities of military intelligence organisations complement the research function of military research organisations, for they are all responsible for providing advice, proposals and recommendations to the decision-making elite. At the 1998 National People’s Congress, which approved a radical plan to cut ministry staff by fifty per cent and shut down fifteen ministries and commissions, a proposal to establish a powerful military research body was passed without a hitch.

CONCLUSION

The enduring function of structural influence in general and by military personnel with dual roles in particular derives from what a senior Chinese diplomat has identified as China’s weakness in implementing its international strategies in comparison with western countries—the undeveloped and unsystematic think-tank network and horizontal linkages. He considers the problem to be even more severe in the case of the senior think-tanks. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, there is no solid basis for think-tank operations, as a result of a disinclination for such establishments during Mao’s period; secondly, the democratised and scientific process of decision-making is now only at a formative stage; and thirdly, there is a major problem with brain-drain in research personnel (Jiang 1996, 14). While these factors partially explain the need to employ dual-role
military personnel, the diplomat neglects to mention, intentionally or otherwise, the inevitable end-result of the inherent dualistic entanglement between the party and the military. Given both politico-military and civil-military relations, the more institutionalised the duality of the Chinese leadership, the more the PLA tends to exert its influence in politics, particularly on foreign policy-making. Without any change in party-army relations, the PLA’s structural influence in the policy-making sphere will be an on-going phenomenon, along with other forms of influence.

The PLA’s overwhelming interest is, as always, in national security, where research is done in such a way that it is integrated with that of the foreign policy system, and on the basis of which military policy is carried out. Because of some general attributes of bureaucracy such as “organizational mission and ideology, the protection and expansion of ‘turf’; jockeying for access to the ‘principal’ policy-makers; sabotaging the implementation of other institutions’ programs etc.” (Shambaugh 1987, 280), this overlapping and interlocking feature of research mechanisms provides the military with obligations, administrative backup and authority when influencing policy-makers. It also provides dual-role military personnel with an environment in which they can constantly move between the two spheres, not only as messengers but also as “technical” planners. As a result, the military’s structural influence will continue to have an impact on China’s foreign policy, particularly in the wake of NATO’s bombing of China’s embassy in Yugoslavia, the escalating tensions across the Taiwan Straits and, above all, the worsening of US-China relations.

NOTES

1When Huntington reasoned that the military profession, by virtue of its recruitment, the socialisation of its members and its professional requirements, usually had a uniformly conservative orientation, he virtually implied that a professional military might be inclined to intervene in national politics. See Lider 1983, 26.

2One of the most noticeable cases shows that under repeated pressure from the PLA, Jiang Zeming, China’s new commander-in-chief, frequently succumbed to the military’s foreign policy preferences and demands for ever-greater resources. For details see Whiting 1995. Another earlier study also shows the military’s enduring influence on Beijing’s incompetent handling of the PLA’s arms trade a few years ago. See Gilks and Segal 1985; Lewis 1990; and Cheung 1996.

3According to Tang Tsou, “the formal structure is a hierarchy with a leader at the top, and the informal political structure consists of a network of informal relations shaped like a spider’s irregular web with the core leader at the center”. See Tang 1995, 127.

4During this period of KMT-CCP cooperation, the KMT’s Special Party Department and Party Representative and Political Affairs Department were established based on the Soviet model.
and China’s particular characteristics. The CCP participated in the establishment of this system and was also responsible for implementing it. Some CCP members were openly known for their membership, and some remained under the cloak of KMT membership.

5 Li Kenong was appointed director of the department, responsible for liaison with the outside and, at the same time, for propaganda. See Fang and Dan 1996, 138.

6 A more foreign affairs oriented body, the International Propaganda Team was later established in Wuhan. It was the first foreign affairs organisation of the CCP that was in close contact with the International Information Team at the headquarters of the Eighth Route Army. As Keith has observed about the ups and downs in the development of China’s foreign affairs system: “A larger group was later established at Chongqing. During the early years of the Chongqing negotiations, satellite missions were established in Guilin and in Hong Kong, but these were closed down as a result of the New Fourth Army Incident of January 1941. In November 1947 all of the CCP negotiators and support staff were hurriedly recalled from Changing, Shanghai and Nanjing. The Central Foreign Affairs Bureau was only established on a regular basis after the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC) established itself in Xibeipo in May 1948”. See Keith 1989.

7 Qi Huaiyuan, president of the Chinese People’s Foreign Friendship Association, interviewed in The Generals and Marshals of the Founding of China, a twenty-part documentary film, volume 6—‘Fenggu’, The Central Television Station.

8 At the outbreak of the war, Beijing appointed Ni Zhiliang ambassador to North Korea. However, recuperating from illness in Wuhan, Ni could not assume the job immediately. Between 1945 and 1950, Ni, a military veteran, served in the PLA in positions including commander of Liaobei Military Region, commander of Nunnan Military Region, commander of Njunjiang Military Region, deputy commander of Ximan Military Region, and Chancellor of Ximan Branch, Dongbei Democratic Joint Military and Politics University, vice chancellor of Dongbei Military Region’s Military and Politics University, and vice chancellor of Zhongnan Military Region’s Military and Politics University. In 1952 he was appointed vice registrar and then registrar of the PLA Logistics Institute, and deputy minister of the advisory ministry of the PLA armed forces. See Shen and Shen 1995, 7–8.

9 Ni Weiting (counsellor), Xue Zonghua (counsellor), Zhang Gengye (first secretary), Zhu Guang (military attaché) and Liu Xiangwen (deputy military attaché). For details see Chai and Zhao 1992.

10 Du 1991, 658. Du Ping, the Director of Political Department at CPV Headquarters, participated in the Korean War from the beginning of the PLA intervention. His involvement in the war ranged from the five offensive campaigns to the armistice negotiations during the following two years of the war. Peng De Huai also commented that the Chinese military was engaged in “an extremely acute, complicated and long-term struggle, mixed with military and diplomatic elements”. See Peng De Huai’s report on the CPV’s Work in Resisting the US and Aiding Korea, dated 12 September 1953 at the 24th Plenary meeting of the Central People’s Government Committee.

11 After 1949, Li was the director of the CMC Intelligence Department and concurrently the first vice prime minister. In 1955, Mao conferred the title of Full General on him.

12 The communist negotiating team mainly consisted of Lieutenant General Nam Il, Major General Lee Sang Cho, and Major General Chang Pyong San, Lieutenant General of the DPRK Army, and Lieutenant General Deng Hua and Major General Jie Fang of the CPV who were conducting the truce talks at the “front desk”.

13 Tang Jiaxuan, the current Chinese foreign minister, is a typical diplomat, who has been promoted from the generation of “interpreter ambassadors”.

14 Otto Braun was also called Li De or Li Te in Chinese. He came to the CCP’s Soviet districts as a German representative of the Comintern and subsequently took a high position both politically and militarily in the CCP and the Red Army. For details see Snow 1973, 411–13.

15 Since the “struggle” against Taiwan in 1996, the military has acquired more power in foreign policy-making. Not only does the military have more say on the issue of Taiwan, its weight in foreign policy-making as a whole has increased. One factor contributing to the rise of the military is the fact that the foreign affairs system has failed to handle the Taiwan issue and Sino-US relations adequately. The event that triggered the military ascendancy in foreign affairs was Lee Teng-hui’s visit to the United States. The dual-role military advisers in the foreign affairs system foretold, before it was clear if the United States would grant Lee’s visa, that Lee would definitely be granted a visa and that the visit would go ahead. The military view was deemed unlikely by the foreign affairs regime. In the event, the military was correct and the military’s role in decision-making was consolidated.

16 The first generation includes General Wu Xiuquan, the late General Li Kenong, deputy chief of staff in the GSD in the 1950s, and General Li Tao, the first director of the Third Department (G-3) in the GSD. The second generation is represented by retirees such as Xiong Xianghui, deputy director of Erbu, and Luo Qingchang, deputy director of the GSD’s intelligence department.

17 General Li Kenong, the predecessor of the Second Department, played a special role in engineering the peaceful liberation of Beiping (Beijing), Hunan and Yunnan, and in organising the uprising of the Nationalists’ airforce and navy. These events greatly shortened the CCP’s estimated timeframe for “liberating” China and reduced the human toll. Unfortunately, the involvement of the PLA’s intelligence department in these events is somehow not mentioned in detail. See Fang and Dan 1996.

18 Apart from the generals’ direct pressure on decision-making, the various strategic research institutes and organisations, particularly those at higher levels, are also inclined to exert their influence on the thinking of the collective leadership or of individual leaders. Given that generals are able to collectively voice their views, and that the offices of veteran leaders retain the power to organise and dispatch investigation teams, to draft reports and proposals on policy issues, and to participate in meetings formulating major policy decisions and guidelines, not only the style but the process of decision-making in these top-level coordinating mechanisms has changed. See Li 1994, 22–24. Professor Garver also forcefully argues that the offices of senior veteran leaders, the majority of whom are military veterans, are another channel through which the military can influence foreign policy. “As of early 1994 fourteen senior leaders were allowed to maintain such offices: Yang Shangkun, Peng Zhen, Yao Yilin, Yang Dezhi, Li Desheng, Zhang Aiping, Yu Qiuli, Gu Mu, Wan Li, Bo Yibo, Song Rengqiong, and Song Ping along with, of course, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun. Of these fourteen elders all but one (Song Ping) had significant military experience during the pre-1949 period. Nine served for periods of time in military positions after the founding of the People’s Republic. Five served predominantly in the military xitong [system] after 1949. These backgrounds gave veteran leaders’ offices connections with, if not a particular interest in, military leaders.” See Garver 1996, 253–55.

19 Focusing on the forum of the NPC, Garver identified the trend: “More important is the flow of the information the other way, from the bottom upwards. This takes place in group discussions by NPC delegates of reports submitted by governmental organs and in discussions...
between delegates and governmental leaders. As part of its effort to give increased substance to its responsibility to supervise the executive organs of China’s government, NPC delegates have begun giving more detailed and critical deliberation to reports submitted by executive organs, have begun taking greater initiative in drafting laws, and shown greater willingness to ask sharp questions, advance criticism and even occasionally reject the proposals of the executive branch.” See Garver 1996, 253–54.

Military leaders attached great importance to the strengthening of research as a whole. Admiral Liu Huaqing, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and vice-chairman of the CMC, emphasised (at the 1996 Fourth All-Army Military Sciences Research Work Meeting) that science and technology should be used to strengthen the armed forces and that research on military science and national defence should not be weakened but strengthened in future. He further stressed that high-standard, high-quality and high-level research achievements must be used during the Ninth Five-Year Plan period to provide advisory services for the CMC and its general departments in making policy decisions and to produce theoretical guidance for the construction and combat of the armed forces and for teaching activities at military academies. His rationale was that, as the world situation and the international strategic pattern are undergoing great change, and modern science and technology develop rapidly, research and development have a direct bearing on the quality of the building of the PLA. For details see SWB, FE/2661 S2/1, 11 July 1996.

This information has been pieced together through various news reports in Hong Kong newspapers and journals. Apart from Shambaugh, few articles have touched on this topic.

PLA military strategists tend to have a holistic approach to national security, in which they, although representing the military as an interest group, are more inclined to emphasise political, economic, psychological or moral aspects of inter-state relations and conflict than purely military considerations.

The potentially oil-rich Spratlys are a cluster of isles, reefs and atolls in the South China Sea claimed wholly or in part by China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei.

Twelve reports were read at the meeting, including ‘The military means is one of the options for reunification’ by the National Defense University, ‘The military is the only means for reunification’ and ‘The development and change of the Taiwan authorities towards Taiwan’s independence’ by the Strategic and Intelligence Institute of Guofang University, ‘The work on liberating Taiwan should be kept on and carried out’ by the GSD’s Taiwan Policy Research Task Force, ‘There is no environment of sustained and peaceful development without national reunification’ by the Taiwan Strategic Research Task Force of the Academy of Military Science, and ‘The United States’ and Japan’s China policy has evolved from the status quo of separation to one China and one Taiwan’ and ‘The end of this century and the beginning of the next is the timeframe for reunification’ by the CMC’s International Military Strategy Research Center. See Fan 1995, 25–26.

The Independence Daily, 2 April 1997 (Sydney). This institute has exerted great influence in terms of catalysing the recent phenomenon that China can say “no”. One of its two high-profile foreign advisers is Bob Hawke, former prime minister of Australia.

Both Zhou Enlai, then chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, and Peng Dehuai, commander of an army in 1932, expressed their views on their respective functions in the party. “They had stressed the need for dual lines of specialization in military operations and civil administration, the former to be in the hands of commanders, assisted by commissars, the latter to be exclusively under party control with no commissar interference.” See Whitson 1973, 527–28.
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