Chapter 2

THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AFTER GFCR
(1969 - 1977)

The involvement of the People's Liberation Army in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution mass movement, (1966-1969) increased immensely its position and authority. In many respects, the people's army's engagement in this mass movement was entirely unprecedented and different from its role during both the liberation and post-liberation periods. The armymen's preoccupation in the political affairs of the GFCR covering all walks of life, during this period, disturbed the power structure built during the sixties. This facilitated the taking over the civilian affairs by the army in their own hands, because the government machinery was badly paralysed and was almost non-functional. The sound practice which was built and inherited from Gudian Conference of 1929, that "the principle that it is the Party which commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party" was reversed and it appeared that the Liberation Army because of its extensive participation in the mass activities of the GFCR, disrupted the leading position of the civilian organization - the Communist Party of China.

1. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1950).
After getting an opportunity to handle the civilian affairs, the army personnel ignored the ideological leadership of the party and began to challenge and undermine the supremacy of the Chinese Communist Party. The traditional harmonious civil-military relations were greatly upset. The political leadership of the CCP which was the framework of the Marxist-Leninist activities and under which the people’s army was supposed to work was openly flouted. The armymen, after completely ignoring the party supremacy, succeeded in accumulating enormous powers in their own hands.²

As both, the regular party apparatus and the state bureaucratic set-up were already paralysed at the hands of the ‘Red Guards’, the top military personnel through intensified involvement in the civilian management seized the opportunity to emerge as the “mainstay of the dictatorship of the proletariat by 1969”.³ When the Central Committee of the CCP instructed the men of armed forces to intervene to restore law and order and maintain normalcy in the disturbed areas throughout the country, the Liberation Army once more enhanced and consolidated its position and influence. When the commanders and soldiers were called upon to participate in the “three-support” and “two-military” campaigns, the People’s Liberation

Army got another chance to increase its authority.

Since "Support-the-Left" task was under the direct control and supervision of the Chinese Communist Party's Military Affairs Committee, the armymen were fully authorized to look into the matters of the provincial Revolutionary Committees. This was just a sort of administrative arrangement. Thus, having got a firm grip on the day to day national affairs, the officers and men of the armed forces finally established their complete control practically over the whole country.

To manage and run the state affairs efficiently in the vast countryside, armed detachments were speedily despatched, especially to those areas where no Revolutionary Committees had been set up. The army detachments were also mobilized for those areas, where in spite of the Revolutionary Committees being set up, there was absolutely no law and order and the state affairs were in a state of utter chaos. When the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party instructed the commanders and soldiers to pay greater attention to the national policy of "seize the revolution and promote production", the armymen got another opportunity to consolidate their hold on the civilian affairs. When the army personnel were entrusted with the responsibilities to set up the Revolutionary Committees in those provinces, where they had not been set up before, they further
tightened their grip in the civilian management. Meanwhile, they were also directed to intervene in putting a stop to any possible 'armed struggle' and 'internal strife' and restore the disturbed systems of communication and transport and this widened the scope of their role and placed additional powers in their hands. As the civilian machinery was badly shaken, there was great instability in the provinces. The party apparatus was not functioning properly, because there was no cohesion and coordination between the central organs and the provincial and regional bodies. Various major military and political alliances which had appeared on the national scene representing different factional interests, were busy only in defending their own group interests. They were considering themselves like separate and independent 'islands' completely ignoring broader national interests. There were open splits and clashes among the various groups, which were divided in more ways than one. They were so selfish and short sighted that they cared only to worry about their own sectional interests. By and large, the administration was slack and loose and there was complete instability in most of the provinces, and state affairs, by and large, were bad.


5. Ibid.
were in a state of chaos.\textsuperscript{6} Due to these chaotic conditions, it was not easy to form and complete the consolidation of the Revolutionary Committees in the those remaining provinces where they had not already been formed. In the absence of any well-knit establishment, most of the provinces faced acute problems and difficulties.\textsuperscript{7} The following statement issued by Lin Biao, speaks for itself and throws light on the state of affairs: "you Generals of the old Red Army, you stubborn struggling comrades, stick to your principles and do not fear the Party Central Committee".\textsuperscript{8}

It was noticed that there was overlapping in the implementation of the policies laid down in the "Three-Supports and Two-Military" programmes. There were widespread complaints that because of selfish viewpoints, the military personnel entrusted to carry it out, ignored the central Directive, and implemented it only where it suited their own group interests. This disarrayed the entire administration and put it in utter confusion, and indiscipline crept into every field of life — public or private, civil or military. The locally stationed army units, which did not agree with the Communist Party

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} \textit{JPRS} — 54343, October 20, 1971, p. 24.
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Central Committee directives, obeyed it only outwardly, but violated them secretly.\textsuperscript{9} Its implementation became difficult at the regional level. Its reason probably was that most of the army units were not happy with the "support the Left" policy. Since, there was lot of ambiguity and confusion in the "supporting the Left" policy, hence most of the army units refused to carry out and implement the central directives.\textsuperscript{10} The locally stationed armed forces in order to please one particular political group opposed and attacked another group. To weaken and harm their rival factions, the concerned military units reportedly distributed guns and ammunition to their supporters to whom they were politically aligned.\textsuperscript{11} In the absence of law and order, there were open factional rivalries and clashes. This led to general loot and plunder. In such an uncertain atmosphere, a good many people were killed or maimed and the state of affairs was full of horror and fear.\textsuperscript{12}

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9. Ibid.

10. These observations are made by the western China specialists. \emph{JPRS - 54343, October 20, 1971}, p. 23.

11. Ibid.

12. Major articles which were published on July 31 and August 24, 1969 gave the general impressions that there were widespread disturbances in the country. Joint ed., \emph{Renmin Ribao, Hong Qi, Chaohfeng Chunbao, China Topics}, Year Book 538 (Rectification - 43), November 18, 1969.
There were other problems too. There was no coordination between the army units and the people responsible for the revolutionary mass organizations. Due to their group interests involved, the army personnel in various cases refused to obey orders and there were reports that they often indulged in open armed clashes. The intra-party conflicts badly affected the officers and soldiers. This created tension and disharmony among different army units and mass organizations, which adversely affected the process of reconsolidation of the Revolutionary Committees.\(^{13}\)

To check factional feuds and restore normal administration, the army personnel who were obstructing the normal functioning of state machinery and damaging the wider public interests, were warned thus by Premier Zhou Enlai, "if you are to immediately put a stop to the armed struggle and internal strife, and if you have to restore communications and transport, you must, stop clashes at once and achieve an agreement on the cessation of the armed struggle".\(^{14}\) To cope with all these problems, the Military Affairs Committee of the CCP was asked to assert firmly its position of authority throughout the country. After two years of inactivity and silence, the

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13. JPRS - 54343, October 20, 1971, p. 23.
General Political Department was again active in late 1969. By this time, necessary preparations were made to convene the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and also to restore and streamline the civilian bodies from the regional to the top levels.

The National Power Structure (1969-71)

Before holding the session of the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in April 1969, the People's Liberation Army had already established its hold in the central, provincial and regional organs of the Chinese civilian power structure. The army personnel further strengthened their position after the 9th Congress. There was a remarkable rise in the army's authority which was very much obvious from the fact that they got representation in the 9th Congress, which was much more than they should have got. The army personnel themselves were instrumental in convening the Congress and they took the fullest advantage of it.

The way the People's Liberation Army weakened the dominating position and authority of the Communist Party was very much clear from a significant talk in which Mao Zedong put the entire blame on the politicians for the very unhealthy and undesirable developments in the Chinese political arena. During his inspection tour from mid-August to September 12, 1971, while talking to
local comrades Mao had expressed his feelings in these words - "the fine traditions of the unified leadership by the party and the primacy of the party controlling the gun, had been undermined by the PLA's enhanced position of power."

By 1969, the Liberation Army had virtually surpassed its jurisdiction and limits. It had tremendously increased its role and made it dominant in the party apparatus, the government and other civilian organs. Even after holding the Ninth Congress of the CCP and establishment of the local party committees, at provincial level between November 1970 to August 1971, the dominating position of the Army remained unchallenged. It rather became stronger. The proportional representation of the army personnel in the provincial party committee leadership was even higher than it had been during the tumultuous period between January 21, 1967 and September 5, 1968.

The People's Liberation Army was built politically faithful as a instrument of the 'Communist Party and the people' ... Its first and foremost duty was to resolutely

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implement the party's policies, measures and resolutions and carry out its general line for socialist construction. But due to its immense involvement in the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent mass upheaval, this practice, a basically Marxist-Leninist one could not be strictly followed. Some unexpected and unlikely developments, at this juncture, unavoidably threatened the Communist Party's leading position and the party's supremacy was jeopardised. The Liberation Army, which was always expected to be a 'subservient handy tool' in the hands of the civilian machinery asserted itself in no uncertain terms, once it got the opportunity to involve itself in the political activities of that period.

Once, the army's political task was over and the normalcy was fully restored, the military personnel were supposed to go back to their barracks. After the fulfillment of their political task on the civilian fronts, the commanders and fighters were expected to leave the civilian management in the hands of the civilian body, the Chinese Communist Party itself. But after assigning the all important role of rebuilding the civilian organs, such as party apparatus and government bodies at various levels central as well as provincial to the military

personnel, it became very difficult to persuade and convince them to "return to the barracks" and hand over the civilian tasks to the CCP. Moreover, entrusting the responsibility of rehabilitation work to the People's Liberation Army, was an open invitation to it to build its strategic position and further strengthen its authority.19

The tendency among army men to grab power and keep it safe in their hands was so great that the civilian leadership found it extremely difficult to overcome this problem and restore the Communist Party's traditional position and authority. The civilian leadership was realizing it to its cost that it was not very easy to persuade the army personnel to get back to their old jobs and to leave the civilian duties to be looked after by the civilians and the Communist Party and its leaders. In many cases, army officers were reported to have openly flouted and disobeyed and challenged the party leadership. The army's reluctance to withdraw from the civilian field was not only undermining the civil-military relations but it was also posing a threat to Mao Zedong's potential itself.20


In the new power composition the army personnel had consolidated their stronghold in all the Chinese civil-military organs. This was clear from the very large representation they got in the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. The major military group led by Lin Biao emerged as a very strong political force in the civil-military bodies. It was acknowledged in the various Chinese official statements, that the traditional practice of unified leadership in the top civil organs was completely missing and that the army men were disregarding and flouting the Communist Party's authority. Highlighting this complaint, Hsin Huanbao, reportedly pointed out on November 22, 1969, that "the reason why some of the comrades of our armed forces have not yet become obedient instruments of the party and the people is that ... such bourgeois individualist thoughts as pride, complacency, ambition and vestiges of war-lordism continue to haunt them. They work not in the interest of the cause of the party but for the sake of enhancing their personal prestige". 21

In order to rectify the unhealthy tendencies, which were obvious among the military personnel and to bring them under the party's ideological leadership, Mao Zedong

raised the following slogan — "correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political leadership and line should be neither divorced nor should it be disregarded". To make the people's army as a faithful and trusted instrument of the Communist Party, he suggested, "we must insist on the system of party control over the armed forces. Within the armed forces, the Communist Party has to set up party committees at all levels. The political-commissar system and the political work system ought to be restored .... If anyone in the armed forces fails to put himself under the leadership and supervision of the party, and places himself above the party, and acts and speaks peremptorily, believing that he can spurn the leadership and decisions of the party committee, he is doing something which the principle of (party) organization will never allow". How could the People's Liberation Army emerge in the most dominating position in the civilian power structure? In this connection it will be interesting to delineate the circumstances and situations under which the armymen seized the opportunity to enhance their position. So far as, the management of the military affairs was


23. Ibid.
concerned, militarily the People’s Republic of China was divided into 13 military regions and 25 provincial military district headquarters. (After 1970, they were reduced to 11 military regions and 23 provincial military headquarters).

Generally speaking, China’s military power was divided into “Four Major Field Armies”. In the new power structure, which was built during the seventies, the top military personnel who were already holding the strategic command in the respective military regions or military districts easily succeeded in keeping power in their own hands. Being in an advantageous position by virtue of their holding full military command, the concerned military commanders controlled their respective field-armies and built their military power bases. Having got a firm grip on the military matters, the concerned military commander was very much instrumental to influence the national political developments from his military base. These “Four Field Armies” were controlled and commanded by Marshals Peng Dehuai, Liu Bo Cheng, Chen yi and Lin Biao and their bench-men. The 1st Field Army which fell under the control of Marshal Peng Dehuai

covered the areas constituting Shanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai and Xinjiang in North-West China; the 2nd Field army was controlled by Marshal Liu Bocheng which struck its roots in Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang provinces in North East China and Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Tibet in South-West; the 3rd Field Army was under the supreme authority of Marshal Chen Yi which covered Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui province in East China; and finally, the 4th Field Army was led by Marshal Lin Biao, who controlled Hebei, Hunan, Shandong, Guangxi provinces in Central-South China.26

The military personalities of these respective Field Armies, created their own civil-military power bases in their respective military regions. The leading military personnel of the 13 military regions, the 20-old military districts and scores of garrisons, formed the dominant power groups in China's 21 provinces, five autonomous regions and three major municipalities.27 Due to their

26 Ibid.

27 The heavily dominant position of PLA in the post Cultural Revolution was the special feature which was obvious from the composition both of the various provincial Revolutionary Committees and the new central organs of the 9th Central Committee after 9th Congress of the CCP. The leadership of the RC's was weighted heavily in favour of military men. Of the 479 standing committee members, 235 or 49 per cent were from PLA, 109 or 22 per cent were veteran cadres, while 132 or 27.6 per cent were represented by mass organisation. Of the 219 chairmen and vice-chairmen, 100 or 45.7 per cent
strategic geographical location and geo-political conditions the concerned military region had its unique importance in the national defence and security system. For its peculiar characteristic and significance each military region had its own say in the national political set-up. In each Field Army, the officers and men holding important positions in the specified military region, had consolidated their personal influence and authority. They were directly involved and responsible to implement the policy decisions and look after the important matters concerning state affairs. They had their own political affiliations and they owed allegiance to particular political groups both at the centre as well as the regional levels.

Normally, it was not possible to challenge the concerned military official, while he was not acting according to the directives of the central or provincial civil authorities. When the 9th Congress was finally convened, one of the major issues which dominated the

Footnote 27 cont'd...

were military men, 62 or 28.3 per cent were veteran cadres, while 57 or 26 per cent were from mass organizations. Of the 29 chairman, 22 (79.9 per cent) were military men (13 commanders and 9 commissars) Jurgen Domag, "Party Politics and the Cultural Revolution", in Frank N. Trager and William Henderson, (eds.), and Communist China, 1949-1969: A Twenty Year Appraisal, 1970, pp. 90; and Ellis Joffe, The Chinese Army After the Cultural Revolution: The Effects of Intervention", op. cit., pp. 456-57.
Congress was the question of the successor of Mao Zedong. As the People's Liberation Army had already consolidated its position in the military dominated-provincial-Revolutionary Committees, it was not surprising that the 9th Congress only manifested the domination of the provincial and regional military leadership. The majority of leaders who participated in the 9th Congress had a purely military background. Once, Marshal Lin Biao's position was consolidated by declaring him the successor to Mao Zedong in the new power structure, it generated discontentment, competition and rivalry among those who were either opposed to that idea or belonged to the dissatisfied civil-military groups. Thanks to large scale purges and rehabilitation in the following years, Lin Biao's men seized the opportunity to grab power in their own hands. Regarding purges and replacements, although no substantial and complete statistics were published, yet according to the Western estimates about 700 provincial military leaders were given important positions in the new power structure. The national political scene was heavily dominated by the officers and men with a military background.28

The Second Lushan Conference held in 1971 was a very important event in China as it brought a new turn and development in the People's Liberation Army. It brought to the surface the principal tussles and differences covering policy matters in military affairs. Marshal Lin Biao and Chen Boda and their supporters in this Conference, were reported to have openly criticized Mao Zedong's military line. The differences on policy matters and the ensuing mutual distrust culminated in the downfall of Marshal Lin Biao and Chen Boda and some other top army personalities. This badly disturbed and dislocated the power structure built during the seventies.

The Civil-Military Impasse (1971-73)

In order to resolve certain deadlocks and restore the army–party solidarity, fresh campaigns were launched. Their main purpose was to restore civil and military unity and cohesiveness. To improve the fast deteriorating relations between the civil and military bodies, the party leadership made an earnest appeal to the army personnel to retrace their steps and to rectify their past mistakes. The slogan raised on this occasion was: "the nation should learn from the People's Liberation Army and the Liberation Army should learn from the people of the whole country". 29

It was pleaded that because of their rich experience and better understanding of the party's policies and responsibilities towards the complicated civilian matters, the veteran party cadres were much better qualified than military officers in carrying out the domestic programme.  

Since the reins of political power had already passed in to the hands of the military personalities, so to curtail army's power, the Central Committee of the CCP took numerous measures to reduce armymen's influence over civilian affairs and entrust them (civilian affairs) to the party cadres who were well versed in the art of running the civilian administration. To overcome and rectify the mistakes committed by the armymen a vigorous campaign intended to develop "a stirring atmosphere of armymen cherishing the people, the people supporting the army and the armymen and people learning from each other" was launched. A major article appearing in the "Red Flag" during 1972 noted with pain and shock, certain erroneous attitudes and tendencies with in the army, which were contrary to unified leadership and chief among them were - the mountain stronghold mentality.

30. The Resolution concerning the strengthening of the Political and Ideological Work of the Military. The Resolution urged military cadres to recognise that military cadres action serves as a tool for accomplishing political tasks. In Commemoration of Army Day, Cheihfang Chunbaq, August 1, 1970.

sectarianism, and "splitism" and all of them were openly harming the unified leadership\textsuperscript{32} of the Chinese Communist Party. However, it was also pointed out that there was "lack of coordination between the party, the government, the army and the people which was badly affecting these bodies with pernicious influences of subjectivism and sectarianism".\textsuperscript{33} Those army personnel who were encouraging such tendencies as 'anarchism' and were negating the party's organisational principles were severely criticized. They were asked to put a stop to these unhealthy tendencies and correct them by sincerely following Mao Zedong's revolutionary-military line. Furthermore, "the attitude of not consciously studying and executing the party's line and policy, the attitude of distorting the line and policy of the party and also such acts as disregarding or even divorcing oneself from the party's leadership, and taking free action politically and taking liberty of making one's own pronouncements\textsuperscript{34} were all very severely condemned and branded as unhealthy and anti-Marxist.

The officers and men of the armed forces were told to devote more attention to strengthen the party leadership

\textsuperscript{32} "Strengthen the Party's Centralized Leadership", \textit{Hong Qi}, no. 11, November 1, 1972, Trans. in \textit{SCMP}, no. 741.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
rather than the armed forces, so that the people's army could be built in accordance with the proletarian outlook. The Chinese official pronouncements repeatedly appealed to the nation for unity and the cadres and fighters were earnestly urged to restore the civil and military unity. Major stress was laid on building and strengthening the ideological and organizational set-up of the party and the army. The erroneous ideas and unhealthy tendencies, detrimental to revolutionary unity, such as non-organizational viewpoints, individualism, small-group mentality, ultra-democratic attitudes, absolute egalitarianism, which were harming the civil and military unity were bitterly criticized.

In order to solve those ideological problems which had damaged both the civil and military institutions, the leading mouthpiece of the Communist Party — the People's Daily in its issue of 26th January 1972 suggested, "the truth must be laid in the open and reasoning be adopted; one must absolutely not adopt a rash attitude, or else one will not only ruin the individual but also the party organisation". To check the unhealthy tendencies within the military organization the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army

instructed and made an ardent appeal to the officers and soldiers to carry out the 'rectification campaign'. To rectify the ideological mistakes and eradicate unhealthy tendencies, they were told to overcome "arrogance and conceit". Recounting the past events, when the People's Liberation Army had deviated from the Marxist principles and the party lines, and had committed wrongs, it was suggested that "a rectification campaign" (should) be carried out in the entire army from the top to the ground levels, by separate groups, aimed at eliminating "bureaucratism", "sectarianism" and "subjectivism". It was stressed that attempts should be made to resolve the deadlock between the officers and the common man, between the higher and the lower authorities and between the army and the civilian officials.

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39. The army personnel during "Three-support and Two military" campaign were critical and criticized to be disregarding the organizational discipline, practising departmentalism, subjectivism, individualism which were creating obstacles to re-build the civilian party apparatus and their ideological revolutionization. Hong Qi, no. 9, Oct. 1970, Trans. in China News Summary no. 342, October 22, 1970, p. B4.
Pointing to the unhealthy tendencies left behind by the erroneous policies, it was asserted that "infection by the bad style of sectarianism within the revolutionary ranks leads to the tendency of putting the interest of the individual and of the small clique above that of the whole, consequently ending in loose unity and slackened discipline, sabotaging the thorough implementation of the party's correct line, damaging or even totally destroying the party's fighting strength". 40 The rank and file of the soldiers was told to keep a close and constant watch on the erroneous and faulty lines and to struggle hard to rectify them. Only when the ideological mistakes are corrected, it was pleaded, the soldiers could succeed to accomplish the tasks of unifying the whole party, army and revolutionary ranks. To rectify the ideological wrongs, the armymen were instructed to pay proper attention to study the major historical military documents and manuals. To rectify those faulty ideas which had crept into their minds, the armymen were urged upon to take a careful and reasonable approach and "persist in carrying out education along the party's correct line". 41

41. Ibid.
Lin Biao and After

The Lushan Conference brought dramatic downfall of Lin Biao and his top military associates. His exit caused severe dislocation of many civil and military institutions and also of the power structure. The period between 1971 and 1973, when the 10th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was convened, was tumultuous. The repercussions caused by the downfall of such an influential man upset the entire political equilibrium. The purging of such a powerful military figure as Lin Biao, completely shook the organizational structure of the People's Liberation Army. It shook to the roots many armyman, who were active in various regions. The exit of some of his top associates created a vacuum in the military-power structure. Under this turbulent atmosphere an air of uncertainty prevailed over the Chinese military organization. His purge was followed by large scale reshuffling, shake-up, and changes in the civil-military leadership at the Central, provincial and regional levels. A thorough reshuffle of the top military personnel had already taken place. According to the New China News Agency report which was released on January 1, 1974, a list of newly appointed commanders was announced. Out of the total of 11 commanders in the 11 Military Zones, there were eight fresh appointments and only three remained untouched.42

There were reshufflings, transfers and changes in the various different Military Regions and Military Districts. Among the foremost military figures, Li Dezheng had taken up Xilian's military command in Shenyang, and Chen had been placed in charge of the Beijing Military Region. Ding Sheng was asked to take over at Nanjing and Xu Shiyu was posted at Guangzhou. Yang Deshi was transferred to replace Deng Siyu (Yang to Wuhan and Deng to Jinan), and Han Xianzhu and Bi Dingchun were asked to interchange their respective positions (Han to Lanzhou and Bi to Foozhou). 43

However, a number of political commissars of these Military Regions had also been listed for reshuffling and transfer. Some of the new names which entered in the fresh list were those of Ji Dengxu's, the First Political Commissar of the Beijing Military Region, Wei Guojing's the First Political Commissar of the Guangzhou Military Region, and Bai Juba's, the First Political Commissar of the Jinan Military Region. 44 In addition, Wu De was elected the Second Political Commissar of the Beijing Military Region and Xu Liqiu was appointed the Political Commissar of the Jinan Military Region. The changes and

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
alterations in the civil-military fields, greatly shook the balance in those numerous party and army groupings, which were shaped during the seventies. The post-Lin alterations, by and large, went in favour of pragmatists linked with Premier Zhou Enlai. The potential losers in the civil-military power set-up were the members of the Lin Biao group and the "Leftist" represented by Shanghai group. 45

In the major reshuffle both the Lin Biao men and the "Leftist" groups suffered the greatest losses. The group led by Premier Zhou Enlai was the potential gainer. The transfer of Li Dezheng from Beijing Military Region to Shenyang Military Region removed the "greatest" supporter of the "Leftists" from the scene. Chen Xiwen, who was instrumental in denouncing Lin Biao was dominating the area around the capital. 46 Being closer to Premier Zhou Enlai, he sided the pragmatists in tussle for power. Chen Xiwen was adequately "compensated" for relinquishing voluntarily his "area of domination" 47 in the Northeast Shenyang Military Region. The Military Region at Canton, once the stronghold of Lin Biao was badly shaken and it was further weakened by the removal of Ding Sheng. His successor Xu Shiyu who was considered to be "neutral" in

45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
the Lin Biao affair, was reported to have lost his stronghold in the Nanjing Military Region, where he was supposed to be having a firm grip over the affairs for nearly twenty years. Yang Deshi was uprooted from the Jinan Military Region, presumably for adopting a comparatively soft attitude towards the "Leftists" group and also for his very close links with the Lin Biao group. 48 Only three out of the eleven commanders of the military regions were left untouched. These three had suffered from the "Leftist attacks" during the "Cultural Revolution" and they were "rehabilitated" in 1970. These three were Yang Yong of Xinjiang Military Region, Jin Jivei of the Chengdu Military Region, and Wang Bisheng of the Kunming Military Region. 49

Of all the important changes in the central political scene, the "shaking up" of the key post involving Li Desheng was of special significance. Being the Director of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army, Li Desheng was holding a very strategic position. By virtue of his holding that key position in the commissar system, Li Desheng was very helpful to the "Leftist" group. His transfer to the Shenyang Military Region, deprived him of the post of the Director

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
of the General Political Department. Once away from Beijing, he could no more be relied upon for any direct help by the "radical group". Li Desheng "number two" in the echelons of the top military leadership in the powerful 9 man standing committee of the CCP Central Political Bureau, and who was second only to Ye Jianying, was considered to be the staunch supporter of the "Leftists". His transfer was a fatal blow and great political loss to them. 50

The Military Region at Beijing and the commander of this region were supposed to be vital both politically and strategically. Its importance in the domestic power tussle too was very significant. It was from here that Lin Biao started his civil-military career. In any of the many national mass activities, this military region was considered to be of unique significance as it had its fingers on the strings, controlling both the Centre and the provinces.

Re-building the PLA (1973-76)

The holding of the 10th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1973 saw the re-building and re-framing of the new power structure. Following this session of the Congress, a bitter campaign was launched

50. Ibid.
against Lin Biao, with a view to denouncing and criticizing him. He was criticized for holding and following the Confucius military line. To rectify his erroneous military line and to curtail whatever influence he had on the People's Liberation Army, mass meetings and rallies were organized to condemn and malign him. They were organized with an avowed purpose to attack and criticize the 'restoration and retrogression' of rehabilitated veteran cadres. This campaign was only a part of the major Lin Biao criticism. Lin Biao was also blamed for damaging the civil and military relations. Condemning and vehemently criticizing the "poison", which was left over by Lin Biao, the Chinese official pronouncements asserted, "it is absolutely impermissible for the People's Liberation Army to become a tool of individual careerists in the Communist Party". Lin Biao was alleged to have said, "at present the task as well as the status of our army has changed and because of this, the army "must control not only the military power, but also the party and the financial powers". It was alleged that Lin Biao used the army to control the party and the government both only to

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serve his own personal interests and ulterior motives". 53
It was further alleged that all these activities led to
disturb the civil–military harmonious relations. Lin
Biao was blamed to have attempted to place the army and
not the party at the central command and thus providing
a "theoretical foundation for the guns to command the
party". 54 Lin Biao was alleged to have said that "the
party, the army, the government and the mass organizations
were together, the fundamental components of the state". 55
Among all the principal components of the state organs,
Lin Biao had added that, "the people’s army was the
centre of all the centres and the key link of all the
key links .... So long as the army does not change its
colour, there will be a way to deal with the other compo-
nents – the party, government and people". 56 Lin Biao

53. Ye Jianying’s speech in Commemoration of the
Thirtieth anniversary of the publication of "On
Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party". Citation
in Lin Naonan, Issues and Studies, vol. VIII,
no. 6, March 1972, pp. 44–45.

54. Ibid., p. 45.

55. Annual New Year Spring Festival Campaign organised
to promote civil–military unity, Honan Radio,
December 30, 1971, Trans. in China News Summary,

56. "Party and Army", Renmin Ribao, November 13,
1974, Trans. in SCMP, no. 5737.
was also reported to have said that "collective leadership weakens individual responsibility" and hence imperils the traditional practice of collective leadership in the Chinese Communist Party.

Furthermore, Lin Biao was also accused to have opposed at one stage the practice of party representative system in the People's Liberation Army. He was also accused to have disturbed the commissar and commander systems in the military organizations. He was accused to be one of the many opportunistic chieftains like Chen Duniu, Wang Ming, Zheng Gustao, Peng Dehuai and was severely criticized for destroying the collective leadership of the Party Committees, and for forming "secluded independent islands" and setting up "sects" and "factions" for his own personal and selfish motives. To correct these ideological mistakes in the army, numerous important notifications were issued on behalf of the Chinese authorities warning the cadres and fighters that, "the army can never be allowed to become the tool of individual careerists and that any kind of patriarchal rule, seriously sabotaging the unity and unification of the Chinese Communist Party would not be allowed". To undo the pernicious influence

57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. "Collective leadership is the highest principle of our Party leadership", Renmin Ribao, November 13, 1974, Trans. in SCMP, no. 5737.
left by Lin Biao on the proletarian army, its officers and men were instructed to carry out ideological campaigns to counteract Lin's military line. Lin Biao was labelled to be practising war-lord class military line containing “ultra rightist essence”. His military line was condemned as a “jumbled mixture, permeated with the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, idealism and metaphysics”.61

It was further added that “the ideological root of Lin Biao in pushing through his political line of right reaction and capitulation and his bourgeois thinking on military affairs was only the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius, the ideology of the reactionary moribund classes. Politically, Lin Biao followed Confucius maxim — “restrain oneself and restore the rites”62 and attempted in vain to restore the reactionary rule of the landlord's and bourgeoisie. Militarily, he followed the Confucian principle to regulate the army by means of the rules of propriety, and thus attempted (in vain) to change fundamentally the nature of army and make it his tool for restoring capitalism”.63 The cadres and fighters were cautioned to “guard against arrogance and to do away with

60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
complacency" and "be comrades of the masses in the cause of revolution." They were told to wage a resolute struggle against the mistaken military line of Lin Biao and repudiate his reactionary political programme of 'restraining oneself and restoring the rites'.

In the course of the mass campaigns launched during Spring Festival in January 1974, the major thrust was towards the rectification of the wrong tendencies, prevailing in the armed forces. To restore the civil-military solidarity, campaigns such as "supporting the army and giving special care for families of army men" were launched. The army personnel were asked to pay proper attention to the 10th Congress documents. The soldiers and fighters were instructed to affirm and enable to "acquire a deeper understanding of the party's basic line throughout the historical period of socialism". In the course of the campaign launched to criticize Lin Biao and to rectify the style of work, the grass root

65. Ibid.
workers were asked to "make severe criticism of Lin Biao’s towering crimes in attempting to change the Communist Party’s basic line and policy, undermining the unity between the army and the people, between army and the government and between the army and the party".68 They were to keep in mind the dictum that "it is the party which will command the gun and gun must not be allowed to command the party".69

Till 1974, changes, transfers and "rehabilitation" of the various army personnel to different places continued. Since organizational structure was badly shaken due to the purge in the Army, there was necessity of restructuring the military apparatus. Several civil-military posts were lying vacant. Attempts were made to remedy the instability within the civil-military bodies and the Chinese leadership succeeded by the end of January 1975 to stabilize most of the civil-military institutions. The New China News Agency broadcast of January 1975 announced certain appointments for the vacant military posts. Marshal Ye Chienying was appointed the Defence Minister, Deng Xiaoping was appointed the Chief of Staff and Zhang Zhunjieo was appointed Directors of the General

68. Ibid.
Political Department of the PLA. After his appointment to the post of the Vice-Chairman of the CCP Central Committee, and his nomination to the membership of the Standing Committee of the CCP Central Politbureau, and his appointment as the senior Vice-Premier of the State Council and the Vice-Chairman of the CCP Central Military Affairs Commission, Deng Xiaoping emerged as the strongest man in the top Chinese political hierarchy.

In order to balance the civil-military power structure, Zhang Zhenjiao, a young luminary of the Cultural Revolution period, was appointed to the post of Director of the General Political Department of the PLA. It was reported by Western observers that by August 1, 1975, 35 provincial military district commanders, deputy commanders, political commissars and deputy political commissars had been transferred. Most of them had been from the four military regions of Beijing, Kunming, Lanzhou and Xinjiang.70 Some army officers were transferred to different military posts in the Beijing Military Region, while others were transferred to the border areas. A number of the rehabilitated officers of the PLA were appointed to new provincial positions. Many military leaders were either promoted or they were placed in new positions in the provincial party committees. Approximately,

around 30 officers mostly the "rehabilitated veterans", were appointed in the PLA Central, the General Staff, the General Political and the General Logistics departments and also in the Scientific and Technological Commission. Eleven new First Secretaries and 46 Secretaries had been appointed to the various provincial party committees. In the meantime, five First Secretaries and 28 Secretaries had lost their positions either by death, transfer or dismissal.71

One significant trend which was noticed in the massive reshuffling of the military personnel was that they were transferred and sent far off places. The process of gradual reduction of army's percentage in the civilian organs had started. The civilian personnel were given more authority in the matters of civilian affairs and the army's power in the civilian affairs was drastically curtailed. In the new power structure which took shape by October 1975, in a total of 193 provincial First and Second Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Secretaries, 127 (66%) were civilian cadres, 66 (34%) were PLA cadres. At the beginning of 1975, PLA cadres accounted for 45% of the entire total.72 Another significant development issuing out of the new power

71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
structure which was built at the centre, and at the provincial and local levels, was that substantial concessions were made to the radical 'leftists'. This was manifest from their heavy representation in the new power composition of the Second Plenary Session of the Tenth Central Committee of the CCP, which commenced its session on January 8, 1975. In both the civilian and military organisations, the emergence of Wang Hongwen was noteworthy. He was officially declared to be one of the Vice-Chairmen of the CCP Central Military Affairs Commission.

With the "reshuffle" and transfer of the military personnel, the process of re-building the military organization started. In the rebuilding and restructuring of the military organization, care was to be taken to build the People's Liberation Army that it could serve better the interests of the Chinese masses. It was stressed that its faulty and erroneous military lines should be corrected. To rectify the erroneous tendencies, which had recently crept into the army, it was proposed that careful attention should be paid to the various steps that were to be taken to best and correctly understand and thereby strengthen the political and ideological work in the army. In order to rectify the unhealthy tendencies

74. Ibid.
which had somehow entered into the minds of the commanders and the fighters in the Army, the anniversary celebrations and also the publications of the Enlarged Session of the Military Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, stressed the need for firm handling of the ideological problems. Giving theoretical justification for this, the various Chinese official pronouncements, made from time, had repeated, "why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie?" and stressed the need to thoroughly understand the question. Lack of clarity on this question would lead to revisionism. "This should be made known to the whole nation," 75 The officers and the soldiers were urged that they should properly understand this problem and correctly handle it. They were warned about the possibility of the emergence of new bourgeoisie elements within the Chinese society.76 They were asked to be always alert about the "bourgeoisie sugarcusted bullets"77 which very often corrupt the cadres. To handle this ideological problem, a campaign was launched against the "material seduction"78 which pollutes the comparatively young soldiers and fighters.

77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
Linking the rebuilding of the People's Liberation Army movement with the anti-Lin Biao and anti-Confucius campaign, special emphasis was laid upon "retaining Genuine Proletarian Political Qualities and Struggle to Consolidate the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and they were warned to be ever cautious of any person or persons who attempted to "sabotage the Communist Party's collective leadership and its democratic centralism." They were also warned to be watchful against anybody indulging in plots and schemes, organising factions, sabotaging the harmonious civil-military relations or interfering in the Mao Zedong's revolutionary line.

To bring the People's Liberation Army under the ideological leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese leadership reiterated and asserted, "the gun must forever be kept in the hands of the party and people." It was stressed that "the People's Liberation Army must subordinate itself to the centralized leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. In the whole country it must obey the leadership of the Central Party, and in a region it must obey the centralized leadership of the local

81.  Ibid.
party committee.\textsuperscript{83} It was also repeated that the Liberation Army was both a fighting force and a work force. The concrete task and form of this kind of work force may change with the changes in the revolutionary situation, but the status of the army under the absolute leadership of the party cannot be changed.\textsuperscript{84} The Enlarged Session of the Military Commission of the CCP of 1975, attempted to restore the civil-military relations. To rectify the bourgeois military line, the Military Commission called upon the armymen to carry out the two heavy burdens--firstly building the army and secondly building the political power. Taking into account the long-term and the complex nature of the class struggle, it was asserted that cadres and fighters must carry out these "heavy burdens to the logical end."\textsuperscript{85} In building a strong revolutionary military organization, it was asserted that the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line should always be kept in mind. It was also asserted that only by following the correct ideological line, could armymen conscientiously implement the correct political line of the party.

\textsuperscript{83} Hang Zhou Radio, July 24, 1975, Trans. in FBIS, July 30, 1975.

\textsuperscript{84} Chieh-fang Chumhao, February 25, 1977, Trans. in FBIS, March 2, 1977, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{85} Hong Qi, no. 6, June 1979, Trans. in JPRS - 73956, August 3, 1979, pp. 56-57.
To build a strong base for the political power, a fundamental change was sought in the soldiers' social outlook. The proletarian revolutionary/could not be placed and built on solid foundations unless the commanders and fighters strictly adhered to and followed correct political lines. They were assured that once they had mastered the correct military line of Mao Zedong, they could place the army on solid foundations. Mao Zedong's military theory and military line, it was asserted, had represented the important development of Marxist military science. In the course of the revolution, it had given the proper directions. His line had enormously facilitated in defeating the enemies and ultimately seizing the political power. It was, however, added that the historical significance and correctness of his line was not only been relevant to the present revolutionary wars but it would be relevant and applicable to future wars too. To correctly grasp the revolutionary-military line, the men were instructed to "deepen their understanding of Mao’s viewpoint of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, strengthening their ability to distinguish between the genuine and the sham Marxism and thus raising consciousness of implementing his revolutionary line." 86

86. Renmin Ribao, November 8, 1975; SCNA, and November 7, 1975; Trans. in SCMP, no. 5981.
Those army personnel who held this wrong notion that, "military affairs and policies are opposed to each other and do not recognize that the military machine is only one of the tools for the fulfilment of the political task"\textsuperscript{87} were severely criticized. The Chinese leadership was faced with the all important question whether to unify military affairs and politics or to set them apart against each other, and whether it should uphold materialism or it should support idealism. "The purely military viewpoint and bourgeois politics, though different in form, are in reality one in essence. They are products of idealism, running counter to the Marxist theory of unity between politics and military affairs".\textsuperscript{88}

The viewpoint advocating the idea to "set politics and military affairs sharply against each other"\textsuperscript{89} was vehemently criticized. "This type of military line splits subjectivity from objectivity and divorces knowledge from practice".\textsuperscript{90} It also violates the law of developments


\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
and obstructs the building of the revolutionary army. While this viewpoint was criticized, Mao Zedong's military line was praised as it represented the proletarian politics and it also unified military affairs with politics. The "mountain stronghold mentality" as well as the "sectarian tendency" which developed in the military organizations during past was criticised. The soldiers were urged to wholeheartedly and resolutely respond to the call of the Second Plenum of the 10th Central Committee and the 4th National People's Congress.

To recognize the Chinese armed forces, the commanders and soldiers were instructed to implement sincerely Mao's military line and to follow the centralized leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The army men were to pay proper attention to the "three main rules of discipline" and the "eight points for attention". To change their world outlook, the army personnel were instructed to learn humility from the people and to take active part in bringing about the "socialist revolution and in the other construction tasks". To save the country from foreign invasion and other calamities, the army men were alert to "be prepared against war, be prepared against natural disasters, and do everything for the people". In order

91. "We must be ready at all times to fight", Cheihfeng Chymbao, February 25, 1977. Trans. in FBIS, March 2, 1977, p. 16.
to prepare the country to meet the eventuality of external threat, the soldiers were asked to "dig deep tunnels, store grain everywhere and never seek hegemony".\textsuperscript{92} To "heighten the vigilance and step up combat readiness, the military men were instructed to run the militia well and to struggle hard to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat to defend the socialist motherland and to guard against subversion and thwart all sorts of aggression by the capitalists and 'social' imperialism and their lackeys."\textsuperscript{93}

\textbf{Post-Mao Scene (1976-77)}

Chairman, Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and Marshal Zhu De, the three most important personalities of the Revolution Era died in 1976. The unexpected and sudden demise of these very important figures in the same year, caused a big vacuum and uncertainty in the Chinese civil and military scene. In the absence of proper arrangements for a smooth succession in the central leadership there was an air of uncertainty prevailing in the country. Although a new power structure under the leadership of Hua Guofeng was built, he was not able to remove the uncertainty which prevailed on the Chinese political scene.

\textsuperscript{92} In celebration of 49th anniversary of the Founding of the PLA, Chungfa Chungkao, July 27, 1976, Trans. in FELS, August 2, 1976, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
There was lot of dissatisfaction in the various forces, which were politically divided between themselves. The years following the death of Premier Zhou Enlai, had witnessed certain significant developments. Due to major policy disagreements and differences with the top authorities, Deng Xiaoping was toppled down and was removed from all important positions except from the membership of the Communist Party. After the deaths of Zhu De and Mao Zedong the real tussle for power started. The main actors in the Chinese political scene were the pragmatists and the leftists. The manner in which these forces were acting, disturbed the civilian and military balance of power at the centre. It appeared that the nation was likely to plunge in utter chaos. There was a keen contest for power. The situation seemed to go out of hands and it very adversely affected the law and order, when the leftists entered the arena. The army was kept in readiness to meet any eventuality, which might cause widespread disturbances. The People’s army at the very first opportunity used force ruthlessly and brought the situation under control. Armed detachments were directed to move to check the activities of the leftist factions. When the movements of the leftists assumed serious proportions and posed a serious threat to the position of the Hua Guofeng, the army was summoned and ordered to intervene directly. Consequently, the
arrests of Jiang Qing, Wang Hungwan, Yao Wenyuan, Zhang Zhunjiao followed. To check the factional and group clashes and bring the situation under complete control, the army was asked to play the crucial role to save the nation from complete disintegration. A countrywide campaign was launched against the "Gang of Four". The Chinese official media was directed to criticise them for indulging in and committing conspiratorial activities and "altering the party's basic line" and "running counter to Mao Zedong's military line". The "Gang of Four" was charged with usurping the party and state leaderships and grabbing military power.

During the period between Hu Qiaofang's coming to power and the convening of the 11th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1977, the Chinese political scene was very tense. At this crucial juncture, the army played the balancing role in the civilian machinery and in consolidating the position of Hu Qiaofang. By 1977, began the process of "readjustment, reform and reorganis-

94. "In undertaking the New Long March, it is necessary to carry forward the tradition of plain living and hard struggle", Hong Qi, no. 7, July 1976, p. 80, Trans. in JPRS, 71961, September 29, 1976, p. 90.

sation of the leading groups. This followed the rehabilitation of cadres who were previously purged. The new leadership assembled at the 11th Congress of the CCP, pledged once again not to deviate from Mao Zedong’s military line with its traditional revolutionary character. In order to restore the army’s traditional values, the men of the armed forces were instructed to "be law-abiding, maintain party spirit and root out factionalism". While recalling the revolutionary past the armymen were told to strengthen the military organizations and attaching special attention to the leading organs.

The Military Commission Conference and the All-Army Political Work Conference convened in 1977, laid down a set of new directives to re-build the People's Liberation Army. The All-Army Political Work Conference specifically pointed out that in military construction no effort should be spared to modernize the army rapidly. The armymen were instructed to carry out the eight-point programme honestly.

96. "Be of one heart and one mind, go all out to raise the level of modernization of our armed forces", New Year Editorial, Xinhua Yu E Hua, in Chinese no. 1, 1980, Trans. in JPRS - 75841, June 9, 1980, pp. 96-97.


98. Xiao Hua, "Bring the Powerful Force of Political Work into play in the modernization of the Armed Forces", Hong Qi, no. 1, June 1979, Trans. in JPRS - 73958 August 3, 1979, p. 56.
and sincerely and to go all out to raise the level of the Liberation Army. 99

To rejuvenate the military organisation, the leadership called upon the whole party, the whole army and the whole country to work hard and to consider the class struggle as the key link. 100 It was however stressed that "the army must be consolidated" 101 and "be prepared for war". 102 In reforming the military organs, armymen were expected to take keen interest to rectify those irrational rules and regulations 103, which could create obstructions in modernising the People's Liberation Army. They were told to treat the People's Liberation Army as a 'big school' and build its organisational structure and streamline its training system. It was stressed that keen interest should be taken in building the organisational set up of the armed forces, and in restoring the traditional


100. Editorial: "Be of one heart and one mind, go all out to raise the level of modernization of our armed forces", Xinhua Ya Bao in Chinese, no. 1, 1980, pp. 6-8, Trans. in JPRS - 75941, June 9, 1980, pp. 85-89.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.
heritage of the Liberation Army. Special attention was to be paid towards raising the political consciousness of the troops, strengthening its organizational discipline, restoring and developing the revolutionary traditions in the armed forces. Proper care was also to be taken to raise the ideological level of the soldiers. To modernize and streamline the standard of defence forces, with a view to meeting the requirements of modern warfare, the commanders and soldiers were asked to pay proper attention to 'reform', 'reorganize' and 'readjust' the people's armed forces.  

104 In re-building and restructuring the military organs, the soldiers and fighters were asked to understand clearly and thoroughly the distinction between the proletarian revolutionary military line and the revisionist opportunist military line. In building the army, the officers and fighters were asked to keep in mind the fact that, "the line is the key link, once it is grasped, and everything else falls apiece".  

105 The army was to be built according to the needs of the changing conditions and the modern requirements. Unless commanders and the fighters correctly understood the "Marxist-viewpoint" and indoctrinated it in "progressive
political line", it was feared, the People's Liberation Army might lose its revolutionary bearings and just stick to a "purely military line". 106

The new leadership reaffirmed and reiterated Mao Zedong's viewpoint that, "politics and military affairs were united in a dialectical way". ... Politics commands the military affairs, and the armed forces serve politics". 107 It was claimed that when the soldiers and officers conscientiously place politics in command, ideology in the lead, arm themselves with Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong's thoughts, seriously implement the Communist Party's policies and principles, and promote the Liberation Army's fine tradition of work and style and fully arouse the people's initiative and creativeness in doing all kinds of revolutionary work well, they would then succeed to transform the military organisation into a powerful instrument, which would act as a strong bulwark to defend the socialist society. 108

For the consolidation of the armed forces, the soldiers were instructed to criticize and if possible

106. Ibid.


liquidate the bourgeois legacy and develop the proletarian ideology. The rank and file of the soldiers was called upon to remodel its world outlook. It was suggested that for modernizing the army, the major attention should be paid not only to the improvement of weapons but also on preparing and developing material and ideological bases. To build a powerful socialist army the entire rank and file (of the armed forces) was told to "grasp education and training, strengthen organizational discipline, improve work-efficiency and to work for coordinated action".\(^{109}\) within the People's army.

The Central Committee of Military Affairs Commission (1977) laid down broad and comprehensive guidelines to build a powerful revolutionary socialist army which could meet the challenge of any eventuality. The commanders and fighters were directed to study "the laws of military theory, army organisation, army strategy and tactics, management methods, the innovation and reform in present weaponry and the work style".\(^{110}\) The Fifth People's National Congress and the Second Plenary Session of the Fifth People's National Congress stressed that the army should be built keeping in view the best example of the military commission of 1977. It was also suggested

\(^{109}\) Ibid.

\(^{110}\) Ibid.
while building the Liberation Army, strategic importance should be given to political education and military training. The military training of the soldiers must be combined with political and cultural education. To make the succession problem of the old and retiring army personnel easy, recommendation was made to train the young and deserving soldiers so that there is no possibility of any vacuum. To further facilitate the succession, the Central Committee of the Military Commission also underlined that “old comrades of the army were assigned the task of training the young soldiers as their successors and hence doing a good job by passing their experience to those who were following them. The young soldiers were specifically advised to learn from the retiring veteran and experienced soldiers. The leading groups at all levels were instructed to work for and strengthen unity between the veteran and young soldiers. The soldiers were instructed to master the skills in their respective fields and to specialize in handling modern weapons.

The Chinese leadership laid great stress repeatedly on Mao Zedong’s dictum that “winning the countryside victory is only the first step in a long journey covering 10,000 miles and the journey after the revolution will be much longer, the work much greater and much more difficult.”

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In a country, which was backward industrially and technically like China, the commanders and the soldiers were reminded that, "the forthcoming long March would be an event of profound economic, political, scientific and technological importance and it would require greater and more arduous efforts than any previous struggle". 112 The final battle had yet to be fought and won. Hence, they were instructed to "steadfastly take class struggle as the key link, persist in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and fight to prevent revisionism". 113

While addressing the military personnel in a Conference, Mao Zedong has posed this question, "why should political work be strengthened in the army? and then giving the answer himself said, "politics is the commander, the soul in everything .... Political work is the life blood of all work". 114 It was also added in this context that "recently there has appeared in our society, particularly among the young people, a tendency to totally neglect politics. The young men have only one concern and that is to advance their own material interests." 115

112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Xu Xiangqian, "Strive to achieve modernization in National Defence - In Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Founding of the PRC", Hong Qi, no. 10, October 2, 1979, Trans. in JPRS - 74660, November 30, 1979, pp. 50-51.
115. Zhao Dong, "Why should Political Work be strengthened in the Army", Wen Wei Po (Hong Kong), May 9, 1980, p. 6, Trans. in JPRS - 75792, May 29, 1980, p. 84.
If such tendencies are allowed to go unchecked, they would harm the broader interests of the people. The main purpose of the 11th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in 1977, and also of the Fifth National Congress was to find a solution to these problems and to bring a new period of socialist revolution and construction. In this period, the major emphasis was to be laid on the armymen continuing in their involvement in the revolutionary movements in the class struggle. They were to participate in the struggle for production and scientific experiments. To modernize army they were to pay great attention to the four modernizations. Unless the country made great breakthroughs in agriculture, industry, science and also in technology, lofty talk of defense modernization would be a mere eyewash. For attaining defense modernization, great emphasis was laid upon consolidated efforts and the unity of the soldiers and the common man.

For the military modernization, it was repeatedly emphasized that "if the class struggle and the 'relevant' lines were missing, modernization could not be achieved. Even if military modernization is brought about for the time being, it would most probably collapse in the end and if it survives at all, it would be a modernization

116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
along the imperialist and social-imperialist (American or Russian) fashion.\textsuperscript{118} The Political Work Conference of the PLA held during 1977, sharply criticized "subjectivism", "formalism", and "bureaucratism",\textsuperscript{119} which were finding favour with the commanders and soldiers. Recalling the traditional qualities of the past, the soldiers were asked to restore the creativity and the agility of the past. They were instructed to be "Red and Expert" both.\textsuperscript{120} In order to modernize the armed forces, they should preserve both these qualities. It was stressed that without a high degree of revolutionary character and expertise in one's profession the goal of modernization would be impossible to achieve.

Regarding the improvement in the armament of the PLA, a balanced approach was adopted by the Chinese leadership. In order to modernize the armed forces, a great emphasis was laid on improving the quality of nuclear weapons, advanced equipments, guided missiles and other sophisticated weapons but at the same time the use of the old conventional weapons was not altogether ignored. And as regards the military organisation, command and

\textsuperscript{118} Renmin Ribao, February 6, 1976, Trans. in \textit{AFCP}, no. 6043.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
operation systems underwent some changes and alterations. However, it was asserted that the basic concept of the army - revolutionization for the sake of modernization would not be accepted. To meet the challenges of the modern warfare, the new leadership reiterated that the soldiers and officers would not deviate from the traditional military lines, and its strategy and tactics. To improve the advance fighting character of the armed forces the rank and file of the soldiers was instructed to pay more attention to the training system.

The official pronouncements repeatedly stressed that "China certainly wants to modernize her national defence, but modernisation of her national defence must be compatible with the reality of her national economic development and must not exceed a certain proportion". While vehemently stressing the need to equip the Liberation Army with advanced techniques and modern weapons and arms, the official note pleaded for a "balanced modernization strategy", giving due importance to conventional weapons also. The leadership emphasized on the policy of "active defence" in order to meet the requirements of any foreign aggression.

122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
An important editorial which appeared in Liberation Army Daily of June 1977, drew the attention of the armymen to military education and training. In order to accelerate revolutionization and modernization of the Liberation Army, the commanders and fighters were asked to learn the historical experiences of the "Three Rises and Three Falls" of 1964, 1972 and 1975\textsuperscript{124} and also to remember and emulate the fine example of the "Hardbone 6th Company".\textsuperscript{125} The editorial added that in the military modernization, major interests should be taken to "raise man's political consciousness ... and bring into play the role of modern weapons, technology and equipment".\textsuperscript{126} Another editorial entitled "Great Call to Accelerate the Revolutionization and Modernization of Our Army"\textsuperscript{127} called upon the officers and soldiers to link closely the target of military modernization with the other factors of the Chinese economy.

One significant remark which was made in the 11th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party pointed out that "Only with the faster growth of economic construction,


\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.

can there be more progress in defence construction”. 128
On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding
of the People's Liberation Army, which was celebrated on
1 August 1977, the call previously given for sweeping
military modernization along with the campaign to modernize
the Chinese economy was reaffirmed. The achievement of
the target of powerful ground, naval and air forces in
the military organization, it was asserted, will depend
upon the soldiers' mastery of handling new techniques,
modern arms and equipments.

On the occasion of the Army Day, the Defence Minister
Ye Jianying remarked in two separate speeches that "the
modernization of economy will enhance the modernization
of defence capability". 129 He also pointed out that in
order to "step up scientific and technological research
for national defence, the production of defence industries
had to be raised with very hard work and no effort was to
be spared for the building of China into a great, powerful
and modernized socialist country before the end of this
20th century". 130 Elaborating the subject further Ye
Jianying pointed out that "a modern army must be supported

128. The then Defence Minister Ye Jianying's speech at
the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding
of the PLA (Joint editorial), in Renmin Ribao, Hong Qi,
Chenfang Chumbao, August 1-2, 1977, Trans. in FBIS,

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.
by a modern economy.\textsuperscript{131} because the urge of "a strong national defence must have a strong national economy as its base".\textsuperscript{132} In the same tone, he however, added that "if agriculture, industry, science and technology did not make much progress, how could national defence be modernized".\textsuperscript{133} However, an other article which appeared in the "Liberation Army" Daily laid great emphasis on "accelerating the modernization of National Defence"\textsuperscript{134} and at the same time laid importance on "turning out more grain, iron and steel, petroleum and other industrial and agricultural products and developing science and technology will contribute towards building our national defence".\textsuperscript{135}

To modernize the national defence, the leadership emphasized that "not only modern weapons are needed but also men, who are imbued with and devoted to the socialist cause and well-versed in modern weapons and operational methods".\textsuperscript{136} To build a powerful modern army, the

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} Xu Xiangqian. "Strive to achieve modernization in National Defence", in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China, Hong Qi, no. 10, October 2, 1979, Trans. in JPRS - 74660, November 30, 1979, p. 47.
soldiers were asked to adopt new attitudes and a new revolutionary spirit. They were asked to demonstrate leadership quality, professional competence, ability and eagerness to learn the principles and techniques of modern warfare. While modernising the armed forces, the precious legacy which the armymen had inherited from the past was not to be neglected and renounced. Quoting from the past events, the leadership declared that the past history proves that the defeat of an army is caused not by its weapons being poor, but because its commanders have backward military thinking and that they direct the operations in the wrong way. To win any war, the armymen were asked to improve and advance their scientific and cultural standard.

The Chinese official media consistently adhered that while making new advancements along the road of a 'Long March' towards the military modernization, the political work in the army should not be ignored. Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese leadership reiterated that the political work was the People's Liberation Army's life blood. It was emphasized that the new historical conditions, the people's army was to strengthen at all
costs its political work. Political work was to be brought into full play to meet the needs of modernizing the army. As in the past, the principal task of the army's political work, would be to unify and "rationalize" the thinking of the rank and file of the soldiers along the basic guidelines laid on the occasion of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee and also the Second Session of the Eighth National People's Congress.