

The Defense Establishment

~~(C)~~ Within the last year the roles and functions of the four major organizations in the Chinese defense establishment have changed. These organizations, which formulate and execute policy, and exercise command and control of the armed forces are:

- o the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (known as the Party Military Commission, or MC);
- o the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China (the State Military Commission or CMC);
- o the Ministry of National Defense (MND);
- o and the three General Departments of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)--the General Staff Department (GSD), the General Political Department (GPD), and the General Logistics Department (GLD).

~~(C)~~ Party Military Commission. The Party Military Commission (MC) remains the highest organ of military authority. Professionalization and modernization notwithstanding, in China the Party still "controls the gun."

- o ~~(C)~~ The MC is led by a small group of five individuals, known as the Secretariat, which is made up of China's most powerful political and military leaders. The MC decides broad national security policy, defines policies governing military modernization, and provides the link between the party and the military.

- o (U) The five MC members are:
 - Deng Xiaoping, Chairman
 - Zhao Ziyang, First Vice Chairman
 - Yang Shangkun, Permanent Vice Chairman and Secretary General
 - Liu Huaqing, Deputy Secretary General
 - Hong Xuezhi, Deputy Secretary General

~~(C)~~ Central Military Commission. The state Central Military Commission (CMC) develops plans in support of broad party MC decisions, and formulates specific policies to be implemented by the armed forces. It provides a forum for coordination between the members of the MC, the Minister of National Defense, and the directors of the three general departments of the PLA -- who comprise the CMC -- and serves as the link between the state and the armed forces.

- o ~~(C)~~ For example, the MC recently decided to reinstitute formal ranks within the PLA, codify service regulations for the officer corps, and create a corps of civilian cadres (a PLA "civil service"). However, the state CMC worked out the details and issued implementing directives.
- o ~~(C)~~ Deng Xiaoping retains the Chairmanship of both military commissions. However, he remains in the background and has handed over the day to day running of the commissions to Vice Chairman Zhao Ziyang--his chosen successor.
- o ~~(C)~~ In a significant break from past practice, the Minister of National Defense and the three chiefs of the General Departments of the PLA are no longer leading members of the Party MC. Within the past year, their policy-making authority has been exercised primarily in the state CMC and their own organizations.

~~(C)~~ Ministry of National Defense. The role of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) is changing. Plans are underway to make it a more powerful body with a larger role in formulating defense policy. Zhao Ziyang has commissioned a study to define its new role.

- o ~~(S)~~ The Minister of National Defense, Qin Jiwei, seems ideally suited to head a more active and assertive MND. In contrast to his predecessor, Zhang Aiping, a research and development expert, Qin is a professional soldier whose entire background has been predominantly as a field commander. Moreover, he is senior to the three PLA General Department heads in both time in service and party position.

~~(S)~~ The Three General Departments. The PLA is directed by three general departments: the General Staff Department (GSD), the General Political Department (GPD), and the General Logistics Department (GLD). The heads of these three general departments are members of the CMC.

- o ~~(S)~~ The GSD exercises command and control, develops operational doctrine, oversees training, and supervises force and equipment development. The Chief of the General Staff (Chi Haotian) is the equivalent of both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chief of Staff of the Army in the United States. Since the PLA is predominantly a ground force, the GSD acts as the army staff as well as the joint staff. The other three services of the PLA (the PLA Navy, PLA Air Force, and Strategic Missile Force) have autonomous, but subordinate, staffs within the GSD. Command and control of the armed forces is exercised by Beijing through seven geographic military regions.
- o ~~(S)~~ The GPD acts as the link between the party and the army, and is responsible for political work through the political commissar system. The GPD is also the center of military personnel administration. Assignments, transfers and promotions of all PLA officers are staffed through the GPD.
- o ~~(S)~~ The GLD is responsible for supply, maintenance, and logistical work within all of the services, and coordinates the funding, development, and fielding of new equipment for the PLA.

