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**THE IDEALS OF TODAY'S MODERNIZING PEOPLE'S
LIBERATION ARMY**

by

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THE IDEALS OF TODAY'S MODERNIZING PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

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ABSTRACT

As China emerges as a major world power, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has adjusted its ideology to maintain national spirit and power. Elements of this adjustment can be seen in changes within the People's Liberation Army (PLA). As the PLA aggressively pursues a revolution in military affairs with Chinese characteristics, some have asserted the PLA's modernization and professionalization reform involves reviving values and ideals associated with Confucianism and China's traditional past. This thesis will reveal that the PLA has not revived values and ideals associated with Confucianism in its drive to modernize. Instead, the PLA is incorporating values and ideals similar to other modernizing militaries that have some similarities to ancient Chinese ideals but are comparatively different. The values and ideals the PLA has incorporated provide a foundation for all service members and clarify allegiances, define acceptable ethical behavior, elucidate competing ideological thoughts, establish a benchmark for military members' actions with each other and with society, and facilitate loyalty to the CCP.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	PURPOSE.....	1
B.	IMPORTANCE.....	2
C.	PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS	2
D.	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
1.	PLA Modernization and Revolution in Military Affairs	4
2.	Ideological Change.....	5
3.	Confucianism in the PLA	6
E.	METHODS AND SOURCES.....	9
II.	MODERNIZATION OF THE PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY	11
A.	BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PLA	11
1.	How the PLA Got Its Name	11
2.	The Shifting Doctrines of the PLA	12
B.	LEADERSHIP OF THE PLA.....	15
1.	Command and Control.....	15
2.	The Relationship of the PLA Leadership with the CCP	18
C.	INFLUENCE OF THE PLA IN CHINESE SOCIETY.....	19
1.	The PLA Supports the People and the People Support the PLA ..	19
D.	MODERNIZING THE PLA	22
1.	Elements of Modernization	23
2.	Education and Training	24
3.	Restoration of Professionalism	26
4.	The PLA Reduction in Force	27
E.	REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	28
1.	What is RMA?.....	28
2.	China’s RMA.....	28
F.	VALUES AND IDEALS OF THE PLA.....	30
1.	The Five Core Military Values	30
2.	Why the PLA Has Core Values	31
G.	CONCLUSION	32
III.	THE IDEALS OF CONFUCIANISM.....	35
A.	CONFUCIAN BEGINNINGS.....	35
1.	Who was Confucius?.....	35
2.	The Hundred Schools	36
B.	THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONFUCIANISM.....	37
1.	The Values of Confucianism	37
2.	The Confucian Writings	40
3.	Confucianism after Confucius	40
C.	THE IDEALS OF CONFUCIANISM COMPARED TO THE IDEALS OF THE PLA.....	40
1.	Similarities and Differences	41

2. Why the PLA Has Its Core Military Values.....43
D. CONCLUSION46
IV. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....47
A. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLA AND ITS CORE VALUES47
1. A Time of Transition Presents Obstacles.....47
2. The PLA Needs Core Values.....50
B. CONCLUSION52
LIST OF REFERENCES55
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST61

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPC	Communist Party of China
CMC	Central Military Commission
FM	Field Manual
GAD	General Armaments Department
GLD	General Logistics Department
GPD	General Political Department
GSD	General Staff Department
IW	Informational Warfare
PAP	People's Armed Police
PKO	Peace keeping operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PME	professional military education
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SARS	Sever acute respiratory syndrome crises
UN	United Nations

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

As China emerges as a major world power, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has adjusted its ideology to maintain national spirit and maintain power. In October 2006 at the China's Sixth Plenum of the 16th Central Committee, the Party endorsed the concept of a "harmonious society" in China, which would require the push for a "harmonious socialist culture" built upon a "socialist core values system."¹

Elements of this adjustment may be seen in changes within the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The 2004 PRC White Paper on national defense included a chapter called "Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics," which without specifying what these "Chinese characteristics" are described how the PLA is modernizing with regard to structure, training, logistical reform and political work.² In 2008, Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, extended the concept of "socialist core values" directly into the PLA under the concept of "the core values of military personnel."

The inculcation of new values and ideals in the PLA raises basic questions. What are the values and ideals that the PLA is inculcating in its soldiers to support military modernization? Are they comparable to values and ideals used in other contemporary militaries, either in the West or the Third World? Do they reflect a significant departure from the Soviet-era values and ideals that shaped the PLA in the period before the current military modernization effort began in 1985? To what extent do they draw on elements of martial values of China's traditional past? Specifically, is the CCP reviving values and ideals associated with Confucianism, as some have asserted, in its drive to modernize China's military?

¹ James C. Mulvenon, "Hu Jintao and the 'Core Values of Military Personnel,'" *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 28 (Spring 2009): 1.

² Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13.

B. IMPORTANCE

A thorough assessment of the nature and source of the values and ideals the CCP is injecting into the PLA modernization process may reveal valuable insights into the strategic culture of China's contemporary military. In recent years, there has been extensive but unresolved debate as to whether there is a distinctly Chinese way of war. Some have argued that Beijing's approach to the use of force, its views on strategy, its preferences regarding what kind of military it requires, and the kind of soldiers it should train reflect characteristically "Chinese" cultural preferences and choices. Others argue that China's strategic culture is not intrinsically different from other modern militaries, and that insofar as the PLA is modern, it increasingly reflects a strategic culture like other modern militaries. A careful examination of the "core values" of the PLA may shed useful insight into the strategic culture debate, and so, contribute to evaluation of the PLA's evolving capabilities as a fighting force.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS

My hypothesis is that the ideals the PLA is using to modernize the military have some similarities to ancient Chinese ideals but overall are comparatively different. Moreover, I argue that the values and ideals the PLA uses to modernize are more comparable to other modernizing militaries. In order to assess the degree to which the contemporary effort to inculcate new values and ideals in the PLA draws on military ideals imported from China's traditional past, the thesis first focuses on the precise definitions of the values and ideals the PLA is adopting. It then compares them to those used in traditional China. Comparing traditional values with those of today present difficulties.

In the sixth century BCE, before the first Chinese empire, Confucius strove to live a moral life in chaotic and disorderly time. Confucius had a lasting impact on subsequent periods of Chinese history as a broad tradition of ethical and socio-political commentary. Over time, Confucianism and its emphasis on learning and virtue became a part of Chinese governance, survived the rise and fall of dynasties, and are still very much alive

today.³ Yet, one problem with comparing past values to ones of today is that over time the values change and may be altered according to the circumstances and goals of those interpreting them. Ideals can change according to culture, and culture changes over time. If a set of values is adopted as an official philosophy, problems may arise with relating it to new realities.⁴ The meaning and content of an ideal today does not necessarily accurately relate the original interpretation and meaning of the same ideal in the past. For the purpose of this research, I define the parameters of traditional Chinese ideals and values to those of the works and interpretations from the times of Confucius and his early followers. The words “value” and “ideal” are often incorrectly used synonymously because of their frequent use. A value is defined as “something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable.”⁵ Values are subject to interpretation according to culture, and one’s experience over time. An ideal is “an ultimate object or aim of endeavor” pointing to a “standard of perfection, beauty, and excellence.”⁶ Ideals can be goals one aims to achieve. In context with each other, often one establishes and lives by values to come closer to achieving an ideal. In Chinese, “value” (价值 jià zhí) and “ideal” (理想 lǐ xiǎng) have different meanings but are also sometimes mistakenly used interchangeably. This research, value and ideal are not meant to be used interchangeably but sometimes are in translations or incorrect use by an author.

Furthermore, research on the PLA must contend with the problem of finding reliable and accurate information. Apart from work on the PLA by foreign researchers, useful information may be gleaned from documents produced by the PLA itself—mainly from the PLA daily newspaper *Liberation Army Daily*. However, the validity of such data must be scrutinized carefully, as it is subject to censorship before it is published.

³ Rhoads Murphey, *East Asia: A New History*, 4th ed, (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 64.

⁴ Arthur Wright, *Confucianism and Chinese Civilization* (New York: Atheneum, 1964), 4.

⁵ Merriam-Webster.com, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/value/> (accessed April 5, 2010).

⁶ Ibid.

The conjecture that the CCP is using elements of the same ideologies and philosophies used thousands of years ago is ironic because in China's more recent political history there was a push by political elite to break China with the past.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several works present conclusions regarding the relevance of Chinese traditional values and the program to modernize the military.

1. PLA Modernization and Revolution in Military Affairs

Dennis Blasko points out that the PLA, in endorsing the concept of promoting “military transformation with Chinese Characteristics,” is a “logical continuation of the PLA’s multifaceted military modernization program that has been underway for 25 years.”⁷ The concept of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) when applied to China, stated Blasko, is the “method by which China will build its new military force.”⁸ The Chinese characteristics or “Chinese-style military change” is the blending of old (the principles of “people’s war”) with the new focus on principles to fight and win a “local war under informationalized conditions.”⁹

Part of that relationship of old and new, according to Blasko, is the role of man in war. Citing Jiang Zemin’s 1990 quote: “Though we’re unable to develop all high-technology weapons and equipment within a short period of time, *we must train qualified personnel first, for we would rather let our qualified personnel wait for equipment than the other way around*” (emphasis added).¹⁰ Blasko points out that a fundamental principle of PLA modernization is that China intends to increase its mechanization and information technology application in the warfare, as well as be able to utilize the technology at all levels on the battlefield. “Even as large quantities of new equipment

⁷ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 13.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wang Congjiao, “Jiang Zemin’s Book on Technology, Army Building Viewed,” *Yangcheng Wanbao* (internet Version-WWW) in Chinese, February 13, 2001, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/CPP20010221000077?searchKey=341377&rpp=10&index=9/ (accessed February 24, 2010).

enter the force, constant emphasis remains on traditional PLA operational methods incorporating speed, mobility, stealth, deception, and use of stratagem to confuse or mislead the enemy. These methods depend more on Chinese ingenuity than expensive technology....”^{11 12}

China concedes that it does not yet have the hardware or expertise to match other global powers’ military force projection capabilities. However, a whole chapter on the “Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics” in the 2004 White Paper on National Defense highlights the PLA’s focus on individual training in tandem with other military modernization goals. The 2006 and 2008 White Papers also describe training personnel as a central focus for a more modern and professional military.

2. Ideological Change

James Mulvenon states there has been and continues to be a fundamental ideological change in the PLA, as seen with changes in the military education system and increased functional specialization among ranks. One way the PLA has modernized is that it has drastically changed its military educational system.¹³ The curriculum for military education has become “increasingly professional in orientation” and “the PLA’s higher rates of education are enhancing the professional expertise of the officer corps.”¹⁴ Not only has military training been upgraded, but since the early 1990s there has also been a change in ideological focus.¹⁵ Former military education involved intense political indoctrination. Today, education is presented to military members with a division between military and politics.¹⁶ Specifically, emphasis has been changed from

¹¹ Blasko’s use of the word “traditional” in this context refers to China’s military focus to fight wars close to Chinese borders.

¹² Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 12.

¹³ Information was part of a RAND study for the Office of Secretary of Defense in which Mulvenon was tasked to analyze key factors influencing China’s emergent national security strategies, policies, and military capabilities.

¹⁴ James Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps: Trends and Implications* (Washington D.C.: Rand, 1997), 22.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

the Chinese military carrying out the tasks of a revolution-type military under Mao to a military “assigned to deal with high-tech warfare.”¹⁷

Functional specialization, training, the role of university education and other formal education influences in the PLA professionalization process has also changed. The rank-and-file soldier carrying the “little red book” has changed to one who is more specialized which, according to Mulvenon, not only strongly suggests a change in ideals but also that “the PLA as a military organization is abandoning generalism and cross-fertilization in favor of functional specialization, as dictated by the demands of modern technological warfare.”¹⁸

Mulvenon’s book is insightful in that it shows the PLA is incorporating a new ideology of education to combat ever changing threats. Where it falls short, which he readily admits, is because the nature of his data creates limitations on his research.¹⁹ His report draws conclusions on open source data specifically around demographics and promotion rates of PLA officers from two data sets. Whereas inferences can be made, he admits future research should strive to improve data collected from earlier periods, specifically pre-reform years.

3. Confucianism in the PLA

In a more recent piece, Mulvenon explains a possible reason why the PLA is conducting an educational campaign “designed to cultivate ‘the core values for revolutionary soldiers of the contemporary era.’”²⁰ The fact that China is trying to incorporate morals into the psyche of the everyday serviceman is worth analysis in that the basis of traditional Confucian philosophy was to focus on morality. The core values of contemporary servicemen are meant to counter negative phenomenon that pose a threat to the overall power of the Chinese government.²¹ Specifically, by pushing core values

¹⁷ Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps*, 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁹ Mulvenon, “Hu Jintao and the ‘Core Values of Military Personnel,’” 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

like being loyal, serving the country, and showing devotion to missions, all of which show a moral obligation to the state, the military will be better suited to stand up against other damaging and corrupt ideals. Mulvenon stated that “despite the tumultuous changes occurring among the population, the overriding goal of the values campaign is to facilitate continued Party dominance of the army.”²² One of the implications listed in Mulvenon’s piece is that the “core values” campaign in the military “creates a right normative narrative about the special values of military organizations (honor, duty, etc.) and the traditional Confucian values of China, but ultimately... [are] focused intensely on continued Party dominance of the PLA.”²³

There are other opinions on the restoration of Confucian philosophy in China. Alice Miller challenges the contention of some foreign observers that the new goal established by way of resolution at the 16th Central Committees Sixth Plenum to establish a “harmonious society” signals “a restoration of traditional Confucian concepts in CCP political discourse.”²⁴ According to her, there is nothing in common between the values of traditional Confucianism and those of a “socialist harmonious society.”²⁵ Her article compares the Hu Jintao’s “8 dos and don’ts” to a 1659 edict called the “6 maxims” from the Shunzhi Emperor and states there is little evidence of convergence in concept.²⁶ She states that Hu Jintao’s ambition in establishing a “harmonious society” seems more similar to moral principles pushed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in its last decades.²⁷ This article shows that there are criticisms of the argument that the CCP uses Confucian philosophies from traditional times to establish morals in government compared to what the CCP is supposedly trying to do today in order to establish harmony in today’s Chinese society and the PLA.

²² Mulvenon, “Hu Jintao and the ‘Core Values of Military Personnel,’” 5.

²³ Ibid., 6.

²⁴ Alice L. Miller, “Hu Jintao and the Sixth Plenum.” *China Leadership Monitor*, no 20 (Winter 2007): 8.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 9.

David M. Lampton brings up an argument that bears on the character of Confucian values and how the PLA is professionalizing. China's fourth-generation government leaders have focused in on ideational power as a way to broaden national strategy.²⁸ Ideational power “does not rely primarily upon material (“money”) rewards or coercion (“might”) but rather derives from the intellectual, cultural, spiritual, leadership, and legitimacy resources that enhance a nation’s capacity to efficiently define and achieve national objectives.”²⁹

Whereas previously Confucian’s “rigid hierarchical character” was in many aspects used to explain China’s backwardness, today, Lampton argues, much of China’s success is attributed to Confucian thought and society based on discipline, an inclination to save, the ethic of mutual obligation, the value of education, and networking.³⁰ He poses the question, “How can the same Confucian values hold a society back from modernization for hundreds of years and then propel it into amazing levels of growth over a few decades?”³¹ Lampton agrees that culture is central and ideology plays a large role in China’s reach for power. But, he argues further that culture and ideology are hard to define or measure and that culture involves interaction with other variables domestically and in an international context.³² Confucian philosophy has had a central role in China’s focus on ideational power, but it is hard to define because of culture and its interpretation over time.

Finally, Zhang Youyi, a professor from the Philosophy Teaching and Research Department at the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Party School states that “socialist core values have a close relation to traditional Chinese culture” in that “socialist core values have been planted in the fertile soil of traditional Chinese

²⁸ David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 119.

²⁹ Ibid., 118.

³⁰ Ibid., 140.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

culture.”³³ According to Zhang, traditional culture has evolved over a few thousand years and is linked to contemporary traditions that shape Chinese values, morals, customs, and other aspects of Chinese life. Socialist core values, she said, are “the cream that remains after the scum is removed from traditional Chinese culture.”³⁴ Confucius’s emphasis was on the value of harmony. As the “intrinsic nature of all things in the universe and the basis of existence for all things in this world...it is sheer innovation to create a ‘culture of harmony’ suited to the development of modern society.”³⁵ However, because “there is no lack of useless things in Chinese culture,” one must discriminate as there are ideas from Confucianism that ought to be discarded.³⁶ One must take “the dialectical approach of ‘accepting or discarding’ to get hold of the positive factors and establish a set of core values that is scientific and generally accepted by the people.”³⁷

Zhang advocates that the CCP Central Committee recognize the importance of Chinese culture and the need to embrace it in order to define a set of values and build up a harmonious society. Whereas the Cultural Revolution became a movement to exterminate traditional culture, which led to adverse consequences and “gave rise to ‘a broken generation’ and ‘a Westernized generation,’” the new leadership has exerted great efforts to promote Chinese national spirit and provide the opportunity for the Chinese to take the traditional Chinese culture seriously.³⁸ Zhang states that today’s Chinese regime has put a priority on learning about Chinese culture in order to establishing core values requisite to build a harmonious society.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

The purpose of this research is to determine what values and ideals the PLA is using to modernize and then compare those values and ideals to those of early Confucian

³³ Youyi Zhang, “PRC: ‘Socialist Core Values’ Rooted in ‘Traditional’ Chinese Culture,” *Zhongguo Dangsheng Ganbu Luntan* (May 6, 2007): 40.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

times. If the values and ideals do not compare, what are they comparable to? My thesis first defines what values and ideals the PLA is using to modernize and then compare those to the Confucian values and ideals of ancient China. I discuss how the PLA ideology has evolved over the last two decades and define the PLA's values and ideals of today. Using a comparative approach, I assess whether the PLA's values and ideals today are similar to those of traditional Chinese Confucianism. I also determine whether there are other explanations that better illuminate the significance of the values and ideals the PLA is adopting by comparing today's PLA values and ideals to those of other modernizing militaries.

In order to draw valid conclusions, the thesis draws on open source materials from contemporary newspapers, magazines, speeches by Chinese leaders, academic journals, and Chinese government statements.

II. MODERNIZATION OF THE PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY

China has aggressively sought to modernize and professionalize the PLA. The PLA has taken modernization as its central task. A brief history of the PLA will explain how the PLA has developed over the decades in regards to its relationship with the CCP as Chinese military doctrine has changed over time. The PLA plays a major role and has influence in Chinese society. An explanation of the reciprocal relationship between the PLA and Chinese citizens sheds light on the CCP’s reliance of the PLA being one of the faces of the Chinese government to the Chinese citizens and the need for the PLA to be loyal to China’s Communist party. China has repeatedly stated that its military has embarked in a revolution of military affairs. China’s RMA has shown the PLA has not only pursued technological advances to fight a “limited war in high-tech conditions” but also a systematic reform of its military doctrine. One doctrinal reform is the incorporation of ideals and core military values to guide the way a PLA soldier thinks as the Chinese military modernizes.

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PLA

The PLA has existed from its beginning under the tight control of the CPC. Since its beginning, there have been four major shifts in PLA military doctrine due to changes in threat, leadership, and political reform.

1. How the PLA Got Its Name

The PLA was officially established on 1 August 1927. The PLA was initially called the Chinese Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army during the revolutionary struggle against the Kuomintang. The army was composed of peasants as its main body who subjected themselves to the CCP leaders for direction reflecting a desire for tight control of the army by the CCP.³⁹ As a result of the Sanwan Reorganization in September 1927, the CCP reestablished the basic organization of the military by placing a Party branch in each company, thereby, guaranteeing the Party’s absolute leadership at the grass-roots

³⁹ PLA Press, *The Cross-Century Chinese People’s Liberation Army* (Beijing: PLA Press, 2005), 3.

level throughout the armed forces. A fundamental milestone characterizing the relationship between the CCP and the Red Army occurred at the Gutian Congress in December 1929. The Gutian Congress Resolution specified the nature of the Red Army.

The Red Army of China is an armed group to carry out revolutionary political tasks. Besides launching wars to annihilate the enemy military power, the Red Army shall take up important tasks such as spreading publicity among the masses, organizing the general public and helping them set up revolutionary regimes as well as Party organizations.⁴⁰

In 1946, after a short period when the CCP and the Kuomintang combined forces to defeat the Japanese, war again broke out between the CCP and the Kuomintang Nationalists. The CCP charged the PLA to “liberate the people and make them the masters of their own country.”⁴¹ When the Chinese Civil War began in 1946, the CCP’s Red Army was renamed as the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. The name has since been used till now.

2. The Shifting Doctrines of the PLA

Since the 1930s, the PLA has evolved and encompassed a wide array of doctrines categorized into four phases: the “people’s war” from 1935 to 1979 which included the Soviet Modernization Period in the 1950s, the “people’s war under modern conditions” from 1979 to 1985, “limited war” from 1985 to 1991, and “limited war under high-technology conditions” from 1991 to present.⁴² The changes in doctrine due to a change in threat, leadership, and political reform caused the size and capability of the PLA to fluctuate over the last eight decades.

The people’s war doctrine capitalized on a large number of people fighting under harsh conditions. The PLA defended the mainland with ground forces from an advanced military by taking advantage of a large population and land mass employing speed, deception, surprise, and stratagem against the enemy.⁴³ Through attrition, the enemy

⁴⁰ PLA Press, *The Cross-Century Chinese People’s Liberation Army*, 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴² David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 60.

⁴³ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 11.

would wear down as they were drawn further away from supplies and reinforcements. Mao military doctrine emphasized the role of man over weapons, using the population as the fighting force, and incorporating guerrilla tactics to overcome the enemy until there was an accumulation of combat power and the transition could be made to conventional military operations.⁴⁴ Relying mainly on the peasant population to field the army meant a compromise in training and deep seated education in military warfare for the average military person.

The “people’s war under modern conditions” was a shift from the former due in large part to the realization that even with limited access to western military technology the PLA was “inadequately armed, poorly equipped, deficient in communications, lacking in logistic support, and insufficiently trained for complex operations” as demonstrated in China’s disastrous invasion of Vietnam in 1979.⁴⁵ Chinese manpower superiority was grossly overestimated, which showed with Chinese casualties of 26,000 killed in action with another 37,000 wounded. The PLA’s technological backwardness fell short of the Chinese leadership’s expectations. The PLA’s combat failures showed the PLA was not prepared for war against a modern military because they were overwhelmed by a smaller, less advanced, and war-weary Vietnamese force.⁴⁶ During this phase, the CCP was collaborating more with the West and relied upon western technology to modernize while still holding onto the large scale people’s war doctrine.

Phase three, the transition to “limited war” starting in 1985 is the baseline for the current Chinese military modernization. This phase posed a fundamental shift in Chinese strategic warfare. In June 1985, Deng Xiaoping, the chairman of the CCP and PRC’s Central Military Commission (CMC) put forward a new assessment of China’s security situation. Deng argued that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was likely to start a war and the chances of Soviet massive attack against China, he argued, were fading.⁴⁷ Instead of providing a people’s war, China must instead be prepared to fight

⁴⁴ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 11.

⁴⁵ Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 94.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁷ Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 64.

“local limited wars” on its periphery. Such wars would have to be won quickly and decisively to prevent escalation into prolonged conflicts. Limited wars would be fought with modern military technology—weapons, not men, win wars. This dramatic change in doctrine emphasized professionalism, technological upgrade, rejuvenation, and downsizing of the PLA as the threat of nuclear war was replaced with a threat of local wars.

Phase four, “limited war under high-technology conditions” began in 1991. Operation Desert Storm and the Gulf War made a significant impression on the Chinese leadership. PLA analysts mistakenly believed that the United States and its coalition would be bogged down in a ground war with Iraq’s massive ground force. Instead, the United States surgically destroyed Iraq’s military in a matter of days with almost no casualties. Operation Desert Storm and the near flawless execution of that military campaign by a coalition force showed the PLA high command many of its own militaries deficiencies⁴⁸ Perhaps one of the most important lessons learned concerned weaponry. “Breaking with the cardinal Maoist tenet that man was the most important element in warfare, PLA writings began to evince a new appreciation of the role of weapons and technology.”⁴⁹ Although the third phase, “local limited war,” placed importance on technology over man, the fourth phase placed a greater emphasis on research and development of broad ranged and advanced weapons and technologies.

High priority was subsequently placed on mastering electronic warfare and electronic countermeasures (particularly air and naval countermeasures); improving ballistic missile production and precision-guided munitions (PGMs); building satellites, early warning and command systems, and advanced communication relay stations; investigating laser technologies; developing artificial intelligence and information warfare skills; improving avionics and mastering in-flight refueling; and developing anti-ballistic missile systems.⁵⁰

In addition to lessons from Operation Desert Storm being implemented into PLA doctrine, PLA analysts put more emphasis on U.S. military journals and officials

⁴⁸ Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 69.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

discussing the “revolution in military affairs” (RMA). There are a multitude of aspects to RMA, but the baseline “is the application of information technology to the battlefield and contemporary warfare.”⁵¹

The shifts in PLA doctrine from the 1930s emphasizing huge numbers of untrained men fighting a large war of attrition compared to today’s doctrine of focusing on short, local wars fought by trained men with state-of-the-art technology shows how the last 80 years of the PLA’s evolution was influenced by a change in threat, leadership, and political reform.

B. LEADERSHIP OF THE PLA

The command structure of the PLA is unique and warrants some explanation to understand how policy is generated and implemented. Today’s PLA leadership is modeled much like that of the Soviet organizational model implemented during the 1950s when China and the Soviet Union were close allies. The relationship between PLA officers and CCP officials also offers unique perspective as to what influences military modernization policy. As more CCP leaders do not have the same personal war-fighting type experiences with the PLA like that of Mao and Deng, some believe there is a greater separation between the CCP and military organizations possibly implicating more potential for military intervention of the PLA in Chinese politics. Because there is more of a personal relationship separation between PLA and CCP leaders, CCP leaders would be more vulnerable to yield to PLA senior leader demands in an effort for the CCP to sustain the loyalty of the PLA. There is no evidence that the CCP yields to PLA leaders’ demands but the PLA does have more influence. The separation between PLA and CCP leadership is evident in the trend that there are increasingly fewer PLA leaders on the Politburo (compared to only a few years ago).

1. Command and Control

Two Central Military Commissions play a role in PLA decision-making power. One commission is part of the CCP and the other is part of the state. The twin CMC’s

⁵¹ Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 75.

have authority but high-level decision-making power comes from the Central Committee Politburo.⁵² Since the early 1980s, the Chairman of the CMC for the CCP and the PRC (state) have been the same person meaning there are two different commissions but effectively the CMC has been the same body. Article 19 of China's 1997 National Defense Law states that "the armed forces of the PRC are subject to the leadership of the Communist Party, and CCP organizations in the armed forces shall conduct activities in accordance with the CCP Constitution." Article 10 states that the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress decides on the proclamation of a state of war and general mobilization of the PLA. Ultimately, command and control of the PLA resides with the President of the People's Republic of China as stated in Article 11 that says he is the one who declares war and issues the mobilization orders.

Each chairman of the CMC had a different personal background with the PLA. The first generation chairman was Mao Zedong (1935–1976). Mao did not receive a formal education, but he had a strong military background as a result of the bloody wars during the Chinese revolution and with Japan. The leaders that surrounded him were survivors of the Long March who were also mainstream military minded leaders. The second generation leader was Deng Xiaoping (1981–1989). Like Mao, Deng was not formally educated and had a strong military influence due to his service in the PLA. However, Deng was more open to new ideas and as mentioned earlier was responsible for major changes in PLA military doctrine. The third generation of CMC leadership was led by Jiang Zemin (1989–2004). Jiang had a formal education and a background in business and politics—not the military. Consequently, many of those close to him also had formal educations and little if any experience with the PLA. The fourth generation CMC leader is the current Chairman of the CMC, Hu Jintao (2004 to present). Hu was barely born at the time of the end of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949 and has not been a member of the PLA. Instead, his background is as an engineer, and he worked in construction before he entered the major political scene. As chairmen have changed, the background and experiences they had with the PLA before and during their

⁵² Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 112.

appointment influenced PLA military doctrine and policy. With each chairman the PLA has been re-shaped and reformed to deal with the challenges unique to that time.

The organizational structure of today's PLA is much like that of the Soviet model implemented during the 1950s when China established a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Before 1950, the Red Army used German and Soviet military models. After the Chinese communists took power, the PLA relied heavily on Soviet military advisors embedded at different levels of the military and gradually leaned more to the Soviet model due to the heavy Soviet influence. Today's PLA command and control is strongly influenced by a Central Military Commission, which sets policies and gives directions to be executed by four General Headquarters Departments: the General Staff Department (GSD), General Logistics Department (GLD), General Political Department (GPD), and the General Armaments Department (GAD).⁵³ Military units are assigned to regions and districts according to the different services.⁵⁴ The PLA has an army, navy, and air force, but the army is by far the biggest due to China's previous overarching doctrine of protecting the mainland.

Many ranking PLA officers have their background in ground forces because they trained and experienced their formative years in the army when the use of ground forces dominated Chinese military doctrine.⁵⁵ The ground-force oriented approach to war held firm by previous PLA leaders meant that "until recently many have not been exposed to some of the intricacies of modern, joint warfare involving land, air, sea, space, and electromagnetic components."⁵⁶ However, as PLA doctrine changes to emphasize more jointness, even conservative ground force leaders accept the fact that a single-service, land-based operation would be an exception to the rule for any future war against China.⁵⁷

⁵³ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 28.

⁵⁴ Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 109.

⁵⁵ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

2. The Relationship of the PLA Leadership with the CCP

There is a symbiotic civil-military relationship between the PLA and the CCP. This relationship has been sustained over time but there have been different periods when the CCP has tried to exert more control and times when the PLA has sought more autonomy. Harry Harding, a political scientist and Chinese specialist, noted “that this fluctuation correlates to the strength or weakness of the party-state.”⁵⁸ The PLA tended to act as a corporate bureaucratic lobby when the party-state was strong and acted as a political arbiter between the competing factions when the party-state was weak. In the periods 1954–1959, 1974–1975, and 1982–1989 the PLA carefully sought to increase its autonomy from the CCP.⁵⁹ In contrast, the PLA in 1967, 1976, and 1989, sought to exert a greater role in high-level party affairs. However, no matter which way the fluctuations have gone, at no time has the PLA tried to seek full autonomy from the CCP or vice versa. The PLA has sought greater independence in areas it considers fully in its domain--training, military doctrine, force structure, military education, and national security.⁶⁰

Although the number of PLA leaders on the Politburo has decreased over recent years, overall PLA influence in the Politburo and its Standing Committee has increased.⁶¹ The military is in a strong position and can influence civilian-military affairs because the CCP is dependent on their support. PLA leaders see themselves as stewards of China’s honor and territorial interests and officers function in a concentrated nationalistic environment. Officers are continuously indoctrinated with nationalistic values and are instilled with a sense of mission as protectors of these values.⁶² For most, the PLA’s absolute subordination to the party and party leaders is not in doubt, but today’s Chinese military can influence political leadership because military leaders have leverage over the

⁵⁸ Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 18.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ James C. Mulvenon and Richard H. Yang, eds., *The People’s Liberation Army in the Information Age* (Washington D.C.: Rand, 1999), 34.

⁶² Ibid., 37.

party leadership who need PLA support for special bureaucratic interests and regime stability.⁶³ As more CCP leaders have less personal work experience with the PLA like that of Mao and Deng, there is a greater separation between the CCP and military organizations. This raises the potential for greater PLA influence in Chinese politics if CCP leadership yields to PLA leadership demands in order to maintain PLA loyalty to the Party. Although PLA influence is possibly higher, actual appointments of PLA leadership to high Party positions has been on the decline as demonstrated by fewer PLA leaders on the Politburo (compared to only a few years ago). Currently there are no PLA members of the nine-member Political Bureau Standing committee of the Central Committee and only two uniformed PLA officers on the full Political Bureau composed of 24 members.⁶⁴ In addition, there has been a generational change among PLA commanders who increasingly are more concerned about overseeing long-term modernization of the PLA than being involved with politics.⁶⁵

C. INFLUENCE OF THE PLA IN CHINESE SOCIETY

The PLA plays a major role in Chinese society. There is a reciprocal relationship between the PLA and the people of China. The PLA provides disaster relief, medical services, man-hours for infrastructure buildup, and many other services. At the same time, the people provide support to the PLA. In many ways, the PLA is the public face of the Chinese government to the people.

1. The PLA Supports the People and the People Support the PLA

The CCP does all it can to promote the PLA as a people's army. Especially since the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, the PLA has thoroughly undertaken the task to rebuild ties between society and the military. With the aim of portraying the PLA in good light to Chinese citizens and the world, the PLA is engaged in supporting society down to the community level, in disaster relief operations, in domestic security

⁶³ Mulvenon and Yang, *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*, 44.

⁶⁴ Blasko, *The Chinese Army*, 8.

⁶⁵ Mulvenon and Yang, *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*, 47.

operations, and in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations (PKO).⁶⁶ CCP propaganda makes it clear that a major responsibility of the PLA is to support the people by protecting the mainland and the people through providing security against threats to Chinese leadership and people of China.

One way the PLA supports the people is through its active support and participation in national construction.⁶⁷ The PLA actively supports and participates in national construction. The GSD and the GPD have directed each PLA soldier to devote at least eight days a year to national defense construction assignments.⁶⁸ The PLA has been involved with infrastructure construction projects all over China but especially in the “rust belt” (northeast) and more rural regions in support of national economic development. PLA units from each of the services have engineering units that contribute heavy machinery and technical expertise and manpower to construct “buildings, highways, bridges, airports, ports, pipelines, and railroads, and laying many miles of optical fiber cable, often through remote areas.”⁶⁹ Propaganda aside, another reason the PLA is engaged in infrastructure projects is that most infrastructure supported by the PLA is dual use; the projects also have military application in time of war. Not only does the construction support the people, it also provides PLA units with expertise and training as well as modernizes the PRC’s infrastructure for any future war.

The PLA also influences Chinese society by supplying the local populace in impoverished areas with medical care. The “Notice on Military Hospitals Supporting Civilian Hospitals in Western Provinces” issued by the PLA GLD in 2001 required PLA hospitals to support civilian hospitals.⁷⁰ Regularly, there are images produced of PLA medical personnel providing care for civilians and PLA soldiers donating blood in Chinese military media to show PLA support of the people and maximize positive influence. During the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) crises (2002 to 2003),

⁶⁶ Blasko, *The Chinese Army*, 171.

⁶⁷ *China’s National Defense in 2004*, “The Armed Forces and the People,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/28/content_18078.htm/ (accessed on April 9, 2010).

⁶⁸ Blasko, *The Chinese Army*, 172.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

even after the PLA publicly downplayed the severity of the outbreak and hid evidence of the spread of the epidemic, once the political decision was made to tackle the problem, the PLA was called on to play an significant role in the crisis. The PLA immediately implemented policies to manage and treat the disease across China but also provided the world with a visible example of how the PLA positively contributed to helping society. For example, the PLA built and manned a hospital near Beijing in only a few days to care for SARS patients.⁷¹

The PLA also supports the people by being involved in disaster relief operations. A recent case in point was the PLA activity in support of the 12 May 2008 earthquake in Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province, which measured 8.0 on the Richter scale. According to the 2008 White Paper on National Defense,

...the PLA and the PAPF deployed 146,000 troops, mobilized 75,000 militiamen and reservists, flew over 4,700 sorties/time (including the use of helicopters) and employed 533,000 vehicles/time in the relief effort. They rescued 3,338 survivors, evacuated 1.4 million local residents, and transported, airlifted and air-dropped 1.574 million tons of relief materials. They sent 210 teams of medical workers, psychotherapists, and sanitation and epidemic prevention specialists, and treated 1.367 million injured people. The troops strictly observed discipline, and kept detailed records of hundreds of millions of yuan in cash and large quantities of valuables recovered from the debris, all of which was handed over to the owners or relevant departments of local governments.⁷²

There is a reciprocal relationship between the people and the PLA. Under the “Double Support Work,” it defines the reciprocal relationship as requiring “civilian work units to support the military and to provide favored treatment terms to families of military professionals in service and...military work units to support the civilian government and to love civilian people.”⁷³ The PLA “loves” the people by performing the services and security mentioned above. The civilians show their support to the military by giving preferential treatment to soldiers and their families, as well as help demobilized soldiers

⁷¹ Blasko, *The Chinese Army*, 173.

⁷² *Chinese National Defense in 2008*, “The Armed Forces and the People,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_12.htm/ (accessed on April 9, 2010).

⁷³ Blasko, *The Chinese Army*, 171.

find employment and make available various types of support to military units in the area. The PLA is visible in Chinese society and influences the Chinese people as they provide support and security for them.

In many ways the Party tries to convey to the world and the people of China that the PLA is the public face of the Chinese government. Whereas the PLA's positive influences for the people are dual use and benefit the PLA in preparing for and fighting a war, the Propaganda from the Party continually shows that the PLA supports the CCP and Chinese people by providing security and a variety of services which influence the Chinese society.

D. MODERNIZING THE PLA

Beginning in the 1980s, and especially in the 1990s, the PLA accelerated its program to upgrade in a sustained and comprehensive fashion.⁷⁴ Practically abandoning the Maoist doctrine of "people's war," the PLA began to modernize to prepare for the more realistic wartime scenario of limited engagements with modern forces using conventional strategies. Although the PLA has major military deficiencies, the PLA is determined to modernize and build a military "commensurate with its long-term aim of gaining preeminent status in East Asia and a pivotal global role."⁷⁵ Dr. Paul Godwin stated that in response to changing requirements,

the past 20 years have seen the focus of china's national military strategy shift from continental to peripheral defense and maritime force projection. PLA operational doctrine has changed from defense in depth to forward defense, force projection and grappling with the implications of the RMA and Informational Warfare (IW) as its strategists contemplate twenty-first-century warfare.⁷⁶

There has been a comprehensive shift in the last few decades that describe the PLA modernization. The PLA is not just out to buy and/or acquire new weapons

⁷⁴ Mulvenon and Yang, *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*, 41.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁶ Paul H. B Godwin. "Compensating for Deficiencies: Doctrinal Evolution in the Chinese People's Liberation Army: 1978–1999," Mulvenon and Yongs, eds. *Seeking Truth from Facts: a Retrospective on Chinese Military Studies in the Post-Mao Era*, (Santa Monica, CA: National Security Research Division: Rand, 2001) 91–92.

systems, there has also been major reform in education and training, an emphasis to restore professionalism in the PLA, and reform to reduce the number of PLA personnel and emphasize quality over quantity.

1. Elements of Modernization

According to Dennis Blasko, there were a number of elements of PLA modernization in addition to the acquisition of better war fighting equipment. Blasko stated that there would be changes in force structure, changes in the personnel system, constant doctrinal change to prepare the PLA to engage and win in “local wars under modern high technology conditions,” improvements in training, a transformation of PLA logistics system to support joint operations, reorganization of the professional military education (PME) system, enhancing the standard of living for PLA members, reforming the structure and missions of the PLA reserves and militia, and modifying the PLA’s interaction with society.⁷⁷ These elements show a comprehensive shift from the previous PLA focus to have a large military able to fight a war of attrition deep in China’s hinterland.

The 2004 White Paper on National Defense emphasizes “informationalization” as a major focus of modernization. The paper says,

In its modernization drive, the PLA takes informationalization as its orientation and strategic focus. By adopting the general approach of giving priority to real needs, making practical innovations, valuing talented personnel, and achieving informationalization by leaps and bounds, the PLA is actively engaged in the research and practice of informationalization.⁷⁸

The 2008 White paper on National Defense is more specific how the PLA is to use informationalization to modernize the Chinese military. It says,

To modernize China's national defense in line with both the national conditions of China and the trend of military development in the world by adhering to the policy of coordinating military and economic

⁷⁷ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 6.

⁷⁸ *China's National Defense in 2004*, “Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics.” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/28/content_18078.htm/ (accessed on April 9, 2010).

development, and improve the operational capabilities of self-defense under the conditions of informationalization.⁷⁹

2. Education and Training

While informationalization is vital to PLA modernization, having a personnel core capable of fighting an informationalized war is also vital to PLA modernization. Military training is regarded as the basic approach to further the comprehensive development of the PLA. The PLA is working to reform training programs, methods, management and support, and create a scientific system for military training in conditions of informationization.⁸⁰

The PLA is systematically upgrading its methods of training as part of its modernization. Dennis Blasko, Philip Klapakis, and John Corbett, Jr. identify four characteristics the PLA has undertaken to reform training and education. First, training has become more experimental in nature. Selected military units experiment in different aspects of modern war and lessons-learned are analyzed after the unit participates on exercises. Small units are initially chosen to test new weapons and techniques and gradually larger units are used for study.⁸¹ Second, more emphasis is being placed on joint operations and combined arms with an expectation for standardization compared to before the Gulf War.⁸² Third, there has been more effort to develop low-cost training techniques, computerized war games, simulators, and command post exercises to practice scenarios without having to put military forces on the battlefield.⁸³ Fourth, the PLA has continued to emphasize the importance of man over machine in spite of the emphasis of studying high technology warfare.⁸⁴ In 1990, Jiang Zemin stated, “Though we’re unable

⁷⁹ *Chinese National Defense in 2008*, “National Defense Policy,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_12.htm/ (accessed on April 9, 2010).

⁸⁰ *Chinese National Defense in 2008*, “Reform and Development of the PLA,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_12.htm/ (accessed on April 13, 2010).

⁸¹ Dennis J. Blasko, Philip T. Klapakis, and John R. Corbett, Jr., “Training Tomorrow’s PLA: A Mixed Bag of Tricks,” *The China Quarterly*, no.146, Special issue: China’s Military in Transition (June 1996): 490.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 491.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

to develop all high-technology weapons and equipment within a short period of time, we must train qualified personnel first, for we would rather let our qualified personnel wait for equipment that the other way round.”⁸⁵

In August 2003, the CMC authorized the “Strategic Project for Talented People,” which proposed that in one or two decades the PLA sought to have a core of command officers capable of directing informationalized wars and have “informationalized” armed forces.⁸⁶ The PLA wanted to see an improvement in the quality of personnel—both the quality of leadership and the education and training of the average soldier, airman, or sailor. Wang Xinjun, a Chinese military expert who helped draft the 2004 white paper on China’s national defense, stated, “Only by improving the training of human resources, especially the high-caliber ones, can the Chinese military keep up with the worldwide revolution of military affairs.”⁸⁷ The intent of the project is to produce a cadre of scientists capable of managing the development of weapons and equipment, a cadre of technical specialists with knowledge of high-tech weaponry performance, and a cadre of non-commissioned officers with proficiency in using the weapons and equipment at hand.

To modernize PLA leadership, more institutional education and practice with units has been the focus for commanding officers.

Various measures are being taken to step up efforts to train commanding officers for joint operations, such as institutional education, on-the-job study and rotation of posts. Incorporating joint operations into the whole training process, the PLA carefully distinguishes between the training tasks of educational institutions of different levels and types, and couples institutional education with training in units, so as to establish a system for training joint operations commanding officers which emphasizes both institutional education and practice in units.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 13.

⁸⁶ *China’s National Defense in 2004*, “Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/28/content_18078.htm/ (accessed on April 9, 2010).

⁸⁷ Staff Commentator, “Chinese Military Steps up Training for Talented Soldiers,” *The People’s Daily*, December 27, 2003, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200412/27/eng20041227_168808.html/ (accessed February 10 2010).

⁸⁸ *Chinese National Defense in 2008*, “Reform and Development of the PLA,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_12.htm/ (accessed April 13, 2010).

In 2007, the Ministry of Education and the PLA's General Political Department co-sponsored a conference addressing training PLA officers in higher-education institutions. As of 2008, there were 117 colleges and universities with defense students.⁸⁹

3. Restoration of Professionalism

Another part of PLA modernization is an increased effort for PLA professionalization. The Maoist legacy during and after the Cultural Revolution especially hurt the PLA officer corps. The Maoist radicals viewed the officer corps as the “citadel of antagonistic values and attitudes” and according to Ellis Joffe “was the chief target of their crusade against military professionalism.”⁹⁰ During the Mao years military involvement in Chinese politics led to rivalries and sectarian struggles which left the officer corps “bloated, over-aged, incompetent and incapable of adjusting to new times.”⁹¹ Since the 1980s, there has been a major push to restore PLA professionalism. The PLA's high command has directed efforts to modernize the military and professionalize the officer corps by producing officers who are “younger in age, better educated, and professionally competent.”⁹² From recruitment to retirement, policy reform has put the PLA's officer corps on a whole new footing.

Military Academies have been the center of the campaign to professionalize the PLA. Xiao Ke, commandant of the PLA Military Academy in 1983 elaborated on the relationship of the professional soldier and academies when he said,

The relationship between the academies and troops is like that between the head and body of a dragon while performing a dragon dance. If the dragon head performs well, its long body will soar aloft and dance freely in the air. In the course of building a modern, regular and revolutionary army, the building of colleges and academies is the key link that determines the building of the army.⁹³

⁸⁹ *Chinese National Defense in 2008*, “Reform and Development of the PLA.”

⁹⁰ Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army after Mao*, 121.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

The goal to integrate military studies led to the establishment of the National Defense University in 1985, which was formed by merging the PLA Political Academy, the PLA logistics Academy, and the PLA Military Academy.

Today, new officers are required to be graduates of military academies and must pass examinations set down by the Ministry of Education. Age limits and professional military education (PME) requirements also raise standards for PLA officers. The proportion of PME graduates, or college-educated officers, rose from 1 percent in 1982 to 58 percent by 1987 at the army level, 2 percent to 66 percent at the division level, and 2 percent to 41 percent at the regiment level.⁹⁴ As reforms from the 1980s progressed, the high-level PME curricula become more specialized. China's senior military schools are becoming increasingly professional and the PLA's higher rates of education are enhancing the officer corps.⁹⁵

However, there is a great modernization challenge the PLA is trying to overcome in its enlisted ranks. Because the PLA has an annual conscription and demobilization cycle in the fall, the PLA is always confronted with a situation in which a fourth of to a third of its troops are always first-year soldiers. This puts a large stress on the officer corps to professionalize the whole force and "probably limits the level at which tactical and operational proficiency can be achieved."⁹⁶

4. The PLA Reduction in Force

Another area of reform has been reducing the size of the PLA. In 1982, the PLA had more than 4.2 million men, an estimated 20 percent than the number of men before the Cultural Revolution.⁹⁷ The large PLA had become top-heavy, cumbersome, wasteful, and inefficient.⁹⁸ After the Cultural Revolution, the reforms associated with troop reduction were established in order to make the PLA more competent and efficient. PLA leadership wanted to substitute quality for quantity. Since the 1980s the PLA has twice

⁹⁴ Mulvenon, *Professionalization of the Senior Chinese Officer Corps*, 14.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹⁶ Blasko, Klapakis, and Corbett, "Training Tomorrow's PLA," 493.

⁹⁷ Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao*, 134.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

reduced forces by more than 1.5 million. In 2003, the PLA again decided to downsize personnel by 200,000 members by 2005 to maintain force strength of 2.3 million men and women.⁹⁹ Restructuring aimed to optimize force structures and have a better quality force.

E. REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS

China has repeatedly stated its military has embarked on a revolution of military affairs. After defining RMA, this section will discuss what the Chinese military is doing to undertake RMA.

1. What is RMA?

Andrew Krepinevich defines RMA as “what occurs when the application of new technologies into a significant number of military systems combines with innovative operational concepts and organizational adaptation in a way that *fundamentally alters the character and conduct of conflict* (emphasis added).”¹⁰⁰ Krepinevich describes RMA as having four elements: technical change, systems development, operational innovation, and organizational adaptation.¹⁰¹ The occurrence of RMA not only incorporates technological innovations into a military, although such innovations definitely add to RMA, but also incorporates tactical and doctrinal changes as well as political, social, economic order different from the past. RMA does not pertain to why states fight, but rather implicates how they fight. RMA is creating decisive asymmetry to beat an adversary in a conflict.

2. China’s RMA

China’s RMA is discussed in the 2004, 2006, and 2008 defense white papers. In the 2004 paper, it says that the worldwide RMA is gaining momentum and the form of

⁹⁹ *China’s National Defense in 2004*, “Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/28/content_18078.htm/ (accessed on April 13, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Krepinevich, “Calvary to Computer—The Pattern of Military Revolutions,” *The National Interest* no. 37 (Fall 1994): 30.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

war is changing from mechanization to informationalization.¹⁰² Further, the paper states that the confrontation of systems has become the principle feature on the battlefield and that the world's major states are making readjustments in technology and doctrine as asymmetrical, non-contiguous and non-linear operations have become the important patterns of contemporary operations. China concedes in the 2004 paper that as other states continue to transform their militaries, the generation gap in technology between informationalization and mechanization is widening and the military imbalance worldwide continues to increase.

In the 2006 defense white paper, it states that “to effectively fulfill its historic mission in the new stage of the new century, the PLA is speeding up the revolution in military affairs with Chinese features and enhancing in an all-round way its capabilities of defensive operations under conditions of informationization national defense and modernization.”¹⁰³ Chinese national defense and military modernization is a requirement to keep up with the trend of global revolution and development in military affairs. The 2006 paper says that China will not engage in an arms race but based on steady economic development the defense “will take the scientific development outlook as an important guiding principle for the building of national defense and military affairs, vigorously advance the revolution in military affairs with Chinese features, and strive to realize an all-round, coordinated and sustainable development in our country's national defense and military capabilities.”¹⁰⁴

In the 2008 defense paper, it states that “the PLA has accelerated RMA with Chinese characteristics, and pushed forward its military, political, logistical and equipment work in a coordinated way, in an effort to achieve sound and rapid

¹⁰² *China's National Defense in 2004*, “The Security Situation,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/28/content_18078.htm/ (accessed April 13, 2010).

¹⁰³ *China's National Defense in 2006*, “The People's Liberation Army,” <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/194421.htm/> (accessed April 13, 2010).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

development. The PLA has taken modernization as its central task by comprehensively advancing revolutionization, modernization, and regularization.”¹⁰⁵

China’s PLA is undertaking RMA by aggressively pursuing technological advances and systematically reforming its military doctrine to become a leaner, smarter, efficient, and more competent fighting force in order to be able to fight a limited war in high-tech conditions.

F. VALUES AND IDEALS OF THE PLA

Hu Jintao has described each of the PLA’s five core military values. After discussing each of the core military values, this section discusses the relationship between the PLA’s values and the overarching ideal of “putting the Chinese people first” and why the PLA has core values.

1. The Five Core Military Values

On 30 December 2008, Hu Jintao listed the five core military values of the PLA for the contemporary era as “being loyal to the party, deeply cherishing the people, serving the country, showing devotion to missions, and upholding honor.”¹⁰⁶ Hu explained each value. To be loyal to the party is to “consciously uphold the Party’s absolute leadership over the armed forces, hold aloft the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, fortify ideals and convictions about socialism with Chinese characteristics, and resolutely obey the party’s orders at all times and under all circumstances.”¹⁰⁷

The core value of cherishing the people means to “faithfully practice the basic aim of serving the people wholeheartedly, put the people’s interests above and ahead of

¹⁰⁵ *Chinese National Defense in 2008*, “Reform and Development of the PLA,” http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2009-01/20/content_1210227_12.htm/ (accessed April 13, 2010).

¹⁰⁶ Xu Zhuangshi, “(Military Affairs) Hu Jintao Calls for Vigorously Cultivating the Core Values of ‘Being Loyal to the Party, Deeply Cherishing the People, Serving the Country, Showing Devotion to Missions, and upholding Honor’ for Contemporary Revolutionary Soldiers,” *Xinhua Domestic Service* in Chinese, December 30, 2008, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/CPP20081230172001?searchKey=936347&rpp=10&index=8 (accessed April 14, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

everything else, always preserve the people's army's political character, cast in one's lot and share weal and woe with the masses, and show selfless devotion to the people."¹⁰⁸

Hu explained the value to "serve the country" means "to vigorously promote the patriotic spirit; closely link an individual's future and destiny with the country's future and destiny; resolutely defend the country's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity, as well as the state power based on the people's democratic dictatorship; and make contributions to building a prosperous, strong, democratic, civilized, and harmonious modern socialist country."¹⁰⁹

To "demonstrate devotion to missions" on "must perform the sacred duties of revolutionary soldiers, cherish the armed forces, be proficient in military skills, cherish and show dedication to one's work, not shrink from making sacrifice, be valiant and skillful in battle, and resolutely perform the historical missions entrusted by the party and the people to the military at a new phase in the century."¹¹⁰

The last core military value, to "uphold honor," Hu said was to "consciously cherish and defend the honor of the country, the military, and military members; put honor ahead of one's life; consciously practice the concept of socialist honor and disgrace; promote the spirit of revolutionary heroism, and collectivism; improve quality and develop in an all-around way; strive for first-rate results and render meritorious service; uphold the integrity of a revolutionary; and strictly observe military discipline."¹¹¹

2. Why the PLA Has Core Values

Hu has emphasized that the five core values must be cultivated in all the facets of China's military buildup and modernization so officers and soldiers will understand and accept them as the most basic core values that reflect the relations between officers in

¹⁰⁸ Xu, "(Military Affairs) Hu Jintao Calls for Vigorously Cultivating the Core Values."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

China's military and the communist party, the people, state, and the armed forces.¹¹² The five core values are to guide the way a soldier thinks and to achieve the ideal of putting the people's interests above anything else as the military modernizes.

Gong Fangbin, a senior researcher at the Academy of Military Science in Beijing said the five core values are consistent with the key traditions of the PLA when it was founded during the revolution of contemporary China. Gong stated, "It has been the most important belief since the army's founding that soldiers should serve the people wholeheartedly and put people's interests above everything."¹¹³

Chinese leaders know the world is closely watching the Chinese army as the PLA modernizes and China enters the international arena and China has more at stake in international affairs. China's status is growing and shares more global responsibilities. The PLA is opening up to the outside world and has thus adopted a mindset to strengthen the loyalty to its core values. PLA analysts say the army must remain unshaken amid disturbances and adhere to the key principles of the Chinese servicemen as the world changes. In January 2009, while addressing the PLA Hu said, "All servicemen should strengthen their spiritual pillar and foster the core values. New historic conditions have required the army to hold on to these core values after years of practice and have given new meaning to these values today."¹¹⁴

G. CONCLUSION

The PLA's history and change in military doctrine over the decades shows the tight control and influence of the CCP over the military. The PLA has tremendous influence in Chinese society and the CCP relies on the PLA in some aspects to be the face of the Chinese government. The CCP is heavily reliant on the PLA for support and loyalty as well as provide domestic and international security as China develops into a

¹¹² Xu, "(Military Affairs) Hu Jintao Calls for Vigorously Cultivating the Core Values."

¹¹³ Xiao, Huo, "Core Values to Guide New Missions," *China Daily Online* in English, February 4, 2009, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/CPP20090204056005?searchKey=936347&rpp=10&index=2/ (accessed April 14, 2010).

¹¹⁴ Xu, "(Military Affairs) Hu Jintao Calls for Vigorously Cultivating the Core Values."

great power. China's RMA has shown the PLA not only pursued technological advances to fight a limited war in high-tech conditions but also incorporated systematic reform of its military doctrine. By implementing the ideal of putting the people first and the five core military values of being loyal to the party, deeply cherishing the people, serving the country, showing devotion to missions, and upholding honor, the members of China's modernizing military will understand the relations between members of China's military and the communist party, the people, state, and the armed forces. China's leaders know the world is watching as the PLA modernizes. Chinese leaders realize as China becomes an economic leader the pressure will be for the PLA to open up to the outside world. The PLA's ideals and values help ensure the military has a solid foundation, as well as strengthen the PLA's loyalty to the CCP.

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III. THE IDEALS OF CONFUCIANISM

This chapter begins with a focus on the roots of Confucian philosophy and defines the traditional ideals and values of Confucianism. Next, a comparison is made between the ideals and values of Confucianism and what the PLA currently promotes as its ideals and core military values. Discussed are the similarities and differences of Confucian ideals and values and those the PLA has incorporated into its military modernization, as well as why possibly the PLA chose to incorporate the ideals and values it did.

A. CONFUCIAN BEGINNINGS

Confucius lived in a tumultuous time of Chinese history. A man not of noble birth, Confucius presented ideas and an ideology to Chinese courts in an effort to restore order in society. His ideology was one of many of the Warring States period and, although not readily accepted, has become one of mankind's oldest philosophies.

1. Who was Confucius?

Kong Qiu, known as “Kongzi” and “Kongfuzi” by his followers, lived from 551–479 BC. Kongfuzi translated to mean “the Master Kong,” was Latinized to “Confucius” by Jesuit priests in China in the 16th and 17th century. It is generally accepted that Confucius was a citizen of Lu located near the east coast of China. At an early age, he was a tutor and teacher for the children of the de facto ruler of Lu, Meng Xizi, where he taught ritual etiquette observed at state religious ceremonies.¹¹⁵ Confucius traveled to different northern Chinese courts in hope that rulers would make his ideas the basis of state policy. After being largely ignored, he returned to Lu and was appointed as a police commissioner, a minor post in the government. After only a few years, Confucius again traveled in search for the opportunity to influence courts with his ideas. Upon his return, at this time approximately 70 years old, Confucius devoted his time to editing classical texts.¹¹⁶ As a philosopher of an early era, the ideas of Confucius, today known as

¹¹⁵ Bradley K. Hawkins, *Asian Religions* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2004), 209.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

Confucianism, were from a man who lived in a tumultuous time in Chinese history. After his death, his ideals and virtues were elaborated upon by his followers. However, Confucius' ideology of striving for morality did not become official in any Chinese court until centuries later under the Han dynasty in 136 BC.

2. The Hundred Schools

Confucianism was a philosophy that evolved from the Warring States Period. When the Zhou succeeded the Shang dynasty, there were several centuries of relative stability. As the Zhou dynasty's strength began to decline, the dynasty disintegrated into several competing small states, each bidding for power. In the context of political confusion, social unrest, and economic uncertainty, the political chaos and endless warfare stimulated intellectual examination of the era's troubles. Several "schools" of thought emerged as solutions to the troubles of the day.

By 360 BC, the Qin began to emerge as the strongest state because of its favorable location, fertile soil, and economic reforms drawing in peasantry, which increased the Qin's population and enhanced its agricultural potential.¹¹⁷ As the Qin increased its capacity to mobilize greater armies, the dynasty became even more powerful and began to assimilate other states. By 221 BC, the ruler of Qin controlled the whole region, united China, and declared himself the first Emperor of the Qin. The Qin regime was governed by a harsh code that rewarded success and punished failure. Talent was emphasized as criterion for advancement in government instead of noble birth. This period of unification was critical in Chinese history because it began to facilitate an atmosphere that spurred ideological thought, established cultural norms, and standardized law, a weights and measures system, and currency for trade.¹¹⁸

The laws of the Qin were established under the tenets of Legalism. Legalists advocated building state power and stressed agriculture over commerce, the need to always be prepared for war, the importance of the having strict laws firmly behind the state's agenda to regulate the people, and the absolute authority of the state's leader.

¹¹⁷ Hawkins, *Asian Religions*, 207.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

Among the Hundred Schools, the legalists had enormous impact on their time. However, the Qin almost immediately faced opposition as a consequence of its harshness and rebellion that eventually destroyed the dynasty.

The Han dynasty succeeded the short Qin rule in 206 BC. Even though there was disdain for the Qin, future rulers adopted many of its ideas. The Han dynasty used the philosophy of legalism for its institutions but it incorporated Confucianism as the official creed of the empire.¹¹⁹

Confucianism was just one of the “hundred schools” that emerged during the Warring States period. Even though Legalism was the first official philosophy under a united China, it proved to be too harsh and was replaced under the Han dynasty with Confucianism. The Han and later dynasties incorporated many of the Legalist philosophies in their courts. Confucius’s doctrine evolved over time but his vision and ideals with the exception of a few short periods became and remained an influential philosophy in China for the next two millennia.¹²⁰

B. THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONFUCIANISM

The philosophy of early Confucianism consisted of a specific ideal and values that Confucius believed would restore order during a tumultuous time. Much of what is known about Confucius and Confucianism is from books written by Confucian disciples, containing sayings and dialogue written centuries after Confucius was alive.

1. The Values of Confucianism

Confucius’ main preoccupation was to determine how to live a moral life in a chaotic, disorderly time. The Zhou dynasty had instilled order in society with religious rituals but that had fallen by the wayside. At the same time, the Zhou dynasty experienced political, social, and economic challenges that eventually led to the Warring States period. Confucius believed the way to restore order in society was to restore rituals for a moral effect. The solution to social order was through personal virtue, not by

¹¹⁹ Hawkins, *Asian Religions*, 208.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 226.

law (which was completely opposite to the Legalist philosophy). Confucius believed everybody was capable of improvement “but only at the cost of considerable hard work and constant application.”¹²¹ The hard work was necessary for one to grow and could be done, if they lived by a defined set of Confucian values: *ren* (humaneness), *shu* (reciprocity), *zhong* (loyalty), *li* (ritual), *zhi* (wisdom), *yong* (courage), *xin* (trustworthiness), *jing* (reverence), and *xiao* (filial piety).

Ren (humaneness) is much like the golden rule—one should not do to others what one would not want done to himself. Crucial for man to be humane to another is the practice of the Confucian values, *shu* (reciprocity—an in-kind response to another’s actions) and *zhong* (loyalty—specifically to oneself and one’s superiors).

Li (ritual) is the value that compels one to act appropriately to one’s circumstances and role. One must observe the proper rituals, ceremonies, and protocols to promote social cohesion and individual morality.¹²² Ritual was a vital Confucian value because it provided the means for one to favor the interests of the society at large instead of the natural human tendency to favor oneself.

Zhi (wisdom) not only refers to gaining overall knowledge of facts but also an in depth understanding of human nature. According to Confucius, “the most random element in human existence was human nature itself,” so one could only have influence and predict the course of events through years of study.¹²³

Yong (courage), to see what is right and to do it, was a value Confucius knew needed to be tempered with other values in order to lead one to real moral improvement. Confucius said, “Men of principle are sure to be bold, but those who are bold may not always be men of principle.”¹²⁴

Xin (trustworthiness) is the Confucian value to keep one’s word. In a greater sense, to one has the obligation to not say something that is not true. A Confucian uses

¹²¹ Hawkins, *Asian Religions*, 212.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, Vol 1 (La Vergne, TN: Lightning Source Inc., 1861), 276.

words sparingly in an effort not to say anything untrue or that might become untrue. Confucius taught that “the superior man wishes to be slow in his speech, and earnest in his conduct.”¹²⁵

Jing (reverence) refers to an awe one must have associated with the emotions that describe the awareness of the enormity of responsibility one has to their ancestors and promoting the welfare of the society.¹²⁶ Reverence to family and the common people is of tremendous importance in defining a true gentlemen.

Xiao (filial piety) is the value that describes the fundamental relationship between parent and child. Filial piety is to show one’s parents and ancestors a devotion and obedience to their seniority in the family.¹²⁷ Specifically, children had an unconditional duty to obey and respect their parents based on the assumption that parents treat their children with consideration and love.

As one pursues the Confucian values between parent and child, elder and younger siblings, husband and wife, ruler and subject, and between friends (the five Confucian relationships), they acquire *yi* (righteousness) and eventually *de* (personal virtue)—the key to social order.

Confucius taught that one’s moral perfection came in degrees. The *sheng ren* (the sage) was the epitome of moral development. Next down the scale was the *shan ren* (the good man). Then there was the *cheng ren* (the complete man). The sage, the good man, and the complete man were extremely rare (Confucius denied the *sheng ren* to any living person, even himself).¹²⁸ The *junzi* (gentlemen) was the most morally perfected person one was likely to meet. While Confucius’ emphasis on restoring ritual was conservative, his belief that anyone was capable of improvement through learning, education, and personal cultivation was intrinsically liberal.

¹²⁵ Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 172.

¹²⁶ Hawkins, *Asian Religions*, 214.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

2. The Confucian Writings

Much of what is known about Confucius comes from the *Analects*, a collection of sayings compiled by Confucian disciples centuries after his death.¹²⁹ In Confucius' later years, he supposedly edited the Five Classics: the *Classic of History*, the *Classic of Poetry*, the *Classic of Changes*, the *Classic of Rites*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.¹³⁰ These books are the basics for Confucian scholars and form the basis of all subsequent Confucian studies.

3. Confucianism after Confucius

After the death of Confucius, his thought doctrines were elaborated upon and developed in different ways. One of Confucius' best known students, Mencius (372–289 BC) expanded Confucian teachings. Like Confucius, Mencius lived in the chaotic times of the Warring States Period and his desire was to stabilize society and restore order through individual morality by applying Confucian ideas on virtue directly to governing. Mencius advocated the idea that the people had the right to rebel and overthrow the government, if the government was unjust and immoral. Mencius elaborated on many ideas only briefly mentioned in the *Analects*. According to Bradley K. Hawkins, “subsequent Confucian philosophy is as much the thought of Mencius as it is of Confucius.”¹³¹ Like Confucius, Mencius and his ideas were not readily accepted. Nonetheless, Confucius doctrine whether by Confucius himself or his followers deeply penetrated Chinese society and has endured over two millennia.

C. THE IDEALS OF CONFUCIANISM COMPARED TO THE IDEALS OF THE PLA

The principal ideal of Confucianism, morality of the individual achieved through the life-long struggle to live the Confucian values of *ren* (humaneness), *shu* (reciprocity), *zhong* (loyalty), *li* (ritual), *zhi* (wisdom), *yong* (courage), *xin* (trustworthiness), *jing* (reverence), and *xiao* (filial piety) seems fundamentally opposite the PLA's principal

¹²⁹ Murphey, *East Asia*, 37.

¹³⁰ Hawkins, *Asian Religions*, 210.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

ideal of putting the people above oneself through the five core military values of being loyal to the party, deeply cherishing the people, serving the country, showing devotion to missions, and upholding honor. As there are concrete differences in the PLA's ideals and values compared with Confucian ideals and values, there are also abstract similarities.

1. Similarities and Differences

One fundamental similarity with the Confucian ideal of morality of the individual and the PLA ideal of putting the people above the individual is that both are ideals the common person can try to achieve. Confucius and his disciples advocated that the morality of the individual was to be a way of life for everybody—from those in the court to the everyday man—morality was for everyone. Technically, anybody was eligible to study and learn which allowed one to theoretically move up in their level of moral perfection despite their class or seat in society. Similarly, the ideals the PLA advocates are also applicable to the individual regardless of their rank or position. Every member of the PLA despite their rank can apply the ideals they are learning. The highest officer to the newest conscript is expected to put the people of China above themselves. Ironically, there is also a fundamental challenge to the PLA and the CCP leaders in this ideal. In early times, meritocracy (where one is chosen to serve in government based on merit instead of social class, wealth, or family) was implemented by the examination system. Political reform was determined by who passes the test, not on political loyalty. In contemporary times, if the PLA soldier did all he could to put China above himself, what if that meant sacrificing himself in order to replace the CCP with a “better” government, i.e., replace the Communist Party in the name of putting China first? The PLA and CCP leaders are careful to qualify putting the people of China above themselves to also mean unequivocally devoting oneself to the Communist Party as a duty and obligation.

Confucian values and the Chinese military core values similarly reflect on loyalty, trustworthiness, knowledge, and respect. These values are common in the purpose of identifying how one should make individual choices to put them on the path of achieving the ideal. There are even similarities in the Confucian value of filial piety with that in the

PLA. The chain of command in the military can be compared to a family relationship. There is to be respect between officer and enlisted much like that of the father and son. In this way, the elements of the PLA modernization structure draw on the martial values of China's traditional past. Not only are enlisted Chinese ranks trained to be loyal and respectful to their superiors, it is also expected of the superior to take responsibility and provide necessary resources for the lower-ranking military members much like it was the responsibility of the father to provide for the wellbeing of a child. Another example is the act of self-criticism. PLA leaders criticize themselves in order to identify and correct behavior (good and bad) in an effort to improve. This practice, very popular in the Maoist era, echoes the idea that demands be directed to oneself before they are directed at others.¹³²

There are similarities in Confucian and PLA ideals and values, but there are also fundamental differences. The values taught by Confucius and his followers were directed to provide change in the individual. When the individual became more morally perfect, society as a whole would improve. The chaos, war, economic troubles of Warring States Period would improve. The Confucian ideals and values were aimed at the individual in the hope that collective individual morality of each person would influence and have an effect on the society for the better. As for the PLA, it seems it is the opposite. The CMC and the PLA leadership have tried to implement an ideal with values that focus on the whole society (put the people of China first), much like the typical Marxist/Leninist socialist ideals that when achieved will mean an effect to the individual.

Even though contemporary Chinese leadership postulates an ideal that focuses on the society as a whole with an effect on the individual, there have been individualistic elements of Confucianism in Chinese culture and society for centuries. Confucianism has been a part of Chinese history for more than 2000 years. Even during the Cultural Revolution beginning in 1966 and carried out until the death of Mao in 1976, the Chinese held on to elements of Confucianism as Mao and other CCP officials berated traditional Chinese traditions in an effort to cleanse the Party and government of anti-socialist

¹³² Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 10.

movements. Because elements of Confucian thought and morals had penetrated the fabric of Chinese society so many centuries ago, “to be Chinese is, in some sense at least, to be Confucian.”¹³³

2. Why the PLA Has Its Core Military Values

If the core military values and ideals Hu Jintao mandated are to be used in the PLA have fundamental differences than the ancient Confucian values, why does the PLA have its current core military values and ideals? The fact is the current military values the PLA teaches are not much different from those of other militaries. A better question might be, why do militaries have core values?

The military values the PLA teaches are much like the values identified by other contemporary militaries. The core values of the British Army are, “selfless commitment, courage, discipline, integrity, loyalty, and respect for others.”¹³⁴ The British Army’s *Military Covenant* describes an overall ideal of having soldiers put their Nation, The Army, and others before themselves. The U.S. Navy refers to its core values as “bedrock principles” which are “honor, courage, and commitment.”¹³⁵ The U.S. Navy uses each of these values to describe a sailor’s relationship with others and duty to the nation. The PLA’s core values are in principle very much like those core values and ideals of other nations.’

It is common and expected for a modern military to have a set of core values that encompass a military ethic. The U.S. Army’s capstone doctrinal field manual, *Field Manual (FM) 1* states, “Each profession establishes a unique subculture that distinguishes practitioners from the society they serve while supporting and enhancing that society. Professions create their own standards of performance and codes of ethics to maintain

¹³³ Hawkins, *Asian Religions*, 208.

¹³⁴ Army.Mod.UK, <http://www.armyjobs.mod.uk/howdoijoin/rolesranks/Pages/CoreValuesandtheMilitaryCovenant.aspx> (accessed May 6, 2010).

¹³⁵ Navy.mil, http://www.navy.mil/navydata/navy_legacy_hr.asp?id=193 (accessed April 20, 2010)

their effectiveness.”¹³⁶ A link is made between effectiveness and a military having an ethic defined by a set of core values during times of transition.

Militaries are inherently always in some sort of constant state of transition. On the battlefield, the injury or death of a soldier will require reinforcements. Unit stability and cohesiveness is easier to maintain if the new reinforcements are acquainted with and adhere to the same ethic and set of values as those they replace. The effectiveness of a battle unit in training or on the battlefield is largely determined by unity. Another inherent constant state of transition is the result of modernization. Especially in contemporary militaries, the pace of technological improvement, transition to new weapon systems, different types and sizes of units, and ever-changing different military social conditions, it is vital that each military person as well as military leadership bond around values for maximum effectiveness and growth through that transition. This is especially true for militaries whose aim it is to modernize quickly.

The CCP is not reviving values and ideals associated with Confucianism in its drive to modernize China’s military. Instead, the CCP is incorporating values and ideals similar, if not exactly the same as other modernizing militaries. Values embody what an organization stands for. The PLA’s core values are the primary basis for its soldiers’ behavior. The lack of a primary basis leads to a disconnection between the organizational and individual values. The PLA is in such constant transition as it races to modernize that not having core values like those of other modernizing militaries could lead to dysfunction. Dysfunction in China’s military could be very dangerous to the ruling regime. The CCP counts on the PLA to be professional, loyal, and ready when called upon. If there is dysfunction, there is diminished control. Loss of control could be fatal to the CCP.

The Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 is an example. As millions of students demonstrated in 132 cities, including Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, CCP leadership could not decide how to deal with the demonstrations. Eventually, the Politburo Standing Committee declared martial law and tasked the PLA to restore order. Confrontation

¹³⁶ *Field Manual (FM) 1*, U.S. Army (14 June 14, 2005), Paragraph 1-40.

immediately arose between PLA troops and citizens as the PLA entered Beijing. There was hesitation on the PLA's behalf as to how to control the situation. Only one senior PLA commander was charged with refusing to obey Deng Xiaoping's orders for the PLA to quell the demonstrations, but Deng called in other PLA units from other areas of China to be sure the military units in Beijing stood behind the action.¹³⁷ On 4 June 1989, PLA tanks and soldiers entered Tiananmen Square and hundreds, and possibly thousands of demonstrators were killed. The Tiananmen Square incident left the CCP on the fringe of command as its regular control measures; control of the press, loyalty of the PLA, and control of the people were put in serious jeopardy.

The CCP cannot afford to lose the PLA's allegiance. "The chief political commissar in the PLA made the remarkable public statement that Hu Jintao is 'greatly concerned' about the stability in the Army."¹³⁸ Since 1989, not only has the CCP introduced and required the PLA to teach, train, and modernize with core military values. Since 2004, in becoming CMC chairman, Hu has continually called on the PLA for absolute loyalty. Funding has increased to the PLA to compensate for the loss of funding as a result of the order given to the PLA to divest itself of commercial businesses (used to supplement their government funding). The PLA received bigger budgets to compensate and curb the corruption that blossomed from the commercial businesses. In addition, the role of the PLA to police the society is slightly different. The CCP has put the People's Armed Police (PAP), a paramilitary organization that monitors and polices domestic security issues as the first line of defense against political unrest. According to Susan Shirk, by making the PAP the first line of defense against domestic unrest, the CCP reduces the risk the PLA might refuse to take action against Chinese civilians, as well as take military action against civilian leaders.¹³⁹

The PLA, like other modernizing militaries, has core values to relieve the tension of transition inherent to militaries and amplified by change induced by modernization and to provide a solid foundation necessary to underline the training and military education

¹³⁷ Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

and ensure loyalty and control. It is vital and absolutely necessary for the CCP to take all steps necessary to ensure the control and loyalty of the PLA. Ideals and core values can provide a military a foundation for all training and education and reduce the chance of dysfunction when orders are given and expected to be obeyed. Especially in the fog of war when rational thinking and human behavior is tested and challenged, a military without a basis of ideals and core values is susceptible to disconnection between leadership and the individual which leads to dysfunction. Dysfunction of the PLA not only undermines the effectiveness of the Chinese military but the ultimate survivability of the CCP.

D. CONCLUSION

Confucianism emerged in a tumultuous time in Chinese history. Confucius and his disciples presented an ideal and values aimed at perfecting ones individual morality which in turn would benefit the society. The main ideal of Confucianism, individual morality, and the main ideal of the PLA, putting the people above oneself, are not the same. The Confucian ideal focuses on the individual, which will affect the society, and the PLA ideal focuses on the whole with the effect on the individual. The core values the PLA has incorporated are somewhat similar to Confucian values but look much more like the core values other modernizing militaries use as a foundation for training and education in a volatile transitional environment. The PLA has core values to facilitate loyalty and control and reduce the chance of dysfunction. Dysfunction in the PLA not only has effect on the lethality and military but also the survivability of the CCP.

IV. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The CCP has adjusted its ideology to maintain national spirit and maintain power. Whereas some have argued the PLA has incorporated ideals and values associated with Confucianism in its drive to modernize, it seems more likely the ideals and values incorporated are commonly used by other modernizing militaries. The ideals and values the PLA has incorporated through its modernization transition provide military unity and ultimately regime stability. Today's PLA is under strain as it modernizes and as China transforms into a modern society. The PLA needs core values to maintain and increase stability and reinforce unity during the potentially volatile modernization transition.

A. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLA AND ITS CORE VALUES

The choice of Chinese leaders to have the PLA stand behind the ideal of putting the people above oneself instead of focusing on the Confucian ideal of focusing on CCP the individual for the eventual change in society makes sense given the challenges the and the PLA face today. As new challenges emerge for the CCP and the PLA due to military modernization and globalization, the focus of the PLA on the whole instead of the individual provides control, stability, and unity necessary for a modernizing military in transition.

1. A Time of Transition Presents Obstacles

The PLA is undergoing a fundamental transition as it transforms to a modernized military. With transition come obstacles introduced by change inherent to all large organizations. The PLA in its quest to modernize and become a high-tech joint force faces monumental challenges. The obstacles the PLA faces can introduce disorder and put strain on the PLA and CCP leadership. In addition, not only is the PLA challenged from modernization and professionalization in its own right, the Chinese military is also strained from changes brought about as China as a whole is also undergoing major transition. As China transitions from a traditional agrarian society to a modern society, a socialist economy to a market economy, and from a Leninist political system to a society with increasingly more democratic tendencies, there is increased strain on the Chinese

leadership.¹⁴⁰ The increased strain provides explanation why the CCP and the PLA promote ideals and core values with a focus on the people and society and not the individual as with the traditional Confucian ideal of individual morality. If the CCP and PLA have rallied behind an ideal and set of core values similar to other Western nations, this implies that it can be expected the Chinese will possibly rally behind other military doctrine common in Western militaries as future challenges and obstacles present themselves. The CCP over its 80-plus year struggle in the modern world has vast experience in trying to keep up with conditions posed as a result of the changing of the times. Hu Jintao, in a speech commemorating Mao Zedong's 110th birth anniversary stated,

We must persist in emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts, and advancing with the times; continue to integrate the basic tenets of Marxism with China's concrete reality under the conditions of the new era; and constantly promote the Sinicization of Marxism. We must foster a broad worldview; take an overall view of the general trends of development in the world's economic, political, cultural, scientific and technological, and military affairs; persist in opening up to the outside world; actively draw on the useful achievements and experiences of the people in other countries in achieving economic development and social progress....¹⁴¹

Even though the PLA may make use of military doctrine and practices from Western countries to address its obstacles, it takes longer for the Chinese military to adapt to doctrinal innovation even though Chinese rhetoric or aspirations might otherwise indicate. The U.S. military normally takes seven or eight years for significant doctrinal change to penetrate to the unit level and for the Chinese it is longer.¹⁴² Knowing the Chinese military adapts to present day challenges by borrowing and implementing doctrine from other Western militaries is useful for military analysts and foreign policy

¹⁴⁰ Jonathan Ungar, ed, *The Nature of Chinese Politics: From Mao to Jiang* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 255.

¹⁴¹ Hu Jintao, "PRC: Hu Jintao Speech at CPC Forum on Mao Zedong's 110th Birth Anniversary," *Xinhua Domestic Service*, December 26, 2003, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/CPP20031226000127?searchKey=1209090&rpp=10&index=1 (accessed 4 May 2010).

¹⁴² Shambaugh, *Modernizing*, 60.

makers in understanding what the PLA is doing today to overcome its modernization challenges, as well as what to expect in future Chinese military doctrine.

Furthermore, seeing how the PLA incorporates values and ideals similar to other modernizing militaries sheds light on China's strategic culture debate. The core of the strategic culture debate is that strategy is determined by subjective, interpreted experiences consistently transmitted to unrelated people over time.¹⁴³ Some have argued that Beijing's approach to the use of force, its views on strategy, and its preferences regarding what kind of military it requires and the kind of soldiers it should train reflect characteristically "Chinese" cultural preferences and choices. The PLA having incorporated values and ideals similar to other modernizing militaries and not necessarily solely characteristic of Chinese culture signifies more of an argument against China having its own strategic culture. China's regime and military leadership may be expected to incorporate other tenants of modernizing militaries like training curriculums, education requirements, retirement age caps, active duty and reserve manning structures, and rank advancement quotas utilized by other modernizing militaries. Nonetheless, as China's military modernizes there will continue to be constant reminder to military members by CCP and PLA leadership that changes will have Chinese characteristics because of the importance of unification and regime stability. Stephen Rosen wrote,

The less a military organization reflects the structure to the society, either because it is recruited from subgroups who are not representative of the society as a whole or because the officers and soldiers are socialized by training and discipline to operate within structures that the society as a whole does not accept, the more the military will be perceived as an alien element in society, as a group that is not representative of society. This can lead to distrust of the military by the society or its leaders, which can reduce the military power available to the state.¹⁴⁴

It is imperative for regime stability that as the military modernizes the PLA and must not appear to be isolated from Chinese society diminishing its strength on the domestic and international levels of power.

¹⁴³ Stephen P. Rosen, *Societies & Military Power: India and its Armies* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 29.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

2. The PLA Needs Core Values

There are other challenges the PLA faces today. The ideals and core values implemented by the PLA maintain and increase stability and reinforce unity during the potentially volatile modernization transition.

Social changes in the military pose legitimate concern for PLA leadership. As the generations of old, well versed in Mao thought, and who have experienced first-hand the struggles from the failed Great Leap Forward are being replaced by a younger generation who have not experienced such sacrifice for the state, the ideal of putting the people first becomes increasingly harder to instill in the minds of younger military members. The core values of today's PLA, much like those of other modernizing militaries, provide a foundation for all service members to relate with thereby helping to ensure military members both old and young have a foundational point of reference.

Adding to the strain for the PLA and the CCP is the increasing influences of globalization. China continues to experience monumental change as a result of globalization. The PLA is expected by the CCP to “shoulder the historical mission of ensuring all-dimensional security for economic construction.”¹⁴⁵ Not only does the PLA need to acquire technology to win a high-tech local war, it also needs to further develop and maintain a sound ideological foundation resilient to the threats of globalization. International competitiveness, the demand for regional stability in order to facilitate strong sustained economic growth, and the increased responsibility China has in international affairs as the state steadily climbs up the “Great Power” ladder means the Chinese military will be faced with more complex domestic and international challenges.

At the same time, the PLA is expected to shoulder the domestic and international security burden as a result of an economically flowering China, the CCP relies on the PLA's core values and ideals to ensure the militaries loyalty. In 1938, Mao Zedong wrote, “Every Communist must grasp the truth, ‘Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.’ Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be

¹⁴⁵ Sun Kejia, “On Military Transformation With Chinese Characteristics,” *Chinese Military Science*, No. 1, (2003).

allowed to command the Party.”¹⁴⁶ Absolute loyalty and Party support, an underlining theme of the PLA’s ideal to put the people above oneself, is one more reminder for the millions of Chinese military members who are the backbone of the CCP regime legitimacy. The PLA’s core values clarify allegiances, define acceptable ethical behavior, clarify competing ideological thoughts, and establish a benchmark for military members’ actions with each other and with society.

Take the crisis of corruption in the PLA for example. Corruption and the problems that arise from corruption are extremely serious and jeopardize the stability of the PLA structure. To highlight the centrality of corruption in the PLA, in 2006 an authoritative commentary from the *Liberation Army Daily* stated, “At present, our army building is moving from a period of mechanization or semi-mechanization toward a period of informatization and is facing two historic projects of winning wars and eradicating corruption.”¹⁴⁷ Eradicating corruption in the PLA is equated in priority to winning wars. To prevent the spread of corruption, the PLA publically stepped up its efforts by launching an education campaign on Hu’s “socialist concept of honor and disgrace.”¹⁴⁸ The PLA now also uses the foundation of its core values to stem the tide of corruption in the military. The PLA core values of upholding honor, cherishing the people, and being loyal to the party directly conflict with a soldier taking bribes or other similar malfeasance. Unit level education, awareness campaigns, and constantly promoting the core values will curb corruption. General Zhang Wannian, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission in 1998 argued that fighting corruption was crucial for stability and unity in the Chinese military and for the country. Zhang stated, “only a

¹⁴⁶ Mao Zedong, “Problems of War and Strategy,” November 6, 1938, available at the “Mao Tse-tung Internet Library,” http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_12.htm (accessed May 5, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Contributing commentator, “Taking Scientific Development Concept as Guidance for Promoting Progress in Ideological and Political Building,” *Jiefangjun bao* in Chinese, August 7, 2006, https://www.opensource.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_200_203_121123_43/content/Display/CPP20060811715023?searchKey=1218681&rpp=10&index=17 (accessed May 5, 2010).

¹⁴⁸ James Mulvenon, “So Crooked They Have to Screw Their Pants On: New Trends in Chinese Military Corruption,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 19 (Fall 2006): 1.

clean Army can help the country to reach its target of military modernization.”¹⁴⁹ One implication here is that the PLA is using its core values to address serious fundamental problems in the Chinese military.

B. CONCLUSION

China has had to adjust as it emerges as a major world power. Globalization, a changing society, and a rapidly modernizing military has caused the CCP to adjust its ideology to maintain national spirit and maintain power. The CCP relies on the PLA for ultimate domestic stability and security as China embarks further down the road of economic construction. The challenges the PLA face, as it strives to acquire technology to fight and win a high-tech local war, combat major issues like corruption, and step up to the greater demands for regional stability have caused the PLA to adjust its ideology and values to ensure unity and loyalty.

The CCP is not reviving values and ideals associated with Confucianism in its drive to modernize China’s military. Instead, the CCP is incorporating values and ideals similar to other modernizing militaries. The ideals and values the PLA has incorporated have some similarities to ancient Chinese ideals but overall are comparatively different. Confucius and his followers taught ideals and values directed to provide change for the individual. When the individual became more morally perfect, society as a whole would improve having the affect of easing the chaos, war, and economic troubles of the Warring States Period. The Confucian ideals and values were aimed at the individual with the hope that collective individual morality of each person would influence and have an effect on the society for the better. As for the PLA, it is the opposite. The CMC and the PLA leadership have tried to implement an ideal with values that focus on the whole society (put the people of China first), much like the typical Marxist/Leninist socialist ideals that when achieved will mean an effect to the individual. The Confucian values: *ren* (humaneness), *shu* (reciprocity), *zhong* (loyalty), *li* (ritual), *zhi* (wisdom), *yong* (courage), *xin* (trustworthiness), *jing* (reverence), and *xiao* (filial piety) have some

¹⁴⁹ James Mulvenon, “To Get Rich is Unprofessional: Chinese Military Corruption in the Jiang Era,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 6 (Spring 2003): 22.

abstract similarities but are comparatively different to the PLA's core values of being loyal to the party, deeply cherishing the people, serving the country, showing devotion to missions, and upholding honor. The values and ideals the PLA uses to modernize are more comparable to other modernizing militaries.

The incorporation of new ideals and values into the PLA signifies more of an argument against China having its own strategic culture. The PLA can be expected to incorporate other tenants of modernizing militaries like training curriculums, education requirements, retirement age caps, active duty and reserve manning structures, and rank advancement quotas. Nonetheless, as China's military becomes more modern, the CCP and PLA leadership will continue to provide constant reminder to military members that changes will have "Chinese characteristics" because of the importance of unification and regime stability. The PLA must not appear to be isolated from Chinese society.

Today's PLA is under strain as it modernizes and as China transforms into a modern society. The PLA needs core values to maintain and increase stability and reinforce unity during the potentially volatile modernization transition. The core values of today's PLA, much like those of other modernizing militaries, provide a foundation for all service members to relate with thereby helping to ensure military members both old and young have a foundational point of reference in order to cope with the many challenges of transition and reduce the chance of dysfunction. The PLA's core values clarify allegiances, define acceptable ethical behavior, elucidate competing ideological thoughts, establish a benchmark for military members' actions with each other and with society, and facilitate loyalty to the CCP.

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