The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems

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This article is an effort to establish a comparative theoretical framework for the study of civil-military relations in communist political systems. Although the literature on civil-military relations in polyarchic and praetorian polities is theoretically as well as empirically rich, theories of civil-military relations in the field of comparative communism are still at the preliminary stage of development. It is argued that civil-military relations, like all the fundamental dynamics of communist political systems, derive from the structural relationship between a hegemonic Leninist party and the other institutions of the polity. Although the party directs and supervises all other institutions, its political supremacy is necessarily limited by the division of labor among various institutions. The relative autonomy of the military and its relations with the party vary from one country to another and can be described as coalitional, symbiotic, or fused. These relations are dynamic, changing over time in each country in response to contextual circumstances. The role of the military in politics is complex and variegated: on ideological issues, there is usually little conflict between party and army; on issues of "normal politics," the military acts as a functionally specific elite engaged in bargaining to defend its perceived institutional interests; and in crisis politics, the military is a political resource that various party factions seek to enlist against their opponents.

The role of the armed forces in Marxist-Leninist political systems seems inherently contradictory. The Leninist party is anchored in the Clausewitzian dictum that politics is supreme to military action, and communist states have ideological proscriptions against military interference in civil politics which are as strong as those in Western pluralist systems. Yet the armed forces of communist systems are, almost without exception, politicized institutions which participate in politics more directly and unabashedly than the armed forces in any Western state. At times the military is a pivotal actor—e.g., in China during the Cultural Revolution, in Cuba during the 1960s, and in Poland today. Despite such politicization of the armed forces—a characteristic reminiscent of praetorian polities—there has never been a case in a Marxist-Leninist system where the military has overthrown the party by coup d'état.

How do communist states maintain this seemingly contradictory mix of civilian hegemony and military politicization? What, precisely, are the dynamics of civil-military relations in Marxist-Leninist political systems? The key to answering these questions, we believe, lies in understanding the basic authority relations of a party-state organized along Leninist lines.

No existing communist system could have been established without resort to armed force, but communist regimes do not live by force alone. Power may come from the barrel of a gun, but the barrel of the communist gun is the party, not the military. Once a communist state has been established, the pattern of regime development depends upon the evolving relationship among party, army, and state, the "iron triangle" of politics in communist systems. The practice of politics in such states is essentially bureaucratic in the sense that political conflicts are resolved within the confines of hierarchically organized structures, but the authority relationship and elite patterns that define the structural relationship between bureaucratic entities in a communist system differ sharply from those typically found in noncommunist ones.[1]

The Party-state System

Marxism-Leninism is a combative political philosophy whose goal is not to describe the world but to change it, by force of arms if necessary. The revolutionary movements to which Marxism-Leninism gives rise are thoroughly transformational: when successful, they seek to demolish systematically old political institutions, social structures, and value orientations, and to replace them with a new sociopolitical edifice erected according to the Leninist ideological blueprint. Whatever local variations may characterize a par-

[1]For a discussion of the bureaucratic model of socialist politics, see Hough (1977).

ticular communist system (and there are many important ones), all have two features in common: in the economy, private enterprise is subordinated to state property and central planning, and in the polity, all political and administrative structures are subordinated to a hegemonic party, hierarchically organized along democratic-centralist lines. From these two structural features comes a set of core political dynamics that define the typical mode of operation of communist systems, dynamics that differentiate such systems from both the pluralist politics of advanced industrial societies and the praetorian politics of the underdeveloped Third World.[2]

The vanguard role ascribed to the Communist party in Marxist-Leninist ideology produces, in practice, a political system in which the party is sovereign, acting as the chief arbiter of values, authority relations, institutional arrangements, political practices, and policy. Structurally, the party plays its vanguard role by supervising, coordinating, and directing the functions of all the polity's constituent institutions—the state, the armed forces, and the mass organizations.[3] From its place at the pinnacle of politics, the party acts as integrator by setting public policy and assuring that other institutions follow through faithfully with its implementation. Although these functions of direction, arbitration, and integration may be carried out more or less successfully in specific instances, they are always and everywhere a function that is in principle the preserve of the party and is thus the essential content of its role as political vanguard. When a ruling communist party is not successfully performing such functions, the political system is almost always in a clear state of crisis.

In practice, the extent of party hegemony depends upon how successfully the party exerts control over nonparty institutions. At the micro-level of politics, the principal mechanism through which the party maintains its structural position as system integrator and arbiter is the existence of dual-role elites. Virtually every official of consequence within nonparty institutions is a party member, and at the apex of the political system, the overlap between senior party and nonparty leaders is always extensive (see Albright 1980). The party's position as sovereign authority, combined with the strict discipline of democratic centralism, assures that the first loyalty of dual-role elites will almost always lie with the party; when it does not, as in the case of Marshal Zhukov, the party acts quickly to remove the renegade official from power (Colton 1979, pp. 175-95).

The implications of the dual-elite arrangement for conflict resolution are profound. Serious conflicts, whether personal, ideological, or bureaucratic in genesis, are resolved within the party, not between the party and nonparty institutions or nonparty elites. The dual-role elites carry conflicts into the party, making every important conflict an inner-party conflict. The dual-role elites then carry the resolution of the conflict back to nonparty institutions, which must adhere to the position defined by the party. It is the absence of strict authority boundaries or elite boundaries between the party and nonparty institutions, together with the primacy of the party, that gives politics in communist systems its distinctive character. Although politics is bureaucratic in style, the structure of conflict does not adhere to the relatively neat institutional alignments typical of noncommunist systems. On issues of consequence, bureaucratic structures do not face off with one another; they petition the party for a redress of grievances.

The party's exercise of control cannot be complete, however, because the complexity of governing requires a division of labor among various political institutions. With this division of labor comes, of necessity, some degree of institutional autonomy, at least vis-à-vis the implementation of policy. Thus the relationship between the party and nonparty institutions (especially the armed forces and the state) is a complex combination of limited institutional autonomy within the context of overall political subordination to the party. The whole issue of "state-party relations" which perennially emerges in communist systems is a clear example of how complex, fluid, and potentially unstable this autonomy-subordination relationship is. The other premier example is civil-military relations.

The Military in the Party-State

Historically, the issue of civilian control has attracted the most attention among scholars of civil-military relations: how do civilian political actors manage (or fail to manage) to subordinate the military to their authority? (See Huntingon 1957, Finer 1962, and Kolkowicz 1967.)

[2]This notion that communist systems share a set of basic political dynamics that distinguish them from noncommunist systems is the underlying intellectual rationale for the field of comparative communist studies. The key works in this field include: Johnson (1970), Fleron (1971), Ionescu (1972), Gripp (1973), Brown (1974), Lane (1976), Herspring (1978), and Wesson (1978). On party-state military relationships in authoritarian political systems, see Perlmutter (1981, chs. 2 and 3).

[3]The studies of communist elites are numerous. See, for example, Scalapino (1972), Farrell (1970), and Beck (1973).

In polyarchic systems the crucial bulwark against military intervention has been constitutional structures that define military authority and their realms of operation (Huntington 1957, pp. 80-84). The general competence of civilian institutions and their widespread legitimacy among a politically aware and participatory populace has given these constitutional prescriptions a solid foundation in the political culture of polyarchy. Thus military intervention has been a rare phenomenon.[4]

This is not to say that the military in polyarchic systems is strictly apolitical, only that it rarely challenges the legitimate authority of civilian rule. As we shall discuss later, the military in polyarchic systems plays a considerable role in debates over specific policies that fall within its realm of expertise. What it does not do, however, is challenge the legitimate authority of civilian rule over the political system itself.[5]

In praetorian regimes, clear constitutional boundaries between civilian and military authorities are either nonexistent or without force.[6] The pivotal issue in praetorian systems is not who *ought* to rule, but who is *able* to rule—who can establish order and maintain stability and internal peace, and who is best able to deal with the problems of modernization (Bienen 1969, Janowitz 1977). The distinguishing feature of praetorianism is the inability of civilian institutions to handle these tasks—i.e., their inability to rule. Because of the impotence of civilian institutions and their typically low level of legitimacy, the military often comes to see itself as better qualified to rule than civilian authorities (Nordlinger 1977, pp. 107-46). When such a perception is combined with a near monopoly of coercive force, it is not surprising that praetorian regimes are so often subject to military coups.

In communist systems, civil-military relations are embedded in a much more complex set of authority relations. The centrality of the issue of civilian control in the general study of civil-military relations derives from two assumptions that are largely irrelevant in a communist system: (1) that there is a clear division between civilian and military elites that makes elite conflict among them an inter-institutional conflict between civilian and military structures; (2) that either civilian or military elites (or both civilian and military elites) subscribe to the norm that the military ought to be apolitical, that is to say, it ought not inject itself into political debates in ways that challenge or compete with civilian authority. Neither of these assumptions is valid for communist systems. Thus the problem of military intervention against civilian authority (Bonapartism), although not unheard of, is a secondary matter in the complex of relations between the armed forces and the rest of the political system.

The nature of civil-military relations in communist systems is a matter of considerable debate among leading analysts.[7] For Kolkowicz (1967) the main variable that explains Soviet civil-military relations is control. The party established a wide, complex, and effective system of control over the military, a system that made the military's subordination possible. Kolkowicz also argues that civilian-military relationships and the military's political role in the USSR are dynamic and have evolved over seven decades from dependence-subordination through interdependence-accommodation and today have reached the era of dependence-domination. He attributes this evolution to the professionalization of the Soviet armed forces. As the technology of war has become more complex, civilians (the party elite) have been forced to cede greater institutional autonomy to the military, at least on those issues in which the military holds a monopoly of technical knowledge. This argument parallels our concept of limited institutional autonomy, but Kolkowicz goes on to argue that the military (along with a few other elite groups) has managed to achieve enough independence to qualify as an interest group in some limited pluralist sense.

Colton (1979, pp. 58-114, 221-249) challenges the primacy of the control concept by demonstrating that party-army elite relationships were actually coalitional, and that Stalin's great purge of the military failed to distinguish between the Military Party Administration (MPA) (the party

[4]It does occur occasionally, however: in Prussian Germany, when civilian authorities sought more absolute authoritarian domination; and in Gaullist France, when civilian authority needed augmentation. On France, see Ralston (1967); on Germany, see Craig (1956) and Perlmutter's (1977, pp. 42-88) analysis of the politics of European professional soldiers.

[5]Early on, Lyons (1961) noted the blurring of boundaries between civilian and military realism in the United States as the military was drawn increasingly into the politics of national security policy after World War II. That this "politicization of the military" has been limited to specific policy issues is evidenced by the subjects covered in Lovell and Kronenberg (1974).

[6]On the types of praetorian regimes, see Huntington (1968, pp. 92-203), Nordlinger (1977, pp. 1-29), and Perlmutter (1981).

[7]See Kolkowicz (1967), Odom (1973), and Colton (1979). See also the excellent collection edited by Herspring (1978) and Herspring and Volgyes (1978). For a long list of individual country studies, see the excellent bibliography in Albright (1980).

control apparatus), the administration, and the professional military. All suffered equally. The party certainly dominates, but Colton demonstrates that the level of military participation is potentially if not actually high, and that the military is rarely politically quiescent. "The Soviet military establishment," Colton argues, "has been at least capable of playing far more ambitious roles in politics than it has, and these could conceivably be extended so far as to include seizure of power in society." This, of course, hinges on the efficiency of civilian constraints and of the party apparatus.

For Colton, a more appropriate analytical approach is to examine the regimes' mechanisms of constraint, which are set against the dynamics of military participation and military politics. Colton says that the challenge to authority rests not so much with civilian or party control, but depends on "officers' actual and potential roles in politics." Accordingly, one must distinguish military participation in terms of internal, institutional, and societal dimensions. Colton finds that military participation is narrowest in matters that concern only the military and widest when set in institutional and societal terms. The scope of participation must be analyzed and judged along different patterns of military participation in politics.

Odom (1978, pp. 27, 29, 31, 41-43) challenges the arguments of both Kolkowicz and Colton. He disputes Kolkowicz's claim that party-army relationships are based upon professionalism and control. Instead, Odom argues that both the military and the party are elitist and nationalistic. "Military professional autonomy" does not contradict the "military's subordination to ideology," as Kolkowicz assumes. Odom thus conceives of "the Soviet military as an administrative arm of the party, not something separate from it and competing with it." Cleavages in the leadership over military policy "are intraparty functional divisions, not just divisions of party vs. military." Challenging Colton, Odom sees no basis for the latter's challenge to Kolkowicz's notion of control. Kolkowicz's analysis, argues Odom, "has the virtue of internal consistency in that it accepts Party-Army conflicts." To Odom, Colton is only vintage Kolkowicz; involvement or intervention is a characteristic of party-army symbiosis.

In our view, Kolkowicz, Odom, and Colton disagree largely because each focuses on or emphasizes one aspect of the multifaceted relationship between party and army at the expense of other aspects of that relationship. The dynamics of a particular interaction between the party and the military, such as the extent of conflict or the degree of military autonomy, depend largely upon the specific type of interaction involved. As we shall see, in different types of interactions the relationship between army and party will resemble the different patterns described by each of these theorists. Our intention is to show that these conflicting theories are not so much contradictory as they are complementary—once we understand the variegated nature of the party-army relationship.

Before examining the types of interaction that exist between party and army, we need first to examine the more permanent, structural facets of the relationship and their range of variation as derived from the general model already outlined: (1) the ideological level, which is concerned with value orientations regarding the legitimate authority relations of the political system; (2) the microlevel of politics, which concerns elite composition; (3) the systemic level of politics, which concerns the functional relationship among bureaucratic structures.

At the ideological level, the military, like all political structures, is constitutionally subordinate to the party. The primacy of party authority is the norm within which virtually all military participation in politics takes place. Bonapartism—the exercise of military power against the party qua party—is extremely rare. At the same time, classical and liberal conceptions of the political docility of the military are largely irrelevant to the value orientation of a communist system. All institutions, the military included, are intentionally politicized. To speak of military "intervention" is a misnomer; the military is a normal participant in politics. The point is to understand the nature and extent of military participation, its context, and the constraints on it.

Under the rubric of Marxism-Leninism's basic tenets, communist systems at different times and in different places have developed their own specific national variations ideologically—the romantic revolutionary zeal of China's Great Leap forward, the participatory ethos of Yugoslav self-management, the goulash communism of post-1956 Hungary, the stodgy pragmatism of the Brezhnev era. As a regular participant in politics, the military has some say in the evolution of such ideological norms and does its part to inculcate and defend them through its press and its political education programs.

At times, however, the military's ideological role can become more generative; there are instances when the military has been the *source* of the ideological model for society at large. Sometimes the military poses a radical model which is propagated against prevailing social norms, i.e., against society in order to transform it, as exemplified by the role of the People's Liberation Army at the onset of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the role of the Cuban mili-

tary during the period of the Revolutionary Offensive, and the regime of the Khmer Rouge. Invariably the product of such ideological demarches has been social tumult and sometimes social collapse, which suggests that although it may be possible to undertake a radical shift in value orientations within the relatively controlled environment of the hierarchically structured armed forces, civil society is much more resistant to firestorms of ideological change, even when the coercive resources of the military are devoted to promulgating them.

The reverse phenomenon also occurs occasionally when the regime is compelled, for whatever reason, to enlist social support by appealing to more traditional values. During the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet armed forces became the institutional focus of efforts to bolster Marxism-Leninism with a strong dose of patriotism. The Polish armed forces play a similar role today. With the legitimacy of the Polish party exhausted by decades of corruption and mismanagement, nationalism—as embodied in the armed forces—is now invoked to bolster the survival of the regime.

The ideological role of the military in a communist system is central only in times of crisis, when the party, for whatever reason, falters in its ability to uphold and advance Marxism-Leninism consonant with the interpretation of key elites.

At the microlevel, party and military elites are among the most integrated elites in the party-state system. The dual elite between party and army is both the source of the military's politicization and the guarantor of party supremacy. It makes no sense to ask whether this dual elite functions as the agent of the party within the army or the agent of the army within the party. It is both. It is the embodiment of the integration of party and military elites and the linchpin in the coalition between the party apparatus and the officers corps.

The existence of this dual-role elite operating within the confines of a party-dominated authority pattern produces a complex structural relationship between the army and the party as institutions. The military is politically dependent upon the vanguard party, but this dependence is not complete. The armed forces retain the right to limited institutional independence in which their own structural integrity is maintained as a necessary condition of performing the designated functions of maintaining internal order and waging war. This structural integrity is forfeited only under extreme circumstances, as in the dual command system created by Bolsheviks who distrusted the political loyalty of czarist officers.

Political dependence combined with structural integrity produces an unequal partnership between party and army. The extent of this inequality can vary widely depending upon a whole host of circumstances. Any particular communist system (i.e., a specific system at a specific point in time) can be located along a continuum defined by the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the military institution. Position on the continuum is the product of the tension between the military's political dependence and its institutional autonomy. For analytic purposes, we can simplify this continuum somewhat by resolving it into three basic ideal types of army-party relationships: coalitional, symbiotic, and fused.

Coalitional Soviet Civil-Military Relationship

A coalitional relationship is one of mutual benefit for the partners, a combination facing internal and external adversities, but one where the autonomy of each individual structure is the greatest concern. A coalition is a system of reaping mutual benefits and advantages in whose absence the participants lose more than they stand to gain if they are coalesced. It is a political relationship in which the participants maintain relative equality and independence from one another.

Where the complexity of military technology requires specialized knowledge inaccessible to nonmilitary elites, the autonomy of the military will tend to be high and the relationship between party and army will tend to be coalitional. The contemporary relationship between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet armed forces is the best example of such a coalitional relationship.

But Soviet civil-military relations went through a long, complex evolution before reaching the coalitional character they exhibit today. Initially, the relationship was one of extreme dependency. Because the Bolsheviks came to power by sudden insurrection, they had not developed a full-fledged army led by politically reliable officers which could then be turned to the defense of the revolutionary government. To confront the external intervention and the armies of White Russia, the Bolsheviks had to create the Red Army literally within a few months. They were forced to rely upon the military expertise of the czarist officers whose political loyalty was, to say the least, suspect. The system of dual command invented by the Bolsheviks to ensure the party's control over the Red Army represents the most extreme form of party control.

The purges of the Stalin period reinforced the dependent nature of civil-military relations by subordinating the Red Army to Stalin himself rather than to the party per se. Virtually every political institution of the Soviet political system was similarly tamed.

After Stalin's death, civil-military relations began to take on a more symbiotic character. The Zhukov affair was, of course, the critical event in army-party relations during the Khrushchev period. As elite conflicts have subsided in the Brezhnev period and institutional-bureaucratic prerogatives have become more clearly defined, civil-military relations in the USSR have become increasingly coalitional.

Today the Soviet army, whose institutional autonomy has been growing, has assumed the roles of protector of the CPSU's waning legitimacy; guardian of the Party's ideological-revolutionary heritage; quasi-revolutionary agent of Soviet interests in the Third World; and traditional defender of the homeland. Civil-military relations in the Soviet Union are shaped by important systemic, structural, and ideological parameters, some of which derive from the nature of communist systems per se and some of which are unique to the USSR: (1) the hegemonic power of the single party; (2) the absence of constitutional means of transfer of power; (3) the presence of security and paramilitary organizations within and around the military establishment; (4) the antimilitaristic Marxist-Leninist traditions which view the standing professional armies as anti-revolutionary forces and a threat to the revolutionary goal of party hegemony in communist societies. More than other institutional structures in the USSR, the military has developed special institutional loyalties and relationships to the party and the state. Its professional concept of responsibility and mission and its associative corporate values guarantee not only its political quiescence but also its partnership with the party. The latter enhances the military's political influence and privileged position.

In recent literature, Colton (1979, pp. 227, 250-278) develops the argument that the Soviet military's coercive capability is "not fundamentally different from that followed by soldiers in other societies," i.e., that they wield considerable influence. In addition, he argues, its ideological capability is not limited by the party and the state, which are the twin instruments of rule in the USSR. The USSR's military, corporate, ideological, and institutional interests could converge and even pressure the military into intervening in the political sphere. Thus the military in the USSR could play the same role it did in China, by regenerating pristine Bolshevism; that is to say, Leninism. All of these hypotheses seem intellectually exciting, but they are politically implausible since Colton himself defends vigorously the notion of the Soviet military's historical political quiescence.

Kolkowicz (1967, p. 15) reminds us of the Leninist iron law pertaining to the role of the military in the USSR: "The factor that helps shape life in the Soviet Union more than any other is the Communist Party's dominant position within the state." The Soviet military played an important traditional state function at the birth of the USSR as the protector of the state.

But the Party is the defender of society and supreme authority over both society and state. Fundamentally, these relationships have remained stable through a long road of conflict where the Party dominated the military. After the civil war, the military became a dependent of the party-state. Its political role was meager and subordinate. The Stalinist era was characterized by a subservient and sometimes intimidated military elite (Kolkowicz 1967 and Erickson 1942).

Although the military and the other state bureaucracies, as well as the Party, were modernized, this did not change the fundamental relationship between party and army. In fact, during the era of professionalization and modernization under Stalin, the military elite was subject to its most severe abuse, suppression, and near annihilation. There was no contradiction between professionalization and control; in fact, one complemented the other, as Colton (1979, pp. 86-112) clearly demonstrated. The Soviet military was formed as a subordinate, party-dependent structure, and it would carry into its more prosperous and politically autonomous years the legacy of dependency and subordination. This is *the* tradition of the Soviet military (Kolkowicz 1967, pp. 101-13). The party's post-Stalinist intervention into military affairs is tolerated, and the party as arbiter of army-party disputes remains intact in spite of the fundamental conflictual relationships between the party-state and the military.

The emergence of professional autonomy and the debate over the degree of military autonomy after 1945 demonstrates the organizational growth of the military and its growing bureaucratic role in policymaking rather than any challenge to party sovereignty. The military changed its role from dependency to a symbiotic relationship and eventually to a coalitional one. It did not change its political aspirations, nor did it seek political primacy, or even political independence. It sought what it deserved—organizational and functional autonomy over its own growth and functions. It sought influence over budgets and over foreign and security policies, which were obvious political roles for it as a bureaucratic participant, but it did not aspire to turn over the hegemonic role of the party nor to challenge its political supremacy.

In that respect, the Soviet military corresponds to the Huntingtonian model—seeking subjective control or greater influence in matters directly related to its structure, function, purpose, and

mission. The Soviet military never aspired either to rule, to subordinate the party, or to act as the regime's praetorian guard, and will not so long as the USSR remains modelled along Leninist lines. The mission of the military remains classical; it is the state's instrument of violence, even if both party and army tolerate a high degree of intervention into one another. Thus we take exception to Kolkowicz's thesis that the nature of the party-army conflict lies at the heart of the party's concept of control. We also take exception to Colton's thesis that the absence of real control demonstrated by recent evidence raises the army's coercive ideological and participatory capabilities. The problem of civil-military relations in the USSR is not control. Control is the fundamental requirement of the party-state's role, which does not except the military.

The relationship between civil and military authorities in the USSR has changed dynamically from dependency to symbiosis and coalition. The nature of the relationship could change once again in spite of the military's modernization. Scholars must focus on the relationship between these two unequal and authoritative political structures in the USSR, the party and the army, and not so much on the nature and the effectiveness of the party's control over the military. The Leninist party-state will not tolerate any political structure's challenge to its supremacy and sovereignty, and the military has so far demonstrated no desire to challenge the Leninist constitution any more than the American military has challenged its Constitution. The party is the Soviet sovereign, and the political authoritative relationships and behavior of all of the USSR political structures are related and subordinated to its sovereign. Relationships could sometimes be dependent and sometimes coalitional and symbiotic. This thesis doesn't deny army-party conflict, mutual intervention, and the party's abuse of the military when it is ruled by a tyrant like Stalin. The military under Tukhachevski never challenged the supremacy of the sovereign; the suspicious Stalin feared the growing and "uncontrollable" role of the military. Stalin's fears, real or imaginary, should not confuse the student of civil-military relations in the USSR. The next ruler of the USSR may or may not reflect Stalin's position. The military does not indicate any desire to challenge its sovereign; it will support the Leninist party-state if not each member of the Politburo. The military may challenge the party elite or parts of it but never the party itself.

China's Symbiotic Civil-Military Relationship

A symbiotic civil-military relationship is more organic than a coalitional one. It is a system of living together, a partnership involving one another, and is associated with the survival of each institutional structure. It is a system of high dependence more than of mutual benefits, which a coalition nurtures. A term borrowed from biology, symbiosis underlies the sustenance of a structure and of a division of labor. It refers to a complex network of sustenance relationships that bind two institutions. It also implies inseparability and survival. In the social sciences, symbiosis means an organizational structure with specialized functions that are related to one another in a division of labor. Symbiotic interaction is on all institutional levels, whereas a coalition is rather restricted to the top elites. Symbiosis also implies modifications of each other's behavior for purposes of sustenance and survival; it is reciprocally advantageous and binds political structures of different functions.

Symbiotic relationships are characterized by low levels of differentiation between military and nonmilitary elites, and the circulation of elites between military and nonmilitary posts. The functional and even institutional boundaries between military and nonmilitary structures may well be obscure, as they were, for example, in Cuba during the 1960s and China during the early 1950s.[8] Symbiotic relationships are most common in communist systems that come to power by waging guerrilla war, a form of politico-military combat in which the fusion of political and military elites is virtually inevitable, and in which the governing of liberated territories is a function performed largely by the guerrilla army itself.

Once guerrillas establish themselves in power and begin the process of dividing the labor of governing, a symbiotic party-army relationship is difficult to sustain. Institutional boundaries begin to solidify, and elite circulation between military and nonmilitary posts becomes more difficult. The more professional the military becomes and the more sophisticated its technology, the more likely it is that the party-army relationship will evolve away from symbiosis toward coalition. This is precisely what has happened in Cuba over the past decade, as the armed forces have retreated from tasks of domestic economic administration and have received increasingly sophisticated arms from the Soviet Union (LeoGrande 1978). A similar process was underway in China in the 1950s but was interrupted by the cataclysmic conflicts of the Cultural Revolution (Lee 1978).

In China the party (or at least Mao's party) was born at the base of the People's Liberation Army.

[8]On Cuba, see LeoGrande (1978) and Dominguez (1980); on China, see Lee (1978).

Historical circumstances and the length of the civil war created a relationship of high dependency and symbiosis that essentially has not changed since 1927. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) of 1920 to 1927 finally collapsed, and the military CCP of Mao and Che Tuh took over.[9] Military prestige was so high in 25 years of civil war and revolution that Mao used some of the military, particularly its revolutionary guard, as an instrument forceably to reform the CCP and acquire its early military and pristine ideological commitments. The military has now become the arbiter of Chinese communist politics.[10] This could not have happened in the USSR, where the army, converted by Lenin and Trotsky early in its evolution, followed the pattern of the classical European professional standing army (Perlmutter 1977, pp. 245-50).

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR), the army demonstrated the political importance of the hyphenated relationship between the two most powerful structures of Chinese communism. The military became Mao's mailed fist against the party; later on it was used as the protecting shield of the party against praetorianism. It can be assumed that in the absence of the army, the CCP might have been further weakened and fragmented because the military was employed as a political instrument to fortify the party. The same army that was used by Mao as an instrument of purification and to bring about a return to pristine communism was also used by his successors to restore order in both the party and the state.

Rather than withdrawing at the end of GPCR, the military consolidated its political position and strengthened its domination of the regional power structures. This action coincided with the reconstruction of the party (Joffee 1979). The military's limited disengagement from politics demonstrates that the post-GPCR upheaval is not completely settled yet; the military still serves as the revolution's praetorian guard. The military in China, as in the USSR, plays an important role in the politics of leadership succession, and it will continue to do so in the future in both countries. The era of withdrawal by the military coincides with the eras of relative party stability; the eras of intervention are linked to political crisis in communist systems. The most important crisis management and conflict resolution is accomplished within the confines of the party with the participation of both the army and the party.

[9]For the early days of the CCP, see the authoritative studies of Schwartz (1952); Schwartz, Brandt, and Fairbank (1953); and Brandt (1957).

[10]The principal works on civil-military relations in China include: Cheng (1966), Gittings (1967), Joffee (1967), Whitson (1973), Godwin (1976, 1978).

Cuba's Fused Civil-Military Relationship

The history of civil-military relations in Cuba is particularly revealing because Cuba had the first successful socialist revolution without a Leninist party in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle (LeoGrande 1978a, b). The collapse of the Batista regime in 1959 was brought about by a guerrilla army which operated as the central element of a broad, loose, and ideologically heterogeneous coalition of political groups. The 26th of July Movement, headed by Fidel Castro, was in no sense a party, and it virtually ceased to exist as an operating organization as soon as victory was won.

Through the first six years of Cuban revolutionary government, the guerrilla army, transformed into the Revolutionary Armed Forces, acted as the "politico-military vanguard," i.e., as both party and army. Although Castro declared the revolution's socialist, Marxist-Leninist character in 1961, the Cuban Communist Party was not even founded until 1965. For five more years, the party existed on paper but remained too weak and small to take on the vanguard, hegemonic political role that Marxist-Leninist parties in power have historically played (Dominguez 1980).

The fundamental difference between the Chinese experience and that of Cuba was the existence in China of a Marxist-Leninist party capable of directing the political system after the seizure of power. Thus the legacy of guerrilla war in China was symbiosis, whereas in Cuba it was fusion. This difference did not go unnoticed. The Cuban example stimulated Regis Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution* (1967), in which he argued that the Cuban "model" was applicable across Latin America. Standing Mao on his head, Debray argued that power did indeed come from the barrel of a gun—the gun of the guerrilla army. There was no role for the party in Debray's theory of revolution. Only after the triumph would a party emerge, and then only from the loins of the revolutionary army itself.

The absence of a truly hegemonic Marxist-Leninist party in Cuba until the 1970s led some analysts to question whether or not Cuba could even be rightly referred to as a communist political system. Since the Cuban Communist Party has, in the past decade, been strengthened to the point that it now directs the political system, in the case of Cuba this theoretical issue is moot. But Cuba is not unique; there are a number of self-described socialist regimes that embrace Marxism-Leninism as an ideology, yet lack a

hegemonic party. In Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Afghanistan, communism did not win state power by revolutionary struggle. Factions of existing elites seized power by coup d'état in the name of Marxism-Leninism.

Are such regimes communist systems? This is not merely a semantic issue; the underlying question is whether these regimes will behave in predictable ways based upon our existing models of communist systems. In our view, the fundamental structural feature of communist systems is the party-state. Unless these fused systems evolve in such a way as to produce a hegemonic Leninist party, their dynamics are not likely to correspond to those of communist systems. Hegemony within these states lies with the armed forces, and so they are best understood as variants of the praetorian model—Marxist-praetorian, if you will, rather than Marxist-Leninist. Perhaps such systems will eventually be transformed into communist states by the development of a hegemonic party, but until such transformations are undertaken, treating them as if they are communist systems will only obscure the search for comparative theory.

Civil-Military Conflict

A party-dominant authority structure, a high level of elite integration, and a complex institutional relationship that combines elements of both subordination and autonomy—these are the relatively constant aspects of the party-army relationship in a communist system. The way in which these structural facets of the relationship shape the dynamic political interaction between party and army must be the next focus of our analysis.

The occasions of political interaction between party and army are not different in principle from the civil-military issues that arise in noncommunist systems. That these issues at times produce a different political interaction in communist systems, that they are processed differently, is the result of the unique structural relationship we have already considered.

Three sorts of civil-military issues need to be addressed: (1) the issue of civilian (party) control over the military; (2) specific policy issues in which the military has a partial interest, and therefore influence; (3) broader political issues in which one or more fundamental questions of ideology, elite composition, and general policy directions are at stake, and which therefore affect the future of the entire regime.

The basic content of the civilian control issue in a communist system is no different from that in a noncommunist one: How do civilian authorities prevent the military from usurping political power? The fundamental pillar that maintains civilian hegemony is also the same in both communist and noncommunist systems. Civilian control rests upon the military's acceptance of the legitimacy of civilian authority. Since the military has a near monopoly of coercive force, it could hardly be otherwise. In pluralist systems, the ideological premise that safeguards civilian hegemony is the principle of an apolitical, professional military; in communist systems, it is the principle of the party's vanguard role, a principle which a highly politicized military shares. In praetorian systems where the legitimacy of civilian authority is weak, military intervention is the norm. This ideological foundation of civilian control may well be buttressed by more practical sorts of political arrangements, for example, an internal security force or a militia that serves as a politico-military counterweight to the armed forces, but the ideological principle itself is the heart of the civilian control system.

Because most communist systems owe their existence to armed conflict, they preside over a political system in which to resort to armed force against state authority is not, ipso facto, illegitimate. Just as a newly established communist system must create a new set of political institutions to govern society, so too it must create a new ideological superstructure that legitimizes the system. The central premise of this ideological structure is, of course, the preeminent role of the party. To instill this principle, in both theory and practice, the party institutes a whole series of mechanisms that provide it with control over all other political institutions. The military is no exception. Such mechanisms may range from the extreme of dual command, through nomenclature, to the more cooperative system of coopting military commanders into high party posts. A party structure within the armed forces and an elaborate system of political education for officers and troops cement the loyalty of the armed forces to the party-state system. Officers who do not share this ideological commitment do not reach high positions, or if they do, they do not retain them for long once their ideological deviation becomes clear.

The system of control which Marxists have devised to ensure party dominance is effective as well as elaborate. There is no recorded case of an armed-forces revolt against party authority in a fully consolidated communist system. When Odom (1978) argues that it makes little sense to speak of civil-military conflict in the Soviet Union because the party and army share fundamental values, this is the level of interaction to which he is referring, and he is correct.

As we have noted, however, the dependence of the military is rarely total, and in more advanced communist states, the military enjoys considerable institutional autonomy. This autonomy dis-

plays itself in the course of "normal" politics, the day-to-day debates over policy. To the extent that the military enjoys even limited autonomy, it has institutional interests to defend and valuable expertise that it alone can bring to the policy debate. This sort of interaction comes closest to resembling the interest group politics described by Kolkowicz (1967), and is not fundamentally different from the operation of bureaucratic politics in any complex, institutionally differentiated political system. To acknowledge its existence is not to imply that politics in communist systems are becoming more pluralistic, as some critics have charged. (See, for example, Odom 1978.) It is simply to recognize that functionally specific elites engage in bargaining to defend their perceived interests. The bargaining process in communist systems differs from that in pluralist ones in only one important way: in communist systems, the locus of bargaining lies largely within the party, and dual-role elites carry institutional interests into the party forum for debate and reconciliation.

Civil-military interactions in communist systems bear relatively close resemblance to such interactions in pluralist systems when the issues at stake are those of civilian control or "normal" politics. But when the issues are fundamental ones that affect the whole future of the system and thus generate intense intra-elite conflict, the role of the communist army is quite different.

One effect of politicizing the armed forces and creating a dual-role elite that links the party and the army is to assure party supremacy. But a second, more potent, effect is inevitably to draw the military into any major intra-party conflict. Because the military elite always belongs to the party and usually holds party rank of some consequence, military leaders are naturally participants in serious conflicts over ideology, elite composition, and major policy directions. It is important to understand that the military elite participates in such conflicts not as the military per se, but as part of the party, the party-in-uniform. Yet, obviously, the party-in-uniform retains the ability to use its military command to settle inner-party conflicts by force of arms, and the coercive potential of the party-in-uniform is often enough to resolve inner-party conflicts.

When a communist party erupts in serious factional strife that is ultimately resolved by the armed forces (either by the use of force, or by the threat thereof), the party has not lost control of the gun. On the contrary, the party commands the gun still, but command lies with one faction of a fractured party rather than with the party as a whole. Military subordination to party authority has not been lost; only party unity has been. One party faction uses the military as an instrument of inner-party struggle, and the military is the ultimate resource.

When Khrushchev was challenged in 1957 by the Anti-Party Group, Zhukov's support helped carry the Central Committee for Khrushchev; the military sided with the Khrushchev faction. But when Zhukov began truly to question party authority, he was quickly removed. When the People's Liberation Army entered the battles of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1967, they carried the day for the Maoists, not for the PLA. Similarly, when Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiapeng joined forces to arrest the Gang of Four, the military formed a key element of their anti-Maoist coalition. But party supremacy was never at issue. In these cases, and every other "military intervention," the military acts not to replace party hegemony with military hegemony, but rather to sustain the political hegemony of one party faction over another.

Poland offers an excellent example of party-army relations in a period of profound regime crisis. From the outset, Polish nationalism has pervaded and, on occasion, overshadowed Polish communism. As a consequence, the Soviet Union has traditionally held suspect the ideological purity of the Polish military. To protect the Marxist-Leninist party from a potentially reactionary nationalist army, the Polish armed forces have historically been kept dependent, even servile, not merely to the Polish party but to the Soviet armed forces as well. Not until the Gomulka and Gierek reforms of the 1960s and 1970s did the Polish military gain any significant degree of institutional autonomy, moving from a role of dependency to one of symbiosis. The reform program of 1963 which modernized the armed forces by increasing its technological sophistication tended to strengthen its heroic nationalism rather than its communism as de-Stalinization and professionalization converged.

Solidarity's challenge to party hegemony in Poland struck at the very core of Marxism-Leninism, the dominance of the party-state. For a time, Solidarity's leadership seemed sophisticated enough to realize that further reforms had to be undertaken through the party itself. Thus the Polish party became the focal point of political struggle between reformers and conservatives. Despite the fundamental changes that were underway in Poland, the issue of reform shifted, as is characteristic of a Marxist-Leninist system, back into the party itself, thus taking on the character of an intra-party debate.

But the party itself was too divided to resolve the crisis. Kania sought unsuccessfully to hold the center against pro-Solidarity reformists and hardliners within the party, and when his tenuous balancing act produced only paralysis, the party's

crisis was complete. Thus the role of the armed forces became pivotal, beginning with Jaruzelski's promotion to party leadership. The military—the party-in-uniform—became the only party faction capable of breaking the deadlock. The military's monopoly of coercive force gave it the ability to suppress the challenge of Solidarity, whereas its role as the institutional carrier of Polish nationalism gave it a legitimacy that the civilian party had long since lost.

The military's role in the Polish crisis must not be construed as a Bonapartist-praetorian coup but rather as a rescue of the party's waning hegemony. The party-in-uniform, in coalition with party hardliners, has broken the intra-party deadlock with martial law. But the party itself has not been overthrown or supplanted. At this writing, the party-in-uniform is still weighing what direction the party should take in the future.

Conclusion

The specific details of civil-military relations in any communist political system naturally depend upon the specific historical circumstances under which the revolutionary elite seizes power. The divergence evident in the preceding discussions of the Soviet Union, Poland, China, and Cuba is considerable. Yet underlying these divergences, the same basic civil-military dynamics are nevertheless operative. In all cases, the party plays the leading political role in society—even when, as in Cuba, it is organizationally much weaker than the army. The principle of the vanguard party holds even when, as in China, the party itself is beset by factional combat that leads to its virtual disintegration. This principle of party hegemony is enforced ideologically by Marxism-Leninism's particular value orientations regarding legitimate authority in a communist system. It is enforced functionally by a process of elite selection and placement that rewards ideological loyalty and locates the key elites of nonparty political institutions in party posts as well. The result is a system in which bureaucratic conflict is carried on, not between discrete institutional structures but rather within the party itself between dual-role elites.

But the most distinctive characteristic of civil-military relations in communist systems is the role assumed by the military during severe factional conflict within the party itself, such as conflict over fundamental policy directions, and leadership succession. Although the dual-role elite carries bureaucratic issues and conflicts inward to be resolved by the party leadership, it also carries fundamental battles outward through the political system to nonparty institutions. These institutions become, then, key political resources for contending party elites in a factional conflict. The military's coercive potential makes it by far the most important such resource, important enough to carry the day, as it did in the Soviet Union in 1957 and in China in 1967. But even when the military "intervenes" in such factional conflicts, it intervenes on behalf of the party, upholding the hegemony of one party faction over the other. In times of crisis, the officers may well be the most strategic faction of the political elite, but they are still party men.

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