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The Transitioning Economic Dynamics of the Military in Communist Regimes: A Comparison of Cuba, China and Vietnam [Student's Paper Series]

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September 2011

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The views expressed in this research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the US Government, Department of Defense, US Southern Command or Florida International University.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Several factors can increase or decrease military-economic involvement in communist regimes. This anomalous form of military behavior, labeled as the Military Business Complex (MBC), emerged in various communist regimes in the 1980s. However, in the early 2000s, the communist governments of China and Vietnam began to decrease the number of military-managed industries, while similar industries increased in Cuba. This paper explains why military industries in Cuba have increased over the last two decades, while they decreased in the Chinese and Vietnamese examples. This question is answered by comparatively testing two hypotheses: the Communist Party and the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian (BA) Hypotheses.

The Communist Party hypothesis helps explain how the historical and current structures of Party oversight of the military have been lacking in strength and reliability in Cuba, while they traditionally have been more robust in China and Vietnam. The BA hypothesis helps explain how, due to the lack of a strong civilian institutional oversight, the Cuban military has grown into a bureaucratic entity with many political officers holding autonomous positions of power, an outcome that is not prevalent in the Chinese and Vietnamese examples. Thus, with the establishment of a bureaucratic military government and with the absence of strong party oversight, the Cuban military has been able to protect its economic endeavors while the Chinese and Vietnamese MBC regimes have contracted.

INTRODUCTION

The Military Business Complex model (MBC) places the military apparatus in charge of economic and business dealings on behalf of the civilian communist authority. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was engaged in an MBC regime between 1978 and 1998. This included important businesses such as the Sanju (999) Enterprises Group, which began as a pharmaceutical oriented-conglomerate but in the early 1990s expanded into real estate, investments and electronics, and the China Xinxing Group Corporation which specialized in many production industries such as civilian clothing and accessories.¹ It was not until 1998 that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under the presidency of Jiang Zemin officially announced the end of PLA economic financing, dismantling the bulk of the Chinese MBC and its industries from 20,000 enterprises to a mere shadow of less than 1,000 units.²

The Vietnamese MBC regime, which was established in 1986 by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), consisted of more than 300 enterprises in the 1990s and was managed by the Vietnamese People's Army (VPA). These included businesses such as the Truong Son General Construction Corporation, which concentrated, in addition to construction projects, on transportation of exported and imported goods, and the VPA Special Operations Branch which took part in the mining and gem production business.³ Most of these industries shrunk in size as the Vietnamese MBC was reduced to less than 200 economic units by the early 2000s.

¹ James Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998* (New York, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 113, 128-129.

² James Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune*.

³ Carlyle A. Thayer, *The Vietnamese People's Army Under Doi Moi* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1994).

In contrast to the Chinese and Vietnamese MBC experiences, the Cuban MBC regime is still in place and has grown in operation since the early 2000s. The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) managed between 100 to 250 economic units and industries in the early 1990s. This number increased to 1,400 businesses by 2006.⁴ Among them, the all important Gaviota S.A., which provides services for tourists, and Copextel S.A. which helps produce electronic appliances for local use.

The purpose of this paper is to examine why the Cuban MBC has continued to expand, while the Chinese and Vietnamese MBC regimes have ceased or reduced their economic involvements.⁵ It presents the two hypotheses that are discussed as possible explanations to the research question. It also reviews the data on how each of the hypotheses relates to the three MBC case studies. Finally, it summarizes the outcomes for each case study and offers a conclusion.

VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESES

Communist Party Variable and Hypothesis 1 (H1)

The ability of the central communist party to maintain control over the military is a crucial factor that determines the fate of the MBC regime. Various scholars, however, argue that communist-socialist regimes do not have clear

⁴ Hal Klepak, *Cuba's Military 1990-2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2005).

⁵ This paper answers the research question by looking into the two underlined hypotheses. It presents information and data related to the differences in party oversight structure over the military, and the differences in military political appointees and delegation of power in each of the case studies. It should be noted that this paper does not take an in depth analysis of the MBC regimes themselves, but merely presents how two hypotheses can explain the discrepancies documented with each of the three MBC case studies.

distinctions between civilian and military institutions, as may be the case in democratic governments such as, the United States and the European Union.⁶ This is so because the armed forces in communist societies are normally active in the political affairs of the local communist party and *vice versa*. This is not to suggest that there is an absence of areas where a distinction can be made between party and military, but it can be difficult for a researcher to distinguish between the two and determine which one is more influential.⁷ For this reason, this study takes into account two control factors that are stated to be crucial for a totalitarian authority to oversee and maintain a subordinated military.

Samuel P. Huntington points to the first factor in his explanation of the term *Subjective Civilian Control* of the military. Subjective control over the military is when a civilian faction maximizes its power over the military by not allowing the establishment of an autonomous military sphere of interest.⁸ Huntington argues that in this type of civilian control in totalitarian regimes rely on interior security ministries, or other control instruments, to maintain or coerce the armed forces into a subordinate role. In this study these control institutions are analyzed for their strength and influence within all three MBC regimes.

Amos Perlmutter and William LeoGrande present the second factor in the form of “historical legitimacy” within the communist party, arguing that the armed forces stay loyal and subordinate to the local communist party by respecting

⁶ Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande, “The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems,” *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 76, No. 4 (1982), 778-89.

⁷ Perlmutter and LeoGrande, “The Party in Uniform.”

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil- Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 84-85.

its historical legitimacy in society.⁹ They argue that it is important for communist party apparatuses to begin building their legitimacy during the time of their formations, which in many socialist regimes occurred through violent uprising and revolution. During the time of “national revolution,” the communist party organization builds a mutually beneficial relationship with the armed forces, and establishes itself as the leading organizing entity. As such, by the time of “revolutionary triumph,” the armed forces see the party as the legitimate government.¹⁰ Based on this criterion, the current investigation conducts a historical analysis of the times during which the respective three communist parties were established by their party founder, therefore bearing evidence on how well each communist party institution was able to bring legitimacy on its armed forces. Since this historical contrast is derived by Perlmutter and LeoGrande’s arguments, Huntington’s criteria of oversight ministries and institutions is also taken into account in this section. Thus, the hypothesis reads as follows: If the Cuban communist central authority does not have institutional control over the FAR, and the Chinese and Vietnamese party authorities do have control over the PLA and VPA institutions, then this variable can account for the discrepancies witnessed in the MBC regimes.

Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Variable and Hypothesis 2 (H2)

The bureaucratic-authoritarian hypothesis is based on a different notion than the communist party hypothesis. It encompasses the possibility that some of the MBC countries are adapting qualities that go beyond the traditional MBC model, and can be more accurately explained with an alternative model on military praetorian activity. The alternative model that is analyzed is the Bureaucratic-

⁹ Perlmutter and LeoGrande, “The Party in Uniform,” 786.

¹⁰ Perlmutter and LeoGrande, “The Party in Uniform,” 786.

Authoritarian (BA) model that was applied to various South American military *junta* governments during the 1960s and 1970s.

A key element in the BA model is that the military becomes the central governing institution by having many military officers holding delegated positions of power while not dependent on the authority of a single individual.¹¹ The BA form of military governance stands apart from other types of military rule because of its decentralized nature. For the purpose of this study, the BA variable is defined as a bureaucratic military leadership, consisting of many military officers holding autonomous positions of power and authority.

The analysis of this variable and hypothesis is done by observing the governing leadership structures of the selected case studies during the time of MBC regime existence. This involves identifying the key decision-makers of each country, and presenting the institutions and delegates involved in carrying out economic and political policies. An analysis of political leaders and their delegations of authority validates whether there is a delegation of power to civilian or military officers, and accounts for officers who take active decision-making within the economic and political sectors. Thus, the hypothesis stipulates that if prominent FAR military officials hold independent institutional positions of leadership, and such military elites are absent in the PLA and VPA cases, this variable might explain the outcomes observed in MBC regimes.

¹¹ David Collier, "The Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model: Synthesis and Priorities for Future Research," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, edited by David Collier, 363-97 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 368.

CHINESE MBC

Communist Party Variable

The PLA and the CCP were both created in 1927 under the communist leadership of Mao Tse-tung. Mao acted as supreme leader for both institutions, establishing party legitimacy within the armed forces and military obedience to his charismatic decision-making.¹² By the late 1920s, Mao established the political commissar system. Party officers began to accompany PLA units and ensure party doctrine in military decision-making. However, this triggered resistance by field commanders who were fighting the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) forces in central and eastern China during the 1930s. Their main argument was that civilian political officers were interfering with decision-making in the PLA chain of command. The political officer system was removed in 1936, and Chairman Mao ensured that all political and military decisions passed through him personally. His authority was formally institutionalized in 1951 with the creation of the Central Military Commission (CMC) under the leadership of the CCP.¹³

The party commissar system was re-introduced in 1958 due to cases of criticism from PLA generals and officers. The re-introduction of the commissar system installed political commissars on all branches of the PLA, including the Air Force, Navy and regular Army units. The system was later partially removed in 1976, yet the need for reliable oversight of the PLA was not eliminated. A system of party secretaries

¹² Ellis Joffe, "The Chinese Army in Domestic Politics: Factors and Phases," in *Chinese Civil-Military Relations: The Transformation of the People's Liberation Army*, edited by Nan Li, 7-22 (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 13.

¹³ You Ji, "Sorting out the Myths about Political Commissars," in *Chinese Civil-Military Relations: The Transformation of the People's Liberation Army*, edited by Nan Li (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 80-106.

was installed under the new leadership of Deng Xiaoping in 1985. Party secretaries were known to report on PLA actions and decision-making to the leadership of the CCP. However, they did not have the authority granted to political commissars on actively overruling PLA officers and their decisions. Authority for overruling military decisions was reserved for Chinese leader Deng, the CMC, and by party member vote in the Central Committee of the CCP.¹⁴

In 1993, President Jiang Zemin, a civilian official, began to enforce party secretaries at the provincial level by giving them the status of political officers. The new batch of commissars was composed of civilian and military personnel, ensuring active participation of political commissars and secretaries answerable to the CMC and preferentially acceptable to both CCP and PLA interests.¹⁵ Such a network of civilian oversight has been prevalent in Chinese party-military relations ever since.

BA Model Variable (Military Institutional Rule)

The communist government of China historically has been led by four prominent leaders. The leadership under Mao Tse-tung lasted from 1927 to his death in 1976, and involved a central form of leadership where Mao was considered head of the party and the military, with little or no criticism by PLA officers.¹⁶ For example, the re-installation of the political commissar system in 1956 and the removal of Minister of Defense Peng Dehuai in 1958 were both accepted by the PLA with limited criticism.¹⁷ Mao was also hesitant in delegating authority to any of his subordinates, and he constantly warned over having too much bureaucracy

¹⁴ Ji, "Sorting out the Myths about Political Commissars."

¹⁵ Ji, "Sorting out the Myths about Political Commissars," 94-95.

¹⁶ Joffe, "The Chinese Army in Domestic Politics."

¹⁷ Ibid. 13.

and decentralization of power.¹⁸ He did possess an entourage of trusted advisors whom he appointed to various positions within the CCP and the CMC. By serving as chairman of both the CCP and the CMC, Mao ensured that his network of advisors would keep him updated on all PLA decisions, thus ensuring his centrality in both institutions with limited delegated authority.¹⁹

Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping, also employed a network of party and military advisors that ensured his leadership, most notably CMC Vice-Chair Yang Shangkun. Deng was able to solidify his power between 1976 and 1978 by purging the pro-Maoist "Gang of Four" and Mao's former wife Jiang Qing.²⁰ Like Mao, Deng was also considered a centralist military authority and all major decisions were enacted by him with little delegation of authority. Advisors such as Yang helped to ensure his rule in the PLA institution, yet Deng was considered the sole authority during his time in power and the PLA officer's core remained overall loyal to his persona despite criticism by some military officers when he ordered the PLA to begin its business endeavors in the early 1980s.²¹

Deng's leadership lasted until 1994, when he disappeared from public life. Jiang Zemin, former chairman of the

¹⁸ Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, and William R. Overstreet, *Political Handbook of the World 2008*. (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2008).

¹⁹ Ji, "Sorting out the Myths about Political Commissars," 13-14.

²⁰ Banks, et al., *Political Handbook of the World 2008*, 249-250.

²¹ James Mulvenon argues that in the 1980s, Deng began to institute economic reforms, saving costs on the central national budget. These new economic policies included severely diminishing the national defense budget and cutting the number of active regular PLA troops. To offset the diminishing defense budget, Deng ordered the PLA to increase their economic activities, thus ushering in the beginning of the Chinese MBC (2001).

CMC,²² was named as his successor. Jiang's rise to power in the mid-1990s symbolized a shift in Chinese leadership and military management. Apart from Mao and Deng, who had strong roots within the PLA, Jiang was a civilian leader with no military experience and limited charismatic appeal. His leadership strengthened institutions, such as the CCP and the CMC, instead of falling back on charismatic legitimacy evident in his two predecessors.²³ This was done by replacing older civilian and military officers who were deemed by Jiang as too independent and threatening to his rule with younger officials that supported his rule.²⁴

Jiang's policies were then followed by President Hu Jintao in the early 2000s. Hu was also a civilian party official with limited military legitimacy, and relied on strong institutions to ensure his rule. This included replacing pro-Jiang civilian and military officials with those more loyal to him, a move that eventually led to the removal of former President Jiang²⁵ in 2005 from the CMC chairman position, a position that Hu then took for himself.²⁶

Presidents Hu and Jiang were not the central charismatic leaders seen in Mao and Deng. They were more bureaucratic in nature, as both of them relied on institutional strength from the CCP and the CMC. Yet, none of these four leaders, including Mao and Deng, delegated authority to military

²² Jiang was the first known civilian chair of the CMC. He obtained such a position when Deng Xiaoping relinquished his formal title of Chair of the CMC. After which, Deng possessed informal rule of the CMC, and was still recognized as China's supreme leader (Banks et al., *Political Handbook of the World 2008*, 252)

²³ Joffe, "The Chinese Army in Domestic Politics," 15-17.

²⁴ Ibid. 100.

²⁵ President Jiang retained his post of chairman of the CMC after he relinquished the presidency in the year 2003 (Joffe, "The Chinese Army in Domestic Politics," 16-17).

²⁶ Joffe, "The Chinese Army in Domestic Politics," 17.

leaders to the point seen in BA regimes. They each possessed their circle of advisors and in the case of Presidents Hu and Jiang, a decentralization of institutional authority did occur, seen in the empowered institutions of the CCP and the CMC.²⁷ Yet, these examples are based more on a civilian bureaucratic authority, and do not match the BA regime form of military delegate authority.

THE VIETNAMESE MBC

Communist Party Variable

The VPA was created in 1944 by party leader Ho Chi Minh as a parallel institution to the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). Ho saw the need to train and rally Vietnamese nationalists to help unify the nation, which would contend with Japanese imperialism in the 1940s and French colonialism in the 1950s. It was first composed of approximately 500 fighters in 1945, but grew to more than 10,000 troops by the mid-1950s.²⁸

The Vietnamese Communist Party first began as the ICP in 1944 under Ho's leadership. It was then renamed the Vietnamese Workers' Party (VWP) in 1954 and then the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) in 1976 as the official government party of the newly unified Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV).²⁹ During its initial years, the party mostly followed the decisions employed by leader Ho. Ho surrounded himself with individuals who had dual roles in forming the communist party apparatus and the Vietnamese military institution. These dual role personnel ensured

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Thaveeporn Vasavakul, "Vietnam: From Revolutionary Heroes to Red Entrepreneurs," in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in South Asia*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 336-56.

²⁹ Banks, et al., *Political Handbook of the World 2008*, 1477.

parallel military and party compliance, as well as party historical legitimacy over the armed forces. Ho's early proclamation in 1944 of the Vietnamese revolution as a socialist revolution under the leadership of the ICP also ensured party historical legitimacy in the VPA military institution.³⁰

After defeating France in the 1950s and the U.S. in the 1970s, certain institutions were installed to help manage the VPA, which by then was composed of almost 2 million soldiers. The Central Military Party Committee (CMPC) was established in 1985 and was the latest institution of a long line of preceding party institutions.³¹ The CMPC was the main liaison institution that ensured party commissars within the VPA followed party decisions and policies. It also kept tabs and records of military personnel that were party members to enforce party compliance by military officials.³² The CMPC mandate was later expanded to include oversight of the Vietnamese MBC. It enforced two separate party reforms which led to the gradual diminishment of the Vietnamese MBC, and were severely criticized by VPA military leaders.³³

The Vietnamese party oversight system has kept strong controls on the VPA military apparatus; however, this system has not exempted the VCP from military criticism. Various VPA generals and officers, including former Secretary Lt. General Le Kha Phieu, openly criticized the party in the preceding months of the 1996 party congress. In

³⁰ Vasavakul, "Vietnam," 341.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Vasavakul, "Vietnam," 341-344.

³³ Carlyle Thayer, "The Economic and Commercial Roles of the Vietnamese People's Army," in *The Military as an Economic Actor*, edited by Jorn Brommelhorster, and Wolf-Christian Paes, 74-93 (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 89-92.

his address over the Hanoi National Radio Network, Secretary Le openly stated that the VCP needed to increase training of raw young recruits within the armed forces. He also criticized the party for failing to make industrialization and economic modernization more of a national priority in the 1990s.³⁴ General Dao Dinh Luyen, a long-standing member of the Party Military Committee, also criticized the party. Dao stated that the VCP was failing to meet the requirements needed to improve industrialization, technological advancement and national defense.³⁵

The Vietnamese military institution has at times openly criticized the local communist authority, yet these acts of resistance have been limited. History shows that the VPA has been unable to prevent party action in containing independent military decision-making. An example of this is seen with the removal of Lt. General Le Kha Phieu as party secretary in the early 2000, which was criticized but otherwise accepted by the VPA leadership.³⁶

BA Model Variable (Military Institutional Rule)

As established, the VCP was formed in 1944 as the Indochinese Communist Party by Ho Chi Minh and his circle of civilian and military leaders. All of these individuals played a part in carrying out party and military policy, yet the central authority figure that governed the Vietnamese nation was the charismatic party leader Ho Chi Minh.³⁷ Ho was the founder of the ICP and the Vietminh socialist

³⁴ Lewis Stern, *The Vietnamese Communist Party's Agenda for Reform: A Study of the Eight National Party Congress* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc, Publishers, 1998), 41.

³⁵ Ibid., 42.

³⁶ Vasavakul, "Vietnam," 351.

³⁷ Ibid.

movement, and all party and military authority was centered on his persona with limited delegation of power.³⁸

Ho's death in 1969 brought the *de facto*-leadership of General Secretary Le Duan³⁹ until the formation of the SRV in 1976, which then brought the authority of President Ton Duc Thang as the official leader of the SRV.⁴⁰ Vietnam came under the rule of various leaders after President Ton's death in 1980, yet the SRV was basically run by the VCP. The presidents and political leaders that came after 1980, Presidents Nguyen Huu Tho, Trung Chinh and Vo Chi Cong, were all characterized as non-charismatic and non-military leaders. These leaders mainly focused on strengthening the bureaucracy of the VCP, which included the formation of the CMPC in 1985. Consequently, during the time of these presidencies, Vietnamese governance was carried out by the party and civilian institutions with little or no delegation of power to military officers.

It was not until 1992 that Vietnam came under the presidency of its first military leader, retired General Le Duc Anh. Up to this point Vietnam was mainly ruled by the VCP and its civilian institutions.⁴¹ The Vietnamese MBC first began to take hold in 1986, yet it was under President Le's leadership that it grew to more than 300 industries. Under Le's presidency, the most prominent military member that rose to a high position of power was Lt. General Le Kha Phieu. General Le was named as Party Secretary and was one of the strongest supporters of increasing the Vietnamese MBC. Yet after President Le Duc Anh resigned in 1997,

³⁸ Banks, et al., *Political Handbook of the World 2008*, 1478-1479.

³⁹ The post of President and Party Leader was left vacant until 1976 as a sign of respect to Ho Chi Minh's leadership (Banks et al., *Political Handbook of the World 2008*, 1478).

⁴⁰ Banks, et al., *Political Handbook of the World 2008*.

⁴¹ Banks, et al. *Political Handbook of the World 2008*.

General Le was eventually removed from office in 2001 and Vietnam was again under civilian rule.⁴² The only resemblance of BA model military authority was with the tenure of both of these officers between 1992 and 2001. Yet these two examples of military decentralized leadership within the Vietnamese MBC do not conform to the BA variable definition of multiple military officers holding autonomous positions of power. Furthermore, even during the time of military President Le Duc Anh, Vietnam was still centrally governed by the civilian communist party, and the appointments of these two officers did not stop the two economic reforms that were enacted by the CMPC in 1995 and 1997 to gradually reduce the Vietnamese MBC.

CUBAN MBC

Communist Party Variable

The Cuban Communist Party (PCC) was officially created in 1965, but according to LeoGrande, was not considered a strong reliable governing organization until the early 1970s. The FAR was created in 1961, yet its personnel and staff were already organized under the leadership of Fidel and Raúl Castro in 1957. This lapse of time ensured a party military spectrum that consisted of a newly created communist party organization contending with an already established legitimate military institution.⁴³

In 1961, then President Fidel Castro ordered the creation of the Central School of Revolutionary Instructors. It was created to train a set of instructors to help politically educate FAR military units, a move that was part of Fidel Castro's

⁴² Vasavakul, "Vietnam," 351-352.

⁴³ William M. LeoGrande, "A Bureaucratic Approach to Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems: The Case of Cuba," in *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, edited by Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 201-18.

pronouncement of the Cuban revolution as a socialist revolution. With this pronouncement, Fidel saw the need to make sure that the military remained loyal to his regime. Between the years of 1959-1962, the only mechanism of civilian control over the military was the loyalty of the FAR forces to Castro himself,⁴⁴ and the counterweight offered by the National Revolutionary Militias composed of irregular civilians.⁴⁵ Yet, the establishment of revolutionary instructors, who were later referred to as political instructors, offered the Castro leadership a more sophisticated institution to maintain civilian control of the FAR.

By 1963, the drawbacks and overall failures of installing political controls on the FAR became evident. Cuban military officers immediately criticized the use of political officers, arguing that they did not have any knowledge or experience in military governing methods and were an impediment in military fighting effectiveness. With the Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), the Castro leadership appeased FAR officers by restructuring the training parameters of political officers. Consequently, from 1963 to 1970, political officers were strictly limited to act as a supportive role to the military. This included taking direct orders from FAR officers in their respective military units.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Edward Gonzáles documents this charismatic element with his *Fidelismo* model, which presents a charismatic leader holding complete central authority in every single component of governance, as such not relying on any decentralized bureaucratic political institution (Edward Gonzáles, *Cuba Under Castro: The Limits of Charisma* (Los Angeles: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 218-221.

⁴⁵ LeoGrande, "A Bureaucratic Approach to Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," 206.

⁴⁶ LeoGrande, "A Bureaucratic Approach to Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," 207-210.

A similar outcome occurred with the creation of the PCC in 1965. Military officers believed that such bureaucratic intervention would impede the FAR's administrative mandate. Such conflict of interest was voiced by then Minister of Defense Raúl Castro in 1966, who eventually proclaimed that there was widespread resistance by FAR officers in accepting PCC command. Because of favoritism, and the overall prestige of the military, the PCC was unofficially recognized as a supportive arm and tool of the FAR during the formative years, between 1965 and 1970.⁴⁷ During this time, as the inner departments of the PCC were organized and consolidated, FAR officers held almost complete decision-making in selecting party central committee members; moreover, criticism of FAR officers by party members was completely banned during party meetings. Thus, in the formative years of the PCC, the Cuban communist party was completely subordinated to the FAR military institution.⁴⁸

It was not until the 1970s that the PCC began to increase its control and influence as a governing institution, in large part due to the political pressure from the Soviet Union on the Castro leadership and the overall failure of the 10 million tons grain harvest to live up to expectations under the mostly military-administrated economic policies. By 1974, the FAR position of privilege in non-military tasks was decreasing, and the Cuban party-military spectrum began to resemble the typical communist regimes seen in Russia, Asia and Eastern Europe. However, they quickly reverted back to a similar scenario of the 1960s as a reaction to the emerging Gorbachev reforms of the 1980s, and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989.⁴⁹ In the 1990s, the Castro

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Juan Carlos Espinosa, "Vanguard of the State: The Cuban Armed Forces in Transition," in *Cuban Communism: 1959-2003*, edited by

regime augmented the FAR's hold on power by increasing its economic and political influence by transferring economic and political institutions from PCC jurisdiction to FAR management.⁵⁰

The most famous case regarding the transfer of power occurred with the Ministry of Interior (MININT), the main domestic security institution in Cuba.⁵¹ In 1989, with the sacking of MININT director José Abrantes, FAR General Abelardo Ibarra became head Minister of MININT. This led to a change in MININT's operations and procedures, including FAR participation in security decision-making, inability to investigate FAR officers without prior military approval, and stationing of FAR personnel in security tasks such as interrogations, drug enforcement and crime investigations.⁵² The one institution that could have offered oversight to the FAR began to be heavily hindered in military oversight operations.⁵³

BA Model Variable (Military Institutional Rule)

Since 1959 the Cuban leadership structure has always been centered on Fidel and Raúl Castro. As was the case with Chairman Mao Tse-tung in 1949 China and party leader Ho Chi Minh in 1965 Vietnam, Fidel Castro proclaimed himself as the sole charismatic decision-maker. According to

Irving Louis Horowitz and Jaime Suchlicki (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2003) 366-87.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Brian Latell, *After Fidel: Raul Castro and the Future of Cuba's Revolution* (New York: Palgrave, 2005).

⁵² Juan Antonio Rodríguez, *Cuba Por Dentro: El MININT* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1996), 42-29.

⁵³ For more information on the jurisdictional transfer of MININT to FAR control, including its relation to the important events of the execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa and the arrest of Director José Abrantes, Colonel Antonio de la Guardia and his brother, see *After Fidel: Raul Castro and the Future of Cuba's Revolution* (Latell).

interviews from defected Cuban officials, Fidel himself admitted his deep antipathy for bureaucracies and committee forms of government. He was known to have an inner circle of ten civilian and military advisors, which he would use to obtain advice and recommendation and then make his final decision with no delegation of authority.⁵⁴ This was the main characterization of Cuban governance from 1959 to 2006.

Raúl Castro, in contrast to his brother, is considered to lack charisma, assertiveness and prestige within the Cuban context.⁵⁵ As such, Raúl's leadership has been characterized as delegating power to loyal military officers from his time as Minister of Defense. Such officers include General Ramiro Valdés⁵⁶ who was former head of the Ministry of Interior in the 1960s and now heads FAR Corporation Copextel S.A, former Minister of Defense General Julio Casas Regueiro who up to his death in 2011, was a key player in managing the all important GAESA S.A. organization, and finally General Abelardo Ibarra, who currently heads the Ministry of Interior and is considered one of Raul's trusted colleagues.⁵⁷

Other important FAR appointments to government ministries include General Ulises Rosales del Toro, head of the Ministry of Sugar Industry, Colonel Manuel Marrero, head of the Ministry of Tourism, General Carlos Fernández Gondin, head of the FAR counterintelligence and vice minister of MININT, Colonel Álvaro Pérez Morales, former head of Ministry of Transport and Ports, and Colonel

⁵⁴ Anthony P. Maingot, "The Inevitable Transition: From Charismatic to Military-Bureaucratic Authority in Cuba," Cuban Research Institute. Report No. 3. Miami: Florida International University. 2007: p.8-9.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 12-13.

⁵⁶ It should be noted, however, that Valdés was considered in the late 1980s as a potential rival to Raúl Castro. As such, his loyalties are stated to be more inclined toward Fidel than Raúl (Latell, *After Fidel*. 221).

⁵⁷ Latell, *After Fidel*, 242

Orlando Rodríguez Romay, former head of Ministry of Fisheries and Merchant Marine.⁵⁸ These appointments represent the independent military-political element within the Cuban government. This institutional form of military economic and political management is an evolving phenomenon that closely resembles the appointments and delegations of power seen in BA regimes.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Communist Party Analysis

According to Huntington, Perlmutter and LeoGrande, totalitarian states ensure civilian control with their governing historical legitimacy, and with the use of security institutions to influence military decision making. The Chinese and Vietnamese communist institutions were both created on a parallel platform with their armed forces, and they both were given executive rights, through their charismatic party founders, to oversee their respective military institutions. Apart from isolated cases of military personnel criticizing party governance, the Chinese and Vietnamese military institutions as a whole recognized and followed orders early on from their respective communist parties.⁵⁹ Thus, both the Chinese and Vietnamese party organizations possess historical legitimacy within their party-military spectrums.

The Cuban case presents a different example, where the FAR military institution predates the PCC by several years. The FAR was the main working institution in the 1960s, and was the main managerial agent that took charge of rebuilding Cuban society after the revolutionary war of 1957-1959.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Domingo Amuchástegui, "FAR: Mastering Reform," *Cuba in Transition*, Vol. 10 (2000), 433-41.

⁵⁹ Thayer, "The Economic and Commercial Roles of the Vietnamese People's Army."

⁶⁰ Espinosa, "Vanguard of the State."

By the time the PCC was created in 1965, it had to contend with an established military governing regime, which severely limited historical party legitimacy. Lack of historical legitimacy is clearly seen as FAR commanders had almost complete authority to control party committee membership, party schedule and meetings, and inner investigations on FAR personnel.⁶¹ Hence, the Cuban case study does not follow with Perlmutter and LeoGrande's argument of historical legitimacy.

The argument of security institutions is also a fact to explain in this analysis. During and after the initial years of socialist revolution, the CCP and the VCP installed a network of oversight institutions on the PLA and VPA military establishments. Despite initial resistance by army officers in the 1930s, the CCP installed a dual system of political commissars and political secretaries who answered to the Chinese president, the CCP, and the CMC institution. It was this institutional network that enabled the diminishment of the PLA economic involvement in 1998.⁶² The Vietnamese, likewise, installed a similar chain of institutions which specifically answered to the CMPC. The institutional rule of the VCP and the CMPC ensured two waves of reforms in the Vietnamese MBC, which resulted in its diminishment.

In the Cuban example, the attempt at installing political officers in the ranks of the FAR was met with overall failure in the 1960s. Despite the success by the PCC after 1974 in becoming a legitimate institution, the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s led the FAR to once again act as a power broker above the PCC. Party weakness in overseeing the FAR also became evident when the Ministry of Interior was

⁶¹ LeoGrande, "A Bureaucratic Approach to Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," 206.

⁶² Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune*.

transferred to military jurisdiction in 1989, preventing strong party oversight on the Cuban armed forces.⁶³

The Chinese and Vietnamese case studies meet Huntington's benchmark of security oversight institutions as these two communist parties maintained control of their respective militaries. The Cuban example, however, does not meet this argument on the grounds that the FAR has historically overruled PCC control, and presently controls the main security institution that could offer party oversight. Thus, the Cuban party-military spectrum does not meet either the Huntington, or the Perlmutter and LeoGrande benchmark points used to determine the level of party control over the military. As such, the communist party hypothesis fits the comparative model underlined in this study, as being a possible reason for the research question.

BA Model – Military Institutional Rule Analysis

One of the prime BA characteristics is that power and decision-making are spread out and decentralized across a wide range of military actors.⁶⁴ The Chinese MBC began under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, a legitimate PLA figure and rival to Mao Tse-tung. Deng was the official chair of the CMC from 1978-1989. He took active decision making in the CMC and CCP, and relied on the presence of loyalist such as Yang Shangkun to ensure his authority within the all government institutions.⁶⁵ In the Vietnamese case, military President Le Duc Anh and the appointment of Lt. General Le Kha Phieu as Party Secretary ensured a limited bureaucratic presence of military interest. Le was known to have his own sphere of authority during his time as party secretary.⁶⁶ Yet, these examples of Vietnamese and

⁶³ Rodríguez, *Cuba Por Dentro*.

⁶⁴ Collier, "The Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model."

⁶⁵ Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune*.

⁶⁶ Vasavakul, "Vietnam."

Chinese military delegation of authority are limited. They do not compare to the various military appointees seen in the Cuban examples, which involved many high-level FAR generals obtaining political positions, in addition to economic assignments. These included, for example, key sectors such as domestic security (Ministry of Interior), agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture) and tourism (Ministry of Tourism). Thus, the BA hypothesis is a prime reason for as to why the Cuban MBC is able to expand in contrast to the Chinese's and Vietnamese's MBC contractions.

CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion of this study is that the Cuban MBC has increased because the FAR is gradually becoming the most prominent institution to manage the Cuban economy and government. The Chinese and Vietnamese MBC regimes have decreased mostly because both the PLA and the VPA have to contend and coexist with an equally strong and influential party apparatus that limits the economic spheres of military interest. The FAR does not contend as much with a party apparatus, but influences and uses the party as a political tool.

It is important to understand that the communist party and BA hypotheses are interconnected. The fact that the Cuban Communist Party does not possess a reliable oversight mechanism over the FAR is a clear catalyst for the rise of FAR generals to key government positions. The rise of a bureaucratic FAR institution is then a result of a power vacuum left by an underdevelopment of party institutions. This argument is comparatively corroborated by looking at the Chinese and Vietnamese MBC counterparts, which possess a heavy involvement of party institutions, such as the Chinese CMC and the Vietnamese CMPC, and prevent complete independence by military officers. The fact that the

Ministry of Interior, the strongest Cuban institution capable of overseeing the Cuban MBC, was shifted to FAR jurisdiction in 1989 suggests that coordinated civilian oversight over the military enterprises is non-existent.

It must be clarified that this study does not conclude that the Chinese and Vietnamese militaries are completely subservient to general party authority. One must recall the historical cases of military resistance and criticism of party leaders in both of these countries. Many scholars label this as “Conditional Compliance” within communist regimes.⁶⁷ Communist parties will respect military autonomous spheres of interest in which the military is more equipped and capable to handle: i.e. national defense and domestic security. In return, the military will respect party, and ultimately civilian, fields of interests such as economic and social development. This form of party-military relation is evident in the Chinese and Vietnamese examples, which consist of the communist party and the military simultaneously competing and coexisting with one another.⁶⁸ Such a relation is not evident in the Cuban example, as the communist party acts as the supportive tool for the military.

These are the scenarios that have emerged in the three case studies, and may explain why military-economic involvements expand and contract. When there is a rival civilian institution that can offer oversight over the military, then military-economic involvement will probably decrease or hold stagnant. However, a gap in civilian control over the military coupled with a legitimate bureaucratic military entity can lead to an increase in military-economic involvement.

⁶⁷ Frank O. Mora, “Military Business: Explaining Support for Policy Change in China, Cuba and Vietnam,” *Problems of Post-Communism* Vol. 51, No. 6. (2004), 44-63.

⁶⁸ Mora, “Military Business.”

This can help present a clearer picture and understanding of the domestic and foreign policy decisions enacted by regimes that possess highly influential economic-military institution.

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