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CASE STUDY: CHINA

China is an important case study for students of AP Comparative Government and Politics because it provides an example of a functioning communist system. While China maintains a communist political system, students will find paradoxes among its government policies. In order to compete in a global economy, China has moved away from communist orthodoxy in its approach to the economy. China no longer has a command economy: it now allows privatization, free trade, and other policies more commonly associated with a capitalist system. At the same time, China still follows a communist political system: only one party (the Chinese Communist Party) rules the country and little dissent is tolerated. Perhaps the most well-known example of the party intolerance of dissent is the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident in which pro-democracy students demonstrated in Tiananmen Square only to be harshly repressed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). This incident was viewed on television around the world, and while much time has passed, the government in China largely still does not tolerate political dissent such as public protests.

KEY TERMS

Chinese Communist Party (CCP)	Hundred Flowers Campaign
Cultural Revolution	iron rice bowl
extraterritoriality	Long March
factions	mass line
Falun Gong	one-child policy
four modernizations	special economic zones (SEZs)
Gang of Four	township and village enterprises (TVEs)
Great Leap Forward	warlords
<i>guanxi</i>	
Han Chinese	

KEY CONCEPTS

China's population is very large and fairly homogeneous. China maintains Communist Party rule. China was once ruled by dynasties, but eventually the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) came to rule in 1949. Mao Zedong led the Communist Party. In the 1950s, he launched the Great Leap Forward, which was a disastrous plan for economic modernization. In the 1960s, he launched the Cultural Revolution, an anti-Western campaign and an attempt to reawaken revolutionary fervor that caused turmoil in the country. After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping led the country and launched economic reforms. The Communist Party still rules China, but economic reforms have led it to function more like a market economy. Limited political reforms have taken place, including elections held at the village level, but the Communist Party still controls the press and limits speech. One party continues to run the government.

THE BASICS

China is the world's most populous country, with more than 1.3 billion people. Unlike Russia, China has a fairly homogeneous population with 90 percent belonging to the Han Chinese ethnic group. However, because China's population is so large, even relatively small minority groups make up large numbers of people and can have an impact on government and politics in the country. One such group is the Muslim Uyghur people, who live predominantly in the north and have launched protests against alleged discrimination. The government has attempted to quell dissatisfaction by allowing exemptions from the one-child policy, for example. The one-child policy has traditionally limited families who are Han Chinese to one child. Another example of population diversity are Tibetans, who are ethnically, linguistically, and culturally different from the Han Chinese and live in a semiautonomous region.

China is a developing country with big differences in standards of living; the contrast between urban and rural standards of living is especially great. Life expectancy is fairly high (72) as is the literacy rate. China has the largest military in the world and one of the largest economies.

EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE STATE

For millennia, China was governed by an imperial system that created a successful government bureaucracy and fought off foreign invaders. The Qin Dynasty was known for implementing a successful and well-organized bureaucracy, and elements of this have carried over to the political system today. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, the bureaucracy was stretched over a growing population increasingly composed of impoverished peasants. British imperialism soon reached

China, and China was defeated in the Opium Wars (1839–1842). The British began to impose the principle of extraterritoriality, applying British law to British subjects who committed offenses in China. This intensified a long tradition of distrust and dislike of the West, since the British did not have the interests of the Chinese in mind. To make matters worse, the Sino-Japanese War escalated tensions with foreigners, and many Chinese began to realize that they were not keeping up politically and economically with the outside world. This realization sowed the seeds of a revolution that consisted of many factions (small organized groups).

Sun Yat-sen was a revolutionary who favored Western traditions and organized a coup. He was exiled. While abroad, he continued to plan a takeover and organized the KMT (Kuomintang) or Nationalist Party, which formed one faction in the revolution. Sun's group weakened the regime, which gave way to warlords, or tribal leaders, who would rule the country briefly. Later, the government was ruled by the KMT.

During this tumultuous period, many Chinese turned to Marxism, a faction already in control in Russia and a belief system that appealed to the oppressed. The Soviets supported the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek, who took over after Sun's death. Tension between Marxists and Nationalists mounted and finally came to a head in a Nationalist attack on the Marxists in Shanghai. Mao Zedong, a Communist peasant leader, began to organize a following. Mao believed in peasant-based guerilla warfare to overthrow the Nationalists. After initial defeats, Mao and his followers withdrew to regroup their forces in the Long March, which lasted over a year. The Long March was a time in which Mao led peasants on a foot journey and engaged in communist organization and guerilla warfare along the way. During World War II, both the Communists and the Nationalists fought the Japanese, who had begun encroaching on Chinese territory. After the defeat of Japan in 1945, the Nationalists and Communists turned on each other. In 1949, the Communists drove the Nationalists from the mainland. The Communists broke up large estates, gave land to peasants, provided them with food and clothing, and allowed women to play a role in politics. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officially took control and still rules China today. The party is based on the principles of Democratic Centralism.

Mao was elected chairman of the politburo, and a communist state was established. Under Maoism, value was placed on conflict and disorder, the human spirit, and rural values. Specialization and intellectualism were seen as negative influences, and the people were encouraged to learn greater self-reliance and not become too dependent on the state. Internal infighting and factionalism continued, however. There were plots to kill Mao, and Nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-shek remained in power on the island of Taiwan. Although Mao was able to mobilize the peasants, support for the regime was far from universal. Peasant-based rebellions had to be suppressed by force.

Mao and his supporters launched a new economic plan called the Great Leap Forward. Under the command economy and central planning model, central authorities set plans for agriculture and industrial production. Peasants were forced into collective farms or made to work in large factories to comply with the plan. Dissent was

not tolerated, except for brief periods orchestrated by the government. One such time was known as the Hundred Flowers Campaign in which the government briefly encouraged dissent, to appease the people. The idea promoted was, "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred points of view be heard." However, when the government did not like the criticism, it harshly cracked down on the speech.

Perhaps the most important struggle during Mao's leadership was a campaign he organized called the Cultural Revolution. This campaign took place 20 years after the Communists had come to power and was designed to rid the country of traditional ways, to curb Western influence, and to reaffirm communist ideals. The campaign involved a massive use of propaganda, and the Red Guards violently attacked Western products and ideas. The *Red Guards* were the police/soldiers led by Mao Zedong to carry out the physical labor of the goals of the Cultural Revolution. They also punished anyone who was believed to sympathize with the West, sometimes with imprisonment, exile, or even death. Books were burned, museums were ransacked, and Western products were destroyed. In order to get the country's support, Mao mobilized a propaganda machine. Individuals were forced to study Mao Zedong's thoughts in small study groups and to rally behind Mao. Mao's *Little Red Book* was memorized in schools. Any hesitation in supporting Mao would result in abrupt and harsh punishments, such as being paraded about in public with a dunce cap. Posters of Mao appeared everywhere, and television images portrayed him as a hero. Mao was elevated to godlike status; the Mao's cult of personality intensified.

Upon Mao's death, uncertainty arose over who would succeed him. The Gang of Four, who were supporters of the Cultural Revolution, briefly ruled China. They emphasized the four modernizations (science, agriculture, industry, and military), which China would concentrate on for years. A faction within the CCP soon arrested the Gang of Four. Deng Xiaoping took over, and he ended the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

SINCE MAO'S DEATH

Deng Xiaoping's leadership ushered in a period of change for China. Believing in the slogan "to get rich is glorious," Deng began a campaign to open up the Chinese economy. Economic change has been slow, one-party rule is still in place, and political freedoms continue to be limited. Hu Jintao succeeded Deng Xiaoping as president and current party leader. He has been committed to continuing Deng's policies of free market, while at the same time, has pledged to pay more attention to poverty and pollution.

ECONOMIC REFORMS

Deng launched several important changes in his attempt to open up the Chinese economy. First, he created special economic zones (SEZs). SEZs were contained areas, such as Hainan, in which free trade was allowed. Western companies such as Kodak were allowed to operate

in these areas, and foreigners were permitted to visit. As these areas flourished economically, the government gradually opened up more areas of China to free trade. Today, few areas remain in which free trade is not allowed.

Deng made the revival of the rural economy one of his top priorities, abolishing collective farming and establishing a system in which farmland is contracted out by the villages that own the land. Township and village enterprises (TVEs) sprang up in the countryside. These were rural factories that varied in size. TVEs were the fastest-growing sector of the economy. Entrepreneurial farms were also allowed by Deng, and privatization of farms was phased in.

The state began a privatization campaign by selling off some major industries to private buyers. Privatization is not universal, but competition between private and public industries exists in China today as a result of Deng's reforms. Deng also broke up collective farms. Farms today are largely private and not run by the state.

Last of all, private entrepreneurship is allowed, and much state economic planning has been abandoned. While these reforms have been gradual, they have transitioned China to a market-based economy. As in any market-based economy, employment is no longer guaranteed, there is a disparity of income, and the state no longer provides universal health care. These economic changes are ironic considering the communist/Marxist goal of egalitarianism.

While economic reforms stimulated the economy, the benefits of the programs did not reach all citizens. No longer, for example, does the state guarantee employment or health care for its citizens. In other words, the iron rice bowl (guarantee of basic needs being met) was dismantled by these market reforms. Moreover, it is commonly believed that the *guanxi* (people with connections) benefit the most from the reforms. With the changes, there were winners as well as losers.

CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY RULE TODAY

China's governing system today is based on the principle of one-party rule. The Chinese Communist Party allows some minor parties and independents to run as long as they do not contradict its goals, which essentially prevents them from being true opposition parties. (In effect, these minor parties serve as interest groups.)

The Communist Party's general secretary is selected internally and serves as the country's head of state. This person's real power comes from the fact that he is also chairman of the Communist Party. Power is concentrated in the politburo, which is composed of a handful of senior party leaders. The secretariat or executive branch carries out the politburo's orders. Village leaders oversee rural areas. A National People's Congress has more than 2,000 members that vote on the directives of the politburo. Not once, however, has this body voted against a directive.

The government maintains political control over the country. The press is state owned, and the CCP heavily monitors Internet sites.

Dissent against public policies is not tolerated. For example, the Falun Gong, a Buddhist exercise and religious group, has been banned. Private religious groups may only organize with permission from the government. The same is true for any organized group. Additionally, the CCP continues to lack the transparency of democratic countries. Instead, leadership selection and policy directives take place in secret. Information normally accessible in a democratic country, such as census information, is not provided by the CCP.

LIMITED POLITICAL REFORMS

The CCP has instituted a few political reforms. Perhaps the most significant is allowing for local elections. The government monitors but allows villages to choose between candidates by a democratic vote. One must be a Communist Party member or an approved candidate in order to run (opposition candidates are not allowed), and a CCP member strictly regulates the campaigns. However, the villagers do have a choice. In a process known as the mass line, the CCP maintains frequent communication with the common people in order to access and integrate public opinion into the policy-making process. The CCP has also set up avenues for citizens to complain about party officials through government-sponsored anonymous hotlines. Finally, the one-child policy has been relaxed; those choosing to have an additional child must pay higher taxes. Some minority groups are exempt from the one-child policy. At the same time, however, there are punishments if a couple cannot afford an additional child.

The CCP has also begun to allow capitalists to become party members. Once strictly based on the principle of *nomenklatura* and limited membership, the CCP began losing members during the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping. Since membership in the Chinese Communist Party was no longer the only way to get ahead, Chinese citizens could achieve economic success as businesspeople and were no longer lining up to become members of the CCP. Therefore, the CCP began to accept capitalist members in an effort to keep party membership strong. This is an obvious irony, since capitalism and communism are not compatible ideologies.

China's judicial system has also undergone change. During the Cultural Revolution, any Communist Party member could serve as a judge and impose penalties under China's code of laws. Precedents did not determine punishments, so punishments varied and were arbitrary. Typical punishments during Mao's leadership included public humiliation, sentencing to a work camp, exile to the countryside, or the death penalty. The CCP is beginning to require judges to receive legal training. China maintains some of its punishments from the Cultural Revolution era and still has a death penalty for a variety of offenses. Many Chinese citizens remain unaware of how to file a lawsuit.

Many questions linger about the nature of reform in China. The CCP continually attempts to maintain legitimacy, but challenges continue.

AP Tip

Revolution is a core concept in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course, and the Chinese revolutions will help you illustrate the concept in your essay answers on the exam. When reviewing, ask yourself the following questions:

- What similarities/differences did the communist revolution in China have with that in the Soviet Union?
- What type of revolution was the Cultural Revolution?
- What changes did the Cultural Revolution bring?

AP Tip

Political and economic change are two core topics in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course, and China is an excellent case study to use in reviewing these topics for the exam. When reviewing, ask yourself the following questions:

- What political changes have occurred in China and why?
- What is the current relationship between economic change and political change?

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of the following best describes the Chinese population?
 - (A) All are of the same ethnic group.
 - (B) Most are of the same ethnic group, but there are large numbers of minorities.
 - (C) All support Communist Party rule.
 - (D) All are from families with only one child.
 - (E) Most advocate political and economic reforms openly.

2. The principle of extraterritoriality most directly led to which development?
 - (A) the Long March
 - (B) the downfall of the Qin Dynasty
 - (C) Mao's rise to power
 - (D) the Sino-Japanese War
 - (E) anti-Western sentiment