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THE ART OF WAR: WARLORD ERA REPUBLICAN CHINA  
BACKGROUND GUIDE

TRITONMUN XXVII – APRIL 27-28<sup>TH</sup>, 2024

MODEL UNITED NATIONS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

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## CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER

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Greetings Delegates,

My name is William Huang, and I am excited to be your Crisis Director for this committee! I would like to welcome you all to the “The Art of War: Warlord Era Republican China” committee of TritonMUN XXVII! I am a second-year Math-Economics major with a double minor in Data Science and History, and this is my seventh year in Model United Nations!

Being from China, I think the Warlord Era of 1912-1927 is both an underexplored and chaotic period of history! I wanted to pitch an idea like this for *years*, and am overjoyed for it to be a part of this year’s TritonMUN! You’ll notice that I also heavily incorporated elements of strategy gameplay in our Rules and Procedure, which I am equally eager to explore with you as a new approach to Crisis Committees!

I and the rest of the Dias hope to make this committee a fun experience for everyone, a place to let loose your imagination and feel like a true military leader! Please feel free to cause as much havoc in your notes and directives as possible (to a sensible degree, of course). Whether you go bold with your ambitions or work together to achieve something grand, the choice is entirely up to you! Whatever unthinkable ideas you come up with, your real-life counterparts probably already thought or did it before...

As always, I am always open to any of your questions and concerns. Feel free to reach me at [wih004@ucsd.edu](mailto:wih004@ucsd.edu) if you need anything!

May the sleeping giant of Asia awake and soar under your command!

William H.

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## POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

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### TRITONMUN POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

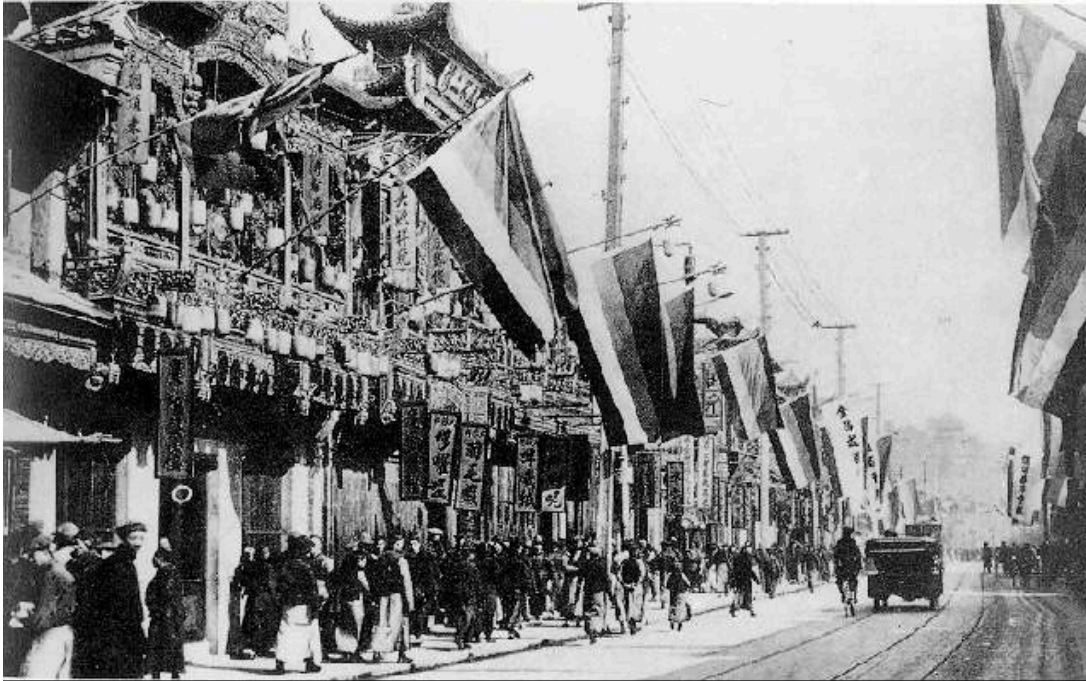
- Position Papers are due on **April 19, 2024 at 11:59pm.**
  - Requests for extensions must be sent by the advisor to TritonMUN by **April 12, 2024.**
- Position Papers must be submitted to the **Google Form** linked here:  
<https://forms.gle/kBYPRmDpbDSt69Ys7>
- Format
  - For committees with one topic there should be two pages for the topic with an additional page for citations, for a total of 3 pages.
  - Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures.
  - At the top of each paper, include your country/person, name, committee, and topic.
  - Required\* Sections: Each of these sections should be clearly labeled
    - Background
    - Past Actions by the Committee (if applicable)
    - Position of your Country/Person
    - Possible Solutions

\*Some committees may ask for different formatting or an alternative to a position paper altogether, this will be clearly noted in the background guide for that committee

# THE ART OF WAR: WARLORD ERA REPUBLICAN CHINA

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## INTRODUCTION



*Figure 1: “Xinhai Revolution in Shanghai”*

### **Introduction**

After two-hundred-and-seventy-six years, the Qing Dynasty, China’s largest and most extensive Imperial Dynasty has come to a resounding end. The Xinhai Revolution has seen the rise of a new government, the Republic of China. First organized under Provisional President, Sun Yat-sen the Republic presented a potential for a democratic nation (“The Chinese Revolution of 1911”), but its weak institutions and the ambitions of politicians across the state have led to the central government having little control over its people. Now, as the Republic too crumbles, a nation that once stretched from the shores of Sakhalin to the Peaks of the Himalayas splinters into dozens of warlord states. Now other nations see China’s weakness, and while none have moved against the fractured nation yet, it makes a tempting target for many.

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## The Delegates and Powers

As delegates, it will be your imperative to either unite China against its common enemies or pursue your ambition as warlords of the fallen dynasty. **Each delegate will represent a fictitious version of one of the many warlords that once controlled China during this era.** As such delegates will have significant avenues of gaining power and influence during the committee, as well as enjoy substantial freedoms when it comes to moving and allocating resources. However, keep in mind that the crisis directors will be looking for details and coherent arcs to justify the ability to not only possess certain resources but also move those resources between delegates in committee. When addressing crisis notes in the backroom, it is encouraged that delegates create a character or person to whom they direct their message, preferably a second in command of their military and/or finances. Through these means it is the delegate's primary goal to achieve the objectives and desires of their respective warlords and the factions they happen to align with.

Keep in mind that many delegates will have conflicting goals, with some even leading to confrontation. Among the warlords, many will seek the independence of their region and territory, some who seek to claim the mandate as China's new ruler, or others who might seek to ally with foreign powers. The Powers, positions, areas of control, and some of the personal goals of each character can be found in the character list section further into this background guide.

While the characters represented in this committee are fictitious, delegates can expect foreign powers and national events to unfold similarly to real life. Delegates are thus highly encouraged to study national political trends and the influence of foreign nations on Chinese politics.

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## Time Frame

This committee will take place starting at the beginning of the Chinese Warlord Era from January 1912 and onwards until around 1927. Each day will see a roughly equal passage of time, though ultimately the passage will be determined by the crisis backroom and by the pace of delegates in producing new directives. Every large crisis update will indicate a passage of time of six months to about a year. Through this, warlords will have their power and influence grow and shrink, gain or lose territory, expend resources, and expand or lose political power.



*Figure 2: Map of Provinces (made by the Crisis Director)*

## FALL OF THE QING DYNASTY

### **Discontent Rises**

Beginning in 1894 with the outbreak of the first Sino-Japanese war and the subsequent crushing defeat of the Qing Dynasty's Imperial Army, general discontent began to fester among the people of China. Seeing the Dynasty as having failed to protect their people, thoughts of revolution begin to spread through the population of China. This discontent was evident in the formation of the Revive China Society, a coalition of exiled nationalists and exiles from China.

Tensions became most apparent between the Dynasty and other Chinese political leaders when Sun Yat-sen and other revolutionaries were arrested after it was discovered they had been planning to start a revolt against the Qing in the Guangzhou region, which ultimately was dismantled ("The Chinese Revolution of 1911"). But the aftermath of both the war against Japan and this failed rebellion persuades some in the Imperial Court to seek reform ("The Chinese Revolution of 1911"). What followed truly marked the end of the Qing Dynasty as China itself began to split apart.

### **Reforms and Blood**

The Guangxu Emperor's 100 Days of Reform in 1898 sought to bring China into the modern age, using inspiration from other monarchies to make the Qing and more stable and thus powerful state. Reforms such as updates in infrastructure, industry, and even the establishment of modern universities all took place during this time. However, the massive changes eventually spawned a severe backlash against the Emperor as conservatives within the government saw the Emperor effectively removed from power in September of 1898 ("Chinese Revolution Timeline - to 1911."). The subsequent conservative backlash would fuel another decade of war to follow, as the new Boxer movement took hold across China.

Seeking to expel foreign influence from the nation, the violence brought by the Boxers eventually culminated in the Boxer Rebellion, a massive revolt against foreign missions and embassies in northern China (Kuo). The failure of the rebellion and the subsequent occupation of Beijing by foreign forces eventually put an end to the push to remove European influence over



China, with the subsequent treaty seeing massive restrictions placed on the Qing Dynasty. The humiliating treaty serves to only further diminish the validity and political power of the Imperial Court (Kuo).

### **Too Little, Too Late**

In a step to hopefully secure the longevity of the Dynasty, the Imperial Court begins a process of considering reforms. Over the next 10 years, the Dynasty attempted to modernize once more (“The Chinese Revolution of 1911”), sending missions out to study political reform in other nations, but even as this was underway, Sun Yat-sen began assembling a revolutionary coalition in Japan, hoping to one day make a return to the mainland. It was not until 1908, when the Guangxu Emperor died, that political reforms were put in place (“Chinese Revolution Timeline - to 1911.”), which didn't go into effect until almost three years later. It was during this time that calls for political change reached a fever pitch, egged on by exiled Chinese revolutionaries overseas. But the reforms, which established China as a constitutional monarchy and brought in a constitutional cabinet to the office of the Emperor, did little to appease the growing anger as soon after this new constitutional cabinet elected to nationalize the railways of China, selling them and using the profit to pay off reparations from the earlier Boxer Revolts. Such a heavy betrayal of the people’s trust sent the nation into a frenzy, as local militias sprung up, massive protests erupted, and a new government began to form in place of the Dynasty. Finally, in October of the same year, the Xinhai Revolution began (“Chinese Revolution Timeline - to 1911.”), bringing a fiery end to the Qing Dynasty.

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## INTERNAL ISSUES

On the eve of the new republic, China faced a multitude of problems. The following internal issues should only serve to provide guiding thought for delegates in their research on the crises beset upon Chinese politics and society.

### **Lingering Qing loyalists**

China in 1912 is at the earliest of its Republican Era. While the Republic of China was proclaimed across all of China in October 1911, the territory it controls is far less than claimed, being concentrated in the southern areas of the former Qing empire. Large swaths of the north remain under the control of the rump Qing court (Chi, v) and, more accurately, under the military protection of the Beiyang Army (“THE WARLORD ERA”), still nominally loyal to the Aisin Goro clan.

### **The Beiyang Clique**

Led by Yuan Shikai, the Beiyang Clique contains almost all of the leading generals of the Qing Beiyang Army, who are part of a loose network of patronage with Yuan as their central figure. The generals are embroiled in intense factionalism, often only partnering in temporary alliances due to mutual interests.

While the Beiyang Clique currently dominates China with its sheer military size (“THE WARLORD ERA”), the cohesion of the clique is balanced on the aging Yuan’s health. As the only person who could hold this powerful group of generals together, Yuan’s death is both highly sought after and dreaded by many across China. One thing for certain, his departure from Beiyang leadership will bring unfathomable chaos to his all too ambitious subordinates.

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## EXTERNAL ISSUES

The following external issues play a key role in foreign influence on the Chinese military and politics. Delegates are encouraged to conduct more personalized research on how these elements specifically influence their province, and how that may affect their actions in the committee.

### **Japan**

The Empire of Japan was formed after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and strengthened through a period of rapid industrialization and modernization. It has since overtaken China as the foremost military power in East Asia since achieving a decisive victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War. Japanese imperialism in China grew substantially after it won the Russo-Japanese War, dealing a critical blow to Russia and establishing a firm presence over Northeastern China (“The Chinese Revolution of 1911”). This became an even more immediate threat when Japan annexed Korea in August 1910, just a few months from the start of this committee’s time frame.

It is widely expected that Japan would interfere in Northeastern China, and use it as a springboard for its greater imperialist ambitions across all of China.

### **Russia**

As the dominant power of northern Asia, Russia has long eyed Northeastern China as an extension of its Far Eastern interests. It acquired Outer Manchuria from the Qing Dynasty in the Treaty of Harbin, and sought to further expand its control. To that end, it engaged in a bitter struggle with Japan, for which it lost in the Russo-Japanese War (“The Chinese Revolution of

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1911”). In spite of this, Russia remains a formidable land military power and has operational capabilities extending across the borders of North China.

It is widely expected that Russia will interfere in all of North China, especially in the more rural regions of Mongolia and Xinjiang.

### **The United Kingdom and France**

As the leading Western powers, the United Kingdom and France fought the Qing Empire in the Opium Wars and extended suzerainty over many inland trade routes through unequal treaties. While both nations operate a selection of Treaty Ports (“Treaty Ports”) along the Chinese coast, as well as run colonies bordering China, their military capabilities are not as involved compared to Japan or Russia.

The influence of the British and the French is more noticeable in Southern China, mainly extending from their colonies.



## POSITION PAPERS FOR THIS COMMITTEE

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In terms of position papers, please make sure to include and divide your paper into the following three sections:

**Character research:** Initial research on the **starting province** of their warlord

**Past actions:** Past actions on the internal/external issues China faces at the start of the committee

**Proposed solutions:** Provide 1-2 proposed military, strategic, or financial methods to secure new territory, manage your existing territory, and/or possible cooperation with other warlords to forward your goals

Good luck and remember that the Dias will enjoy not only evidence of extensive research into your character and the topic, but realistic plans of action, bold goals, and sound strategies.

## KEY TERMS

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1. Kumintang: Also known as the Nationalist faction, the Kuomintang is the dominant political faction amongst the current warlords of China. It stands for a China united under an authoritarian “republic” which will modernize the nation.
  2. Clique: A political and military alliance of warlords in China working for a common cause.
  3. Fengtian Army: Also known as the North-East Army, the Fengtian Army garrisons the Manchuria region, providing it with regional security.
  4. Beiyang Army: Being the most advanced army under both the Qing Dynasty and the Early Republic, the Beiyang Army is responsible for the success of the revolution against the monarchy. They inhabit the Beiyang region.
  5. Revolution: A political upheaval, usually forceful, that attempts to overthrow established social order.
  6. Warlord: A political leader who gains influence and strength through the force of military might alone, usually within the borders of a nation.
  7. Qing: The last and most powerful of the Chinese dynasties, lasting from 1636 to 1912
  8. Dynasty: A system of succession in which members of an established aristocratic or royal family inherit rulership positions within a government.
  9. Republic: A system of government in which the general population is shared between the people and their elected representatives, with a president elected by the people or appointed by a legislative body
  10. Provisional President: A political leader who serves as the acting president within a nation during a time of crisis or political reform.
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## CHARACTER LIST

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### **Zhang Meifen**

A bandit of origin, Zhang Meifen rapidly rose to power after cracking down on anti-Qing elements in Northeastern China. The Qing had made him the military governor of **Shengjing** under an Imperial Commissioner, but his influence extended to all of the Chinese Northeast through a network of patronage similar to Yuan Shikai's.

### **Yan Wentong**

A prominent member of the Beiyang Clique, Yan Wentong is a pragmatic individual with a love for industrialization and modernization. Holding almost complete control over the **Shanxi** region, a crossroads between the other warlords in central China, Yan believes in a mixed vision for the future of China, believing modernization can be used to protect, not erode, the traditions of his people. His projects led the populace to start referring to him as the “Model Governor”.

### **Wang Jincheng**

Having fought against the Republican revolutionaries in Wuhan during the Xinhai Revolution, Wang Jincheng despises the attempts at democratization brought on by the Chinese Republic. He is a pragmatic militarist, believing in a strong and centralized government. His base of power stands in the **Hubei** province, where he controls two brigades of soldiers.

### **Sun Xiaoli**

Sun Xiaoli to many is the “Father” of the Chinese Republic, credited with overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. Revered by both nationalist and communist sympathizers alike, Sun Xiaoli stands as a potentially uniting force in an increasingly divided China. He served as the first Provisional President of the Republic and leader of the Nationalists but went into self-exile in Japan as the Republic began to fragment. Now having returned to the mainland, where he quickly founded a new government in the **Guangdong** province, he hopes to restore a united China under the Republic.

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### Lu Ling

As appointed by the Republic, Lu Ling commands the Beiyang Tenth Division and serves as the military protector and semi-governor of **Zhejiang**, just south of Shanghai. He is also allied with the growing Anhui Clique.

### Sun Ruolan

Having graduated from the Imperial Japanese Army Academy and served under Wang Jincheng, Sun now sees monetary gain as above all, no matter the source of his riches. He holds influence over **Jiangsu**, which includes the city of Shanghai.

### Tang Guozhi

As warlord of the Independent State of **Yunnan**, Tang Guozhi controls vast swaths of raw resources and industry. He is a brilliant military strategist with connections to the Beiyang army. Tang is staunchly anti-monarchist and anti-authoritarian, believing in the Nationalist agenda for China.

### Wang Huan

Having graduated from a military school in Japan and served in one of Beiyang Army's Engineering Corps, Wang Huan now holds great influence over **Fujian**, serving as its military governor. He has significant connections in the Fengtian Army.

### Qi Shan

A graduate of the Qing Imperial Examination system, Qi Shan rose through the Beiyang Army ranks to become leader of the dominant military force in **Jiangxi** province, commanding soldiers and large industrial and agricultural centers. Qi has connections with the Anhui Clique.

### Zhang Delun

Zhang Delun and Zhang Meifen have been known at times to cooperate closely, but as the Republic splintered both have found themselves in competition for control of Manchuria, specifically the **Heilongjiang** region, from where he rules.



### Guo Yingjie

A key component of Zhang Meifen's network of patronage, Guo Yingjie rules the province of **Jilin**, hoping to unite the rest of Manchuria.

### Wang Longwei

Wang Longwei holds significant influence over the **Guizhou** region. He detests the Nationalist Party and sees them as a threat to Chinese culture.

### Song Jie

Song Jie is a military commander in the **Chahar** province in North-East China. He is an avid anti-monarchist and aligns himself with the Nationalists.

### Yang Guang

Ruler of China's most isolated and farthest west region, **Xinjiang**, Yang Guang is an avid monarchist, having a deep distrust in democracy and Chinese revolutionaries. Yang has strong connections with the region's Muslim population and the general population. While he currently accepts the rule of the Republic, the new government has little control over his region.

### Ma Huizhong

Ma Huizhong has significant influence in the **Gansu** region. Being a Chinese Muslim, Ma has heavy connections with the many Muslims in North-West China. He is a close friend of Yang Guang, sharing his values of pro-monarchism.

### Ma Xing

Ma Xing serves as the Military Commander of **Ningxia**, having close connections with the central government. He was a Muslim and had significant connections with the Muslim population of his region. He supports the integration of Mongolia into China.

### Liu Jinhai

Once the leader of Sichuan province, Liu Jinhai was pushed out and became the commander of forces dominating the province of **Xikang**, under the Chinese Republic. He is a member of the Nationalist Party.

### **Ma Xiu**

Ma Xiu is an officer in the Ninghai Army in **Qinghai**, serving under his father. He is a Chinese Muslim and has connections with the families of Ma Huizhong and Ma Xing.

### **Fu Huiliang**

Fu Huiliang is a major military commander in the **Suiyuan** region. He serves under the Republic but has growing sympathies for Socialist and Christian ideals.

### **Yang Pengfei**

Yang Panfei is the warlord of the **Shaanxi** region. He is loyal to the Nationalists. He believes China should focus on resisting external threats first before unifying the nation.

### **Sun Han**

Sun Han is a native of and dominates **Henan** province. He has strong connections to local bandits and organized criminal gangs. He is known to his men as “Captain Sun”, and maintains connections to Zhang Meifen’s Fengtian Clique.

### **Jiu Lei**

Jiu Lei is a commander in the **Sichuan** Defence Forces and a nephew of Liu Jinhai. He gained power in the province after successfully ousting his uncle in a family coup, and now controls the upper Yangtze trade through his power base in Chongqing.

### **Lu Xiaosi**

Lu Xiaosi is a military commander in **Guangxi**. He distrusts the new republic and believes that the old monarchy will best preserve Chinese unity. To this end, Lu sees Western intervention in China as an existential threat.

### **Zhang Guoliang**

A native of **Anhui**, Zhang Guoliang is a general within the Beiyang Army. He is a Nationalist.

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### Zhang Ning

Noted for his ruthless rule and exceptional opportunism, Zhang Ning holds a tight grip over **Hunan** province.

### Tang Weiyuan

Tang Weiyuan is a warlord in the **Rehe** region. He is a monarchist, seeing the division brought on by the Republic as inviting foreign invasion of China.

### Zhang Deming

Zhang Deming is a man with a storied past. After serving as an auxiliary for the Russian Empire in the Russo-Japanese War, Zhang began to develop strong connections with Chinese bandit gangs in the countryside. Now a powerful general in **Shandong**, Zhang hopes to lead his region back to glory.

### Wu Bingwen

A brilliant military strategist, Wu Bingwen has steadily gained influence in the factionalism of the Beiyang Army. He currently controls **Zhili** province and is entrusted with the military security around Beijing.

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## RULES OF PROCEDURE AND TECH POLICY

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The ultimate goal of this committee is to form a united authority over all of China. Delegates should strive to maintain military security over their territories individually. Aside from the special actions listed below, this committee will follow the standard Crisis Committee ROP. Delegate notes should be submitted over Slack, and Joint Personal Directives should be submitted in paper form. **Technology is permitted throughout the committee sessions.**

*Disclaimer: While the actual setting of this committee contains many incidents of unethical practices, this committee will not tolerate delegates attempting similar actions that may violate DEI regulations, even if it disrupts historical accuracy.*

### KEY PROCEDURAL TERMS

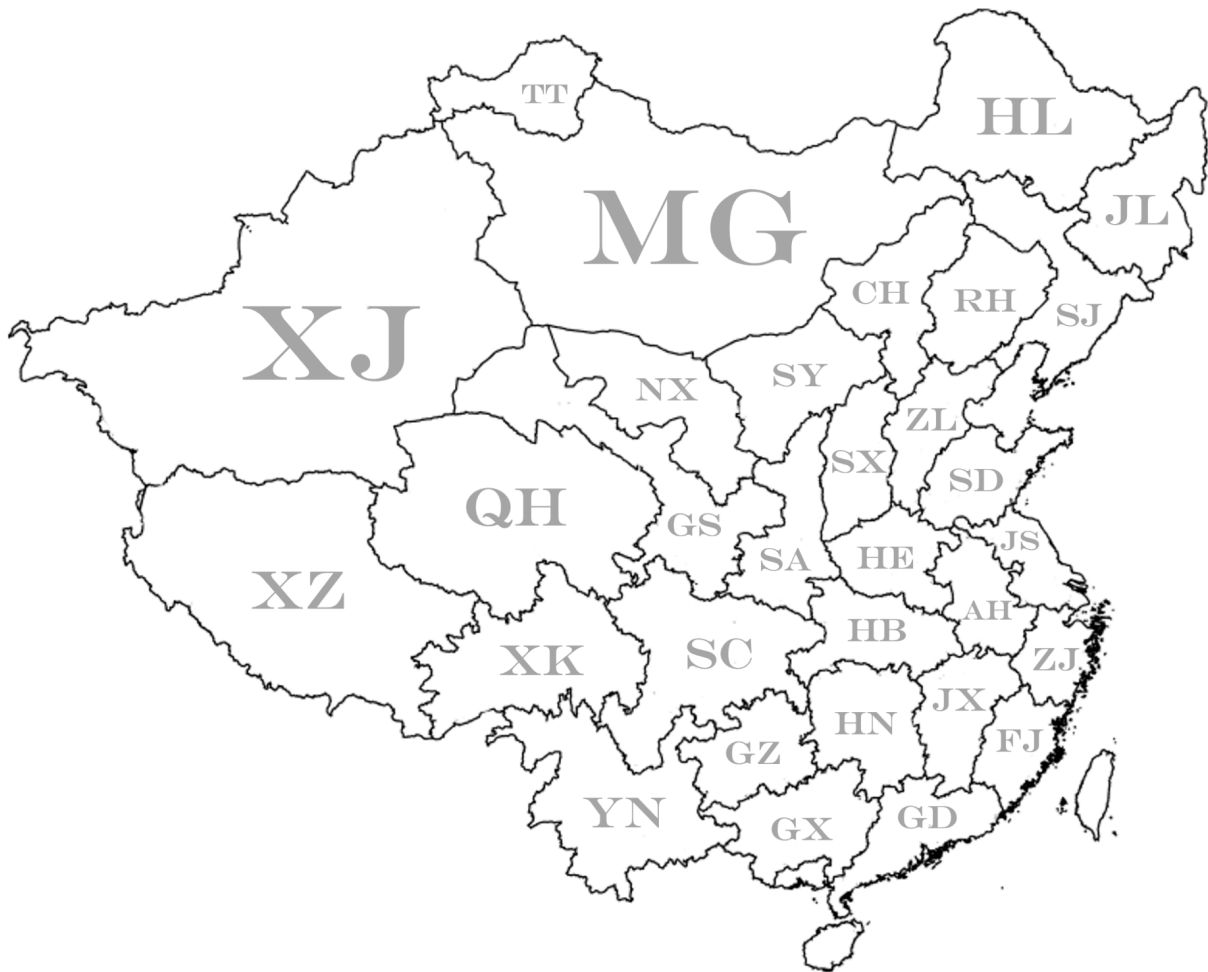
#### Army Unit

A basic military formation. Each “Army Unit” will consist of around 100,000 soldiers and will incur **maintenance costs** every cycle (more on costs in the **Financials** section). For the purposes of this committee, an Army Unit will *not deplete in numbers or strength* unless fully destroyed, under the assumption of automatic replenishment at the end of each cycle. **All units are treated as equal in numbers and combat strength, and no actions can be taken to reinforce/increase the combat strength of individual units** (like equipping better weapons).

#### Province

A top-level administrative division, each province generates revenue to finance **two army units**. The revenue generated by each province is **not affected by delegate actions** (i.e. remain static for the duration of the entire committee). Delegates may opt to split control over provinces and the revenue they generate with another delegate, with each delegate receiving revenue enough to fund 1 army unit.

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*Figure 3: Map of Provinces, labeled by Abbreviation (made by the Crisis Director)*

## ACTIONS

### **Movement**

For each cycle, each troop may move from its starting province to an adjacent province. Units may move into a province controlled by another delegate to “pass through”, provided they receive permission from the said delegate and **both sides explicitly state so in their crisis notes**. Crisis Backroom will treat the unauthorized passage of units as an attack.

## Attack/Defend

Units may attack the same province they are in or adjacent provinces, at a combat strength of 1 per unit. Multiple units attacking the same province will stack combat strength (i.e. 2 units attacking will have a combined combat strength of 2). Winning units will automatically move into the province they attacked. Delegates may also choose to attack specific units within a province without attacking the entire province itself, the winning units **will not** automatically move in this case.

Delegates may order a unit to defend a province, which sacrifices their chance to move the unit for the cycle. The defending unit will automatically engage all units that pass through the province unless specified by the delegate.

Battles are decided by whichever side has more combat strength. A tie in combat strength will result in the defender's victory. Losing attacking troops will return to their starting positions. Losing defending troops will retreat to an adjacent province owned by the same delegate (subject to the delegate's decision) or to a province owned by another delegate (provided both sides permit such action).

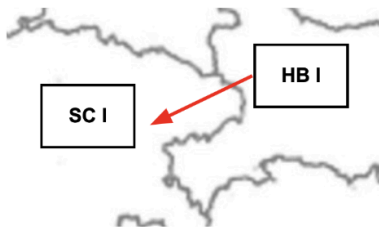
## Unit upkeep

Each unit incurs an upkeep cost for every cycle it exists. In general, delegates are strongly encouraged to maintain fiscal balance. However, delegates are given a grace period of one cycle if they incur a deficit over unit upkeep. If the deficit persists after one cycle, units will be randomly selected by the Crisis backroom and disbanded for each cycle the delegate is still in deficit. The more severe the deficit, the more units will be randomly disbanded.

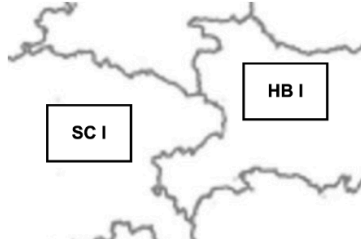
## Creating/Disbanding Units

Delegates may spend the equivalent of 1 unit's upkeep to create a new unit in a province they control. Delegates may also disband units, although disbanding a unit will not refund any revenue. Either creating or disbanding units may be done at any time in the committee, provided the Crisis backroom is notified in time.

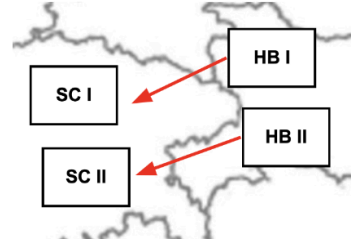
# VISUAL GUIDE TO ATTACK/DEFEND MECHANICS



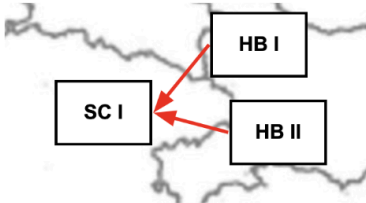
A unit attacks a province  
(1 attacker 1 defender)



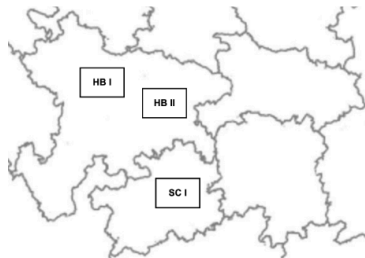
Tie, no change  
(Defender win)



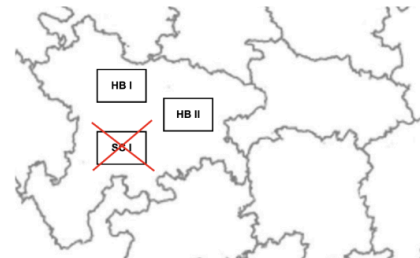
Same logic applies to multiple units  
(2 against 2 tie)



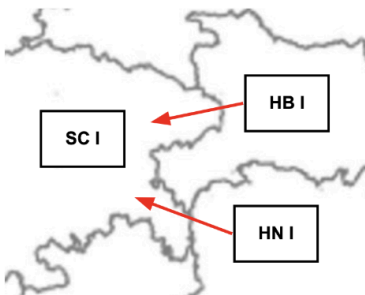
Multiple units attack  
(2 attack 1)



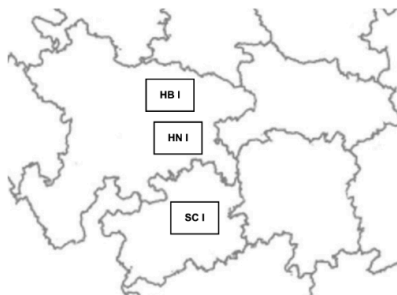
Attacking units win and move in,  
losing unit retreats to other province



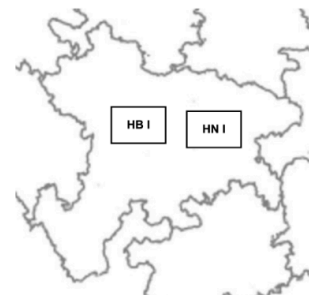
If losing unit has no province to  
retreat to, it is disbanded



Multiple delegates can attack the  
same province at the same time



Attackers win and move in  
(even if not coordinated)



No one gets province's revenue  
(unless later agree to split control)



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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1. How can you balance your expansion with cooperation? When is it more viable to prioritize your holdings, and when is it not?
2. Many warlords will have different and at many times conflicting interests coming into committee, all seeking their self-benefit. How will you balance the desires of all your fellow warlords in the interest of uniting China?
3. Does confronting foreign influence take precedence over combating internal factionalism? What must come first to secure the greatest future for China?
4. Is the Republic a viable form of government for China? Is it maybe time to return to the monarchy or maybe consider a new system?
5. If something big impacts all of China, who do you trust to lead the response? Why do you trust them to do so?



*Figure 4: “Soldiers of Feng Yuxiang practice with their heavy machine guns”*



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