

# CHINA'S EMERGING NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY



MURRAY SCOT TANNER AND PETER W. MACKENZIE

**CHINA'S EMERGING  
NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS**  
AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

MURRAY SCOT TANNER AND PETER W. MACKENZIE

A Joint publication of CNA and Marine Corps University Press

This book represents the best opinion of CNA at the time of printing. The views expressed in it do not necessarily represent the opinions of the U.S. Department of the Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps.

## CNA CHINA 中 STUDIES

CNA Corporation  
3003 Washington Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201  
[www.cna.org](http://www.cna.org)



Marine Corps University Press  
3078 Upshur Avenue  
Quantico, VA 22134  
[www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu\\_press](http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu_press)  
1st Printing, 2015

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Tanner, Murray Scot, author.

China's emerging national security interests and their impact on the People's Liberation Army / Murray Scot Tanner and Peter W. Mackenzie.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

1. National security--China. 2. China--Military policy. 3. China. Zhongguo ren min jie fang jun. I. Mackenzie, Peter W., author. II. Title.

UA835.T399 2015

355.00951--dc23

2014033333

China's Emerging National Security Interests.  
(c) 2010 by CNA Corporation. All rights reserved  
ISBN 978-0-9911588-7-4

Peter Mackenzie dedicates this book to his wife Regina Burns Mackenzie,  
and to their sons Samuel and Iain.

Scot Tanner dedicates this book to his wife Lisa Bang.

For their love, patience, and support as we completed this project.



# CONTENTS

## **INTRODUCTION**

China's Emerging National Security Interests..... ix

## **CHAPTER ONE**

China's Evolving Concept of Its National Security Interests..... 1

## **CHAPTER TWO**

Six Arenas of Emerging Security Interests..... 27

## **CHAPTER THREE**

Implications for the PLA..... 75

## **CONCLUSION**

Pursuing Emerging Interests Abroad ..... 119

## **APPENDIX ONE**

Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers  
and Investment (End of 2006)..... 125

## **APPENDIX TWO**

Combined Chinese Military Exercises with Russia and Other SCO Partners ..... 135

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS** ..... 137

## **FIGURES, MAPS, AND TABLES**

Figure 2.1	
China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment, 2002–9.....	29
Figure 2.2	
Chinese Overseas Contract Labor, 1987–2009.....	31
Figure 2.3	
Total Energy Consumption in China, by Type (2008).....	39
Figure 2.4	
Chinese Oil Production and Consumption (1991–2011).....	40
Figure 2.5	
China's Top Crude Oil Providers, 1998.....	46
Figure 2.6	
China's Top Crude Oil Providers, 2008.....	47
Figure 2.7	
Maritime Economy as Share of China's Total GDP, 1995–2007.....	51
Map 1	
China's Perceived Security Concerns to the South and West.....	59
Table 1	
Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment (end of 2006).....	35

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMS	Academy of Military Sciences (PLA)
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
bbl/day	Barrels per day
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International)
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party (Taiwan)
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EM	Electromagnetic
ESPO	Eastern Siberian-Pacific Ocean pipeline
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOR	Indian Ocean region



MFA .....	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOOTW .....	Military operations other than war
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDU .....	National Defense University (PLA)
NGO .....	Nongovernmental Organization
NOC .....	National Oil Companies (China)
OSC .....	Open Source Center
PAP .....	People’s Armed Police
PKO .....	Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
PLA .....	People’s Liberation Army
PLAAF .....	People’s Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN.....	People’s Liberation Army Navy
PLAN NRI .....	Naval Research Institute of the PLA Navy
PRC.....	People’s Republic of China
ROK .....	Republic of Korea
SCO .....	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCS.....	South China Sea
SLOC.....	Sea lines of communication
UN .....	United Nations
UNCLOS.....	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
V/STOL .....	Vertical/short take-off and landing aircraft

# INTRODUCTION

## CHINA'S EMERGING NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

### FROM TUNIS TO BEIJING

On 17 December 2010, a Tunisian street vendor lit himself on fire at the door of a government office that had refused to address his complaints. Like the single spark that Mao Zedong once said could start a prairie fire, this man's death set off a blast of unrest that engulfed not just Tunisia but Egypt, Libya, Syria, and beyond. In the early months of 2011, China found itself struggling to remain ahead of this sudden wave of antiregime uprisings, and to protect its overseas interests.

The Chinese government reacted quickly, expressing strong concern that the Egyptian and Libyan revolutions could threaten its local energy investments, restrict energy flows through the Suez Canal, and weigh down its economic growth rates with a rise in energy prices. Faced with a sudden need to protect tens of thousands of its expatriate citizens, Beijing took an unprecedented step, calling upon the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to support the foreign ministry's evacuation efforts. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) dispatched a warship that was taking part in an antipiracy mission off the Horn of Africa to the waters off Libya. It also directed People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) transport planes to evacuate Chinese citizens. By 2 March, two weeks after the Libyan revolt erupted, more than 35,000 Chinese citizens had been safely removed.

At the United Nations (UN), Chinese diplomats worked to block or at least limit what they saw as Western efforts to exploit the crisis in order to promote international coercion against authoritarian regimes in the region. At home, the "Twitter revolutions"

in the Middle East spurred Hu Jintao to speak of the need to strengthen control over cyberspace and the “virtual society,” while Beijing launched a crackdown on domestic dissent. Chinese security officials, meanwhile, conferred with Central Asian heads of state about how to prevent instability in China’s Muslim borderlands.

For China, the Arab Spring was not merely an unwelcome reminder that seemingly ironclad regimes can be toppled in quick order by powerful spasms of popular discontent. It also forced China to consider the impact that these distant revolts might have on a wide array of its emerging security interests. As a result of 30 years of China’s rapid development and increasing global engagement, these interests now extend far beyond Chinese shores. More than ever before, China is deeply concerned about the effect foreign developments may have on its energy supplies, commodity prices, overseas investments, citizens abroad, global security environment, and even domestic stability.

Beijing’s response to the Arab Spring underscores that, due to the growth of China’s global security interests, even distant events can have ripple effects throughout China’s political, military, and economic systems. At the same time, China’s emerging interests—and calls from within its security community for greater assertiveness in their pursuit—have increasingly attracted attention and concern among China’s neighbors and other major powers in Asia.

This book has two main objectives. The first is to analyze evolving perceptions by China’s national security community of Chinese national security interests and the potential threats to those interests. The second is to examine the challenges that China’s emerging security concerns are creating for the PLA, and how these challenges are shaping its roles, missions, and activities.

## **DEFINING “EMERGING” NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS**

For the purposes of this study, China’s “emerging national security interests” require some definition. In our research, we sought to identify issues that have caused significant changes to China’s sense of its national security stakes during the Hu Jintao period through the first year of Xi Jinping’s leadership. This study does not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of China’s national security interests. Nor does it focus on areas of enduring security consensus among China’s national security leaders and specialists. For example, neither China’s commitment to keeping the Communist Party in power nor its determination to prevent Taiwan’s independence are considered “emerging” interests within the scope of this study.

Instead, this study examines two types of “emerging” issues. The first includes issues in which China’s leaders perceive a genuinely new and important security stake.

A prime example of a “new” national security interest is China’s need to protect its rapidly expanding economic investment interests overseas, as well as the expatriate Chinese citizens who work to support these investments. A decade ago, China had very few overseas investments or personnel to protect.

The second type of emerging interest comprises existing issues in which security trends have led to a dramatic deepening or expansion of China’s sense of its interests. China’s increasing anxiety about the security of its western borderland regions is a prime example of an existing security interest that has become significantly more important as a result of recent political trends. Guarding China’s borders and suppressing Tibetan and Uighur independence movements are security concerns at least as old as the People’s Republic. But Chinese analysts stress that, over the last decade, borderland security concerns have become qualitatively more serious and complex. Beijing’s anxieties over ethno-religious stability have also become increasingly interwoven with other security concerns along China’s western borderlands, including securing China’s new Central Asian energy imports, struggling against rising inflows of Afghan heroin, handling Beijing’s complex relations with Pakistan and India, and adapting to U.S./NATO operations in the region.

In the past 5–10 years, Beijing has demonstrated a growing concern over six new or emerging national security interests, which will increasingly shape China’s security agenda in the years to come:

- Protecting overseas investments and Chinese workers abroad
- Deepening energy and resource security
- Strengthening maritime security interests
- Stabilizing China’s western borderland regions
- Developing space and cybersecurity interests
- Shaping China’s security environment

The growing importance of these interests is the major focus of this book.

## **OVERVIEW**

This book has been broken into four sections. Chapter 1 analyzes the forces that are spurring the rise of China’s “new” or “emerging” national security interests and examines some of the key characteristics of these interests. The chapter lays out a historical baseline for tracing the evolution of China’s perceived national security interests by reviewing how China’s leaders portrayed their fundamental national security interests

in the mid-to-late 1990s. This section brings us forward to Hu Jintao's leadership of the party, when Beijing began to frankly assert its expanding national interests and to adopt a new official language for promoting and securing these interests. The two most critical milestones in this process have been Hu's elaboration of the "New Historic Missions" of the PLA in 2004, and the party's recent announcement of its "core" national security interests and the specific issues that it claims have a critical impact on those interests.

Chapter 2 identifies the six most critical emerging national security interests that Chinese security experts have emphasized over the past 5–10 years. It examines each of these in some detail—both the objective changes in China's stakes in these security issues, and Chinese security analysts' perceptions of how and why these interests are becoming increasingly important to China's national security.

Chapter 3 examines the implications of China's emerging national security interests for China's military—its doctrine and policies, missions and roles, and force structure. This chapter analyzes recent debates among Chinese leaders and national security experts as to the challenges that the interests identified in chapter 3 are creating for the PLA. The chapter details many ways in which senior PLA strategic thinkers have tried to reform doctrine, policies, and missions in ways that would help the military protect and assert China's security interests beyond its territorial borders. But China's emerging security interests are creating tough choices for the PLA. The military must continue to confront existing security challenges, such as territorial defense, internal security, and preparations to deal with a Taiwan contingency; at the same time, it must prepare to carry out additional new missions dictated by China's emerging interests. In colloquial terms, nothing has dropped off the PLA's existing "to do" list, but a number of complex new missions are being added.

The final chapter concludes by reflecting on the impact that China's emerging national security interests may have on China's future security policy. This chapter notes the tough choices China will face in pursuing its emerging security interests, and the challenges these will create for China's neighbors and the United States. As China's security interests expand and its power grows, it may increasingly have to choose between a long-range calculation that it should avoid angering its neighbors in the region and a short-term desire to display its newly won capacity to defend its interests and assert its power. Drawing on our analysis, we see themes that indicate growing support for China to pursue what we might call "defensive expansion" of China's presence and influence in Asia, including its military presence and influence. Underlying this support for defensive expansion we see three themes recurring throughout China's debates over its emerging interests. First, that China's security community sees its emerging

national security interests as increasingly indispensable to China's future development and power. Second, that China sees many of these interests as increasingly vulnerable or at risk from both traditional and nontraditional threats. And third, that China portrays itself as having exercised much greater restraint in asserting and protecting its interests than many of its neighbors.



# CHAPTER ONE

## CHINA'S EVOLVING CONCEPT OF ITS NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

*We do not merely want to focus on and safeguard the security of our territorial land, sea, and airspace. We also want to focus on and safeguard our security on the seas, in space, [and] in cyberspace, as well as the other dimensions of our national security.*

*— Hu Jintao, General Secretary  
Chinese Communist Party  
December 2004*

### **THE SOURCES OF CHINA'S SECURITY INTERESTS: CONTINUITY, EXPANSION, AND INSTRUMENTALITY**

Over the past decade, China's national security interests have expanded in ways that both complement and complicate its pursuit of more established security concerns. Hu Jintao's 10-year term as Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary coincided with a rise in Chinese publishing and commentary about the nation's security interests and increasingly explicit assertions that those interests are expanding beyond China's land borders.

China's emerging national security interests are increasing the burdens on all of the country's national security assets, both military and civilian. This book focuses on both the substance of these changing interests and on the changing demands that they are placing on one of China's most fundamental instruments for the pursuit of such interests—the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Although the CCP leadership only began publicly using the phrase “core national interests” in 2002–3, it has remained committed to a consistent set of fundamental security concerns ever since Deng Xiaoping launched the era of reform and opening up. Four concerns that reflect the party's sense of itself and its mandate have been at the heart of the CCP's view of national security. As a Leninist party, the CCP's most



essential interest has been in maintaining party-state power and social control—the preservation of the party’s dominance over a stable society. As a developmental party, the CCP’s instrumental interest, on which it relies to make all its other concerns attainable, has been sustaining rapid but stable economic growth and technological development. As a standard bearer of Chinese nationalism, its definitive security interests have had both a defensive and a more forward-looking dimension. Beijing has committed itself to defending the country’s national unity and territorial integrity, and it insists on international respect for Chinese sovereignty. Looking forward, the party is committed to building China’s comprehensive national power and restoring the country to the position of a major global power.

The CCP’s precise formulations of these most critical security interests have evolved over the past three decades—in particular, its conception of how best to pursue its interests in economic development. Other important security interests have been added to China’s list, primarily because of their instrumental value in promoting China’s other fundamental objectives. Still, these four basic interests have remained enshrined in the foundational documents of the party, state, and military since the late 1970s to early 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

But the consistency of Beijing’s most fundamental security interests does not mean that its security concerns have remained static. China’s leaders have tried to be forward looking, expansive, and strategic in identifying new and emerging security interests. Among the best examples of this trend have been Beijing’s deepening interest in strengthening its power in space and cyberspace. This interest is reflected in

---

<sup>1</sup> The persistence of these national security interests is reflected in the December 1978 Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee and the 1982 Constitution of the People’s Republic of China. Regarding economic development, these documents respectively established that economic development (then officially called “socialist modernization”) was the central focus of the CCP’s work and the basic task of the entire Chinese nation. With regard to the party’s leading role and the basic one-party system, the Preamble of the 1982 Constitution enshrined the “leadership of the Communist Party of China” over society’s major tasks, and Article One made clear that the People’s Republic of China was “a socialist state under the people’s democratic dictatorship.” Regarding national unity and territorial integrity, the Preamble of the 1982 Constitution declared that it was “the lofty duty of the entire Chinese people, including our compatriots in Taiwan, to accomplish the great task of reunifying the motherland,” and Article 29 defined the tasks of the PLA as “to strengthen national defence, resist aggression, defend the motherland, safeguard the people’s peaceful labour, participate in national reconstruction, and work hard to serve the people.” This article also noted the state’s responsibility to promote the “revolutionization, modernization and regularization of the armed forces in order to increase the national defence.” The text of the 1978 Communiqué may be found at the *Beijing Review* Web site, [http://www.bjreview.com.cn/special/third\\_plenum\\_17thcpc/txt/2008-10/10/content\\_156226.htm](http://www.bjreview.com.cn/special/third_plenum_17thcpc/txt/2008-10/10/content_156226.htm). The text of the 1982 State Constitution is available on the *People’s Daily* Web site at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>.

assessments by China's top leaders, security analysts, and the PLA that "informatization" is one of the most critical challenges China will face as it strives to strengthen its military and maintain its domestic political stability. Hu Jintao spotlighted China's growing security stake in mastering the realms of space and cyberspace in his landmark 2004 speech on the "New Historic Missions" of the PLA.

Although Beijing has tried to be strategic in identifying its emerging interests, it has not been free to select these interests like preferred items on a menu. It has also been forced to react and adapt strategically to security challenges that have emerged either as a result of global forces beyond its control or, in many cases, as the result of its own past policy choices. Beijing has increasingly been forced to recognize that both the successes and failures of its past 30 years of development have left legacies and created emerging security interests of their own with which it must now contend.

Beijing's strategic identification of its national security interests has been both *instrumental* and *transitional*.<sup>2</sup> By "instrumental," we mean that Beijing has identified and pursued many of its security interests not only for their intrinsic value, but also because of their value in promoting other fundamental interests, such as national unity or the party's control over society. The instrumental pursuit of national security interests has, of course, been a constant element in modern Chinese history since at least the Qing dynasty debates over how best to restore the country's greatness and security through the achievement of "wealth and power." Certainly, the CCP leadership also sees intrinsic value in such security interests as continuing the rapid economic growth that has lifted millions of Chinese out of poverty, promoting a peaceful, nonhostile international environment, and acquiring the military and nonmilitary elements of "comprehensive national power." But Beijing also values these security interests as the indispensable tools for advancing its other national security concerns.

By "transitional," we mean that one of Beijing's prime motivations for pursuing these security interests has been to generate the power resources and forge the domestic and global environment necessary to promote China's transformation from a less-developed, territorially oriented regional power into a "true great power" that possesses "the geopolitical centrality and respect [that Beijing] believes to be its due."<sup>3</sup> China has continued pursuing some of these instrumental and transitional interests throughout

---

<sup>2</sup> Our use of the term "transitional" to refer to an effort to manage the politics of China's transition to great power status is inspired by the writing of Avery Goldstein. See Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), Kindle edition, especially chapters 2 and 5.

<sup>3</sup> This apt characterization is from Michael D. Swaine and Ashley L. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2000), 111.

the post-Mao era—most notably economic growth, scientific and technological development, military modernization, and promotion of a peaceful, nonhostile international environment for its rise.

China's evolving view of how best to promote rapid economic growth provides one of the clearest examples of Beijing's strategic and instrumental approach to its national security interests. As chapter 3 notes, Beijing has identified at least three economic security interests that are increasingly critical to sustaining the nation's economic growth: deepening the security of its energy supplies, strengthening its access to maritime resources, and protecting its growing overseas investments and workforce. Each of these, in turn, has been recognized as one of China's most important emerging national security interests. Going forward, Beijing's assessments of how best to continue promoting economic growth will continue to evolve in order to support its transition to global power status.

### **THREE DRIVERS OF CHINA'S EMERGING SECURITY INTERESTS**

What forces and processes have driven China to recognize the six emerging national security interests examined in this book? We conclude that there is no single force or process that adequately accounts for all of China's emerging security interests over the past decade—not the assertiveness born of China's growing international power, or the restraint woven of China's networks of interdependence, or the fears of instability sparked by China's social problems.

Instead, we believe that China's emerging security interests are shaped both by Beijing's need to deal with the impact of its past policies and by its assessments of its future policy needs and challenges. These security interests are being shaped by the CCP leadership's sense of opportunity born of China's rising international power and confidence, but they are also driven by Beijing's concerns about international opposition to its rise, as well as its chronic anxiety over its many deepening domestic political and social problems. This study has identified three particular processes that have shaped Beijing's recognition of its emerging national interests and the principal threats that these interests face—some of them forward-looking, and some reactive. These processes are

- China's need to confront the legacies of the past successes and failures of its security and development policies
- China's strategic assessments of the future challenges it will face in protecting its fundamental security interests
- China's debates about the new interests that its rising power will permit it to pursue

The first driver of China's emerging interests is the successes and failures of Beijing's past development and security policies. These policies are creating new national security "facts on the ground" that are now emerging as security interests in their own right. China's emerging interests are often rooted in the past strategies China has adopted to promote such existing security interests as regime stability, economic growth, or military modernization. In the language of social science, these emerging interests are "path dependent." By the late 2000s, the strategies that Beijing had pursued to advance its national security during the 1990s were creating a number of new "second order" or "follow-on" security concerns.

Among the clearest examples of an emerging security interest born out of past policy success has been China's rapidly rising concern over the security of its new investments and expatriate personnel overseas. The "going out" policy after 2000 transformed China from an exclusive seeker of foreign investment in the 1990s to an overseas investor in its own right, securing major sources of new wealth, resources, and power for Beijing. But as demonstrated by the PLA's recent reported evacuation of more than 35,000 Chinese citizens caught in the Libyan uprising, China's new role as an investor state means that it must now concern itself with the safety of unprecedented millions of its citizens who have taken up residence overseas in the past decade.

Another example of new security facts on the ground has been China's unprecedented increases in personal mobility and commercial shipping created by three decades of record economic growth. These trends in mobility have, in turn, become key drivers of China's rapidly rising demand for imported energy. China's continued reliance on export-led growth and the lagging development of its domestic market provides yet another example of development policies creating or reshaping national security interests. The export-led strategy has forced upon Beijing a heightened sense that it must develop the forces necessary to vigilantly protect the security of its shipping lanes, especially in the South China Sea (SCS) and Indian Ocean.

An emerging interest more clearly rooted in policy failure is China's spiraling anxiety over ethnic unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang in the wake of the 2008 Lhasa and 2009 Urumqi riots. These uprisings dramatically underscored the failure of one of Hu Jintao's signature internal security policies, a decade of investment aimed at promoting rapid growth and stability in these regions. But the timing of this reemergence of instability, coming as China has a growing list of other economic, military, and political concerns in its western borderlands, has intensified the potential impact on China's security interests.

A second driver in the emergence of new security interests has been the debates and assessments in which Chinese leaders and security analysts have been engaged

concerning how China can sustain its next stages of economic growth and military modernization. As noted above, Beijing's discussions of the changing nature of modern warfare have increasingly caused it to recognize the importance of control over space and cyberspace.

Because of the Chinese leadership's virtual addiction to sustained high growth rates to keep down popular instability and promote military modernization, many of China's most critical emerging security interests reflect its assessments of the requirements for sustaining growth. Security analysts (maritime analysts in particular) write about the need to maintain "sustainable" sources of growth—by which they mean continuing to secure access to the expanding supplies of resources needed in order to sustain rapid growth. Chinese leaders and analysts, from top party leaders on down, also frequently portray China's access to critical resources, markets, and access routes as being infringed on or threatened by neighbors and other major powers.

A third driver of emerging security interests is China's ongoing internal discussion over which national interests it should pursue—and how it should pursue them—now that it is wealthy and powerful enough to assert the interests it was too weak to claim in the past. This study uncovered numerous specific examples of this broad debate, although few issues better exemplify this debate than the question of how China should pursue its growing maritime interests. Military and civilian analysts have asserted that China can and should now claim new national security prerogatives over the adjacent maritime regions that are inside the "first island chain" but outside China's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone (EEZ). These analysts have also discussed when and how China should expand its capacity to protect its maritime security interests by trying to expand the PLA Navy's (PLAN) operational range and presence abroad, and establish new access arrangements for the PLAN in overseas ports. Yet another issue in these debates concerns the new missions and new operations the Chinese leadership should ask the PLA to undertake in protection of Chinese investments and personnel abroad. The result of these discussions has been a serious rethinking of some of China's most well-established military doctrine and security policies, such as the nature of its "active defense" doctrine and the future of its policy of "noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries."

## **HISTORICAL BASELINE: NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE 1990S**

To identify China's emerging national security interests, it is important to establish a baseline view of how China's leaders perceived China's national interests in the years

before the period this study addresses. From the mid-1990s to about 2000, China's leaders set forth their vision of China's most fundamental national security interests in authoritative major party, government, and military policy documents and speeches.<sup>4</sup> These documents provide a fairly clear baseline against which we can evaluate the changes reflected in China's emerging security interests since 2000. Naturally, this type of baseline summary can provide only a broad snapshot of how China's leaders portrayed their security interests in public. It cannot capture all of the many debates and discussions about these issues that China's leaders were engaged in during this historical period.

These policy documents indicate that some security interests that were receiving relatively little emphasis in the late 1990s are becoming increasingly prominent today. We might call these "latent" or "secondary" interests. These include the security or defense of China's foreign investments and overseas labor, the security of "overseas Chinese," China's maritime security and economic interests, and security interests in space and cyberspace.

During the late 1990s, China's leaders placed the greatest emphasis on five national security interests:

- Defending CCP rule and maintaining social stability
- Resisting threats to national unity and territorial integrity (including encouraging reunification with Taiwan and managing reunification with Hong Kong and Macao)
- Sustaining rapid export-oriented economic growth, job creation, and industrial reform
- Maintaining an international environment conducive to China's rise
- Enhancing China's military and nonmilitary influence ("comprehensive national power")

Although party leaders placed special emphasis on the first three of these security interests, which are similar to the "core" interests that Beijing would later identify in the 2000s, these documents and speeches in the late 1990s provide little language that would support any clear or consistent priority ranking of these interests.

---

<sup>4</sup> These policy documents include top party leaders' reports to major CCP meetings; the prime minister's annual report on the work of the government; China's first two national defense "white papers," *China's National Defense (1998)* and *China's National Defense (2000)*, published by the State Council Information Office; and other policy speeches and documents.

## DEFENDING CCP RULE AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL STABILITY

The 1989 democracy protests in China and the collapse of the Leninist states in Europe greatly increased Beijing's focus on regime security and domestic stability as security priorities in the early 1990s.<sup>5</sup> Political scientist Avery Goldstein contends that China's international circumstances also encouraged this focus on domestic security. Following the Cold War, China no longer faced "blunt military threats" from the other superpowers. The major threats to its interests shifted to include popular instability and "the corrosive political effects of economic and cultural exchanges with the West."<sup>6</sup> Echoing Deng Xiaoping's dictum that "stability overrides everything," party leaders continually insisted that suppressing threats to CCP rule and containing social unrest were absolutely indispensable to China's national security and economic development. Unless China maintained CCP one-party rule and social stability, it could not hope to secure its other critical interests.<sup>7</sup> In Jiang Zemin's words,

It is of utmost importance to balance reform, development, and stability to maintain a stable political environment and public order. Without stability, nothing could be achieved.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the 1990s, China's leadership was beginning to see social stability increasingly threatened by an accelerating six-to-seven-year rise in social protest. According to China's Ministry of Public Security, between 1993 and 1999 various forms of public demonstrations—officially called "mass incidents"—soared from 8,700 to about 32,700 nationwide. Although these protests were driven by a variety of causes, in the 1990s,

---

<sup>5</sup> This theme is especially strong in Susan Shirk's *China: Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail its Peaceful Rise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, chapter 2. See also Robert Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy since the Cold War* (Landham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), Kindle edition, chapter 1.

<sup>7</sup> "Only the Communist Party of China can lead the Chinese people in achieving victories of national independence, the people's liberation and socialism, pioneering the road of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, rejuvenating the nation, making the country prosperous and strong and improving the people's well-being." Jiang Zemin, "Hold High the Great Banner of Deng Xiaoping Theory for an All-Round Advancement of the Cause of Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics to the 21st Century," in *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, 12–18 September 1997, Xinhua, China.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* In 1996, Premier Li Peng had likewise asserted the interrelationship among stability, reform, and economic development: "Maintaining political and social stability is the basic precondition for advancing reform and development, while stability can only be achieved by deepening reform and continuous development." "Li Peng Delivers Government Work Report," Beijing Central Television Program One Network, 5 March 1996. In 1997, Li stated that "maintaining social and political stability is an indispensable important condition for our country's modernization." Li Peng, "Government Work Report," Beijing Central Television Program One Network, 1 March 1997.

most were related to layoffs and other problems caused by the restructuring of China's state-owned rustbelt enterprises, predatory local government policies in farming regions, and systemic corruption.<sup>9</sup> In addition to social unrest, China's top leadership perceived significant organized threats from the rapid emergence of "civil society" citizen organizations that were proving increasingly difficult for the CCP to control, as well as from organized opponents such as the Falun Gong spiritual movement and the China Democratic Party.<sup>10</sup>

For party leaders, a critical aspect of their interest in stability was defending their political system against what they saw as "foreign interference" and pressure for democratization and regime reform by the United States, Europe, and other democracies.<sup>11</sup> In the UN and other international organizations, China promoted global acceptance of the norm that all states be allowed to maintain the political systems and human rights policies of their choice, and supported efforts by other authoritarian developing countries to resist pressure for change. Party leaders also resented Western governments for sheltering or assisting international movements, as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that were active in China and that party leaders saw as hostile to their rule—but China's capacity to act against these groups abroad was limited.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Public Security Fourth Research Institute, ed., *Quntixing Shijian Yanjiu Lunwenji* [Collected Research Essays on Mass Incidents] (Beijing: Chinese People's Public Security University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Concern about threats to ethnic unity in Tibet and Xinjiang were not major themes in these key documents during this period. Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, spoke in terms of preserving or building China's multiethnic unity, but made little reference to an immediate or organized threat to this unity. In the pre-9/11 era, Chinese security officials were not yet labeling ethnic separatism as part of a joint threat of "terrorism-separatism-extremism."

<sup>11</sup> In a January 1993 internal speech just one year after the Soviet Union's collapse, Jiang Zemin argued, "At present, international socialism is stuck in an ebb tide, with international hostile forces increasing their penetrating and subversive activities against socialist countries. Regarding this, we must maintain vigilance and never lower our guard in any way." Jiang Zemin, "The International Situation and the Military Strategic Guidelines," in *Jiang Zemin Wenxuan* [Selected Works of Jiang Zemin] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe [People's Publishing House], August 2006), 278–94.

<sup>12</sup> Premier Li Peng, in his March 1997 *Government Work Report*, stated, "Our country has waged resolute struggles against the behavior of violating our state sovereignty and interfering in our internal affairs, and has effectively safeguarded our state sovereignty and national dignity. . . . We oppose all kinds of behavior which interferes in other countries' internal affairs." In his September 1997 *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, Jiang Zemin noted, "It is imperative that we should uphold and improve this fundamental political system, instead of copying any Western models." Later in the report, Jiang decried the serious problem that "human rights and other issues are used to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries." He also declared, "No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another country under any pretext, still less bully the weak and invade or subvert other countries. We do not impose our social system and ideology upon others, nor will we allow other countries to force theirs upon us."



Just 10 years after Tiananmen, however, China's leaders rarely spoke in concrete terms of the PLA playing any major role in helping civilian and paramilitary police units confront social instability, beyond reminding the army that it must protect the state and maintain absolute obedience to the party.<sup>13</sup> China's first *National Defense White Paper*, in 1998, listed "curbing armed subversion" as a "basic task" and a "main objective" of defense policy.<sup>14</sup> But beyond this, it gave little concrete information about the PLA's role in social order missions. And for their part, PLA leaders occasionally admitted the army's strong desire to avoid again being involved in suppressing unrest as it had been in 1989.<sup>15</sup>

## DEFENDING NATIONAL UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

For the Chinese leadership, defending against threats to national unity and territorial integrity became an increasingly prominent national security interest after 1995 as Beijing struggled to halt growing Taiwanese advocacy of permanent, formal separation from the mainland. President Lee Teng-hui's increasingly pro-independence rhetoric and the rise of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caused Beijing to see its interests as being increasingly at risk.<sup>16</sup> Beijing was also increasingly concerned over continued U.S. military reassurance to Taiwan and what Beijing perceived as growing U.S.

---

<sup>13</sup> *China's National Defense White Paper (1998)*.

<sup>14</sup> On views of PLA involvement in internal stability operations at this time, see especially the reference to Defense Minister Chi Haotian's comments in Dennis J. Blasko and John F. Corbett Jr., "No More Tiananmens: The People's Armed Police and Stability in China, 1997," *China Strategic Review* (Spring 1998); also Thomas Bickford, "A Retrospective on the Study of Chinese Civil-Military Relations Since 1979: What Have We Learned? Where Do We Go?," in *Seeking Truth From Facts: A Retrospective on Chinese Military Studies in the Post Mao-Era*, eds., James Mulvenon and Andrew N. D. Yang (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001), 1–38; Andrew Scobell, "The Meaning of Martial Law for the PLA and Internal Security in China After Deng," in *A Poverty of Riches: New Challenges and Opportunities in PLA Research*, eds., James C. Mulvenon and Andrew N. D. Yang (Santa Monica: Rand, 2003), 169–91; Dennis Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 156–58; Andrew Scobell and Brad Hammet, "Goons, Gunmen and Gendarmerie: Toward A Reconceptualization of Paramilitary Formations," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 26 (Winter 1998): 213–27; Tai Ming Cheung, "Guarding China's Domestic Front Line: The People's Armed Police and China's Stability," *China Quarterly* (June 1996): 525–47; and Murray Scot Tanner, "The Institutional Lessons of Disaster: Reorganizing China's People's Armed Police After Tiananmen," in *The People's Liberation Army as Organization*, ed., James Mulvenon (Washington, DC: Rand, 2002), 587–635.

<sup>15</sup> *China's National Defense White Paper (1998)* described the "basic objectives of defense policy" and the "main tasks" given to the armed forces as "consolidating national defense, resisting aggression, curbing armed subversion, and defending the state's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security."

<sup>16</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*.

tolerance for Lee's activities, most notably its granting of a visa to Lee to speak at Cornell University in 1995.<sup>17</sup>

Compared to Taiwan, other potential threats to China's national unity and territorial integrity received far less stress in key Chinese policy documents at the time. The Hong Kong and Macao reunifications went quite smoothly, compared to what Beijing saw as deteriorating trends in Taiwan. Beijing even hoped to use them as an attractive model for Taiwan.

Nor was ethnic separatism in western China perceived to be a threat to China's interests anywhere near on a par with Taiwan. Except for the years immediately following the Soviet Union's collapse, China's leaders spoke less frequently of ethnic separatism in Tibet and Xinjiang as being the pressing, imminent threat to national unity and territorial integrity than they have in recent years. Only after 11 September would they conceive of a joint threat from "terrorism, separatism, and extremism" and elevate this threat much closer to the level that Taiwan independence occupies among Chinese security concerns.<sup>18</sup>

Likewise, China's major policy statements during the late 1990s rarely emphasized its interests in the maritime territories that China regards as under its proper jurisdiction, even though Chinese analysts now assert that China's neighbors have "plundered" the resources in these maritime territories for many years.<sup>19</sup> Beijing publicly affirmed its claim of sovereignty over these regions, but showed greater urgency about improving relations with its neighbors and preserving regional stability. These statements called for solving these disputes through consultation, but they reflected a preference for delay

---

<sup>17</sup> The impact of President Lee's activities and U.S. support for Taiwan on China's perceptions of its security interests has been analyzed by a number of specialists, including David Michael Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Kindle edition, see especially chapter 1.

<sup>18</sup> See Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*. China's first *National Defense White Paper* (1998), for example, does not discuss this threat. The April 1990 violent uprising in Baren, Xinjiang, coupled with the subsequent independence of the former USSR's Central Asian republics, caused serious concern in the Chinese leadership, and one recent analysis contends that these incidents pressured China to make concessions to resolve its border disputes with these republics in return for cooperation in suppressing Uighur separatists. Beijing later followed with a major crackdown on Uighur activists as part of the 1996 anticrime campaign. See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), especially 150–68.

<sup>19</sup> A rare and fairly mild exception was the national defense section of Li Peng's 1997 *Government Work Report*, which called for China and the PLA to "safeguard the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as maritime rights and interests." Li's statement is the most explicit call for defense of China's maritime interests in any government work report between 1996 and 2010.

rather than pressing for resolution, compromising sovereignty, or undermining improving diplomatic relations in East Asia.<sup>20</sup>

## **PROMOTING RAPID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OPENING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD**

Economic development remained the party's official "central task" and a major concern in its own right, as well as the party's key instrumental goal for promoting all of China's other interests. Speaking in 1997, Jiang Zemin called development "the absolute principle, the key to the solution of all China's problems."<sup>21</sup> China's first *National Defense White Paper*, issued in 1998 during the East Asian financial crisis, stressed that economic security was becoming increasingly important to national security. The white paper emphasized the challenges of striking a balance between the competitive and cooperative implications of this trend. It underscored China's growing interest in expanding economic cooperation with other East Asian countries.<sup>22</sup> But it also claimed to see intensifying international struggles for markets and resources and growing competition over economic, scientific, and technological power.<sup>23</sup> Jiang Zemin, speaking in 1997, emphasized China's need to expand trade in commodities and services, open up additional markets for its exports, and attract more foreign capital into the country. China's own outbound foreign investment and expatriate workers had not yet reached a level that would make them an important security issue.<sup>24</sup>

## **PROMOTING AN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO CHINA'S RISE**

Chinese leaders have long emphasized that maintaining a peaceful, nonhostile international environment is critical if China is to have an extended window of opportunity to focus on its domestic challenges, economic growth, and modernization of its military.

<sup>20</sup> *China's National Defense White Paper (1998)*, for example, stated, "As for remaining disputes on territorial and marine rights and interests between China and neighboring countries, China maintains that they are to be solved through consultation by putting the interests of the whole above everything else, so that the disputes will not hamper the normal development of state relations or the stability of the region. China has clearly stated that relevant disputes should be properly solved through peaceful negotiation and consultation, in accordance with commonly accepted international laws and modern maritime laws, including the basic principles and legal systems as prescribed in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea." The *National Defense White Paper (2000)* made similar assertions, though it placed less emphasis on maintaining regional relations.

<sup>21</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*.

<sup>22</sup> *China's National Defense White Paper (1998)*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*.

Promoting such an environment became a major goal of China's security diplomacy in the late 1990s.<sup>25</sup> Beijing's broad concern with forging a more hospitable environment comprised several interrelated elements, including promoting a world order that was, in Beijing's view, less U.S.-dominated and "hegemonistic" and more "multipolar";<sup>26</sup> encouraging other countries to have more positive, less fearful perceptions of China's development;<sup>27</sup> avoiding serious conflict with major powers, especially the United States;<sup>28</sup> and improving and stabilizing China's relations with neighboring countries, including the major powers with whom it shared disputed borders—Russia, Japan, and India.<sup>29</sup> Beijing also called for strengthening international organizations and the role of multi-lateral diplomacy.

During the mid-to-late 1990s, China's leaders were growing increasingly concerned over what they perceived as growing suspicion and fear of China's economic and military rise among its Asian neighbors, the United States, and other countries in the region. This rising suspicion probably began in the early 1990s, spurred by China's attempts to assert its expanding security interests and by its neighbors' differing perceptions of the speed of China's economic and military development.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> This diplomacy and its role in promoting an international environment less hostile to China's rise are discussed in Bates Gill, *Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> In his 1996, 1997, and 1998 *Government Work Reports*, for example, Premier Li Peng criticized "hegemonism" and "power politics"—which in 1996 he called "the roots of instability in the world"—and spoke positively of the ongoing trend toward multipolarization and the strengthening of the developing world relative to the developed world. See "Li Peng Delivers Government Work Report," Beijing Central Television Program One Network [in Mandarin], 5 March 1996; Li Peng, "Government Work Report," Beijing Central Television Program One Network [in Mandarin], 1 March 1997; "Li Peng Government Work Report," Beijing Central Television Program One Network [in Mandarin], 5 March 1998.

<sup>27</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. China's National Defense White Paper (1998)* notes that "China needs and cherishes dearly an environment of long-term international peace, especially a favorable peripheral environment."

<sup>28</sup> Jiang Zemin, "The International Situation and the Military Strategic Guidelines," in *Jiang Zemin Wenxuan* [Selected Works of Jiang Zemin] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, August 2006), 278–94. Jiang noted, "Overall, the present international situation is beneficial to our country's development. First, for a relatively long time to come, it is probable that the international environment will be peaceful with new world wars being avoided. This is an extremely important strategic assessment (*zhanlue panduan*) and is built upon the premise of us consolidating our strength to carry out economic development."

<sup>29</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and China's National Defense White Paper (1998)*.

<sup>30</sup> Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, chapter 5, analyzes the gap between China's perception of its military and economic development and those of other regional powers. Goldstein also analyzes actions taken by China in the early 1990s that spurred concern over a threat from China. One action that raised concerns among its Southeast Asian neighbors was its 1992 passage of its "Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone."

## ENHANCING CHINA'S "COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL POWER"

In addition to rapid growth and a peaceful environment, another of Beijing's major instrumental security interests since the late 1990s has been expanding its "comprehensive national power" (*zonghe guoli*). This concept has certainly included military might, but also much more. Its emergence in the late 1990s reflected China's interest in expanding and exploiting all the interrelated dimensions of its influence that were emerging during this period—including military and economic influence, but also scientific-technological, informational, diplomatic, cultural, social, and other sources of leverage.<sup>31</sup>

The pursuit of "comprehensive national power" also reflected hard choices that party leaders felt they had to make about how to balance their interest in promoting near-term military modernization with their desire not to undermine long-term economic and scientific development by diverting excessive resources to the military. To balance these elements, party leaders simultaneously endorsed defense modernization as "the basic guarantee for our national security and modernization drive" and insisted on the need to "subordinate national defense work to . . . the nation's overall economic construction."<sup>32</sup> They also noted that China faced "great pressure" trying to narrow the "economic, scientific, and technological gap between China and the developed countries."<sup>33</sup>

For Beijing, the U.S. victory in the first Gulf War touched off an ongoing reassessment of the relationship between its interests in strengthening China's national security, its military power, and its high-tech economy. That reassessment is reflected today in China's emerging security interest in space and cyberspace. In a milestone speech in 1993, Jiang Zemin asserted that China needed to strengthen its military forces through emphasizing qualitative, scientific-technological improvements over quantitative improvements. And in a revision to the PLA Military Strategic Guidelines, the leadership set forth the goal of developing forces that were capable of "fighting and winning limited wars under modern, high-tech conditions." Jiang and other party leaders also stressed the

---

<sup>31</sup> The use of this term by Chinese international relations scholars dates from the 1980s, and its usage became more prominent in the mid-1990s. Some of the earliest public uses of the term by senior leaders identified in this study were in 2004. See An Li and Li Dongzang, *Shizilukou Shang de Shijie* [The World at the Crossroads] (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Chubanshe, 2000); Ji Xinde, *Zhongguo de Dongbeiya Yanjiu* [China's Research on Northeast Asia] (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2001); *Zhongguo Da Zhanlue* [China's Grand Strategy] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 2002); Jun Li, "New Development in the Party's Military Guidance Theory—A Study of Jiang Zemin's National Defense and Army Building Theory," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] 20 (2003): 42–50; and "Text of President Hu Jintao's Speech at Macao Return 5th Anniversary Banquet," *Ta Kung Pao*, 20 December 2004, A2.

<sup>32</sup> Compare, for example, Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and China's National Defense White Paper* (1998).

<sup>33</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*.

need for continued improvements in PLA professionalism, proficiency, regularization, education and training, and political reliability.<sup>34</sup>

## **INTERESTS THAT WERE SECONDARY OR LATENT IN THE LATE 1990S**

Several national security interests, which are seen as increasingly critical today, received relatively little public attention from China's leaders in the late 1990s. For example, China's conception of its interest in economic growth during this period remained focused on exporting goods and importing capital, and did not yet include an important place for promoting or protecting its own overseas foreign direct investment (FDI) or overseas laborers. The "going out" policy to promote China's own FDI was still two years away. China's own FDI outflows hovered between just US\$1 billion and US\$2.7 billion between 1995 and 2000, and figures on overseas workers were similarly low.<sup>35</sup>

Likewise, party leaders did not yet express any strong commitment to the welfare of ethnic Chinese who were non-PRC (People's Republic of China) citizens living abroad—the so-called "overseas Chinese." In major speeches during the late 1990s, party leaders typically spoke of "doing a good job in overseas Chinese affairs" and attracting overseas Chinese political support and investment. But they did not express any commitment to safeguarding or providing protection for the approximately 32 million non-PRC-citizen ethnic Chinese in other countries worldwide, even when some of these communities were under physical attack, as was the case in Indonesia in 1998.<sup>36</sup>

As noted above, Chinese leaders were just beginning to focus significant attention on protecting China's maritime rights and interests during this period. In 1992, China

<sup>34</sup> Jiang, "The International Situation and the Military Strategic Guidelines," 278–94.

<sup>35</sup> Chapter 3 will discuss this in more detail and present the data in graphic form (figure 1).

<sup>36</sup> Li Peng in his 1996, 1997, and 1998 *Government Work Reports* made little mention of overseas Chinese, other than to say that the government had made "new progress" and done "a good job in overseas Chinese affairs." Zhu Rongji, in his 1999 report, likewise thanked overseas Chinese who showed concern and support for China's development, and called on his colleagues to continue doing good work in overseas Chinese affairs. Zhu's mild expression of concern is especially striking coming in the wake of the 1998 Indonesian attacks on some local ethnic Chinese residents. See "Zhu Rongji Government Work Report," Beijing Central Television Program One Network [in Mandarin], 5 March 1999. By contrast, Wen Jiabao in 2010 expressed far greater concern and spoke of "protecting" their interests: "We should earnestly implement the party's policy toward overseas Chinese affairs. We should safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese and returned overseas Chinese and their family members. We should support them to pass on and inherit the Chinese culture and to participate in facilitating the motherland's modernization construction and the great cause of peaceful reunification." Quote from "Text of Government Work Report Delivered by Wen Jiabao at NPC Session 5 Mar 10," Beijing CCTV-1 [in Mandarin], 5 March 2010. The estimate of 32 million "overseas Chinese" in the world is based on a detailed, but somewhat dated data set maintained by Ohio University's Dr. Shao You-Bao Overseas Chinese Documentation and Research Center, available at <https://www.library.ohiou.edu/about/collections/international-collections/overseas-chinese-collection>.

passed the Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone that some analysts argued caused growing anxiety among China's neighbors.<sup>37</sup> But in key public documents and speeches during this period, China's leaders did not emphasize the critical role that maritime resources would have to play in sustaining China's continued economic growth or recognize the challenges this would present for its disputed maritime territorial claims. Beijing's *National Defense White Paper (1998)*, for example, made only a brief call for settling disputed maritime interests through peaceful negotiations in accordance with modern maritime laws, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).<sup>38</sup>

Likewise, elements of military power that are receiving growing attention today were not accorded similar emphasis in the mid-to-late 1990s. For example, although China had a long-running space program and established cybersecurity programs by the late 1990s, the security-related risks and opportunities of outer space and cyberspace were not accorded prominence in China's major national security-related reports and speeches during this period. Also, apart from the need to develop forces that could address a Taiwan scenario, major speeches and public documents from China's leaders did not emphasize the growing interest in developing military power projection capabilities or the need to defend China's more distant maritime claims and interests.<sup>39</sup>

## EXPANDING INTERESTS DURING THE HU JINTAO YEARS

In his landmark December 2004 address, "The New Historic Missions of the People's Liberation Army," then-General Secretary Hu Jintao made two critical and authoritative assertions: that China's national security interests were rapidly expanding and that

---

<sup>37</sup> Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge*, chapter 5, analyzes the gap between China's perception of its own military and economic development and that of other regional powers. Goldstein also analyzes actions taken by China in the early 1990s that spurred concern over a threat from China. One action that increased concerns among its Southeast Asian neighbors was its 1992 passage of its Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone.

<sup>38</sup> A Chinese naval publication during this period defined China's "maritime rights and interests" in terms of four points: "Exercising sovereignty over one's maritime national territory; having jurisdiction over and developing one's contiguous zones, exclusive economic zones, and continental shelf; carrying out transportation and military activities during both peacetime and wartime; and developing and using the resources of the high seas, the seabed, and subsoil, as well as carrying out scientific investigation in these areas." Zhang Xusan, ed., *Haijun Dacidian* [The Navy Dictionary] (Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press, 1993). The authors are indebted to their former CNA colleagues Daniel M. Hartnett and Frederic Vellucci Jr. for pointing this out.

<sup>39</sup> Jiang, *Report to the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*.

the PLA had an important role to play in advancing and defending them.<sup>40</sup> Although Hu himself did not yet use the term “core” national interests to define China’s most critical concerns, he reaffirmed the same interests that Chinese officials would label as “core.” Hu also declared that rapid economic growth, globalization, and numerous domestic and foreign threats to China’s security were causing China’s legitimate security interests to expand beyond its territorial land, sea, and airspace. He specifically identified three new realms or arenas into which China’s interests were expanding: the oceans, space, and the electromagnetic (EM) spectrum.

His speech reminded the PLA of its responsibility to help protect and assert the full range of China’s security concerns, from protecting one-party rule to preparing for overseas and even outer space security operations. To the present day, Hu’s speech has provided the touchstone for Chinese security policy makers and analysts who have sought recognition of China’s widening national interests. He also spotlighted the challenges China faces in securing these interests, and called upon the PLA to prepare to defend them.

Hu began his discussion of China’s interests and the PLA’s missions by focusing on internal security and the defense of CCP rule. He called on the PLA to provide a forceful guarantee for the consolidation and stability of the CCP’s rule of China. Speaking during the wave of prodemocratic “color revolutions” in Eurasia, Hu focused on the intensifying threats to party rule from foreign and domestic efforts to Westernize, democratize, and split China. The Western developed countries were, in Hu’s words, an “economically, technologically, and militarily superior” set of “hostile forces” who had “never given up their wild ambition of trying to destroy us.”<sup>41</sup> Their strategies posed an especially serious threat to China now because its rapid development had created complex conflicts of interest in society that these forces were struggling to exploit. Hu underscored the need for the PLA to maintain its unquestioned loyalty to the party and urged it to guarantee that “China’s socialist red mountains and rivers will never change their colour.” While calling on the military to defend the party rule if need be, Hu also emphasized that the party itself bore the “key” responsibility to buttress its popular legitimacy by

---

<sup>40</sup> Hu Jintao, “Renqing Xinshiji Xinjieduan Wojun Lishi Shiming” [Understand the New Historic Missions of Our Military in the New Period of the New Century], speech to an expanded meeting of the Central Military Commission, Jiangxi Province, 24 December 2004, available at <http://gfjy.jiangxi.gov.cn/yl.asp?idid=11349.htm>. The authors are deeply indebted to our CNA colleague Dan Hartnett for helping us better understand Hu’s analysis of the PLA’s “New Historic Missions.”

<sup>41</sup> “Their ultimate goal is to overthrow the party from its ruling position, overthrow the national power of the People’s Democratic Dictatorship, and turn back our country’s socialist system.”



improving its capacity for effective governance and by fighting harder against corruption within the party.

Hu next emphasized the importance of securing China's economic development. In order to seize a 20-year window of "strategic opportunity" to create a "relatively well-off society," China needed to confront several critical security threats that could derail the country's long-term development if they were mishandled. These included threats to national sovereignty, unification, and social stability, among which Hu emphasized the threats of Taiwan independence and ethnic separatists in the border regions, China's unresolved land borders and maritime territorial disputes, and an array of socially disruptive schools of thought and culture.<sup>42</sup>

Hu also reaffirmed China's interest in shaping a world order conducive to its own development and to peaceful, cooperative relations with other powers. As part of China's "new security concept," Hu wanted China's partners to accept that its peaceful development "does not constitute a threat to any nation." At the same time, Hu noted that China would not be able to realize this strategy of peaceful development without a powerful military force to serve as a backup.

But Hu recognized that if China was to seize its "strategic opportunity" to peacefully establish its place as a major power, it would have to strike an increasingly difficult balance between greater assertiveness in its security policies and continued international cooperation. China still required a peaceful global environment and strongly desired to avoid having its development sidetracked by domestic instability, war, arms races, or strategic rivalry. At the same time, Hu Jintao argued on this and other occasions that many of China's security interests are increasingly being infringed upon or threatened by rival major powers, neighboring countries, and politically hostile groups inside and outside China. China must assert its expanding array of security and development interests, and the PLA and China's other security forces must be prepared to defend, or deter threats to, these interests if need be.

Probably the most important innovation in Hu's speech was its explicit acknowledgment that economic development and other forces were continually causing China's

---

<sup>42</sup> In his May 2003 speech to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Moscow, Hu endorsed the struggle against terrorist, separatist, and extremist groups, and the threat they posed to China and its neighbors, in much harsher terms than Jiang Zemin had done the year before. "With respect to the 'three forces' (terrorism, national separatism, and religious radicalism) which are seriously endangering the interests of the member countries in this part of the world, we must never lower our guard, let alone appeasing or accommodating them. Rather, we must make protracted, unremitting efforts to uproot these evil forces in order to safeguard peace and stability in this part of the world." "Text of Hu Jintao Speech at SCO Summit in Moscow," Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service [in Chinese], 29 May 2003.

national security interests to expand. Hu also maintained that in the future the PLA and China's other security forces would increasingly have to help secure and defend these broadening interests. Further, he asserted that China faced increasing international competition and threats to its interests in each of these new arenas.

According to Hu, China's security interests were increasingly extending beyond its narrow, traditional focus on defending its territorial land, seas, and airspace, and now encompassed the ocean, space, and the EM spectrum. Hu asserted that global cooperation was important for the development of these realms, but he also argued that other powers were vying to dominate them at the expense of China's interests. To illustrate his point, Hu referred to China's numerous maritime territorial disputes with its neighbors, the increased "weaponization of space," and the emergence of cyberspace as the "fifth battlefield" for future wars. Summarizing what he saw as the trend of the times, Hu argued that, in addition to guarding its traditional security interests that related to "national survival," China would increasingly have to defend its "national development" interests.

As this study will show, Hu's 2004 speech and its portrayal of China's expanding interests remains the touchstone for PLA and civilian security specialists who discuss the country's expanding national security interests. Whether cited by name or not, the impact of Hu's speech is especially evident in three particular areas. First, Hu's address is widely used by analysts as an ideological "base" or justification (*yiju*) for their argument that China's economic growth and increasing global interdependence legitimize China's expansion of its claimed security interests. Second, Chinese analysts continually draw on Hu's argument about the importance of "development security" interests in addition to existential security interests. They also echo Hu's recognition of the increasing security importance of maritime, cyber, and space interests.<sup>43</sup> Finally, Chinese analysts frequently recapitulate Hu's official assessments of the impact of global security trends on China's emerging interests. Specifically, they assert that even though global cooperation is critical to China's peaceful development, China's expanding interests currently face serious threats and challenges from other powers and neighboring countries that

---

<sup>43</sup> An example can be found in a 2009 definition of China's national security interests by Academy of Military Sciences scholar SrCol Wang Guifang, "Analysis of Basic Features of and Actualization Approaches to Development of China's Security Interests," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] 6 (2009): 20–25. "In a broad sense, national interests consist of . . . security interests and . . . development interests. Security interests refer mainly to the conditions and rights that are necessary to assure a nation's survival and development, and they are the basic preconditions and fundamental assurances for a nation and a society to operate normally. The main goal of safeguarding national security interests is to ensure that the country is protected against invasion, the government is protected from subversion, the nation is protected against separation, and the course of development is protected from being blocked."

are hostile to China's rise. These analysts echo Hu's call for the PLA and China's other security forces to expand their capacity to confront these threats and protect China's widening interests.

### **THE NEW RHETORIC: "CORE INTERESTS" AND BEYOND**

Hu Jintao's accession to the posts of party general secretary and later state president in late 2002 to early 2003 also coincided with some Chinese officials and high-profile security analysts beginning to employ a new rhetoric to publicly assert China's national security interests.<sup>44</sup> Over time, in their discussions of China's national security interests and related issues, a hierarchy of three categories of security interests became discernible:

- At the top of the hierarchy, China's "core interests" (*hexin liyi*) are the publicly expressible formulation of the critical values and concerns that the party leadership considers most essential to continued Communist Party rule and control over society, and to China's unity, independence, security, and national development. China's leaders almost certainly have other critical national security interests that they want to promote and protect, but they choose not to voice them in this public formulation. These may include facilitating a gradual decline in the relative power of the United States, enhancing China's military capabilities, or undermining overseas support for critics of the regime.
- In conjunction with these, Chinese leaders and analysts have identified a set of more concrete issues that "affect" or "relate to" or "influence" China's "core interests."
- Below these—but still very important—are other specific, more concrete interests that make important contributions to one or more of China's "core interests."
- Although the widespread use of the term "core interests" is new, Chinese leaders' list of their core interests (see below) has remained consistent over the past eight years and largely reflects the fundamental interests China had asserted for two decades before that. The biggest change over this period has been the gradual growth of a list of specific issues that Chinese officials assert are important enough to "affect" or "relate to" or "influence" China's core interests. In addition, overall usage of the term "core interests" in the Chinese media has expanded dramatically

---

<sup>44</sup> This discussion is based on the authors' review of several hundred uses of the term "core interests" by China's authoritative central news agency *Xinhua* and by *Peoples' Daily* since the late 1990s.

in the past couple of years.<sup>45</sup> Also, many nonauthoritative sources, such as analysts or journalists, have asserted an even longer list of specific issues that they contend have a significant impact on China's core national interests.

## CHINA'S "CORE INTERESTS"

Core national interests identify what the Communist Party leadership wants to publicly indicate it values most and regards as most essential to its continued rule and China's continued survival and growth. These fundamental national security interests are defined in broad terms, such as "preserving China's basic political and social system." Since official public usage of the term "core interests" began around 2002–3, when China asserted that the Taiwan issue "has a bearing on China's core interests," China's core interests as defined publicly by senior officials have been very similar to the interests that Beijing has insisted upon most strongly over the past three decades.<sup>46</sup>

Speaking at the July 2009 U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo stated that ensuring healthy and stable U.S.-China relations required "mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual support, and safeguarding one's own core interests." Dai then authoritatively enumerated China's core national interests that were important to the U.S.-China relationship:<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> This trend is clear in searches of the term online.

<sup>46</sup> The earliest official public use of the term "core interest" in our Xinhua data set was a statement by Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan to U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell at a 19 January 2003 meeting on the eve of a UN Security Council antiterrorism conference. According to the Xinhua report, Tang Jiaxuan said that "China and the United States should continue stepping up the implementation of the consensus reached last October in Crawford between President Jiang Zemin and President [George W.] Bush." He also said that the Taiwan issue has a bearing on China's core interests and that proper handling of this issue is a key to guaranteeing the stable development of Sino-U.S. relations. He expressed the hope that the U.S. side would abide by the one-China policy, the three Sino-U.S. Joint Communiqués, and the opposition to "Taiwan independence" commitments; would prudently handle the Taiwan issue; and would not send any wrong signals to the forces for the "independence of Taiwan." See "Further on PRC FM Tang Jiaxuan Meets Powell, Discusses Taiwan, DPRK, Iraq Issues," Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service [in Chinese], 20 January 2003. Tang's statement did not spell out China's core interests as a general principle, and only noted that the Taiwan issue related to them. But in September 2002, three prominent Chinese think tank analysts speaking in New York "unanimously" held that "national sovereignty and territorial integrity constitute China's core interest and that the mainland of China will unswervingly adhere to the principle of 'one China' and will never act as 'Master Dongguo' [a naive person who gets into trouble through being softhearted to evil people] on the question of Taiwan." See Zhao Haiyan, "Mainland Experts in Taiwan Affairs Visit United States, Say China Will Never Act as 'Master Dongguo' on Question of Taiwan," Beijing *Zhongguo Xinwen She* [in Chinese], 28 September 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Li Jing and Wu Qingcai, "The First China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue Touches on Major Issues Except Going to the Moon," *Zhongguo Xinwen She* online [in Chinese], 29 July 2009.

- Safeguarding China's basic system and national security
- Protecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Maintaining sustained and stable economic and social development

## **ISSUES THAT “AFFECT” OR “RELATE TO” CHINA’S “CORE INTERESTS”**

The primary method Chinese leaders have developed to leverage their core interests has been to gradually put forward a short but growing list of specific policy issues that they want both foreign countries and the Chinese people to believe are of great importance and sensitivity to the leadership. When Chinese leaders and analysts designate specific issues, such as Taiwan, Tibet, or Xinjiang, as “affecting” China’s core national interests, they are communicating to foreign countries and the Chinese people that the way in which these issues are handled will have a major impact on the stability of bilateral relations. To underscore this point, they frequently use language that conveys their seriousness and willingness to inflict pain or endure sanctions to protect these interests.

Beginning in 2003, China initially emphasized just one issue as affecting its core national interests: Taiwan. China invoked its core interests when calling on the United States and Japan to earnestly “adhere to the one-China principle” in its relations with the island. In reports of meetings with senior Japanese and U.S. officials, Hu Jintao and Chinese diplomats called on the United States and Japan to live up to their past commitments to China regarding Taiwan, to do nothing that might encourage “Taiwan independence” forces, and, in the case of the United States, to cease sales of advanced weapons to Taiwan.<sup>48</sup>

Within about three years, China began expanding the issues it linked to its core interests. No later than 2006, Beijing also began speaking of the issues of Tibet, Xinjiang, and human rights as connected with its core interests. These issues were raised initially in talks with leaders of neighboring countries to China’s south and west, such

---

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, “Chinese Government Special Envoy Dai Bingguo Visits the United States,” Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service [in Chinese], 4 December 2004; “PRC FM Li Zhaoxing Urges Japan To Honor Its Pledges on History,” Beijing Xinhua [in English], 17 April 2005; also Chen Hegao and Che Yuming, “Hu Jintao Meets With Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi,” Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service, 23 April 2005.

as Laos, Pakistan, and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>49</sup> In the wake of the March 2008 Lhasa riots, Chinese regional officials in Tibet and Chinese diplomats described Tibet and opposition to Tibetan independence as core issues of national unity in both domestic security and foreign policy.<sup>50</sup> Some of these statements were relatively pointed and were directed at Western countries perceived as supporting Tibetan separatists.<sup>51</sup> In 2009 and 2010, following the Urumqi riots, China significantly expanded its policy regarding issues linked to its core interests. Beijing not only asserted that Xinjiang and opposition to “East Turkistan Independence” were core interests of China, it also linked this assertion to requests that the United States, Australia, Japan, and other countries make efforts to safeguard China’s interests within their own national territories, asking them to deny visas to Uighur activists or “forbid ‘Tibet independence’ and ‘East Turkistan’ forces” from using their territory to engage in “anti-China separatist activities.”<sup>52</sup>

Widespread unconfirmed press reports that Chinese officials had told U.S. officials in 2010 that the South China Sea concerned China’s core interests underscore the

---

<sup>49</sup> The earliest Xinhua mention of Tibet, Xinjiang, and the human rights issue in connection with China’s “core interests” located for this study was Hu Jintao’s 19 November 2006 meeting with Laotian President Choum-maly Sayasone. See “Hu Jintao Holds Talks With Lao President; Raises 5-Point Proposal,” Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service [in Chinese], 19 November 2006. See also “Hu Jintao Holds Talks With Kyrgyz President Bakiyev; Agreements Signed,” Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service [in Chinese], 9 June 2006; and “Xinhua Carries ‘Full’ Text of Hu Jintao’s Speech at Islamabad Convention Center,” Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service [in Chinese], 24 November 2006.

<sup>50</sup> “Head of Tibet’s Legislature Holds Talks With Australian Parliament Leaders,” Beijing Xinhua [in English], 17 March 2010. See also “RMRB Column Says Dalai’s Attempt To Split Nation Will Be Doomed to Failure,” Beijing *Renmin Ribao* (Internet version) [in Chinese], 27 April 2008; and Kristine Kwok, “Beijing Hints It Wants Tibet Pledge From Obama,” Hong Kong *South China Morning Post* online [in English], 7 November 2009.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, the critical editorial directed at the Polish government. “Xinhua Commentary: Activities Instigating Separatism in China Should Come To End,” Beijing Xinhua [in English], 30 July 2009. See also the interview with former ambassador to the United States, Li Daoyu, “Exclusive Interview With Former PRC Ambassador to U.S. Li Daoyu on Sino-U.S. Ties,” Beijing Xinhua Asia-Pacific Service [in Chinese], 23 July 2009.

<sup>52</sup> The specific wording is from the U.S.-China joint statement, “Highlights of Sino-U.S. Summit, Joint Statement,” Beijing Xinhua [in English], 17 November 2009. See also the discussion of China’s August 2009 cancellation of Vice Premier He Yafei’s trip to Australia in retaliation for Australia’s issuance of a visa to Rebiya Kadeer. “PRC Scholars View Sino-Australian Friction From Rio Tinto Spy Case,” *Nanfang Zhoumo Guangzhou* [Southern Weekend] online [in Chinese], 27 August 2009. Also “China Airs Dissatisfaction Over Japan Granting Visa To Uygur Separatist,” Beijing Xinhua [in English], 27 July 2009; “China Ramps Up Pressure on Japan Over Kadeer Visit,” *China Daily Online* [in English], 30 July 2009. For domestic use of the term “core interests,” see Xinjiang CCP Secretary Wang Lequan’s comments, cited in “Xinjiang TV ‘News Hookup’ Coverage of Xinjiang Unrest Aftermath, 18 Aug,” Urumqi Xinjiang Television [in Mandarin], 18 August 2009.

growing importance of this region for China.<sup>53</sup> This study has not, however, located any evidence that senior Chinese officials have yet chosen to make this assertion about the South China Sea publicly in either the authoritative Xinhua news service or in *People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao*).<sup>54</sup>

Although China's public statements often assert in general terms its willingness to take a hard line on issues that it claims affect its core interests, the statements rarely make clear what China sees as the "red lines" that foreign countries should not cross regarding these issues. Nor do Chinese public statements often make clear how China would respond to violations of these issues that affect its core interests. As a result, foreign countries are left to interpret or inquire which of their actions China might regard as intolerable, and what the nature of China's retaliation might be. Western analysts have often asserted, with little or no authoritative evidence, that core interests are those over which China's leaders would be willing to use force.<sup>55</sup>

Another growing challenge for foreign analysts trying to assess China's critical interests is that the use of the term "core interest" is not monopolized or tightly controlled by the CCP's top leaders, diplomats, central news media, or other authoritative spokespersons. As public debate over defense and security issues has become freer, Chinese analysts who almost certainly do not speak authoritatively for the party leadership have felt freer to claim that certain issues affect China's core national security interests. Foreign analysts are left to determine whether these Chinese specialists are speaking for

---

<sup>53</sup> Edward Wong, "Chinese Military Seeks to Extend its Naval Power," *New York Times*, 23 April 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/world/asia/24navy.html>. "China is also pressing the United States to heed its claims in the region. In March, Chinese officials told two visiting senior Obama administration officials, Jeffrey A. Bader and James B. Steinberg, that China would not tolerate any interference in the South China Sea, now part of China's 'core interest' of sovereignty, said an American official involved in China policy. It was the first time the Chinese labeled the South China Sea a core interest, on par with Taiwan and Tibet, the official said."

<sup>54</sup> This is based on author searches of these sources on the CNA's open source dataset through 31 August 2010.

<sup>55</sup> A noteworthy example is Hu Jintao's March 2005 "Four-Point Guideline on Cross-Strait Relations." Hu's fourth point was "Never compromise in opposing the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist activities. Safeguarding state sovereignty and territorial integrity is where a country's core interest lies. On no account shall the 1.3 billion Chinese people allow anyone to undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will not have the slightest hesitation, falter or concession on the major principal issue of opposing secession. The 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces must abandon their secessionist stand and stop all 'Taiwan independence' activities. We hope the leader of the Taiwan authorities could earnestly fulfill the 'five no's' commitment he reaffirmed on Feb. 24, as well as his commitment of not seeking 'legalization of Taiwan independence' through the 'Constitutional reform,' and show to the world, through his own concrete action, that this was not an empty word or mere lip service which can be forsaken at will." See "PRC President Hu Sets 'Four-Point Guideline' on Cross-Straits Relations: Full Text," Beijing Xinhua [in English], 4 March 2005.

themselves, or for the institution or viewpoint they represent, or whether they are being permitted by senior authorities to float or signal a changing notion of China's national interests to foreigners. One example has been the policy dispute over the United States' calls for China to adopt a more flexible exchange rate for China's currency, the *renminbi*. Some Chinese analysts asserted that this was related to China's core interests, but the sentiment was not publicly endorsed by senior Chinese leaders.<sup>56</sup>

One final point is that China's conception of its own and other countries' core interests appears to be a diplomatic one-way street. China frequently issues statements or communiqués with its various diplomatic and security partners in which it calls for both sides to respect and protect each other's core interests. In meetings with these partners, China often signals either its satisfaction or its dissatisfaction with the current state of relations by hinting at how well China thinks its security partner has respected these core interests.

But a review of Chinese statements on core interests indicates that even though China does not hesitate to insist that other countries respect its own core interests, there is no evidence that China has ever explicitly recognized any concrete issue on which Beijing felt bound to respect the wishes of another country because China acknowledged that the issue constituted a core interest of the other country. While this fact may be a result of differences in language—other countries may not use the exact term “core interest”—China certainly has relations with a number of countries, the United States for one, which issue authoritative policy documents that define similar fundamental security interests. Some nonauthoritative Chinese analysts and commentators attribute nefarious or imperialistic interests as constituting the core interests of such countries as the United States or Japan (alleging that the United States or Japan has a core interest in maintaining “hegemony” or preventing China's peaceful rise, for example). But these data provide no evidence that China has ever explicitly identified any core interest of another country that Beijing concedes it has an obligation to respect.

## **MORE CONCRETE NATIONAL INTERESTS**

Beyond China's core interests and the specific issues that China asserts are related to them, Chinese officials and analysts have also put forward a much wider, more concrete set of national security interests that they believe broadly contribute to one or more

---

<sup>56</sup> In March 2010, the *Global Times* cited Professor Jiao Chen of Qinghua University's Center for Economy and Diplomacy as arguing that “a stronger yuan would cause more harm than benefit to China, as currency appreciation affects the national economy as a whole and therefore China's core interest.” Qiu Wei, “U.S. Senators Escalate Yuan Dispute,” Beijing *Global Times* online [in English], 18 March 2010.



of China's core national security values. Officials and analysts have been a good deal freer in the past decade to assert or debate China's growing stake in a wide variety of interests and issues. One important example of this relatively free discussion that is examined in this book concerns the ongoing divergence of opinion among security analysts over the relative importance of China's national security interests in its south-eastern maritime regions as opposed to its various security and energy interests in its western borderlands.

Having examined Beijing's assertions that its interests are expanding, as well as the drivers of change behind these new security interests, the next chapter identifies and analyzes six major arenas in which China believes its national security interests have expanded over the past decade.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SIX ARENAS OF EMERGING SECURITY INTERESTS

Over the past decade, Chinese leaders and security analysts have identified at least six new arenas in which essentially new national security interests have emerged, or existing and perhaps latent security interests have taken on unprecedented new importance. This chapter identifies these six emerging security interests, and analyzes how China's security community perceives their value, and the potential challenges China faces in asserting and protecting them. China's six emerging security interests are

- Protecting overseas investments and Chinese working abroad
- Deepening energy and resource security
- Strengthening maritime security interests
- Stabilizing China's western borderland regions
- Developing space and cybersecurity interests
- Shaping China's security environment

#### **PROTECTING OVERSEAS INVESTMENTS AND CHINESE WORKING ABROAD**

##### ***The "Going Out" Policy: Overseas Investment and Labor since 2000***

China's rapidly expanding overseas investments and its swelling numbers of expatriate workers abroad are perhaps the best example of how Beijing's development policies have created new "facts on the ground" that have become new national security interests in their own right. Under the "going out" foreign investment promotion program launched

by China's leaders in the early 2000s, China's investments and its personnel overseas have grown so quickly that China's government has been unable to develop an effective strategy, or establish adequate diplomatic and security institutions, to protect them.<sup>1</sup>

Chinese leaders and analysts often assert that China is prepared to rely primarily upon host country governments to provide legal protection and security for expatriate Chinese citizens. This policy is rooted both in China's historic shortage of overseas security capabilities and in its longstanding diplomatic principle of "noninterference" in the internal affairs of other countries.<sup>2</sup>

But our examination of the serious instability and governance problems in a large number of the countries that host Chinese investments raises serious questions about these states' ability and willingness to live up to China's strategy. As the gap between China's assumptions and these local governments' capacity to protect China's interests widens, Beijing may eventually have little choice but to look to the PLA to develop important new options to help protect China's overseas equities.

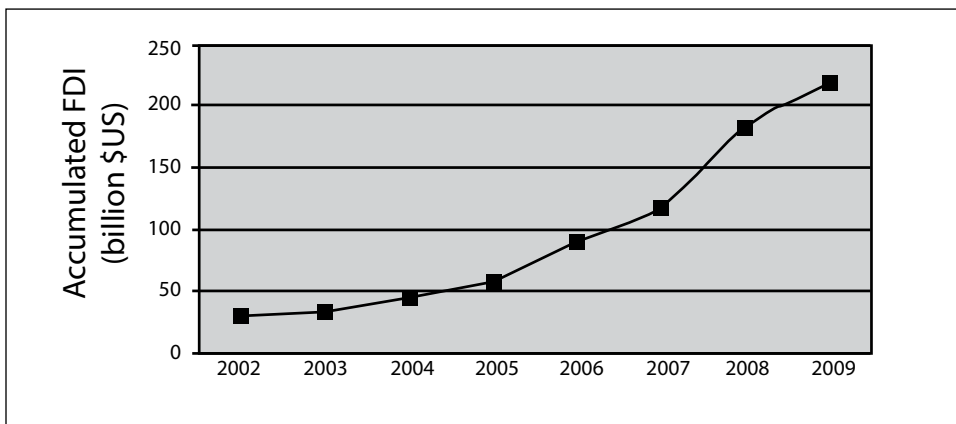
Since the inception of the "going out" policy in 2002, China's outbound FDI interests have expanded rapidly (see figure 2.1). By the end of 2011, China's Ministry of Commerce estimated that China's accumulated overseas FDI stock had reached US\$424.78 billion, and Chinese investors had set up about 18,000 enterprises overseas with a

---

<sup>1</sup> President Jiang Zemin explained that "going out" would permit China to "take part in international economic and technological cooperation and competition on a broader scale, in more spheres and on a higher level, make the best use of both international and domestic markets, optimize the allocation of resources, [and] expand the space for development." China's government has offered to help these businesses invest abroad to create "a number of strong multinational enterprises." The PRC would prod state-owned enterprises to acquire stakes in foreign companies, simplify the approval process for overseas investments by Chinese businesses, and encourage the state-controlled banking sector to free up credit for overseas ventures. "China Will Do a Better Job in 'Bringing In' and 'Going Out'," *People's Daily*, 8 November 2002; and Matthew Forney, "China's Going-Out Party," *Time*, 17 January 2005.

<sup>2</sup> "Non-interference in other countries' internal affairs" is one of China's "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence"—one of China's most enduring diplomatic doctrines—first announced by Premier Zhou Enlai in talks with India over Tibet on 31 December 1953. The five principles are "mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence." For an official Chinese history of the policy, see the PRC Foreign Ministry Web site at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/3602/3604/t18053.htm>.

**Figure 2.1. China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment, 2002–9**



Source: PRC Ministry of Commerce

total asset value just under US\$2 trillion. This included yearly net outflows of \$26.5 billion in 2007, \$55.9 billion in 2008, \$43.3 billion in 2009, and \$74.65 billion in 2011.<sup>3</sup>

Of greater concern to security specialists, the “going out” policy has helped swell the number of Chinese citizens who live and work abroad for these companies. Precise figures on the total number of expatriate Chinese workers are not available, although most estimates place the number in the several millions. One PLAN captain has written that the total number of Chinese workers sent overseas during a year is as high as three million.<sup>4</sup>

China’s Ministry of Commerce—which maintains the most detailed figures available outside of China—reports that the number of Chinese workers employed abroad under contract has risen from 57,000 in 1990, to 425,000 in 2000, to more than 675,000

<sup>3</sup> Data for total accumulated FDI and annual outflows from Xinhua, “China’s Outbound Direct Investment Slows in 2011” 31 August 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90778/7930841.html>; also PRC Ministry of Commerce Web site, “2009 Nian Woguo Duiwai Touzi Hezuo Yewu Jiankuang” [Brief Report on Our Country’s Foreign Investment and Cooperation Activities in 2009], 6 January 2010, <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/tongjiziliao/dgz/201001/20100106752425.html>. Data for 2007 and 2008 from “Overseas Direct Investment by Countries or Regions,” in People’s Republic of China, National Bureau of Statistics, *China Statistical Yearbook 2009* (Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2009), 752.

<sup>4</sup> “At present, China sends out more than 3 million workers overseas each year to provide labor service in more than 3,400 enterprises in 139 countries and regions.” See Xu Ping, “Hu Jintao Guanyu Wancheng Duoyanghua Junshi Renwu Zhanlue Sixiang Yantan” [A Tentative Analysis of Hu Jintao’s Strategic Thinking on Accomplishing Diversified Military Tasks], *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2010): 88. Capt Xu is identified as serving the PLAN Headquarters General Office.

workers employed by 10,000 firms in 2007 (see figure 2.2). By the end of 2009, the ministry reported more than 778,000 Chinese workers abroad.<sup>5</sup> These statistics, moreover, do not encompass all categories of Chinese working abroad. The Ministry of Commerce reports an additional 376,000 personnel abroad taking part in foreign engineering projects by the end of 2010.<sup>6</sup> Figures are also difficult to locate for expatriate Chinese engaged in running their own small-scale businesses and other pursuits. Nor are all of these workers concentrated in a few countries, either. Even excluding North America, Europe, and Japan, as of 2006 there were 8 countries with more than 10,000 Chinese contracted workers in them, and more than 50 countries hosting more than 1,000 Chinese contracted workers.

The numbers of Chinese citizens living and traveling abroad for noninvestment purposes have also spiked during the past decade. From 1949 to 1979, Chinese nationals made a total of approximately 280,000 trips abroad. By 2004, that figure had reached 28.5 million trips per year, and by 2009 the number of foreign trips per year had risen to 47 million.<sup>7</sup> Further, according to one PLA-affiliated journal, as of 2003, more than 580,000 Chinese students were studying overseas.<sup>8</sup> By 2008, China's Ministry of Education estimated that figure at 1,002,400.<sup>9</sup> That same year, a record 179,800 students went overseas to begin their studies.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> "2009 Nian Woguo Duiwai Touzi Hezuo Yewu Jiankuang" [Brief Report on Our Country's Foreign Investment and Cooperation Activities in 2009], 6 January 2010, <http://www.mofcom.com.cn/aarticle/tongjiziliao/dgzz/201001/20100106752425.html>; Li Xiaolun, "Chinese Abroad to Be Better Protected," *China Daily*, 22 August 2007; "China to Establish Mechanisms to Protect Overseas Workers," *Xinhua*, 14 May 2007; "China Sets Up Consular Protection Center to Better Protect Nationals Abroad," *Xinhua*, 23 August 2007; PRC Ministry of Commerce, "Brief Statistics on Foreign Contracting Property and Labor Cooperation, First 11 Months of 2009," <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn>; and PRC Ministry of Commerce, "2007 Nian Woguo Duiwai Chengbao Gongcheng Laowu Hezuo he Touzi Zixun Yewu Tongji" [Statistics on Our Country's External Contracted Construction Projects, Labour Cooperation, and Design Consultation Professions for the Year 2007], 25 January 2008, <http://fec.mofcom.gov.cn/tjzl/gccb/7514.shtml>.

<sup>6</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, *China Trade and External Economic Statistical Yearbook 2011* (Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2011), Tables 8-9 and 8-10, 675–82.

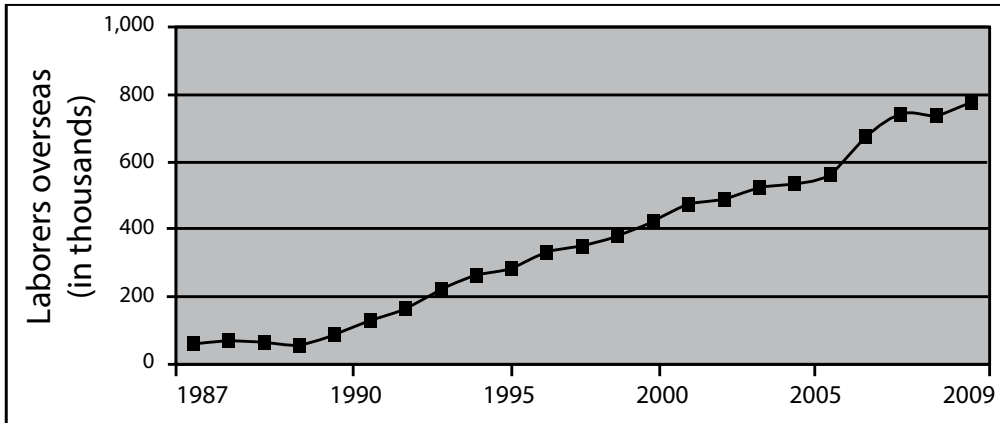
<sup>7</sup> "Deputy Director General Wei Wei of the Department of Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Accepts an Interview with the China Youth Daily on the Issue of Consular Protection," 28 December 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t228775.htm>; also estimates by Beijing tourism experts cited in "Number of Outbound Tourists Soaring," <http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/BeijingInformation/BeijingNewsUpdate/t1108162.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Bi Yurong, "Protection/Realization of China's Overseas Interests," *Guofang* [National Defense], 17 April 2007.

<sup>9</sup> "Development of the Opening Up of China's Education and International Students Studying in China," 25 March 2009, [www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn).

<sup>10</sup> "Chinese Students Studying Abroad Exceed 1.39 Million," *Renmin Ribao* online, 26 March 2009, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6622888.html>.

**Figure 2.2. Chinese Overseas Contract Labor, 1987–2009**



Source: PRC Ministry of Commerce

### ***China's Recent Investment Patterns and Risks to Overseas Interests***

Chinese officials and analysts have consistently stated their preference for relying on host country governments to provide physical security and legal protection for China's investments and workers overseas.<sup>11</sup> But an evaluation of the countries in which China has focused a large portion of its investments under the "going out" policy makes clear the significant risks facing Chinese workers overseas and raises serious questions about the viability of relying on many of these host country governments for protection. Large shares of the Chinese FDI and personnel that have gone overseas during the past decade have headed to countries that, according to respected international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are suffering some of the world's highest levels of political instability, state failure, social violence, malgovernance, and corruption. Hundreds of thousands of China's overseas personnel and billions of dollars of investment are going to precisely the countries where Chinese citizens would be most likely to encounter trouble, and in which local government officials may be least able—and perhaps least inclined—to provide the kind of legal protection and security that Beijing says is the cornerstone of its investment security policy.

To gain a clearer, more systematic picture of the potential dangers facing China's overseas investments and workers, we evaluated the levels of political instability and

<sup>11</sup> Interviews with Chinese officials and policy analysts, 2009–10.

weak governance in China's target countries for investment. This assessment focused on 2006, the most recent year for which the Ministry of Commerce has published country-by-country data for the number of contracted Chinese workers and the total value of investments in each of China's host countries. For indicators of governance and stability in these countries, we drew our data from four internationally respected rankings of political instability, domestic violence, weak governance, and corruption. The stability and governance rankings are compiled by the World Bank and the Fund for Peace, and the corruption indices by the monitoring organization Transparency International. Twenty of these countries are listed in table 1 below, and the entire data set is in appendix 1.

It is important to note that very large numbers of Chinese overseas laborers are still being sent to relatively stable, effectively governed, high-income countries. For instance, in 2006, fully 26 percent of the contracted Chinese overseas labor indexed by the Ministry of Commerce was in Japan.

Nevertheless, just a few data points suffice to demonstrate that strikingly high percentages of China's FDI and overseas labor personnel are in countries whose instability and governance problems are so severe that they lead analysts to believe that Chinese citizens have a high likelihood of encountering serious threats there. They also raise serious questions about these governments' capacity to protect expatriate Chinese citizens:

- **Severe political instability:** About one-sixth of all Chinese laborers (16 percent) and just over one-fifth of China's FDI stock (21 percent) are in countries that the World Bank has ranked in the bottom quartile of its instability index, suffering from the most serious instability problems. These include small populations of Chinese in some of the most unstable countries in the survey, such as Afghanistan, Congo, and Iraq.<sup>12</sup> This most unstable quartile also includes several developing countries that host the largest populations of Chinese workers presently overseas, such as Algeria—the largest with nearly 29,000 Chinese contracted workers—and others such as Sudan (11,988), Nigeria (4,588), Pakistan (4,400), and Ethiopia (2,191). Moreover, looking beyond the 25 percent of countries at the bottom of the index, China still faces additional challenges. The bottom half of the World Bank's political stability index includes countries that are host to more than one-third of China's overseas laborers (35 percent).<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of this book, we are considering countries with stability scores of less than -1 to be seriously unstable. This range extends from Algeria and all the way down to Iraq (the lowest country in the survey that year).

<sup>13</sup> PRC Ministry of Commerce data; governance data are from Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VIII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indications, 1996–2008*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4978, June 2009.

- **Serious governance problems:** Nearly 8 percent of China’s overseas workers and more than 12 percent of China’s FDI stock are in one or another of the 25 countries that the World Bank has evaluated as having the most severe degree of governance problems. And once again, these personnel are not just concentrated in one or two of these malgoverned states. Chinese worker populations numbering more than 1,000 are reported in 9 of these 25 countries, and several of these are host to more than 5,000 Chinese workers, including Myanmar (9,516), Angola (6,279), and Sudan (11,988).<sup>14</sup>
- **High levels of corruption:** China has disproportionately invested its capital and placed its expatriate workers in countries with serious corruption problems—in many cases, countries whose corruption levels exceed even China’s own widely noted problems. In 2006, 35 percent of China’s expatriate workers, and just less than half (49 percent) of China’s FDI stock were in countries that had even worse corruption rankings than China. Nearly one-fifth of all expatriate Chinese workers (19.5 percent), and just less than one-third of China’s FDI stock (32.4 percent) were in 1 of the 48 countries ranked in the bottom quarter of Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).<sup>15</sup> Of these highly corrupt countries, those with the largest numbers of Chinese workers were Russia, Sudan, Myanmar, Angola, and Kazakhstan. Conversely, just 17 percent of China’s expatriate workers and 17 percent of its FDI stock were in countries ranked in the “least corrupt” upper 25 percent by Transparency International.

Why does China tend to send personnel and capital to countries with such serious governance problems? Certainly, one of the most important reasons has been Beijing’s struggle for access to energy resources and critical minerals. Eight of the top 10 middle- or low-income destination countries for Chinese workers are significant producers of oil, natural gas, or strategic minerals.<sup>16</sup> More striking, all of the top 10 middle- and

---

<sup>14</sup> This range includes countries with governance rating scores of -1 or lower, and extends from such countries as Yemen (-1.01), Sudan (-1.11), Turkmenistan (-1.25), and down to Somalia (-2.21).

<sup>15</sup> These were countries with scores of 2.5 or lower on a 10-point scale in which scores of 10 were considered “least corrupt.” In the 2007 rankings, China received a score of 3.5, a ranking that tied at number 72 with India, Brazil, Suriname, Mexico, Morocco, and Peru. The countries with scores of 2.5 or lower—defined as considerably more corrupt than China—ranged from Libya, the Philippines, Yemen, and several others, all the way down to the perceived most-corrupt countries in the survey, which included Sudan, Uzbekistan, Haiti, Iraq, Myanmar, and Somalia. “Corruption Perceptions Index 2007,” [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2007](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2007). As defined here, 0 = most corrupt; 10 = least corrupt.

<sup>16</sup> In order of number of Chinese workers, these are Algeria, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Sudan, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Mauritius, and Myanmar.



low-income destinations for Chinese FDI are important producers of these same strategic resources.<sup>17</sup>

Table 1 and the tables found in appendix 1 summarize the scope of the potential threat facing China's expatriate workers and overseas investments. These tables use PRC Ministry of Commerce data to rank all of the middle- and lower-income countries that were hosting Chinese contract workers as of 2006, according to the total number of Chinese workers in country at year's end. In the color-coded data columns, the table displays the governance, instability, and corruption rankings for these countries from international monitoring organizations. The data cells, in turn, are color-coded green, yellow, orange, or red, depending on whether these countries were ranked in the highest, second-highest, third-highest, or lowest quartiles for each of these governance indicators. The more orange and red, the more severe the potential threat. The more green and yellow, the less severe the potential threat.

### ***Increasing Security Threats to Chinese Abroad***

Before the Libyan evacuation, most Chinese security analysts, in conversations with foreigners, continued to downplay the magnitude of this threat to Chinese personnel and investments abroad. Only in the late 2000s did a limited number of diplomats and analysts admit to the growing risks to China's interests.

But dangerous or violent incidents involving Chinese citizens have become, in the measured words of one senior security expert, "one of the factors constraining the development strategy of 'going global'." This expert asserted that what he called "terrorist attacks" have become "the greatest security problem faced by Chinese abroad."<sup>18</sup> In a 2009 internal report, PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi noted several specific examples of threats to the growing numbers of Chinese citizens abroad.<sup>19</sup> A survey of press reports indicates these incidents have become increasingly common since the mid-2000s:

---

<sup>17</sup> CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

<sup>18</sup> Li Wei, "It Is Imperative to Legislate Protection for Chinese Overseas," *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* [International Herald], 21 May 2007; see also Qiu Min, Li Ying, and Liao Jiehua, "Senior Staff Aiding Foreign Countries Escorted by Police When Buying Vegetables, Getting Haircuts," *Guangzhou Ribao*, 11 July 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Yang Jiechi, "Nuli Yingzao Lianghao Waibu Huanjing, Wei Quanmian Jianshe Xiaokang Shehui Fuwu" [Work Hard to Create a Beneficial Foreign Environment to Provide All-round Service to the Creation of a Relatively Well-off Society], in *Fenjin de Licheng, Huihuang de Chengjiu, 2003–2007, Nian Zhengfu de Gongzuo* [A Path of Bravely Advancing, Achievements that Are Glorious, Government Work from 2003 to 2007], ed., Wei Liqun [State Council Research Office] (Beijing: Zhongguo Yanshi Chubanshe, 2009), 926–28.

Table 1. Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment (end of 2006)

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	World Bank Political Stability Index	Fund for Peace Failed State Index	Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index	World Bank Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Algeria	28,945	-1.02	Warning	3.00	-0.45
Russia	25,275	-0.77	Warning	2.30	-0.45
United Arab Emirates	20,302	0.74	Moderate concern	5.70	0.68
Sudan	11,988	-2.11	Alert	1.80	-1.11
Jordan	11,157	-0.65	Warning	4.70	0.16
Vietnam	11,018	0.43	Warning	2.60	-0.34
Saudi Arabia	10,520	-0.63	Warning	3.40	-0.21
Mauritius	10,055	0.67	Moderate concern	4.70	0.52
Myanmar	9,516	-0.82	Alert	1.40	-1.53
Israel	9,042	-1.34	Warning	6.10	1.25
Kuwait	7,900	0.24	Warning	4.30	0.36
Mongolia	7,268	0.73	Moderate concern	3.00	-0.49
Angola	6,279	-0.49	Warning	2.20	-1.24
Mexico	6,047	-0.48	Warning	3.50	0.10
Qatar	5,777	0.87	Moderate concern	6.00	0.38
Cambodia	5,527	-0.42	Warning	2.00	-0.90
Malaysia	5,441	0.34	Warning	5.10	1.06
Nigeria	4,588	-2.12	Alert	2.20	-0.94
Pakistan	4,400	-1.94	Alert	2.40	-0.53
Bangladesh	3,685	-1.39	Alert	2.00	-0.74

Note: Complete data set may be found in appendix 1.  
 Rankings exclude the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, South Korea, and Australia.  
 Sources: PRC Ministry of Commerce 2008 Trade-in-Services Report, the World Bank, Transparency International; the Fund for Peace.

- Dozens of Chinese citizens were killed, and many others kidnapped or injured in Afghanistan,<sup>20</sup> Iraq,<sup>21</sup> Pakistan,<sup>22</sup> Nigeria,<sup>23</sup> Ethiopia,<sup>24</sup> Niger,<sup>25</sup> Congo-Brazzaville,<sup>26</sup> Sudan, and other countries between 2004 and 2007.
- Eleven Chinese students died, and dozens were injured, in a dormitory fire at the People's Friendship University in Moscow, Russia, in November 2003.<sup>27</sup>
- Four Chinese pilgrims were among the 345 Muslims trampled to death in a stampede during the annual hajj near Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in January 2006.<sup>28</sup>
- Three members of a delegation from China's NDU were killed in a hotel bombing in Amman, Jordan, in November 2005.<sup>29</sup>
- Two Chinese citizens were killed in clashes between local security forces and striking Chinese workers in Equatorial Guinea in April 2008.<sup>30</sup>
- Moscow's city government abruptly closed the city's largest wholesale market in a crackdown on "gray customs clearance" and impounded the goods of 40 Chinese vendors in June 2009.<sup>31</sup>

Such incidents are placing unprecedented demands on the weak consular protection capabilities of Chinese embassies and consulates. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) statistics reveal that between 2004 and 2006 China's embassies and consulates witnessed a spike of more than 50 percent in the number of consular protection cases

---

<sup>20</sup> Eleven Chinese construction workers were killed by gunmen in the northern city of Kunduz in June 2004. Hanan Habibzai, "Gunmen Kill 11 Chinese Workers in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 11 June 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Eight Chinese construction workers were kidnapped and held hostage by Islamic insurgents in January 2005. "Eight Chinese Workers Kidnapped in Iraq," Reuters, 18 January 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Three Chinese nationals were killed in Peshawar, and a suicide bomber attacked Chinese engineers in Baluchistan in June and July 2007. Li Xiaolun, "Chinese Abroad to Be Better Protected," *China Daily*, 22 August 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Fourteen Chinese telecom and oil company workers were kidnapped and held for ransom in the Niger Delta region in January 2007. "Chinese Workers Freed in Nigeria," BBC News, 4 February 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Nine Chinese oil company workers were killed and seven kidnapped in the Ogaden region in May 2007. "China to Establish Mechanisms to Protect Overseas Workers," Xinhua, 14 May 2007.

<sup>25</sup> A Chinese uranium executive was kidnapped by Tuareg rebels in northern Niger in July 2007. Abdoulaye Massalatchi, "Niger Rebels Free Chinese Hostage in Uranium Firm," Reuters, 11 July 2007.

<sup>26</sup> The specific incident Yang refers to here is unclear from available press reporting.

<sup>27</sup> "Chinese Death Toll in Moscow University Fire Rises to 11," *People's Daily*, 3 December 2003.

<sup>28</sup> "Four Chinese Pilgrims among Dead in Stampede," *People's Daily*, 13 January 2006.

<sup>29</sup> "Remains of Chinese Victims in Jordan Bomb Attacks Back to Beijing," Xinhua, 12 November 2005.

<sup>30</sup> "China Pulls Workers from Eq. Guinea after Deaths," Reuters, 7 April 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Wang Linyan, "Delegation Gives Hope to Traders," *China Daily*, 24 July 2009.

for Chinese citizens abroad.<sup>32</sup> MFA has responded by successively strengthening its consular protection departments and increasing their budgets.<sup>33</sup> Still, China's consular protection system remains too small, inexperienced, and overtaxed to provide effective security abroad. According to 2007 Chinese data, China's 160 embassies and 70 consular offices abroad had just 600 persons committed to consular affairs, and their duties also included standard visa, passport, notary, and other administrative matters in addition to providing protection to Chinese abroad.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to consular systems, Chinese commercial officials have initiated new programs to improve overseas security and are experimenting with others. These include inspections and certifications for firms before they go abroad and government training in security awareness for corporate officers. These commercial officials have also called for requiring overseas-invested firms to devote more funds to security or to fund the creation of private security forces that could protect these firms and their personnel overseas.<sup>35</sup>

But as the spring 2011 unrest in the Middle East demonstrated, Chinese authorities no longer regard these diplomatic, commercial, and other civilian responses as adequate responses to the threats expatriate Chinese face. Even before the 2011 Egyptian and Libyan uprisings and evacuations, senior PLA officers and civilian security analysts had begun arguing that China also needed to emulate Western developed powers by coming

---

<sup>32</sup> Yang, "Work Hard to Create a Beneficial Foreign Environment," 926; Li Xiaolun, "Chinese Abroad to Be Better Protected," *China Daily*, 22 August 2007; and "China Sets Up Consular Protection Center to Better Protect Nationals Abroad," Xinhua, 23 August 2007.

<sup>33</sup> In 2008, Foreign Minister Yang noted that the Communist Party and government leadership place great importance on assisting Chinese enterprises and citizens when they become victims of "major, sudden incidents" and have issued directives to Chinese government departments on how to respond to these cases. Yang, "Work Hard to Create a Beneficial Foreign Environment," 926; Zhang Yiyan, "Tan Woguo de Waijiao Baohu Zhidu" [On Our Country's Diplomatic Protection System], *Liaoning Jingzhuan Xuebao* [Journal of the Liaoning Police Academy] (September 2009): 25–27, especially 26; Xia Liping, "A Preliminary Investigation of Transformations and Causes in the Systemization of Our Government's Protection of the Security of Our Citizens Overseas," *Guoji Luntan* [International Forum] (2009): 34–40, especially 34, 35, and 36; and Bi Yurong, "Protection/Realization of China's Overseas Interests," *Guofang* [National Defense], 17 April 2007, OSC report CPP20070417478006.

<sup>34</sup> Consular staff figures are from Zhang, "On Our Country's Diplomatic Protection System," 26. The number of Chinese embassies and consulates as of late 2007 is from Xia, "A Preliminary Investigation of Transformations and Causes in the Systemization of Our Government's Protection of the Security of Our Citizens Overseas," 34.

<sup>35</sup> "China To Establish Mechanisms To Protect Overseas Workers," Xinhua, 14 May 2007; and Li Wei, "It Is Imperative to Legislate Protection for Chinese Overseas," *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* [International Herald], 21 May 2007.

up with its own military options to protect its citizens and property abroad. Their proposals are discussed in the next chapter.<sup>36</sup>

## DEEPENING ENERGY AND RESOURCE SECURITY

Over the past decade China's leaders and strategic analysts have continually insisted that China's key instrumental national interest—rapid economic growth—could not be sustained without reliable, steadily growing access to imported energy resources. Driving this concern has been China's rapidly increasing dependence upon imported sources of oil and the geographic vulnerability of China's oil import routes. Recent energy security policy has focused on reducing China's vulnerability to sudden disruptions in this supply.

In contrast to some recent analyses, our study does not hold that China's concerns about securing imported energy constitute a unique and supreme national security interest that will drive Chinese security policy in the years ahead. But it is certainly true that Beijing's energy security concerns are interwoven with many of the other emerging security interests examined in this study. As the previous section indicated, for example, nearly all of China's top 10 developing country investment sites are major exporters of petroleum, natural gas, or other key minerals. Likewise, as the next section will demonstrate, Chinese maritime security specialists maintain that a major reason for China's growing economic interest in maritime regions is its need for secure access to new sources of energy. And as the subsequent section on China's interests in its western borderlands will demonstrate, China's quest to diversify its oil and natural gas sources by increased purchases from Russia and Central Asia is one important factor contributing to the increasing importance of those regions for Beijing.

Maintaining an adequate *overall* energy supply is not necessarily China's most pressing energy-related security concern. China remains roughly 90 percent self-sufficient in overall energy supply, and almost entirely self-sufficient in electric power. As shown in figure 2.3, in 2008, the Chinese government reported that approximately 70 percent of its energy needs were met by coal, a resource which China produces in abundance, while another approximately 7 percent of energy needs were met by a combination of

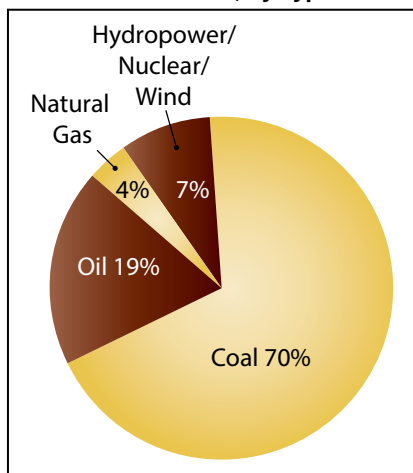
---

<sup>36</sup> Chinese military and civilian policy analysts interviews, 2010; for a senior PLA officer endorsing military options for protecting citizens and investments overseas, see Chen Zhou, "Shilun Xin Xingshixia Zhongguo Fangyuxing Guofang Zhengce de Fazhan" [On Development of China's Defensive National Defense Policy under New Situation], *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 63–71.

hydropower, nuclear power, and wind. Moreover, China still produces enough oil to supply just less than half of its needs.<sup>37</sup>

For China's security leaders, the most pressing energy security concern over the past two decades has been its steadily growing dependence upon imported oil, as domestic production has failed to keep up with many rapidly rising sources of demand. Although China is the world's fifth largest producer of crude oil, its production has leveled off

**Figure 2.3. Total Energy Consumption in China, by Type (2008)**



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

over the past two decades, leaving China a net importer of oil since 1993.<sup>38</sup> By 2009, China was dependent upon imported oil for more than 50 percent of its oil consumption, a milestone that Chinese policy makers reportedly regard as an “energy security alert” (see figure 2.4). In 2009, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences predicted that by 2020 China would depend on imports for 64.5 percent of oil consumption. Between 2010 and 2020, the gap between supply and demand is expected to rise from 120 million tons to 210 million.<sup>39</sup>

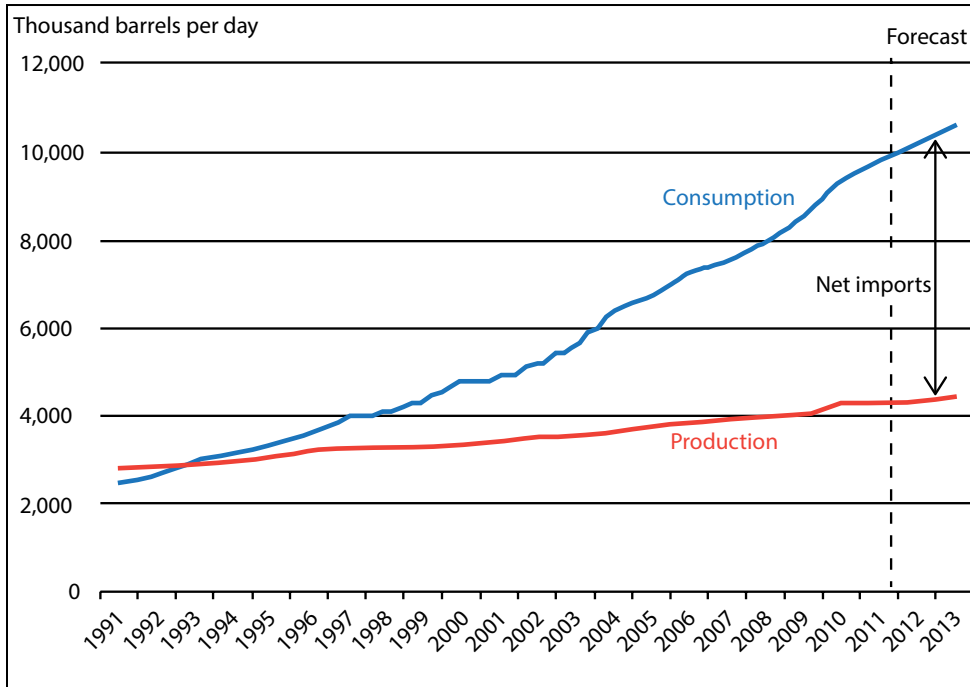
Driving this rapidly emerging interest in energy security have been dramatic changes in China's patterns of demographic distribution, personal consumption, manufacturing, and exports. China's historic rates of urbanization have brought hundreds of millions of citizens

<sup>37</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China, *2009 China Statistical Yearbook* (Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2009), Table 6.2 “Total Consumption of Energy and its Components,” 243; Energy Information Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy, “Country Analysis Briefs: China,” July 2009, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/China/Background.html>; Erica Downs, *China*, Brookings Foreign Policy Studies Energy Security Series (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2006), 8; and “China's Energy Consumption Up 8.4 percent in 2006,” Xinhua, 3 July 2007.

<sup>38</sup> The U.S. Department of Energy forecasts that production at currently operational Chinese oil fields, such as Daqing, will peak and then begin a slow decline within the coming decades, and there are few prospects for major discoveries of new oil deposits on Chinese territory. Energy Information Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy, *2008 World Oil Production*, <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country/index.cfm?view=production>. See also Wan Zhihong, “Crude Oil Imports Jump 33 Percent,” *China Daily*, 11 February 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Xiao Wan, “Crude Oil Imports to Increase This Year,” *China Daily*, 5 February 2010; Li Yanjie, “Energy Problems Looming for Ever-Growing China,” *Global Times*, 8 February 2010; and Liu Houjun and Zhang Jingwei, “New Perspectives to Sustain Energy Security,” *China Daily*, 2 June 2009.

**Figure 2.4. Chinese Oil Production and Consumption (1991–2011)**



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

into the more energy intensive lifestyles of urban areas over the past three decades.<sup>40</sup> Along with this, rising incomes have caused China to emerge as one of the world's fastest-growing automobile markets. Between 2000 and 2008, official statistics indicate that the ownership rate for private cars among urban households increased nearly eighteenfold from 0.5 percent to 8.8 percent of all households (a survey by one international investment bank suggests that the ownership rate may actually be

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Lieberthal and Mikkal Herberg, "China's Search for Energy Security: Implications for U.S. Policy," *NBR Analysis* 17, no. 1 (April 2006).

even higher than this).<sup>41</sup> Consumption by China's manufacturing sector has also risen substantially, with much of that increase going to transport goods from inland areas to seaports and airports, and from there around the world. At present, this sector of the economy has found no cost-effective substitutes for gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel.<sup>42</sup>

Beijing's single greatest source of energy security anxiety concerns the geopolitical vulnerability of its oil imports, which Hu Jintao personally spotlighted, and which has come to be labeled as China's "Malacca predicament." For years Chinese analyses have highlighted estimates that 70–80 percent of China's oil imports traverse the Malacca Strait from China's two largest regional sources of oil, Africa and the Middle East.<sup>43</sup> That percentage, moreover, represents an increase in dependency over 1999 when 64 percent of China's oil transited the strait.<sup>44</sup> Analysts also assert that China is by far the country with the highest dependence on the strait and that, of the 140-odd ships that traverse the strait daily, nearly 60 percent are Chinese. Political leaders and analysts stress the strait's vulnerability to piracy, natural disaster, conflict, and deliberate blockade by China's rivals. Some Chinese commentators pointedly note that, at present, the PLAN lacks the capacity to secure Chinese oil shipments through Malacca against a

---

<sup>41</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China, *2009 Statistical Yearbook of China*, table 9-10, 323. A 2009 Credit Suisse survey of 2,700 urban Chinese consumers shows a considerably higher car ownership ratio but a similarly dramatic trend, with urban car ownership more than doubling between 2004 and 2009, from 12 percent to 28 percent of households. "Credit Suisse Survey Shows Chinese Consumer Spending Jumps," Credit Suisse press release, 12 January 2010, [https://www.credit-suisse.com/news/en/media\\_release.jsp?ns=41389](https://www.credit-suisse.com/news/en/media_release.jsp?ns=41389).

<sup>42</sup> Downs, *China*, 13. Chinese government statistics indicate that petroleum consumption for transportation, storage, and postal services more than doubled between 2000 and 2007, the most recent year for which figures are available. See National Bureau of Statistics of China, *2009 China Statistical Yearbook*, table 6-4, 245.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Guo Xuetang, "Energy and Geopolitics in the Central Eurasian Region," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [Chinese Military Science] (2006). The precise percentage of China's oil imports that presently transit Malacca fluctuates and is difficult to verify. Energy Information Administration's source data on Chinese oil imports for 2011 indicates that 69 percent comes from countries that ship via the IOR, but this report also notes that an additional 11 percent of imports are sourced from unspecified "other" countries, which include some that ship via the IOR, such as Nigeria and Algeria.

<sup>44</sup> Yan Mo, "What the War Brings to China," *Beijing Qingnian Bao* [Beijing Youth Daily], 15 October 2001.



blockade by a stronger naval power.<sup>45</sup> Security experts therefore regard the mitigation of this “predicament” as one of the country’s most pressing energy security interests.<sup>46</sup>

China’s recent energy security initiatives have emphasized four means of relieving dependence upon oil shipped through the strait:

- Energy conservation
- Alternative energy sources
- Diversification of energy sources and shipping routes
- Enhanced protection for shipping routes

Over the past decade, Beijing has worked to develop alternative routes through Myanmar and possibly Pakistan in order to reduce the percentage of its African and Middle Eastern oil imports that must traverse the strait and to decrease its reliance upon foreign providers from these regions whose oil exports to China could be constrained or cut off at sea.<sup>47</sup> These efforts have shown modest success, but have brought with them new energy security issues of their own.

Since the mid-1990s, China and Chinese national oil companies (NOCs) have worked to diversify China’s energy resources. In some cases this involved using “loan-for-oil” programs—deals with governments increasingly seen as “pariahs” in the West—and, reportedly, inflated government-backed bids for available oil fields. A number of international

---

<sup>45</sup> Meng Honghua, “The New Conception of Security, Interest Communities, and Strategic Passageways—Understanding China’s Security Interests,” *Xinhua Wenzhai* [Xinhua Digest], 5 November 2004; “Editorial: Power to Secure Energy Supply,” *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global Times], 14 December 2009; and Li Hong, “Energy Policy Fires Up Future Growth,” *People’s Daily*, 7 May 2009.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Wang Jienan, “Miandian Jushi yu Zhongguo Nanbu Zhanlue Anquan” [The Myanmar Situation and the Strategic Security of China’s South], *Dongnan Ya Zhi Chuang* [Southeast Asia Window] (2009): 20–23; Kong Xiaohui, “Zhongguo Zuo Wei Lu Hai Fuhe Guojia de Diyu Zhanlue Xuanze” [China’s Geostrategic Choices as a Reviving Land and Maritime Power], *Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan Xuebao* [Journal of the Academy of International Relations] (2008): 12–17; Wang Hai, “Cong Beibu Wan dao Zhongnan Bandao he Indu Yang” [From Beibuwan to the Southeast Asian Peninsula and the Indian Ocean], *Shijie Zhengzhi* [World Politics] (2007): 47–54; and Li Jihuan, “Yanjiu Xin Qingkuang, Jiejue Xin Wenti, Kaichuang Xin Jujian” [Research the New Situation, Resolve New Problems, Create a New Situation], *Yunnan Xingzheng Xueyuan Xuebao* [Journal of the Yunnan Provincial Administrative Academy] (2009): 4–8. See also Zhang Wei, *National Maritime Security* (Beijing: Hai Chao Press, 2008), 422.

<sup>47</sup> For a summary of a Hu Jintao speech on efforts to exploit land routes through Myanmar into Yunnan to decrease the “Malacca Predicament,” see Li Jihuan, “Research the New Situation, Resolve New Problems, Create a New Situation,” 4–8; Guo Jinhui, “The China-Burma Oil Pipeline Breaks the Malacca Strait Bottleneck,” *Zhongguo Jingji Shibao* [China Economic Times], 25 November 2009; Men, “The New Conception of Security, Interest Communities, and Strategic Passageways—Understanding China’s Security Interests”; and U.S. Energy Information Administration, “World Oil Transit Chokepoints,” <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=wotc&trk=p3>.

analysts saw these deals as an effort by China to work through the NOCs to develop a reliable, diversified stream of oil that could be protected against disruptions, and that would be largely produced by Chinese workers with Chinese-provided extraction equipment.<sup>48</sup> One widely noted example was the China National Petroleum Corporation's 1996 purchase of a 40 percent stake in Sudan's state oil monopoly after Western oil companies had divested from Sudan. This instance was followed by a decade of Chinese investment to build up Sudan's petroleum infrastructure, pipelines, and shipping terminals.<sup>49</sup> Another example was the China Exim Bank and Sinopec's engagement of Angola following the collapse of Angolan negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2005, which resulted in Angola becoming China's second largest foreign supplier of crude oil behind Saudi Arabia.<sup>50</sup> While these suppliers helped China diversify its petroleum sources, they did not decrease its reliance upon shipping that petroleum through the Indian Ocean and the Malacca Strait.

---

<sup>48</sup> China energy specialist Erica Downs raises the important question of whether these deals by the NOCs are serving a Chinese "national" interest or vice versa. She notes that the NOCs are now sufficiently wealthy, bureaucratically influential players in China and the NOCs' "tail" may be wagging the "dog" of China's overall energy policy. See Downs, *China*, 22–24 and 35–26. In the last few years, as the world was hit by a major financial crisis, numerous Chinese writers raised the idea that this could be an excellent opportunity for China to buy up oil resources at bargain prices, further fueling concern. "Editorial: Power to Secure Energy Supply"; Xiao Wan, "CNPC To Speed Up Oil Assets Buy Plan," *China Daily*, 12 August 2009; and Yang Zurong, "Energy Expert Answers Questions on New Energy Resources," *PLA Daily*, 10 June 2009, 4.

<sup>49</sup> In 1996, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) paid \$441 million for a controlling 40 percent stake in Sudan's state oil monopoly, becoming Sudan's largest foreign investor in the process. Western oil companies had divested from Sudan in the 1980s and 1990s due to security concerns involving the ongoing civil war and the U.S. economic embargo, leaving Sudan with virtually no oil industry. Between 1996 and 2007, CNPC spent more than \$15 billion dollars to develop Sudan's oil infrastructure, which began producing again in 1999. Chinese projects included a pipeline linking oilfields in southern Sudan to Port Sudan on the Red Sea, where Chinese companies funded the construction of a major export tanker terminal. Sudanese oil is now pumped mostly from Chinese-built wells, transported via a Chinese-built pipeline to the sea, then loaded onto Chinese tankers from a Chinese-built terminal. On China's energy relations with Sudan, see Downs, *China*, 22–24 and 35–26; Erica Downs, "China's Quest for Overseas Oil," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (2007): 54; also LtCol Gordon S. Magenheimer, "Chinese Influence on U.S. Operational Access to African Seaports," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (2007): 25.

<sup>50</sup> As a proposed IMF development loan deal collapsed in 2005 in part over oil revenue transparency requirements, China's Exim Bank reportedly offered Angola even larger development loans with no oil revenue accounting requirements. These loans were to be repaid in oil, at a low annual rate of 1.7 percent over 17 years. As of 2007, Angola had accepted \$8–\$12 billion in Chinese loans. Also in 2004, Angola transferred control of two offshore oil blocks from British and French companies to Sinopec, a Chinese NOC. On China's energy relations with Angola, see Downs, *China*, 56; Karen Iley, "Angola's IMF Deal Slips Away," Reuters, 13 August 2005; Lucy Ash, "China in Africa: Developing Ties," BBC News, 4 December 2007; Kate Eshelby, "Angola's New Friends," *New African*, October 2007; and Paul Hare, "China in Angola: An Emerging Energy Partnership," *Jamestown Foundation China Brief*, 13 November 2006.

China's efforts to diversify its energy suppliers and the shipping routes have focused on two areas:<sup>51</sup>

- **South Asia:** In an effort to permit some of the tankers bound for China to offload their cargoes before reaching the Malacca Strait, Chinese companies are presently engaged in or considering port and pipeline construction projects that may permit offloading of energy at the ports of Kyaukphyu, Myanmar;<sup>52</sup> Chittagong and Sonadia, Bangladesh; or possibly Gwadar, Pakistan.<sup>53</sup> But offloading at these ports would refocus China's vulnerabilities toward the northern Bay of Bengal or the northern Arabian Sea, and force China to account for the vulnerabilities of oil pipelines running through these countries. The only one of these pipeline projects presently under construction, the paired oil and natural gas pipelines from Kyaukphyu to Yunnan, was scheduled to be completed in May 2013, but its first oil and gas flows have reportedly been delayed until at least late 2013. Security analysts have also advocated the development of a canal through Thailand's Isthmus of Kra as a potential bypass for Malacca.<sup>54</sup>
- **Russia and Central Asia:** China's decade-long participation in developing a network of oil and gas pipelines linking western and northern China to Russian, Kazakh, and Turkmen fields has been one of its most important efforts to alleviate its reliance on Malacca. These pipelines include a crude oil pipeline from Kazakhstan, which began operation in 2006; a natural gas pipeline from Kazakhstan; and a

---

<sup>51</sup> Zhang Yi and An Pei, "Sino-Burmese Crude Oil Pipeline Project Affirmed: China's Four Major Oil and Gas Import Avenues Have Initially Taken Shape," Xinhua, 19 June 2009.

<sup>52</sup> The Kyaukphyu-Yunnan pipeline is initially expected to carry 240,000 barrels per day (bbl/day), ultimately reaching a capacity of 480,000 bbl/day. This daily total would equal about 9 percent of China's average daily total oil imports for the year 2011. This figure is based on EIA, *China Country Analysis*, which notes that "China imported nearly 5.1 million bbl/d of crude oil on average in 2011, rising 6 percent from 4.8 million bbl/d in 2010. In the first half of 2012, imports rose even higher to 5.6 million bbl/d." Regarding the pipeline's timing, in a January 2013 report, Gao Jianguo, head of the pipeline project for China National Petroleum Corporation, told Xinhua that oil would be flowing through the pipeline in May 2013 if everything went according to plan. But more recent reports indicate that, while the pipeline may be completed on time, instability and other factors may prevent its first oil and gas flows until the end of 2013 or later. See "Myanmar-China Gas Pipeline May Be Delayed Until Year End" Taipei *Want China Times*, 26 May 2013; Aung Hla Tun, "Clashes Likely To Delay Burma-China Pipeline Start-Up: Official," *Irrawaddy*, 13 May 2013, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/34396>; Teddy Ng, "China-Myanmar Oil Pipe to Open in May," *South China Morning Post*, 22 January 2013, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1133322/china-myanmar-oil-pipe-open-may>; "The China-Burma Oil Pipeline Breaks the Malacca Strait Bottleneck," *Zhongguo Jingji Shibao* [China Economic Times], 25 November 2009; and Yi and Pei, "Sino-Burmese Crude Oil Pipeline Project Affirmed."

<sup>53</sup> Kerry B. Dumbaugh, *Exploring the China-Pakistan Relationship: Roundtable Report* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, 2010), report number MISC D0022883.A1/Final.

<sup>54</sup> Zhang Wei, *Guojia Haishang Anquan* [National Maritime Security] (Beijing: Haichao Chubanshe, 2008), 463.

natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan, which began operation in 2009, with a capacity of 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year.<sup>55</sup> Russia's Transneft state oil corporation began construction on the 3,000 mile Eastern Siberian-Pacific Ocean Pipeline (ESPO) in 2006. The pipeline is being constructed in two stages. The first stage, which became operational in 2011, links a Russian pipeline from Taishet to Skovorodino to a Chinese spur from the Daqing field. The Chinese spur delivers up to 300,000 bbl/d. In April 2013, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reported that "the second stage will deliver oil to the Russian Pacific port of Kozmino by 2013. China has requested access to the entire volume of the second phase; however Russia has not decided on supply agreements."<sup>56</sup> Some Chinese analysts see this pipeline as a major prize and claim it will be China's only land-based supply route that does not pass through what they regard as a politically unstable region.<sup>57</sup>

Substantial though these alternative energy routes and supplies are, they still have significant shortcomings as a response to China's energy security problems. Chinese energy analysts estimate that, when these alternative energy routes are completed, they will be able to carry about 40 percent of China's oil and gas imports. But these sources estimate that this will only allow China to lower the percentage of its oil and gas shipments that traverse Malacca from 80 percent to 60 percent.<sup>58</sup> Given China's rapidly increasing oil demand and the limited capacity of the new land routes, this means that, unless additional pipelines can be built, a substantial portion of oil demand increases will still have to be met by vulnerable maritime shipments. Moreover, notwithstanding China's "strategic partnership" with Russia, Chinese experts and officials have noted Russia's past use of energy supplies as a political weapon against Ukraine and other customers, and are not comfortable becoming too dependent upon Moscow as an energy supplier.<sup>59</sup>

On balance, available evidence suggests that China still has far to go to address its growing interest in diversifying energy sources. A comparison of China's top 10 import sources in 2008 with those of 1998 indicates that China has shifted to obtaining a

---

<sup>55</sup> Yi and Pei, "Sino-Burmese Crude Oil Pipeline Project Affirmed."

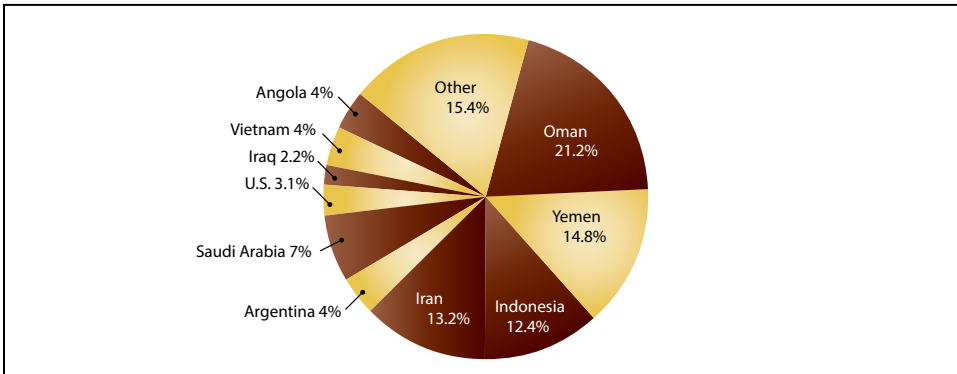
<sup>56</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *China: Country Analysis*, April 2013, [www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH](http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH).

<sup>57</sup> Guan Jianbin, "Creation of a New Model in Sino-Russian Energy Cooperation," *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 25 April 2009; and Wu Qiong and Lin Jianyang, "After 14 Years of Negotiation, Russian Oil Pipeline Runs Into China," *Xinhua*, 19 May 2009.

<sup>58</sup> Yi and Pei, "Sino-Burmese Crude Oil Pipeline Project Affirmed."

<sup>59</sup> Erica S. Downs, "Sino-Russian Energy Relations: An Uncertain Courtship," in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed., James V. Bellacqua (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 146-78.

**Figure 2.5. China's Top Crude Oil Providers, 1998**



Source: UN Comtrade

somewhat higher proportion of its petroleum from land neighbors whose supplies are not vulnerable to cutoff in Malacca (see figures 2.5 and 2.6). By 2008, a combined 10 percent of China's imported oil was coming overland from Kazakhstan and Russia. By 2011, that combined figure was still just 12 percent.<sup>60</sup> And the ongoing projects noted above involving Russia, Central Asia, and Myanmar will further ease this dependence. Chinese oil companies have made significant progress developing new suppliers in Africa, where many countries need help extracting their own oil, and whose oil is of the type and quality most suitable for Chinese refineries.<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, China has not made enormous progress in decreasing its dependence on a small number of suppliers. As shown in figure 2.5, in 1998, China depended on 10 countries for 81 percent of its oil imports, and on 5 countries (Oman, Yemen, Indonesia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia) for 68.6 percent of its imports.<sup>62</sup> By 2008, China still depended on 10 countries for exactly 81 percent of its oil imports, with 5 countries (Saudi Arabia, Angola, Iran, Oman, and Russia) supplying 64 percent of its imports.

## **STRENGTHENING MARITIME SECURITY INTERESTS**

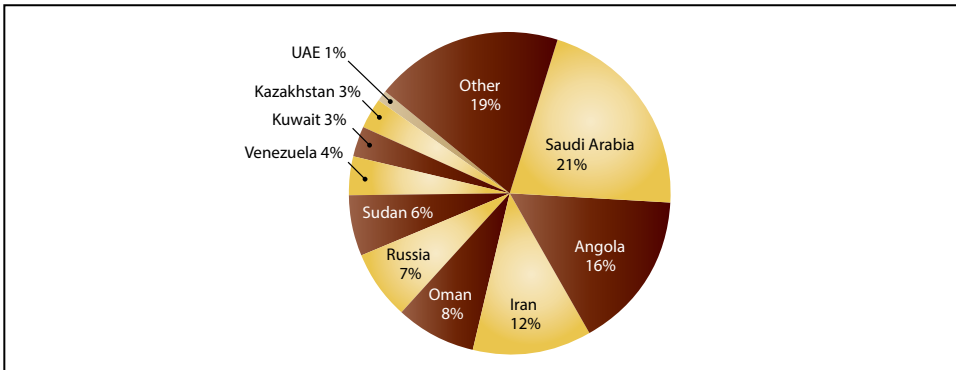
Even before maritime territorial tensions between China and its neighbors the Philippines,

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *China: Country Analysis*.

<sup>61</sup> Liu Shuguang, "Strategic Significance of African Oil, China-Africa Oil Cooperative Development," *Waijiao Pinglun*, 25 December 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Chart data source: UN Comtrade, cited in Edward Hunter Christie, ed., "China's Foreign Oil Policy: Genesis, Deployment and Selected Effects," *FIW Research Reports* 2009/10, No. 3, January 2010, 18, [http://www.fiw.ac.at/fileadmin/Documents/Publikationen/Studien\\_II/SI03.Studie.China\\_\\_s\\_oil.pdf](http://www.fiw.ac.at/fileadmin/Documents/Publikationen/Studien_II/SI03.Studie.China__s_oil.pdf).

**Figure 2.6. China's Top Crude Oil Providers, 2008**



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration

Japan, and Vietnam began to flare in 2011–12, China's concerns about its expanding maritime security and economic interests had already risen substantially over the preceding decade. The oceans are one of the three realms in which Hu Jintao argued China needed to pursue and defend its interests more vigorously in the years ahead. Many Chinese security experts see the oceans as increasingly instrumental to sustaining China's economic growth and expanding its strategic depth in the future, and they contend that the country must more assertively safeguard its maritime territorial claims, offshore resources, naval access, and commercial transit routes.

Chinese security analysts stress four broad dimensions of maritime interests that are growing in importance for their country's security:

- **Maritime challenges to national unity and territorial integrity:** Maritime security specialists in particular argue that China's offshore regions—including Taiwan, the Senkakus/Diaoyutai, Spratleys, and the wider East and South China Seas—have supplanted China's land border regions as the greatest locus of threats to its national unity and territorial integrity. They have also long charged that other countries with competing claims to these territories and resources—in particular Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines—are infringing on China's claims and exploiting these resources more quickly than China.
- **Maritime resources and sustained economic development:** Chinese leaders and security analysts contend that a wide array of maritime interests is increasingly critical to the "sustainability" of China's rapid economic development. These run the gamut from energy and mineral resources in the offshore territories that China

claims, to the security of China's maritime shipping lanes, to the safety of China's increasing overseas investments and personnel.

- **Maritime strategic depth, access, and power projection:** Security analysts increasingly stress the need for the PLAN to strengthen its maritime access and operational range in order to enhance China's strategic depth.<sup>63</sup> Toward this end, China's leaders are trying to assert greater control over foreign military exercises and other activities within what China perceives as threatening range of its coast.
- **Maritime security cooperation, stability, and diplomatic management of disputes:** China hopes to pursue its expanding security interests within a peaceful, stable East and Southeast Asian security environment, enhancing regional cooperation against common security challenges. China's leaders want to forestall efforts by its maritime neighbors to "balance" against its rise, while gradually eroding alliances against China's interests.

The past several years have greatly sharpened the dilemmas China faces as it tries to pursue this wide array of interconnected maritime interests. When Beijing has more forcefully asserted its influence or claims regarding these maritime territorial and resource interests, it has undermined the solid diplomatic relations it needs to maintain with its neighbors. Beijing continues to emphasize the importance of building active security cooperation with these countries on a wide array of other critical traditional and nontraditional security interests, including counterterrorism, suppression of piracy and transnational crime, nonproliferation, energy and resource security, food security, public health, and natural disasters.<sup>64</sup> China also hopes to move those states that still have alliances with the United States beyond what it calls their "Cold War mentality." But growing Chinese power and heavy-handedness in the region have undermined this objective, greatly heightening the concerns of Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and other neighbors that

---

<sup>63</sup> Taylor Fravel's study of China's border stresses that, from the 1970s through the 1990s, China perceived its maritime claims and interests as increasingly important to its economy, but it also feared that they were being increasingly challenged by Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other regional claimants. Fravel argues that these two factors—growing importance of the claims and a sense that these claims are being challenged and eroded—were two of the critical factors in China's decision to use force in the region during this period. See *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> All of these issues were emphasized in Gen Ma Xiaotian's "The Shangri-La Dialogue," speech at The 9th IISS Asia Security Summit, Singapore, 5 June 2010. *China's National Defense White Paper (2008)* cited a much more limited list of common security challenges in Southeast Asia: "There still exist many factors of uncertainty in Asia-Pacific security. . . . Ethnic and religious discords, and conflicting claims over territorial and maritime rights and interests remain serious, regional hotspots are complex."

they can contain and peacefully manage their long-standing maritime territorial disputes with Beijing. Meanwhile, other Asian powers, including Singapore and Indonesia, have pointed to Beijing's handling of its South China Sea and East China Sea disputes as one of the critical indicators of how China will behave in the future as a major regional power. Consequently, Beijing faces growing obstacles for its objective of striking an effective balance between asserting its territorial interests and maintaining peaceful, cooperative relations with its maritime neighbors.<sup>65</sup>

For China's maritime security analysts, a key article of faith is that maritime economic activities and resources constitute an increasingly large and indispensable driver of China's future overall economic development. They also argue—echoing Hu Jintao—that in the regional race for these resources, China is falling further behind its neighbors, whom they contend are unscrupulously exploiting China's patience and restraint. To the extent that China's leaders really see recent security trends this way—and are not simply floating these positions as bargaining levers—they will feel themselves under political pressure that will make it harder to pursue patient diplomatic management of these disputed maritime regions.

### ***Maritime Challenges to National Unity and Territorial Integrity***

Maritime security analysts argue that the focal point of China's efforts to protect its territorial integrity and national unity has shifted from land to sea. In their view, China's maritime territorial disputes seriously affect China's "core interests" of "unity and territorial integrity." Preventing Taiwan's independence, of course, has long been Beijing's most pressing territorial issue, but security specialists have not always cast it so strongly as a "maritime" security concern. But these analysts also emphasize that during the 1990s–2000s land border disputes with Russia and nearly all of China's other neighbors (except India) were resolved through peaceful negotiation. As a result, maritime threats to territorial integrity have now supplanted these as the most pressing and the most difficult to resolve—especially those of Taiwan, Diaoyutai, Penghu, and South China Sea islands.<sup>66</sup>

Chinese security specialists often argue that China's maritime neighbors have been pressing their competing territorial and resource claims more assertively in recent years. Many see this competition for maritime resources very much in zero-sum terms. The

---

<sup>65</sup> As former Deputy Chief of the General Staff Ma Xiaotian noted in Singapore, "The regional security situation is confronted with many challenges. . . . A cold-war mentality still exists, as is often shown by efforts to strengthen military alliances via new technologies, the threat to use force in international relations, and interference in other countries' internal affairs." Ma, "Shangri-La Dialogue."

<sup>66</sup> Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 412–14.



acceleration of trade, foreign investment, and resource consumption by China and its neighbors is sharpening challenges to China's maritime interests. Some navy analysts allege that Japan is steadily expanding its pressure on China's interests in their long-standing dispute over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands. They describe Japan's behavior as increasingly extreme, while emphasizing China's offer to engage in talks over the dispute. They cite recent reports of Japanese maps showing the islands as falling entirely within Japanese sovereign territory, and Japanese maritime security vessels conducting day and night patrols around the islands, forbidding other countries' vessels from approaching.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Maritime Resources and China's "Sustainable" Economic Development***

Many Chinese security analysts see the first 20 years of this century as a period of rapidly expanding maritime security interests that will be critical for China's economic transformation.<sup>68</sup> For China, like other maritime powers, globalization and scientific-technological development will cause the country's maritime security interests and its "zone of security concerns" to expand. In the words of Senior Captain Zhang Wei of the PLAN's Naval Research Institute (NRI), China's maritime security interests and security strategy in the decades to come will possess "a vibrant, outward, expansive quality" (*xinxing de waixiang tuozhanxing*), and this will reflect the "expansion of China's zone of security concerns, and an expansion of its defensive depth."<sup>69</sup>

Maritime officials and analysts insist that China's maritime interests occupy an increasingly indispensable role in the "sustainability" of China's economic development. They point to a wide array of maritime economic activities that contribute to the steadily growing maritime component of China's overall GDP, which they assert has risen from

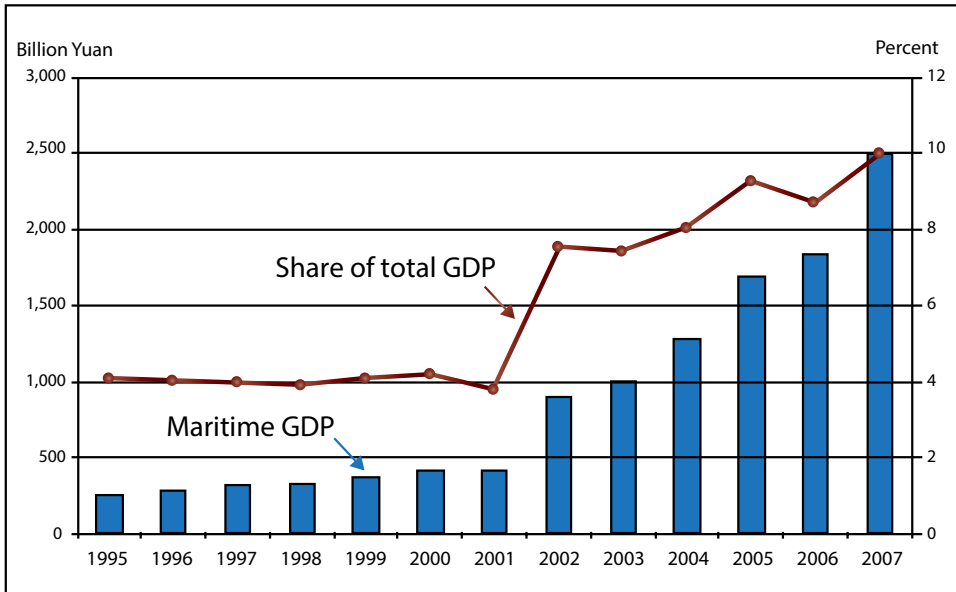
---

<sup>67</sup> SrCol Lin Dong of China's NDU, for example, sees a growing struggle for maritime territorial dominance among the United States, Russia, Japan, Great Britain, Australia, and other powers, with the UN Continental Shelf Commission as a critical battleground. See "Historical Turning Point: Campaigns of Maritime Exploration and Emergence of Maritime Industrial Revolution," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2010): 133–40. See also Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 412–14.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> SrCapt Zhang argues, however, that these expanding interests and zone of security concerns do not indicate that China is undergoing a transformation toward a U.S.-style "Mahanian" obsession with expanding "sea power." At the same time, Zhang argues that, by emphasizing peace and China's defensive nature, China is by no means forswearing war or declining to acquire offensive weapons. *Ibid.*, 457–58.

**Figure 2.7. Maritime Economy as Share of China's Total GDP, 1995–2007**



Source: China State Oceanographic Administration

less than 2 percent in 2001, to about 10 percent in 2007 (see figure 2.7).<sup>70</sup> China's containerized shipping industry, for example, grew by more than 15 times between 1997 and 2007.<sup>71</sup> Maritime oil and natural gas production has also continued rising in recent years, totaling more than 76.9 billion yuan in 2007, an increase of 17.3 percent over 2006.<sup>72</sup> The lesson behind this recitation of maritime economic statistics seems clear enough—maintaining China's rapid growth requires expanding access to maritime energy and other resources, providing greater protection for the security of maritime

<sup>70</sup> State Oceanographic Administration, Maritime Development Strategy Research Team, *Zhongguo Haiyang Fazhan Baogao (2009)* [China's Ocean Development Report (2009)] (Beijing: Haiyang Chubanshe, 2009), 182. The source gives the following year-on-year data: 2001: 8.58 percent; 2002: 9.15 percent; 2003: 8.72 percent; 2004: 8.98 percent; 2005: 9.43 percent; 2006: 10.01 percent; and 2007: 10.11 percent. Also, analyst Lu Rude estimated that the maritime economy accounted for 10 percent of China's GDP in 2006. Lu Rude, "Zai Da Zhanlue Zhong Gei Zhongguo Haiquan Dingwei" [Defining Sea Power in China's Grand Strategy], *Renmin Haijun*, 6 June 2007, 4.

<sup>71</sup> AFX News Limited, April 2006. The authors are indebted to Daniel M. Hartnett and Frederic Vellucci Jr. for introducing them to this source.

<sup>72</sup> State Oceanographic Administration, *China's Ocean Development Report 2009*, 180–81.

trade and transit routes, encouraging maritime industries, and enhancing the protection for China's growing overseas investments and personnel.

Especially critical, in the eyes of maritime security specialists, is securing China's access to or control over the maritime energy, mineral, and other resource rights that it claims to be in its EEZ and continental shelf before other claimants can extensively exploit them.<sup>73</sup> China's maritime policy community contends that these resources are critical to China's "sustainable" (*kechixingde*) economic development. When these analysts speak of "sustainable" development in this context, they often use the term as if to mean gaining for China a continuously expanding supply of the resources needed to sustain rapid growth, and not necessarily the common management of resource pools in what is usually understood as a maintainable manner. Toward this end, Chinese maritime experts claim that China's continental shelf contains verified petroleum reserves of 20 billion tons and natural gas reserves of 6 trillion cubic meters, and the South China Sea contains more than 4 trillion cubic meters of "combustible ice" (*keranbing*), which they estimate is equivalent to 70 billion tons of petroleum, or about one-half of China's total oil and gas reserves.<sup>74</sup> They also cited estimates of oil around the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands that range from 3 to 7 billion tons.<sup>75</sup>

Echoing Hu Jintao's charge in his 2004 "New Historic Missions" speech, maritime security analysts portray China's claims to these critical resources as increasingly threatened by neighboring states. By contrast, they portray China as having shown great restraint in asserting and protecting its claims, purportedly in the interest of minimizing conflict in the region. They assert that more than half of the 3 million square kilometers of maritime territory over which China claims jurisdiction are now the object of boundary disputes, and that since the passage of the UNCLOS, China's neighbors have

---

<sup>73</sup> On this point, see Lin Dong, "Historical Turning Point: Campaigns of Maritime Exploration and Emergence of Maritime Industrial Revolution," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2010): 133–40; Xia Zhengnan, "Concerns and Calls for Maritime Awareness of the Chinese Nation—A Review of China's Maritime Rights and Interests," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 143–46; and Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 456–57.

<sup>74</sup> Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 453–55. Zhang also reports that China has verified that these zones contain 208 mineral beds.

<sup>75</sup> Lin, "Historical Turning Point," 133–40.

been vying to issue laws delineating their EEZs and continental shelves.<sup>76</sup> They accuse these countries of “plundering” and “unscrupulously making off with” China’s oil and gas resources. They charge that countries in the South China Sea, in collaboration with international oil companies, have drilled more than 1,000 oil wells around the Nansha Islands, extracting more than 50 million tons of crude oil and 54.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually. Finally, Chinese analysts see their neighbors rapidly developing their naval power and growing beyond the point that they must rely on major global powers, such as the United States, to defend their claims against China’s territory.<sup>77</sup> According to Senior Colonel Xia Zhengnan of the PLA’s Academy of Military Sciences (AMS),

Our maritime resources are being plundered. The sea areas under China’s jurisdiction are very rich in reserves of oil, natural gas, and living marine resources. In the sea waters of the South China Sea alone, there are 23.5 billion tons of oil reserves, 1 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves, over 500 types of fish, and also a large number of aquatic organisms, such as red coral, that are on our country’s special protection list. However, a number of the surrounding countries have not only carved up China’s sea areas and illegally occupied China’s islands and reefs, but have also developed 19 oil fields and 44 natural gas fields in areas that traditionally belonged to China, through international bidding and other means, and grabbed rich profits. Vietnam alone . . . has extracted over 20 million tons of crude oil and tens of billions of cubic meters of natural gas in the South China Sea, valued at nearly \$3 billion.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> “The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has set a new framework for distribution of interests over the oceans among countries and provided a legal basis for resolving disputes over marine rights and interests. However, it has at the same time intensified yet another round of fierce contention for marine rights and interests among countries, and command of the sea has become the focus of the national ocean strategy of various countries.” Zhao Dongsheng and Liu Cheng, “The National Right of Self-Defense at Sea from a Legal Perspective,” *Guofang* [National Defense] (2009): 21–26; see also Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 419.

<sup>77</sup> Xia, “Concerns and Calls for Maritime Awareness of the Chinese Nation,” 143–46. According to a Chinese publisher’s Web site, Xia is a senior colonel and a researcher in the war theory and strategic research department at the PLA’s AMS; see also Feng Liang, “Strategic Consideration on Stabilizing China’s Maritime Security Environment,” *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009); Tang Dongfeng, “Latest Trends in the Development of Weaponry and Equipment in the Navies of China’s Neighboring Countries,” *Dangdai Haijun* [Modern Navy] (2009): 18–22; and Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 419. Zhang argues that China has focused its offshore oil extraction efforts primarily in coastal areas. Some foreign analysts attribute this to China’s lack of technology appropriate to the South China Sea region, but Zhang claims that China has done this in an effort to show self-restraint and avoid escalating conflicts. This claim may represent an effort to justify a harder line in the future by portraying China as having already endured intolerable violations by its neighbors.

<sup>78</sup> Xia, “Concerns and Calls for Maritime Awareness of the Chinese Nation,” 143–46.

Senior Colonel Xia's words are echoed by the well-known military commentator Major General Luo Yuan:

Due to the consideration of peaceful diplomacy, we have taken an attitude of forbearance toward the issue regarding our exclusive economic zone in these sea areas. By contrast, our neighboring countries have been actively enhancing their "actual control" over those areas. By carrying out relevant means, such as organizing tourism, encouraging migration, building light towers, or even setting up administrative divisions, some countries are trying to demonstrate their sovereignty there and nibble our rights and interests away.<sup>79</sup>

China's sense of its expanding maritime resource interests is not limited to the regions that it claims as its territory (its EEZ and continental shelf). Security analyst Zhang Wenmu—one of China's most vocal advocates of enhanced maritime power—contends that China's "maritime rights and interests are scattered all over the world and continue to expand as the size of the Chinese economy grows . . . [and thus] it is imperative that China continue to take its maritime rights seriously and reexamine its sea power." Zhang and other analysts emphasize, in particular, that China must also preserve its maritime rights and interests to future uninterrupted development contained under UNCLOS, including those "rights and interests outside of the continental shelf, including rights to open waters and rights to exploit international seabed regions." These include the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the polar regions.<sup>80</sup>

Maritime security analysts also stress that seaborne exports and imports will continue to be a prime driver of China's growth for at least the first two decades of the twenty-first century.<sup>81</sup> They emphasize China's need to better safeguard its energy supply lines and the more than 60 percent of its GDP that is comprised of imports and

---

<sup>79</sup> Luo Yuan, "Call from Blue Sea To Protect Development Interests of Country," *Liaowang* [in Chinese], 9 February 2009, 66–8.

<sup>80</sup> Zhang Wenmu, "Modern China Needs a New Concept of Sea Power," *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global Times], 12 January 2007.

<sup>81</sup> Xia, "Concerns and Calls for Maritime Awareness of the Chinese Nation," 143–46. Xia notes that "in 2007, China's global trade exchanges via the sea accounted for about 90 percent of its total trade volume. . . . Those that headed to the Middle East, Africa, and Europe via the South China Sea–Indian Ocean accounted for 56 percent, and those that headed to South and North Americas via the Pacific Ocean accounted for 31 percent. However, there are not many accesses to the sea or sea routes for China to 'go abroad.' In a certain sense, the 'two oceans' are China's lifeline in its future survival and development (the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean shoulder the transportation of over 95 percent of China's total volume of global trade). Moreover, as the gateway that connects 'the two oceans,' the Strait of Malacca is even more critical to China's economic lifeline (60 percent of China's oil imports has to come in via the Indian Ocean–Strait of Malacca–South China Sea)."

exports.<sup>82</sup> In the words of one analyst, since China adopted its “going out” strategy in 2002, “maritime navigation lanes, in particular energy resource transport routes, have become the lifeline for civilian economic development.”<sup>83</sup>

Finally, Chinese maritime analysts have also noted the increasing importance of providing protection for China’s overseas investment interests and Chinese citizens working abroad, as well as overseas Chinese persons. Because the security interests of Chinese workers and investment interests abroad were discussed above, they will not be addressed in this section.

### ***Maritime Strategic Depth, Access, and Power Projection***

Chinese naval analysts increasingly stress the importance of expanding China’s maritime strategic depth in order to protect its economically vital eastern and southeastern coastal economic belt.<sup>84</sup> They note the growing centrality of the 200-kilometer zone along China’s coast to the country’s overall economic security. Despite containing less than 30 percent of the country’s total arable land, this coastal belt is home to more than 40 percent of China’s population, produces more than 70 percent of China’s GDP, has attracted more than 80 percent of China’s foreign direct investment, and produces about 90 percent of China’s products for export. Not surprisingly, these specialists also contend that the economic and cultural importance of this region to China will only increase in the twenty-first century. The region’s economic importance has also been used as yet another argument for the importance of Taiwan’s reunification with the mainland. One senior officer describes Taiwan as China’s crucial “southeastern strategic gateway” and notes that Taiwan and the Zhoushan Islands strategically shield the six southeastern Chinese provinces that produce one-third of the nation’s GDP.<sup>85</sup>

Chinese naval analysts are paying greater attention to potential limitations on China’s access to the Pacific, noting that their country is surrounded by and cut off from the ocean by numerous island chains controlled by other countries, and that China’s only potential unhindered access point to the Pacific would be Taiwan—if it were unified with the mainland.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Zhang, *Guojia Haishang Anquan*, 456–57; and Zhang, “Modern China Needs A New Concept of Sea Power.”

<sup>83</sup> Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 45–69.

<sup>84</sup> Wei Daqiang and Li Ming, “Insight on Maritime Military Development Strategy in View of Harmony,” *Guofang* [National Defense] (2010): 62–64.

<sup>85</sup> Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 414–15.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

### ***Maritime Security Cooperation, Stability, and Diplomatic Management of Disputes***

China retains its strong interest in positive security relations with other East Asian maritime powers and a peaceful environment conducive to its development.<sup>87</sup> Officially, China judges that “the Asia-Pacific security situation remains stable on the whole.”<sup>88</sup> While some of China’s growing maritime interests risk heightened tensions with its Southeast Asian neighbors, others increase China’s need for good relations. Maritime analysts underscore the importance of promoting regional security and economic cooperation, with China playing a prominent role. China hopes that its maritime military forces will be seen by its neighbors as contributing to regional peace, security, and development, thereby counteracting regional fears of a “China Maritime Threat.”<sup>89</sup> Maritime security analysts point with hope to China’s role in a growing set of multilateral security organizations and dialogues, including ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)-plus-China, “ASEAN+3,” (ASEAN plus South Korea, Japan, and China), and the East Asian Summit.<sup>90</sup>

Official policy documents have consistently endorsed settling regional maritime disputes and territorial conflicts through peaceful consultation.<sup>91</sup> In 2002, China and ASEAN signed a brief “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea” that called for building mutual trust and confidence, reaffirming respect and commitment for freedom of navigation, exercising self-restraint in activities that might escalate disputes, and resolving territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means.<sup>92</sup> But in the years since, China has reasserted its strategy of trying to isolate the ASEAN partners from each other, opposing what it calls the “internationalization” or “multilateralization” of the South China Sea issues, and alternately negotiating bilateral deals and applying bilateral pressure to advance its territorial and development interests.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 455–56.

<sup>88</sup> Ma, “Shangri-La Dialogue,” 1.

<sup>89</sup> Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 456–57.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 412–13.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 461. SrCapt Zhang maintains that since the 1970s, China has sought to set aside conflict over the Diaoyu Islands. In 1988, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a “Memorandum on the Xisha and Nansha Islands,” which fully laid out an argument on why China inarguably has sovereignty over the Nansha Islands, but that disputes with other countries could be resolved peacefully through consultations.

<sup>92</sup> “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea,” 4 November 2002. The complete text is available at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Web site, <http://www.aseansec.org/13163.htm>.

<sup>93</sup> A critical analysis of China’s South China Seas diplomacy is available from Barry Wain, “Manila’s Bungle in the South China Sea,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* (January/February 2008), [http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/Manila\\_South\\_China\\_Sea](http://www.viet-studies.info/kinhte/Manila_South_China_Sea).

## STABILIZING CHINA'S WESTERN BORDERLAND REGIONS

### *Evolving Internal Security Threats in the 1990s*

Chinese leadership concerns over internal security have intensified and broadened in recent years as social protest, ethnic unrest, violent crime, drug smuggling, and other indicators of social instability have risen unabated since the late 1990s.<sup>94</sup> Seven years of solid economic growth following the Asian financial crisis did not prevent incidents of mass protest from rising steadily from 37,000 in 1999 to more than 90,000 in 2007.<sup>95</sup> When China's economy slowed during the late 2008–9 recession, law enforcement sources indicate the protest figures for 2008 reached 120,000, and may have gone as high as 180,000 in 2010.<sup>96</sup>

Over the last decade, however, the immediate causes of unrest have broadened beyond layoffs and other economic dislocation issues to include numerous failures of governance, including illegal seizures of farmland, forcible eviction of people from their apartments, official disregard of citizen petitions, environmental pollution, mishandling of natural disasters, and heavy-handed repression of those who organized citizens to complain about these abuses and predations. Large-scale violent confrontations with security forces in such places as Menglian, Wengan, Gansu, and elsewhere, and reported increases in violent attacks on police officers all suggest that the capacity of the police to intimidate citizens may slowly be eroding.<sup>97</sup>

Containing most of these security challenges is primarily the responsibility of civilian public security and paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP) forces. But for the

---

<sup>94</sup> In addition to increases in protests, overall crime rates rose from 2 million incidents per year in 1998 to 4.8 million in 2008. National Bureau of Statistics, *China Statistical Yearbook 2009*, 924; *Zhongguo Falu Nianjian 1999* [Law Yearbook of China 1999] (Beijing: Law Publishing House, 1999).

<sup>95</sup> Mass incidents reportedly reached 87,000 in 2005 and more than 90,000 in 2006. "PRC *Liaowang Weekly* Raises Alarms on 'Mass Incidents'" and "The Warning Signal of 'Typical Mass Incident,'" *Liaowang Magazine* [in Chinese], 8 September 2008, 28. The 1999 figures are from Ministry of Public Security Fourth Research Institute, ed., *Quntixing Shijian Yanjiu Lunwenji* [Collected Research Essays on Mass Incidents] (Beijing: Chinese People's Public Security University Press, 2001).

<sup>96</sup> Professor Zhu Lijia, a program director at the Chinese Academy of Governance, was quoted in January 2010 as stating that his program monitored China's mass incident statistics, and that the number had doubled from 2006 to 2009. "PRC Expert on Mass Incidents as Challenge to Government Over Next 10 Years," *Shanghai Liaowang Dongfang Zhoukan Magazine* [in Chinese], 28 January 2010, 30–31.

<sup>97</sup> "PRC *Liaowang Weekly* Raises Alarms on 'Mass Incidents'" and "The Warning Signal of 'Typical Mass Incident,'" 28; "PRC Expert on Mass Incidents as Challenge to Government Over Next 10 Years," 30–31; Murray Scot Tanner, "How China Manages Internal Security Challenges and Its Impact on PLA Missions," in *Beyond the Strait: PLA Missions Other Than Taiwan*, eds., Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute and the National Bureau of Asian Research, 2009), 39–98.



regular PLA, concerns over the spike in ethnic unrest in China's western borderlands are a special concern. This ethnic instability has become intertwined with other regional security problems, thereby raising the overall strategic importance of China's western borderlands for the PLA and all of China's security forces. These challenges include international terrorist networks; rapidly rising narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan into Xinjiang; increasing energy reliance upon Russia and Central Asia; strategic rivalry among China, Russia, India, and other rising powers in the region; and presence of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia. As a result, a growing number of Chinese officials and analysts argue that China's security interests in its western border region and in Central and South Asia rival those in its southeastern coastal region (including Taiwan), and they have voiced concerns about the widening array of challenges that China faces in the west (see map 1 below).<sup>98</sup>

### ***Lhasa and Urumqi Riots Rekindle Ethnic Instability Concerns***

The riots in Lhasa in March 2008 and in Urumqi in July 2009 further heightened Beijing's concerns about its most pressing western security interest: suppressing and defusing ethnic threats to social control and national unity. Several aspects of the riots caught Beijing off guard, including the failure of its social intelligence networks, the sudden loss of control by regional police forces, and the unexpectedly sharp intercommunal ethnic violence (Tibetans attacking Han and Hui shopkeepers in Lhasa and fights between Hans and Uighurs in Urumqi). As a result, regional officials required logistical and other assistance from the regular PLA to restore order.<sup>99</sup>

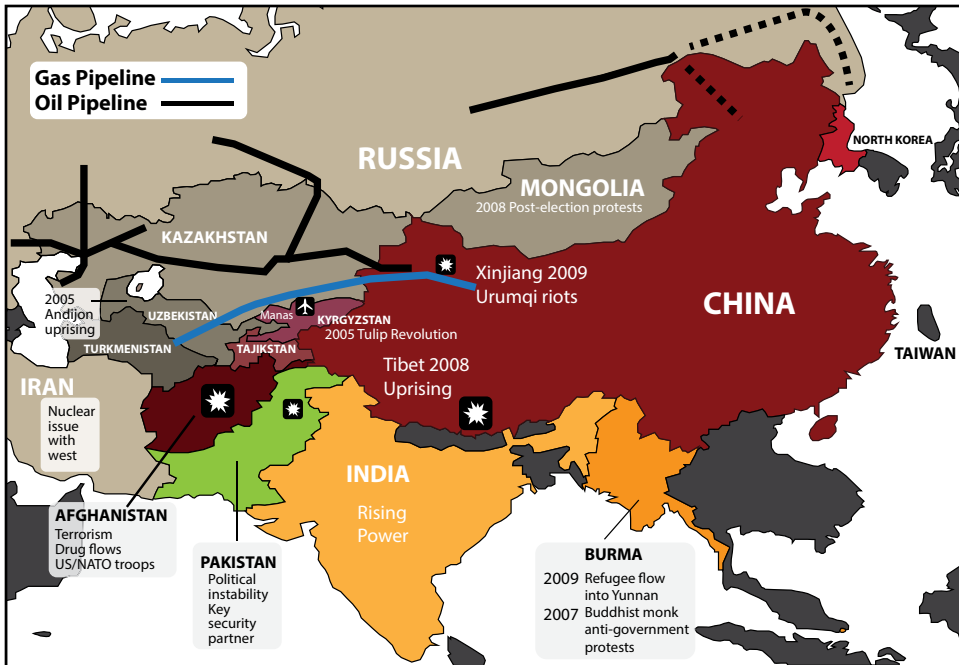
More fundamentally, the riots demonstrated that Beijing's nearly decade-long strategy of promoting rapid economic development to strengthen its legitimacy and defuse opposition among the Tibetan and Muslim populations is still far from paying off. In spring 2010, CCP leaders responded by convening a major national policy "work conference" on Xinjiang. Official press coverage of the meeting indicated that, rather than

---

<sup>98</sup> In addition to the published and interview sources cited in the paragraphs below, several Chinese security and foreign policy analysts have confirmed to the authors that these issues are being discussed at present.

<sup>99</sup> While analysts broadly agree that regular PLA were called in to help after these uprisings, efforts by security forces to obscure their unit affiliations have made it difficult for analysts to find conclusive evidence as to which activities involved the PLA and which were handled by PAP and public security forces. Two detailed efforts to reconstruct this evidence are Harold M. Tanner, "The People's Liberation Army and China's Internal Security Challenges," in *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, eds., Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute and the National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010), 237–94; and Tanner, "How China Manages Internal Security Challenges and its Impact on PLA Missions," 39–98.

**Map 1. China's Perceived Security Concerns to the South and West**



Map adapted by MCU Press, courtesy of Michael Markowitz, CNA

considering fundamentally new strategies for defusing instability, Beijing was doubling down on its existing strategy of relying on rapid economic growth in the region while stepping up repression of potential sources of unrest.<sup>100</sup> Party leaders, moreover, ascribe a good deal of the blame for the unrest to overseas Tibetan and Uighur “instigators,” as

<sup>100</sup> Speaking in March 2010 at a preparation session for the work conference, Politburo Standing Committee Member Zhou Yongkang summarized the strategy this way: “We have to attach equal importance to economic development and social stability and intensify our precautions against and crackdown on the ‘three evil forces’ of terrorism, separatism and extremism.” See “Chinese Central Government to Step Up Support for Xinjiang: Senior Leaders,” *People’s Daily* online, 31 March 2010, <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/66102/6935432.html>. A May 2010 *People’s Daily* online report indicates the region is to receive 10 billion renminbi in development support from 19 other provinces. One expert quoted in the report summarizes the strategy in “Experts: Central Work Conference to Boost Long-term Stability of Xinjiang,” *People’s Daily* online, 21 May 2010, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90785/6994417.html>.

well as countries such as Germany, Turkey, and the United States that provide Uighur rights groups with sanctuary.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Effect on China's Other Central Asian Interests***

China's worries about domestic Muslim unrest have been a critical factor driving its conflicted attitudes about U.S./NATO presence in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia. China lacks a well-developed community of expertise on Central Asia, and analysts differ substantially in their assessments of the threat that Muslim extremism in the region poses to China's domestic security. Some security analysts and military officers assert that, before 11 September, China had reached a *modus vivendi* with Taliban officials to prevent support for Chinese Uighur separatists and could do so again in a post-U.S./NATO Afghanistan.<sup>102</sup> Others still see Afghanistan and Pakistan as seedbeds and conduits for ethnic, religious, and criminal groups that could seriously threaten the social order of China as well as that of its Central Asian security partners. While some of these analysts claim that the Taliban and al-Qaeda still actively train Uighur separatists in these countries for actions against China, other Chinese specialists downplay this threat.<sup>103</sup>

Over the past five years, China's uncertainty about Uighur terrorist links to Afghanistan and Pakistan has greatly complicated Beijing's sense of its interests regarding the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from the region. Beijing has long hoped for the withdrawal of U.S./NATO forces but is worried about the impact this withdrawal will have upon the stability of the region, especially Pakistan. Some Chinese officials and analysts have criticized the U.S./NATO presence following 11 September as part of a larger strategic encirclement of their territory by the United States and its security partners. In conversations with U.S. specialists, Chinese analysts often argued that, regardless

---

<sup>101</sup> In a January 2010 article, for example, Defense Minister Liang Guanglie criticized "hostile Western forces [who] interfere with our internal affairs under the signboard of freedom, democracy, and human rights, doing all they can to instigate and support 'Tibetan independence,' 'East Turkistan,' and other separatist forces to carry out separatist and sabotage activities, causing great harm to our national solidarity and cohesiveness." See Liang Guanglie, "Conduct In-Depth Nationwide National Defense Education and Provide Powerful Spiritual Driving Force for Comprehensive Construction of Well-Off Society," *Guofang* [National Defense] (2010): 4–7.

<sup>102</sup> Interviews with Chinese security analysts, 2009 and 2011.

<sup>103</sup> Interviews with Chinese security analysts, 2009–12. For Beijing, the development of close security cooperation and economic links with the leaders of the Central Asian states and with Russia is essential to maintaining stability in its west, and China has maintained a strikingly consistent focus on these goals in its regional diplomacy. As one indicator, in every one of Hu Jintao's seven addresses to the SCO between 2003 and 2009, Hu's number one priority, or one of his two or three top priorities, has been strengthening SCO cooperation against "terrorism, separatism, and extremism," threats to political stability, and trafficking in drugs and arms.

of the United States' original intentions for moving into the region after 2001, it began using the fight against terrorism and armed extremism in Afghanistan as a pretext to justify establishing a long-term presence in the region.<sup>104</sup> Still, many are concerned about the post-U.S./NATO future. For example, the AMS's Center for National Defense Policy forecast in its *Strategic Review 2011* that the "ten years' anti-terrorism war launched by the U.S. in Afghanistan is far from reaching its expected goal. With the withdrawal pace of NATO forces quickened, Taliban and al-Qaeda attacks are likely to rebound."<sup>105</sup>

Concerns among Chinese security officials over drug traffickers and organized crime groups from Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries transiting into China have also spiked since about 2005. Chinese security experts also believe that much of this drug money ultimately provides financial support for terrorism. China and Russia made this issue a major focus of the 2007 and 2009 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summits and the SCO security ministers' conference in May 2009.<sup>106</sup>

### ***Energy, Trade, and Geopolitical Stakes***

China's trade and investment stakes in Central Asia have also risen rapidly over the past decade, and Beijing increasingly relies on the region's oil and gas to diversify its energy sources and minimize its vulnerability to an interruption of its maritime energy supply lines. China must confront the revival of Russia's power in the region as well as India's rise. More broadly, China has a strong stake in fostering a regional geopolitical and economic environment that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and conducive to China's stability and economic development.

Some analysts also contend that China's security interests in the west are rising in relative terms because its security concerns on its southeastern coast are easing. This view has several elements. Some analysts argue that the decreasing tension between China and Taiwan since President Ma Ying-jeou's election in March 2008 has significantly recalibrated the balance of challenges that China faces. Other analysts attribute this reduced threat on China's east to a relative decline in the United States' and Japan's economic power. Still others point to the emergence of central and south Eurasia as a new "geopolitical . . . center of world affairs" owing to its energy resources and its rising major powers (India, Russia, China), but also to its powerful terrorist networks. Overall, these assessments of Eurasia clearly indicate that there is a debate ongoing among

---

<sup>104</sup> Interviews with Chinese security analysts, 2009–12.

<sup>105</sup> AMS, Center for National Defense Policy, *Strategic Review 2011* (Beijing, April 2012), 21.

<sup>106</sup> Li Yanming and Zhang Kun, "'Jin Xinyue' Dupin dui Xinjiang Shentou Taishi ji Zhencha Silu" [Trends in Smuggling Drugs from the "Golden Crescent" into Xinjiang and Paths for Investigation], *Journal of the Xinjiang Police Officer's Academy* 29 (November 2009): 18–22.

Chinese strategic thinkers; many of these analysts' views flatly contradict those of the maritime security analysts cited above who claim that the greatest threats to China's national security and territorial integrity are increasingly offshore.<sup>107</sup>

Although senior Chinese officials and security analysts overwhelmingly see China's principal security concerns as being to its southeast, some August 2009 speeches by Defense Minister Liang Guanglie provided a clear signal that China's leaders also regard the western borderlands as an area of growing national security interest. Speaking to military audiences in Chengdu and Lanzhou less than two months after the July 2009 Urumqi clashes, Liang emphasized that China's western areas and the countries to its west were "an important strategic direction" for China (*zhongyao zhanlue fangxiang*). Liang's choice of words is extremely important in official Chinese Communist strategic parlance. His wording indicates that, even though China's western regions are still a secondary region not quite equal to China's east as a potential source of threat, the west is still a region of growing importance and strategic concern.<sup>108</sup> There is, at present, no evidence that Chinese leaders or analysts want to go so far as to change China's official 1993 judgment that China's east/southeast coastal region (in particular Taiwan, but also increasingly the South China Sea) is the direction from which China faces its most immediate and serious security challenges—the so-called "main strategic direction" (*zhuyao zhanlue fangxiang*). But Liang's speeches make clear that the CCP and PLA leadership regard China's west-southwest as a region of great strategic importance.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> This phrase is from Beijing University scholar Li Yihu. For a sample of these views, see Jin Canrong, "Changes in the International Geopolitical Pattern and Their Impact on China," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations] (20 May 2008): 12–14; Li Yihu, "Changes in the Entropy of Geopolitics," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (20 May 2008): 6–7; Tang Yongsheng, "Construct a Solid Geostrategic Prop," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (20 May 2008): 20–21; "Editorial: China Should Act as Regional Stabilizer," *Global Times* online version, 20 October 2009; and Jiang Xinwei, "Sino-Soviet Relations Under the Framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (20 March 2007).

<sup>108</sup> "Liang Guanglie: To Boost Innovative Development of National Defense Mobilization Construction," *PLA Daily*, 18 August 2009, [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2009-08/18/content\\_4075742.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2009-08/18/content_4075742.htm); and "Chinese Defense Minister Stresses Importance of Defense Mobilization," Xinhua, 29 August 2009, <http://english.sina.com/china/2009/0829/266762.html>. In addition to these shorter versions on more authoritative sites, a speech that purports to be a longer version of Liang's address in Chengdu, and which discusses regional strategic concerns in greater detail, is available on some Chinese military enthusiast bulletin boards, including "Liang Guanglie Chengdu Jianghua Toulou Zhongda Xinxi" [Liang Guanglie's Chengdu Speech Reveals Important News], [http://bbs.tiexue.net/post\\_3809814\\_1.html](http://bbs.tiexue.net/post_3809814_1.html).

<sup>109</sup> On the concept of China's "main strategic direction," see David M. Finkelstein, "China's National Military Strategy: An Overview of the 'Military Strategic Guidelines'," in *Rightsizing the People's Liberation Army: Exploring the Contours of China's Military*, eds., Andrew Scobell and Roy Kamphausen (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), 69–140, especially 92–103.

## DEVELOPING SPACE AND CYBERSPACE SECURITY INTERESTS

For more than a decade, Chinese leaders and security analysts have increasingly regarded effective control of space and cyberspace resources as critical for defending both China's domestic security and its international security. As noted above, Hu Jintao in 2004 argued that the "progress of the times" and China's economic development were pushing China's security interests into space and "the electromagnetic (EM) spectrum" (*dianci kongjian*), and these, along with maritime regions, were two of the critical new realms into which China's national security interests are expanding.<sup>110</sup>

These deepening interests have both a defensive dimension and an offensive one. From a defensive perspective, Beijing sees space and cyber information resources both as a critical source of military power for its potential adversaries (especially the United States) and as a dangerous organizational tool in the hands of domestic and international critics of China's political and ethnic policies. From an offensive perspective, Chinese military and security analysts see attacks on the space and cyber assets of prospective military and political adversaries as increasingly important to successful offensive operations.

Chinese security analysts, amplifying Hu's comments, contend that China's globalization and economic development will continue driving China's growing space and cyberspace security interests in the twenty-first century:

With the opening up and development of our country's economy, our national interests have gradually gone beyond the scope of traditional land territory, territorial waters, and territorial air space. In order to safeguard our ever-expanding national interests, military strategy needs to expand its vision, not only paying attention to and safeguarding our country's interests in survival, but also paying attention to and safeguarding our country's developmental interests; not only paying attention to and safeguarding traditional security of land territory, territorial waters, and territorial air space, but also paying attention to and

---

<sup>110</sup> Hu, "Clearly Understand the New Historic Missions of our Military in the New Period of the New Century."

safeguarding security in such areas as the ocean, the space, and information, in order to provide strategic support for the expansion of national interests.<sup>111</sup>

China believes that a space program can make important and wide-ranging contributions to its security interests. In addition to burnishing China's reputation as an emerging power, the space program is aimed at enhancing its diplomatic leverage, military power, technological advancement, economic and commercial growth, and even regime legitimacy. Space analyst Kevin Pollpeter notes that "China's space program is intended to portray China as a modernizing nation committed to the peaceful use of space while at the same time serving China's political, economic, and military interests." Pollpeter also notes China's confidence that its space program can become an effective driver for economic and technological advancement. One aspect of this goal has been China's success in establishing itself as an affordable provider of launch services for developing countries, including petroleum suppliers China is trying to court. Beijing has also drawn on the nationalist appeal of its space program—especially highlighting the fact that China is only the third country to mount a successful manned space program—to enhance popular support for the Communist Party.<sup>112</sup>

Over the past decade, Chinese military experts have emphasized China's strategic interest in effectively utilizing information technology, especially space-based information resources, and denying the wartime use of these resources to prospective enemies. These information resources will be critical to enhancing China's strategic depth, strengthening China's deterrent and defense capability, and supporting the PLA's efforts to transform itself into a military that is capable of winning modern informatized wars.<sup>113</sup>

Many PLA analysts explicitly assume that, in a major war, China will be subject to early air and space attack by a technologically superior opponent. At the same time, PLA

---

<sup>111</sup> Fan Zhenjiang and Lou Yaoliang, "Xin Shiji Xin Jieduan Junshi Zhanlue Zhidao Yanjiu," [A Study of Military Strategic Guidance in the New Period in the New Century], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] 105 (2009): 36–44. Very similar arguments are made in the following articles: Chen Zhou, "Shilun Xin Xingshi Xia Zhongguo Fangyuxing Guofang Zhengce de Fazhan" [On the Development of China's Defensive National Defense Policy in the New Situation], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] 108 (2009): 66; Zhang Xiaotian, "New Demands on the Innovative Development of Military Strategies Imposed by the Expansion of National Interests," *Guofang* [National Defense] (2010): 14–16; and Sun Kejia, Lin Peixiong, Liu Feng, and Liu Yang, "Zhongshi Luxing Xin Shiji Xin Jieduan Wojun Lishi Shiming" [Faithfully Implement Our Army's Historical Missions at the New Stage in the New Century] (Beijing: Haichao Chubanshe, 2009), 55–91, 116–68.

<sup>112</sup> Kevin Pollpeter, *Building for the Future: China's Progress in Space Technology During the Tenth 5-Year Plan and the U.S. Response* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2008), viii–x.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

analysts often portray enemy C4ISR<sup>114</sup> resources as vulnerable “systems of systems” and argue that their information flows can be paralyzed or subjected to a cascade of system failures if the PLAAF or other services strike their key nodes and links effectively. Consequently, for a growing number of PLA missions, a principal objective is to identify, target, and disable the enemy’s interconnected command and control, surveillance, and other information systems. PLA analysts have increasingly emphasized both the importance and the utility of space-supported information resources for air force offensive missions. Conventional air strikes supported by space-based information resources are the most commonly discussed method for carrying out the offensive mission. Some PLA analysts have also advocated that China develop its capacity for “air and space orbital strikes” directed against enemy satellites.<sup>115</sup>

Beijing’s efforts to advance its interests in space face a political dilemma similar to China’s maritime security program—how can China advance its interests in space while preserving its self-styled image as a peacefully rising power? Although much of China’s space program involves intrinsically dual-use civilian-military technology, China has struggled to avoid sparking excessive anxiety about the program’s aims in the United States and other major world powers. Hu Jintao’s 2004 remarks emphasized the peaceful motivations underlying China’s space interests and the potential for space as a new area for “international cooperation” that offers important new resources to human development.<sup>116</sup> China has avoided discussing the military aspects of its own space program, even while frequently attacking the alleged military motivations of other major powers’ space programs.

## **MORE ASSERTIVELY TRYING TO SHAPE CHINA'S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

China’s interest in shaping an international security environment that is more hospitable to its rise is not new or unique to China. Jiang Zemin spoke frequently of China’s need to promote a long-term, peaceful international environment, build stable relations with countries on its periphery, and avoid conflict with major powers. Hu Jintao echoed Jiang’s views in his 2004 speeches to China’s top diplomats and military officers, stressing China’s need to seize its period of strategic opportunity by encouraging a peaceful

---

<sup>114</sup> In this instance, Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance.

<sup>115</sup> Yuan Jingwei, *Research on Integrated Aerospace Combat Operations* [Kongtian Yiti Zuozhan Yanjiu] (Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>116</sup> Hu, “Clearly Understand the New Historic Missions of our Military in the New Period of the New Century.”



international environment for the country's rise.<sup>117</sup> As a result, Chinese leaders feel a strong stake in continuing many key aspects of the "new Chinese security diplomacy" that has emerged over the past decade.<sup>118</sup>

But China's leaders feel they can and must make more assertive efforts to shape their security environment in the years ahead. Beijing is willing to undertake more forward-leaning measures to forge a more hospitable environment for China's rise because the leadership feels that their growing economic leverage and diplomatic acceptance permit them to do so. At the same time, Beijing remains deeply concerned that its security environment poses increasingly serious threats to its domestic stability, borderland security, and sustained economic growth.

### ***Continuing Successful Approaches***

Chinese leaders' speeches and analysts' commentaries all strongly suggest that China regards its international security cooperation and diplomacy over the past decade as having been effective in enhancing its influence, deepening ties to its security partners, and defusing potential hostility toward its emergence as a great power. The cornerstones of this security cooperation have been participation in multilateral security organizations (most notably the SCO and ASEAN Regional Forum), international peacekeeping, military diplomacy, and combined exercises with security partners. A major message from Beijing continues to be that China's rise will be uniquely nonthreatening to the world, in marked contrast to past colonial empires or modern superpowers. China insists that it will favor "peaceful cooperation" and political and diplomatic means of dispute resolution.<sup>119</sup> In an effort to "document" that China's inclinations are more benevolent than those of the West, Chinese analysts are promoting the view that historically, whenever

---

<sup>117</sup> See "The 10th Conference of Chinese Diplomatic Envoys Stationed Abroad Held in Beijing," 30 August 2004, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cetur/eng/xwtd/t155745.htm>; also see Hu, "Clearly Understand the New Historic Missions of our Military in the New Period of the New Century."

<sup>118</sup> China's "new security diplomacy" is analyzed in detail in Gill, *Rising Star*.

<sup>119</sup> On Hu's speech to the 11th meeting of diplomatic envoys, see Qian Tong, "The 11th Meeting of Chinese Diplomatic Envoys Convened in Beijing; and "Hu Jintao Makes an Important Speech," Beijing, Xinhua Domestic Service, 29 July 2009.

China has been powerful and expanded its ties to other regions, it has done so in a nonimperialistic fashion.<sup>120</sup>

Chinese leaders will probably also continue to show a keen interest in “structuring” international security problems in ways that maximize China’s leverage and enhance its reputation but diminish the costs it must bear to maintain those international systems from which it benefits. Beijing continues to value regional multilateral security organizations, such as ASEAN and SCO, as tools for tamping down concerns about China’s rise, easing its entrée into these regions, and limiting regional competition from the United States (and probably Japan, Russia, and India). At the same time, China maintains its strong preference for funneling many critical security issues (e.g., Iran, North Korea) into the UN Security Council where its veto restricts U.S. and NATO military actions, where other countries must vie for its acquiescence to sanctions, and where its cooperation with Russia often permits each country to avoid criticism as the “sole protector” of global pariah states. However, on issues where bilateral talks naturally maximize China’s economic and diplomatic leverage—territorial disputes in the South China Sea are a prime example—China has criticized “inappropriate” efforts to “internationalize” or “multilateralize” these issues. Going forward, insistence on the diplomatic structures that are most advantageous to China will remain a key part of its interest in shaping its security environment.

### ***Increasingly Assertive Departures***

As Beijing’s leaders take stock of their country’s growing influence—and the perceived decline of U.S. power—they feel increasingly justified and secure in grasping new opportunities to promote a strategic environment that is less threatening and more conducive to China’s sustained economic development, to its emergence as a major power, and to the CCP’s continued rule.

Believing that China can be increasingly assertive and forward-leaning in trying to shape its security environment, China’s leaders have embraced new objectives and challenges in their security diplomacy and intelligence work:

---

<sup>120</sup> See Wang Guifang, “Analysis of Basic Features of and Actualization Approaches to Development of China’s Security Interests,” in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 20–25. According to Wang, “During the Ming Dynasty, China was a powerful nation with seagoing capabilities; however, the then central government of the dynasty, whose cultural underpinning was the Confucius school of thought, dispatched huge fleets to the distant African continent only to spread the kingdom’s benevolence and majesty. There was no actual military action of conquering, only the seeds of Chinese civilization that were left behind where the ships traveled. The new China upholds the cultural beliefs of peace and cooperation; maintains that all nations, big or small, strong or weak, are equal and that all countries can draw on and use one another’s cultures for reference; and adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.”

- **Enhancing Cultural, Moral, and Legal Influence:** In a major conference in 2009, Hu Jintao called on China’s diplomatic corps to make more effective use of China’s cultural, moral, and legal influence (what many call “soft power”) to promote its security interests. There is evidence, however, that Chinese leaders and analysts are engaged in debates about whether China’s increased diplomatic activism might spark greater foreign opposition to its rise. Toward this end, China thinks it must better coordinate diplomatic, military, and other sources of “soft power.”<sup>121</sup>
- **Increasing Assertiveness to Promote Stability in Neighboring Countries:** Despite its official policy of “noninterference” in other countries’ internal affairs, China is displaying a growing interest in actively pressing for greater political stability within neighboring countries. Recent border region crises and internal instability in Myanmar, Thailand, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nepal are spurring internal Chinese debates over how much its security interests may compel it to “interfere” in its neighbors’ affairs.
- **Increasing Overseas Pursuit of Domestic Security Concerns:** In its diplomatic and political security activities, China appears to be demonstrating an increasing interest in and willingness to carry the fight to ensure the CCP’s hold on power onto the sovereign territory of other countries. Toward this end, China is increasingly pressuring its diplomatic partners to withdraw their protection from groups it believes are linked to domestic threats to its national security, and it may be strengthening its external commitment to monitoring, containing, and undermining these groups’ activities in foreign countries.

### ***Expanding Cultural, Moral, and Legal Influence***

In July 2009, Hu Jintao and other officials called for strengthening China’s comprehensive “toolkit”—diplomatic, economic, and cultural—for advancing China’s security interests. During an “important speech” to China’s diplomatic corps, Hu stressed that China’s diplomatic work should do a better job of serving “reform, development, and stability, and . . . safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development interests.” Hu called

---

<sup>121</sup> Bonnie Glaser and Benjamin Dooley, “China’s 11th Ambassadorial Conference Signals Continuity and Change in Foreign Policy,” *China Brief* 9 (2009), [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org).

for China's diplomats to make the country more influential politically, more competitive economically, more magnetic in its image, and a more appealing force morally.<sup>122</sup>

For Beijing, one of the central dilemmas of this approach will be gauging how much more it should risk in terms of taking on a higher diplomatic profile, at the potential cost of heightening concerns that it harbors expansionist or hostile intent. A former senior Chinese diplomat has noted that China needs "a good international environment" and it cannot make gains "by stirring up confrontation."<sup>123</sup>

### ***Increasing Efforts to Promote Stability in Neighboring Countries***

Recent border-region crises and internal instability in neighboring countries have caused Chinese officials to reconsider China's "noninterference" policy and to assess various methods of actively encouraging political stability in these countries. For the present, PLA and civilian analysts have largely refrained from calling for China to consider using armed forces in these countries. Looking ahead, however, if these incidents of serious border instability continue, the PLA will likely face increased calls for it to come up with options for dealing with instability on China's borderlands.

Among the countries whose instability has sparked Beijing's reconsideration are Myanmar, Thailand, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nepal. Since mid-2009, China has made notable statements indicating a willingness to involve itself in matters affecting the stability of two neighbors in particular: Myanmar and North Korea. Problems with Myanmar emerged in August 2009, when a crackdown by the country's military government on armed groups in the Kokang border region (most of whose inhabitants have ethnic ties to China) caused thousands of people to flee into China.<sup>124</sup> Estimates of the total flow of refugees range from 10,000 to 37,000.<sup>125</sup> Most were sheltered and fed by the government of China's Yunnan Province.<sup>126</sup> The Myanmar

---

<sup>122</sup> Many translations of this four-part phrase have been put forward, including "make efforts so that China will have more influential power in politics, more competitiveness in the economic field, more affinity in image, more appealing force in morality." See Qian, "The 11th Meeting of Chinese Diplomatic Envoys Convened in Beijing"; "Hu Jintao Makes an Important Speech"; see also Qi Fei, "China's 'Diplomatic Focus' Advances with Times," *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* [International Herald] online, 28 July 2009.

<sup>123</sup> The diplomat is Wang Fan, deputy institute director at the MFA's Foreign Affairs University and a former diplomat serving in the UK. See Fei, "China's 'Diplomatic Focus' Advances with Times."

<sup>124</sup> Qiu Yongzheng, "Myanmar Conflict Puts China in Dilemma," *Global Times*, 28 August 2009.

<sup>125</sup> Thomas Fuller, "Fleeing Battle, Myanmar Refugees Head to China," *New York Times*, 29 August 2009; and "China, Myanmar Share Responsibility to Maintain Border Stability: FM," Xinhua, 1 September 2009.

<sup>126</sup> Qiu, "Myanmar Conflict Puts China in Dilemma."

military, pursuing these refugees, fired into Chinese territory, killing or injuring several Chinese citizens.<sup>127</sup>

This crisis placed China in a unique situation, whereby its principle of “noninterference” conflicted with its interest in the safety of both expatriate Chinese and ethnic Chinese in a neighboring country. This was reflected in the strong statements released by the Chinese government in late August and early September 2009 with regard to the crisis. A PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson told reporters on two separate occasions that China “hopes that the Burmese side will properly resolve the relevant domestic issue and maintain the stability of the China-Myanmar border.” The foreign ministry also asserted that “safeguarding the stability of the China-Myanmar border . . . is the shared responsibility of both governments” and urged the Burmese side to “protect the safety as well as legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens in Myanmar.”<sup>128</sup> These statements seem to indicate that China perceives a strong interest in how Myanmar handles its domestic affairs and how ethnic Chinese on both sides of the China-Myanmar border are treated.

Chinese concerns about the stability of the Korean Peninsula have also continued to rise, gradually promoting increased willingness by Beijing to express itself in North Korean domestic affairs. An early sign of this occurred during a May 2010 visit by the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il, when Hu Jintao indicated a need for closer coordination between North Korea and China on internal issues. Among Hu’s “five proposals” for strengthening PRC-DPRK ties were suggestions to “exchange views in a timely manner and regularly on major domestic and diplomatic issues, international and regional situation[s], as well as on governance experience” and to “strengthen coordination in international and regional affairs to better serve regional peace and stability.”<sup>129</sup>

### ***Increasing Overseas Confrontation of Domestic Security Threats***

For decades China has felt a strong security interest in opposing the activities of overseas ethnic, religious, and political groups that use foreign countries as sanctuaries from which to promote and organize opposition to CCP government policies inside the

---

<sup>127</sup> Wang Yan, Yang Yaoping, and Wu Xiaoyang, “Situation in Myanmar’s Kokang Region Tends to Be Stable; China Appropriately Handles Border Inhabitants Flooding Into Chinese Territories,” Xinhua, 30 August 2009.

<sup>128</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesman Answers a Reporter’s Question Regarding the Current Situation on the China-Burma Border,” Xinhua, 28 August 2009; and “China, Myanmar Share Responsibility to Maintain Border Stability: FM.”

<sup>129</sup> “Top Leaders of China, DPRK Hold Talks in Beijing,” Xinhua, 7 May 2010.

PRC. In the past couple of years, evidence has shown that China is interested in carrying the fight against these groups overseas to other countries.<sup>130</sup>

Following the 2009 Urumqi riots, China exerted pressure on diplomatic partners to withhold visas or not provide protection to Uighur activists organizing anti-Chinese activities. In addition to publicly criticizing Australia and Japan, China canceled at least one high-level diplomatic visit (with Australia) and warned Japan that Uighur anti-Chinese activity on its soil would harm relations.<sup>131</sup> Hu Jintao personally requested during two exchanges with President Obama that the United States not permit its territory to be used by these groups to mount activities that affected China's "core" national security interests.<sup>132</sup>

For a somewhat longer period, China has worked with its partners in the SCO and other Central and South Asian countries to prevent Uighur activists and other critics from operating there. China and the SCO have signed mutual extradition agreements for persons suspected by other SCO partners of "terrorist, separatist, or extremist"

---

<sup>130</sup> Chinese sources rarely speak openly about any international missions that the party may have entrusted to China's military and intelligence services to resist or contain perceived international enemies. In his 2004 speech on the PLA's "historical missions" for the current period, Hu Jintao reminded the PLA of its role as a key pillar of the "people's democratic dictatorship," and emphasized that the PLA's first mission was to provide a powerful guarantee for the party to consolidate its ruling position. Hu focused on collaboration between the CCP's domestic and foreign enemies to undermine the party's ruling position and to Westernize and democratize China. Hu underscored the importance of absolute party control over the military, but went into no detail about any missions the PLA might have in confronting China's domestic and foreign political enemies.

<sup>131</sup> In the case of Australia, China demanded Canberra withdraw a visa it had issued to Uighur activist Rebiya Kadeer and then cancelled a visit by Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei. See "China Lodges Solemn Representation Over Australia's Permission for Rebiya Kadeer's Visit," *Beijing Xinhua* [in English], 31 July 2009; Talek Smith, "Australian FM Smith Says China Cancels He Yafei Trip Over Kadeer's Visit," Agence France-Presse (AFP) Hong Kong [in English], 18 August 2009; and "Australia's Choice," *China Daily* online [in English], 19 August 2009. China's treatment of Japan was less harsh. China's foreign ministry expressed "strong dissatisfaction" with Tokyo's issuance of a visa to Ms. Kadeer. Chinese media issued numerous articles saying the visit would harm relations, and later the government called in Japan's ambassador to warn that any "separatist" activities by Kadeer during the visit would harm relations. See "China Airs Dissatisfaction Over Japan Granting Visa To Uygur Separatist," *Beijing Xinhua* [in English], 27 July 2009; and "China Ramps Up Pressure on Japan Over Kadeer Visit," *Beijing China Daily* online [in English], 30 July 2009.

<sup>132</sup> In *Xinhua*'s reports on President Obama's September 2009 and November 2009 meetings with Hu Jintao, Hu is cited as calling on the United States "to prevent the conducting of separatist activities against China in U.S. territory," saying that "I hope that the United States would properly handle the Taiwan issue and forbid 'Tibet independence' and 'East Turkistan' forces from using U.S. territory to cover their anti-China separatist activities." See "Chinese, U.S. Presidents Discuss Bilateral Ties," *Beijing Xinhua* [in English], 23 September 2009; also "Highlights of Sino-U.S. Summit, Joint Statement," *Beijing Xinhua* [in English], 17 November 2009.

activities.<sup>133</sup> Also, China has worked out bilateral arrangements with other Asian countries to extradite or deport persons wanted by China—including extraditions of third-country citizens and residents without consultation with their new home countries.<sup>134</sup>

Chinese public security publications have also called for confronting Uighur, Tibetan, Falun Gong, and other groups by “strengthening” the use of “investigation and research outside of the border” (*jingwai diaoyan*)—an official term for undercover surveillance and

---

<sup>133</sup> In 2005, for example, SCO heads of state at their annual summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, agreed to mutually deny shelter to persons whose home governments have convicted or even accused them of “terrorist, separatist, or extremist” activities in each other’s countries, and extradite them upon request of their home country. See “Declaration by the Heads of Member-States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Astana Declaration),” 5 July 2005, [http://eurasianhome.org/doc\\_files/declaration\\_sco.doc](http://eurasianhome.org/doc_files/declaration_sco.doc). Intelligence and security cooperation between China and SCO members concerning Uighur and other Muslim refugees and expatriates is documented by several refugee rights organizations and journalistic sources, including “Kyrgyz Republic: Powerful Neighbors Imperil Protection and Create Statelessness,” *Refugees International*, 20 December 2007; “Kazakhstan: Neglecting Refugees, Engendering Statelessness,” *Refugees International*, 20 December 2007; Freedom House, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, *Undermining Democracy: 21st Century Authoritarians* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2009), 24–26; and Richard Gulnoza Saidazimova, “Central Asia: Uighurs Hit By Autocratic States’ Cooperation With Beijing,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Web site, 28 April 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1068046.html>. See also Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2008), 101–2. Chinese academic and journalistic reports note political security cooperation between China and the SCO against Uighur groups accused of separatist or terrorist activities, but rarely provide extensive details. See Li Shuyin, “Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi de Anquan Hezuo” [Security Cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization], in *Annual Report on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, ed., Xing Guangcheng (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2009), 76–88, especially 79–82; and Chen Lan, Shi Zhe, Guo Li, and Huang Ming, “1990 to 2007: 17 Years of Chinese Counterattacks Against ‘East Turkistan,’” *Nanfang Zhoumo* [Guangzhou Southern Weekend] online, 11 January 2007.

<sup>134</sup> A prominent example was Uzbekistan’s 2006 extradition of Canadian citizen Huseyin Celil to China in response to a Chinese warrant. China denied Canada’s authority for consular protection of Celil, stating that it does not recognize “dual citizenships.” See “Canadian Citizen of ‘Few Months’ Arrested in Uzbekistan on Chinese Warrant,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 6 April 2006; “Canadian Extradited From Uzbekistan to China Faces Death Penalty,” Agence France-Presse (Paris) [in English], 27 June 2006; “PRC FM Spokesman: Consular Agreement With Canada ‘Does Not Apply’ Terrorist Trial,” *Beijing Xinhua* [in English], 8 February 2007; and “Canada: Chinese Official Warns Canada ‘Lagging Behind’ in Relations With China,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto) [in English], 9 February 2007.

investigation within the borders of other countries.<sup>135</sup> As one example of this activity, Communist Party analysts from Xinjiang have reported that former party General Secretary Jiang Zemin ordered an increase in this overseas investigation of Uighur separatists 10 years ago:

On July 8, 2000, after Jiang Zemin returned to Beijing following a visit to the Central Asian countries, he convened a meeting of the concerned departments, where he gave a speech, focusing primarily on the situation of the “three evil forces”<sup>136</sup> outside of China’s border and the impact that the “three evil forces” outside of the border were having on the situation in Xinjiang. Jiang demanded that the concerned departments strengthen their research and investigation work outside the border, and do a good job of research on countermeasures, so as to prevent the “three evil forces” outside of the border from linking up with each other and creating evil terrorist incidents inside of Xinjiang.<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>135</sup> A Chinese public security training text on “domestic security investigation” work—that is, the investigation of political threats to the party—defines “investigation and research outside the border” (*jingwai diaoyan*) as “investigation work that is carried out in territories outside of those areas where our government exercises sovereignty, which employs all manner of secret forces and all types of secret methods.” Zhang Jiangshan, *Guonei Anquan Baowei Xue Ganlun* [Overview of Domestic Security Protection Studies] (Beijing: Chinese People’s Public Security University Press, 2001), 118. Chinese public security departments have in recent years been called upon to “strengthen the collection, organization, and adjudication of intelligence information, and strengthen investigation and research outside of the border” against political, religious, ethnic, and criminal targets (illegal drug cases appear to be a common nonpolitical target) that are seen as a threat to the CCP and to social order. See, for example, “Xinjiang’s Social Order and Nationalities Problems that Extend Across the Border,” *China Nationalities Report*, 14 April 2010, [www.mzb.com.cn/html/report/122976-1.htm](http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/report/122976-1.htm); Ma Zhenchao, “Dangqian Weihu Guonei Anquan Ruogan Wenti de Sikao” [Reflections on a Few Problems in Protection Domestic Security at the Present Time], *Zhongguo Renmin Gong’an Daxue Xuebao* [Journal of the Chinese People’s Public Security University] (2007); Yang Hua (Yunnan Police Officer Academy) and Li Zirong, “Reflections on Domestic Security Protection Work in Border Areas During the New Period,” *Yunnan Jingguan Xueyuan Xuebao* [Journal of the Yunnan Police Officer Academy] (2004): 57–59. See also “Five Measures in Geng Ma County for Getting a Grip on Social Order Before the New Year,” Lincang City [Yunnan Province] government Web site, 28 December 2007, [www.lincang.gov.cn/Jric/Qxkk/Gmx/200712/23586.html](http://www.lincang.gov.cn/Jric/Qxkk/Gmx/200712/23586.html).

<sup>136</sup> Note that the term “three evil forces” (*sangu shili*) is a Chinese phrase referring to persons whom the CCP accuses of supporting the three political offenses of “terrorism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism” (*kongbu zhuyi, fenlie zhuyi, jiduan zhuyi*). It is not clear that CCP security officials began using the phrase “three evil forces” until after the 9/11 attacks led them to redefine ethnic separatism as linked to terrorism. In 2000, Jiang may have actually used a less harsh and sweeping term for Uighur separatists, and these authors are probably using current-day official terminology to report Jiang’s speech.

<sup>137</sup> “Dang Zhongyang de Zhongda Juece Bushu she Xinjiang Zuohao Wending Gongzuo de Qiangda Wuqi” [The Party Central Committee’s Important Decisions and Arrangements Are a Powerful Weapon for Doing Good Work on Stability in Xinjiang], *Qiushi* [Seeking Truth] (2009): 45–48, see especially 47.



Several PRC documents and articles also indicate that, since at least 2001, Chinese authorities have solicited or encouraged “overseas Chinese” (e.g., non-PRC citizen ethnic Chinese) abroad to engage in an array of activities to oppose Taiwan, Tibetan, and Uighur independence and Falun Gong sympathizers in order to “contribute to the defense of state security.”<sup>138</sup> In 2009, the governments of Sweden and Germany also expelled Chinese diplomats for surveillance and other activities directed against Chinese refugees and activists in their countries. Following a 2009 anti-Chinese government protest by Uighur sympathizers in another European country, Chinese officials called on the country’s officials to supply them with the names and addresses of the persons who participated in the protest.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> The 2008 Annual Report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China cites at least 11 Chinese government documents, government press reports, government journal articles, and other documentation obtained from Chinese government Web sites on efforts by the directors and leading officials of the Chinese State Council’s Overseas Chinese Affairs Office and provincial Overseas Chinese Affairs Offices between 2001 and 2007 to solicit, organize, encourage, or reward overseas Chinese who engage in activities against these groups. The language used has a harsh tone but is not always concrete—such as “striking against” and “aggressively expand[ing] the struggle”—with Taiwanese independence forces, the Falun Gong cult, ethnic separatism, and “other enemy forces in order to contribute to the defense of state security.” The report is available at [www.cecc.gov](http://www.cecc.gov), see especially 92–93 and footnotes 179–88 on pages 238–39.

<sup>139</sup> In June 2009, the Swedish government expelled a Chinese diplomat after the Swedish intelligence service SAPO uncovered evidence that the Chinese embassy was spying on political refugees living in Sweden, in particular Uighurs. German authorities have raided homes of Chinese residents and compelled China to withdraw a diplomat for similar activities against Uighurs and Falun Gong members in 2009. “Sweden Expels Chinese Diplomat,” *The Local* (Stockholm) [in English], 22 June 2009, <http://www.thelocal.se/20212/20090622/>. See also “‘Refugee Spy’ Remanded into Custody,” *The Local* (Stockholm) [in English], 6 June 2009; Holger Stark, “Police Raid in Munich: Germany Suspects China of Spying on Uighur Expatriates,” *Spiegel Online International*, 24 November 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,663090,00.html>; and Sven Robel and Holger Stark, “A Chapter from the Cold War Reopens: Espionage Probe Casts Shadow on Ties with China,” *Spiegel Online International*, 30 June 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,703411,00.html>. Also, personal communications with one of the report’s authors by European academic and government specialists familiar with these cases, 2010.

## CHAPTER THREE

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PLA

#### **OVERVIEW: NEW CHALLENGES, HARD CHOICES, AND IMPERFECT TOOLS**

As the previous chapter demonstrated, China believes that its national security interests are expanding rapidly and are, as Hu Jintao pointed out in 2004, increasingly reaching well beyond China's traditional land borders.

When senior PLA officers and top civilian security specialists discuss why they want to assert or protect these emerging interests now, they most commonly give one of two seemingly contradictory reasons. The first is ostensibly reactive or defensive: China expresses deep concern that its major power rivals, its competitive neighbors, or its own domestic instability might threaten its capacity to assert and protect these vital interests. The second is assertive or even potentially aggressive: China now believes it is, at last, powerful enough to assert these interests.

At the same time, China's rapid economic globalization and deepening domestic political challenges are creating new national security "facts on the ground" more quickly than Beijing has been able to develop adequate responses. For the foreseeable future, Communist party leaders will have to struggle with difficult choices about which interests they want to try to assert or protect, and which ones they will have to downplay for lack of adequate policy responses. Beijing will face a major ongoing institutional challenge of choosing and developing the most effective tools—diplomatic, economic, political, and military—to assert and protect these emerging interests.

This chapter addresses just one of the institutional responses China feels it must make in response to these expanding interests—a reconsideration of the role of the PLA. As this chapter will show, China's leaders and security experts believe the PLA can and must play a greater role in asserting and safeguarding many of these emerging interests, even as it continues preparing for its existing missions. The breadth and scope of these emerging

and existing security interests, however, will force Beijing to make tough choices about the PLA's future direction. Most fundamentally, it will need to consider the following questions:

- How much, and in what ways, will the PLA transform itself into a more outward-looking expeditionary force whose purpose is to advance China's more assertive foreign policy?
- How much, and in what ways, will the PLA remain focused on its traditional missions of preventing Taiwan independence, ensuring territorial defense, and maintaining internal security?

It is not simply the case that all of China's emerging security interests promote a more expeditionary PLA. The overall picture is far more complex. Certainly, several of China's expanding interests—its growing numbers of overseas workers; its quest to guarantee its energy security; and its expanding trade, SLOC (sea lanes of communication) security, and other maritime interests—pull the PLA toward becoming a more outward-looking, engaged, and assertive force with a structure capable of more distant operations. By contrast, China's deepening interest in the stability of its western borderlands reflects some of the PLA's more traditional concerns, such as border security and domestic social stability. But dealing with this interest will require the PLA to look “outward” as well. China's growing interests in Central and South Asia will require the PLA to engage in expanded military diplomacy and bilateral and multilateral security cooperation, especially with the member states of the SCO, as well as with Pakistan and India. And while expanded space and cyber capabilities are indispensable to a globally engaged PLA, they were also initially driven in large part by the PLA's conviction that modern warfare makes space and information superiority indispensable for successfully confronting U.S. forces in pursuit of its traditional Taiwan mission.

For many of China's emerging interests, PLA and Chinese security analysts are still debating how the military should respond. Moreover, there are some interests that the PLA simply may not be prepared to protect for a long time to come. If, for example, sudden civil unrest compelled a rapid evacuation of Chinese citizens from many of the countries with the largest populations of expatriate Chinese workers (Algeria or Angola, for example), the PLA would be hard pressed to find the capabilities to respond by itself. This would be an especially difficult mission if the unrest had a xenophobic component and the PLA could not count on being welcomed in to carry out the evacuation.

As the PLA responds to China's emerging security interests, it is already wrestling with questions about its future direction. As this chapter will show, China's leaders, senior PLA officers, and security analysts are confronting a broad array of new challenges

sparked by the country's emerging security interests. These include challenges to China's long-standing security policies and PLA military doctrine, the PLA's missions, and the PLA's force structure. These challenges are informing the difficult choices about the PLA's future.

But, as difficult as these security challenges are, they have by no means paralyzed the PLA. On the contrary, we can already clearly make out the broad contours of some of the military's responses to China's emerging national security interests. Some of the PLA's responses signal important departures from its past doctrine, policies, missions, activities, and force structure.

- In doctrine and policy, a number of high-ranking, respected PLA strategic analysts are pushing for greater “innovation” and “creative development” to support and justify a more assertive, expeditionary PLA. These innovations include a greater emphasis on power projection, seizing initiative, and offensive operations, although still under the PLA's official doctrinal rubric of “active defense.” They also include a rethinking of traditional policies, such as “noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries,” particularly when Chinese overseas interests are at risk. At the same time, these PLA doctrinal thinkers recognize that the military still needs to strike a balance and preserve the official doctrine of “active defense,” so that PLA doctrine and policy continue reassuring neighboring countries that China's rise will be peaceful and nonthreatening.
- Some senior PLA officers and civilian security analysts contend that China's “zone of security interests” is expanding, not only because its global economic stakes are growing, but also because China increasingly has the power to assert and defend these interests. To capture this notion, these analysts have recently invoked the existence of legally undefined and disturbingly vague concepts, such as China's “national interest waters.” These expanding interests, they believe, justify increasing activities and operations beyond China's territorial land, sea, and air space.
- Chinese naval and other maritime security analysts have already reached a consensus that the PLAN must “go out”—that is, significantly expand its operational range and missions to safeguard China's territorial, economic, and nontraditional security interests. At present, however, they are still in the early stages of confronting the tough choices about which maritime interests are the most pressing, and the implications that these choices will have for the PLAN missions and force structure. Another critical point is that Taiwan contingencies remain the principal mission for the navy, as they do for the rest of the PLA.

- At the same time that party and PLA leaders are calling on the military to focus on new maritime, space, and cybersecurity issues, they are also insisting that the PLA continue to play a major role in domestic security and other military operations other than war (MOOTW). Domestic and borderland security challenges, especially in China's western regions, are rivaling the PLA's efforts to focus its attention and resources on coastal and maritime security interests.
- China's increasing space and information interests are having an important impact on PLA doctrine. PLA analysts emphasize space superiority and information superiority as critical to seizing the initiative in modern, high technology combat. Although PLA analysts hesitate to explicitly advocate launching attacks on enemy satellites and other information systems at the outset of a war, they state frankly that great advantages will accrue to the first power to incapacitate its enemy's space and information resources. As a result, China will face increasing challenges in maintaining its self-styled reputation as a "peaceful" space power.
- The PLA is continuing and will probably deepen many of its security diplomacy activities aimed at encouraging a more hospitable security environment for China's emergence as a major power—including participation in regional security mechanisms, peacekeeping operations, and military diplomacy. But China's expanding security interests will complicate these PLA efforts, especially as Beijing becomes more assertive in insisting on respect for these interests and the PLA expands its presence in regions where China's long-term strategic objectives are already regarded with suspicion.

## **RETHINKING DOCTRINE AND POLICY**

Since 2007, several high-ranking PLA officers and respected military thinkers have contended that in order to respond to the challenges of China's emerging security interests, the PLA must "innovate," "develop," and "enrich" Chinese military doctrine and policy

to, in the words of one, “keep up with the times.”<sup>1</sup> These senior officers are rethinking PLA doctrine and national security policy in ways that are aimed at justifying and accommodating a more assertive PLA role and a widening global presence. These calls for doctrinal and policy innovation are by no means limited to the PLA’s usual cast of ultranationalistic mass media commentators. Prominent among the analysts promoting these innovations and new interpretations are several senior experts from the PLA’s leading research institute, the AMC, including General Shou Xiaosong, director of the War Theory and Strategic Research Department, and Major General Chen Zhou and Senior Colonel Huang Yingxu of the same department. General Chen is well-known outside of China as the principal drafter of China’s biennial *National Defense White Paper*, and his 2009 article on doctrinal reform in AMS’s flagship journal *China Military Science* is by far the most forceful and sustained publication proposing these views.<sup>2</sup> Some of the arguments that can be found in these discussions of policy and doctrine include:

- China’s long-standing doctrine of “active defense” remains in place, but some analysts are reinterpreting it in ways that could justify operations to protect Chinese citizens and investments overseas.
- PLA, diplomatic, and internal security specialists are reinterpreting China’s long-standing policy of respect for other nations’ sovereignty and “noninterference” in their “internal affairs” in order to justify a range of possible operations outside of China’s borders and overseas to safeguard its security interests.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Since the founding of New China, the principles for military strategy have gone through six big adjustments. Entering the new century and the new stage, innovative development of military strategy is important, and we need to intensify our understanding and take hold of key issues.” MajGen Shou Xiaosong, “Dui Dang de Guojia Anquan Lilun Chuangxin Fazhan de Jidian Renshi” [Views on the Innovative Development of the Party’s National Security Strategic Theory], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2007): 43–54. Gen Shou is identified as director of the War Theory and Strategic Research Department of AMS, and president of the Strategy Branch of the China Military Science Society. Other senior PLA officers who call for innovation, development, enrichment, and “broadening of vision” concerning China’s doctrine and policy in response to China’s expanding national interests include MajGen Chen Zhou (AMS), SrCol Huang Yingxu (AMS), MajGen Fan Zhenjiang, the former director of the NDU’s Strategic Teaching and Research Division, and SrCol Lou Yaoliang, also of NDU’s Strategic Teaching and Research Division. See Chen Zhou, “Shilun Xin Xingshi Xia Zhongguo Fangyuxing Guofang Zhengce de Fazhan” [An Initial Discussion of the Development of the Defensive Nature of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy during the New Period], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] 108 (2009): 63–71; and Fan Zhenjiang and Lou Yaoliang, “Xinshiji Xinjiedua Junshi Zhanlue Zhidao Yanjiu” [A Study of Strategic Military Guidance in the New Period of the New Century], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 36–44; and Huang Yingxu and Li Ming, “Lun Zhongguo Gongchandangren de Guojia Liyiguan” [On CPC Members’ Outlook on National Interests], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 1–11.

<sup>2</sup> Chen, “An Initial Discussion of the Development of the Defensive Nature of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy during the New Period,” 63–71.

- PLA analysts are reinterpreting defense policy to support an expanded PLA presence and establishment of overseas predeployment or basing.

These PLA analysts also contend that, as China becomes more powerful and its national interests expand, it will be justified in reinterpreting past policies and doctrine to make them more assertive. General Shou Xiaosong, director of the AMS War Theory and Strategic Research Department, made this point in a 2007 article in which he called for “creative development” of China’s military strategy:

Since the establishment of the new China, the Military Strategic Guidelines have undergone relatively major revisions six times. As we enter the new period of the new century, the importance of creatively developing our military strategy is quite great. . . . For example, we must—as part of adapting to the expansion of our national interests and to the developmental trends of modern warfare, and on the premise of maintaining the defensive nature of our military strategy—appropriately develop our offensive strategic power and our capability for power projection; expand our strategic defensive depth; extend from defending our national territory to the forward defensive edge of our national strategic space; and plan as a whole not only for the security of our territorial land, sea, and airspace, but also for the security of the oceans, outer space, and the electromagnetic spectrum.<sup>3</sup>

Increasingly, some of these officers claim that China embraced many of the more defensive and restrained aspects of its doctrine and policies in the past not primarily because these policies were “right,” but because China was too weak to do otherwise. As China’s global position changes, some of its doctrine and policies should change with it. These analysts are not advocating a wholesale rethinking of policy and doctrine, however. For example, even as General Shou argues for a much more forward and offensive strategy, he also calls for maintaining the “defensive character” of China’s military strategy as a premise of creative development. Some of these experts note that China derives significant diplomatic advantage and international legitimacy from the defensive doctrines and policies, and should for the most part hold on to them.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Increasing Power and China’s Expanding “Zone” of Security Interests***

More and more, PLA analysts contend that China is witnessing a major expansion in its

---

<sup>3</sup> Shou, “Views on the Innovative Development of the Party’s National Security Strategic Theory,” 51.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; and Chen, “On Development of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy Under New Situation.”

national security “zone of interests.”<sup>5</sup> This zone of security interests is not defined solely by China’s objective security needs; its scope is also determined by the magnitude of the strategic capabilities and comprehensive national power that a nation has available for defending its interests. Hence, it can expand with a nation’s power. According to one analyst, Zhang Xiaotian, China’s “zone of strategic interests” was for decades limited to its territorial borders because “there was a huge gap between [China’s] comprehensive national power and that of the other world powers.” Zhang’s thoughts are echoed by several colleagues.<sup>6</sup> He enumerates several examples of how the issues in which China feels it has a strategic stake have grown in tandem with its wealth and power:

As our contacts with foreign nations reach all areas of the world, the parties with whom we have contacts can also be found all over the world, including the Greek ocean shipping fleets, Australian iron ore, French Airbus airplanes, Japanese Sony electronics, U.S. Microsoft systems, Russia’s natural gas, Middle East oil, and the vast markets in other countries and regions, and so on—all of which have now become the objects of our strategic planning.<sup>7</sup>

Senior AMS doctrinal thinkers contend that the PLA must greatly expand its reach beyond China’s borders to safeguard these security interests. Building on Hu Jintao’s “Historic Missions” speech, they argue that in the twenty-first century, China must abandon the traditional view that the boundaries of its national security interests are limited to its own territory and “can never be extended to other countries and regions.”<sup>8</sup> To confront what they portray as inevitable challenges from other great powers, China must develop a defense policy that can “safeguard its national interests and seize the strategic initiative

---

<sup>5</sup> Chinese authors use varying terms to describe the abstract “space” of China’s national interests. Maj Zhang Xiaotian and others use the term “zone of interests,” or more literally “interest boundaries” (*liyi bianjie*). MajGen Chen Zhou writes about China’s “national interest space” (*Guojia liyi de kongjian*).

<sup>6</sup> Zhang Xiaotian, “New Demands Imposed by National Interests Expansion Upon Innovative Development of Military Strategies,” *Guofang* [National Defense] (2010): 14–16. Subsequent publications indicate that Zhang is now a postdoctoral student at AMS. Chen Zhou argues that, since the 1980s, the great change in China’s strategic situation and the increase in its “comprehensive national power” have expanded the territory within which China can protect its interests well beyond her traditional border. See Chen, “On Development of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy Under New Situation,” 67. Lu Rude of the PLAN’s Dalian Vessel Academy also argues that China’s strategy should be shaped by “interest boundaries” rather than national territory. See Lu Rude, “Zai Da Zhanlue Zhong gei Zhongguo Haiquan Ding Wei” [Defining Sea Power in China’s Grand Strategy], in *Renmin Haijun* [People’s Navy], 6 June 2007, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Zhang, “New Demands Imposed by National Interests Expansion,” 14–16.

<sup>8</sup> Chen, “On Development of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy Under New Situation,” 63–71. See also Shou, “Views on the Innovative Development of the Party’s National Security Strategic Theory.”



within a broader sphere beyond China's sovereign territory."<sup>9</sup> Major General Chen Zhou argues that historically, when China's security required it, Beijing's leaders have extended the country's "national defense lines" and ordered the PLA to go beyond its border and its near-shore limits. The time for another such expansion is here, says Chen:

Today . . . in implementing the strategy of active defense, we should break through the limits of China's coastline and actively construct strategic buttresses in surrounding regions, expand the defense forward positions, stretch the "national defense line" in the sea and in the air, adjust the strategic layout, and seize the strategic commanding heights.<sup>10</sup>

Chinese maritime analysts, mindful of regional concerns over a "China naval threat," have put forward a highly defensive justification for significantly expanding China's naval role and presence. Although they concede that China's maritime security strategy has an "expansive character," they argue that this is justified by the need to expand China's strategic depth and defend China's expanding zone of security interests. China, they argue, cannot sustain its economic growth unless it learns to better protect its seaborne exports, its energy and mineral imports, and its access to offshore resources. These are normal and justifiable responses to what China calls increasingly serious military, economic, and nontraditional threats to its maritime interests. They argue that the United States and its partners are committed to keeping the PLAN bottled up within the "first island chain."<sup>11</sup>

This concept of an expanding Chinese zone of interests was clearly on display during the June 2010 U.S.-China dispute over U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) naval exercises in the Yellow Sea. Commentators such as Fudan University professor Dr. Shen Dingli argued that China enjoyed special prerogatives within what he called its national "interest waters." Although the exercises were outside of China's territorial

---

<sup>9</sup> Chen, "On Development of China's Defensive National Defense Policy"; and Zhang, "New Demands Imposed by National Interests Expansion Upon Innovative Development of Military Strategies." See also Huang and Li, "On CPC Members' Outlook on National Interests," 1-11. According to this article, SrCol Huang is a researcher in the AMS's First Research Office of the War Theory and Strategy Research Department, as well as a doctoral advisor at the academy. Capt Li is a doctoral candidate at AMS. See also Fan Zhenjiang and Lou Yaoliang, "Xinshiji Xinjiedua Junshi Zhanlue Zhidao Yanjiu." MajGen Fan was formerly director of the Strategic Teaching and Research Division at NDU and a doctoral advisor. SrCol Lou is director of the Military Strategic Teaching and Research Section of NDU's Strategic Teaching and Research Division.

<sup>10</sup> Chen, "On Development of China's Defensive National Defense Policy."

<sup>11</sup> Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 458.

waters and the EEZ, Shen still argued that China could not tolerate what it perceived as aggressive activities by foreign weapons systems as powerful as a U.S. naval carrier.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Reinterpreting “Active Defense”***

China has long prided itself on pursuing what it describes as “a defense policy which is purely defensive in nature.”<sup>13</sup> Some leading PLA experts, however, are now reinterpreting the meaning of the term “defense” in China’s long-standing official “active defense” doctrine in ways that could support a more expansive overseas role for the PLA. Major General Chen Zhou of AMS, in his recent article in *China Military Science*, spelled out several ways in which the “active defense” doctrine needed to accommodate the security requirements of China’s expanding national interests. Chen contends that China’s lack of military power compared to the power of its main enemies, the United States and the USSR, was the major reason that China’s “active defense” doctrine had such a strong defensive orientation.

For a long period after the founding of new China, the main considerations that determined the defensive nature of our national defense policy were the existence of actual threats of large-scale foreign aggression, and a strategic situation in which our enemies’ forces were more powerful than ours.<sup>14</sup>

Chen’s comment might suggest that he would argue that China could jettison the “active defense” doctrine if China were to become much more powerful. But Chen does not go that far. Chen argues that China must continue to uphold “active defense” as its doctrine for some time to come. He contends that China derives important diplomatic advantages from the “righteousness and legitimacy” of its “active defense” doctrine.<sup>15</sup> Chen does, however, argue that the “content” and the “forms of expression” of China’s “active defense” doctrine will change as China’s security environment evolves and China becomes more powerful.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Like other commentators on this incident, Shen expressed frustration that China lacked the military power to do anything about the United States’s infringement of China’s interests, and he looked forward to the day when China would be strong enough that it would not have to put up with this. Shen Dingli, “Mei-Han Huanghai Junyan yu Guba Daodan Weiji” [US-ROK Yellow Sea Military Exercises and the Cuban Missile Crisis], in *Shanghai Dongfang Zaobao* online [in Chinese], 12 July 2010.

<sup>13</sup> This quote is taken from the preface to the English version of the *National Defense White Paper (2006)*, “China’s National Defense in 2006,” State Council Information Office, Beijing Xinhua [in English], 29 December 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Chen, “On Development of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy.” Chen elaborates on how enemy superiority shaped China’s “defensive” policy from the 1950s through the early 1980s.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 63–71.

Under the new historical conditions, should we continue to uphold the defensive national defense policy? The answer is yes. Persistently pursuing the national defense policy with a defensive nature . . . is the essential requirement of our country's peaceful development strategy and foreign policy, as well as the inevitable option based on China's historical experience of suffering from foreign powers' aggression, pillage, and bullying. Therefore, this is our political advantage and our core values, as well as an important hallmark of the soft power of our state and military. In the long run, upholding this policy will greatly strengthen the righteousness and legitimacy of our effort to safeguard our national interests, and increase our credibility of taking the course of peaceful development. . . . It should also be noted that with changes in the conditions of the times, the security environment, and comprehensive national power, new changes will take place in terms of its contents and form of expression.

### ***Redefining “Noninterference in Other Countries’ Internal Affairs”***

PLA and other security analysts are also searching for new legal and ideological justifications for employing the PLA outside of China's borders and overseas to safeguard its security and economic interests. Toward this end, they are reconsidering China's long-standing official policy of “noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries.”

These analysts recognize the challenges they face. They note that, while virtually no one questions the legitimacy of a country using military forces to defend its sovereignty or territorial integrity, justifying the protection of overseas investments, property, and personnel is far more controversial.<sup>17</sup> China, moreover, has harshly criticized U.S. and NATO military operations in the Middle East, the Balkans, and Afghanistan since 1992, fearing that these operations could establish precedents for future Western support for Taiwan's or Tibet's independence. Therefore, these Chinese analysts are trying to strike a new balance on intervention policy that meets three needs:

- Justify new forms of military intervention that China might wish to employ to secure its borderlands and safeguard its overseas economic and security interests and personnel
- Preserve Beijing's claim that it does not improperly interfere in other countries' internal affairs
- Reinforce China's basis for opposing Western intervention<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> According to Chen, striking a new balance between these policies constitutes “a major challenge” to China's national defense policy.

AMS's Chen Zhou argues that as China's economic interests and national power grow, Beijing must start distancing itself from some of its own past criticisms of Western overseas intervention and embrace some of the justifications that Western countries previously used—even some justifications that Beijing historically rejected. He notes that, in the past, when Western countries claimed that protecting the lives and property of their citizens abroad constituted “legitimate self-defense,” China attacked this claim as “aggression” and “interference in other countries’ internal affairs.”<sup>19</sup> Now, instead of defending China's historic policy for being “principled,” Chen argues that China leveled these criticisms of Western intervention in the past because China was economically cut off and militarily weak at the time. “This [policy stance] had something to do with the historical conditions of our country's relatively closed status and relatively weak power.” Now that China is economically open, wealthier, and militarily more powerful, it must likewise develop justifications for using its forces overseas to defend its personnel and property.<sup>20</sup> Chen's argument is somewhat complex and is quoted here at some length:

As [our] national development interests have increased and extended outward, a major challenge to [our] defensive national defense policy has been how to safeguard these continually expanding national interests while still adhering to the principle of noninterference in other countries' internal affairs. . . . Among international jurists, how a state's right of self-defense should be understood is a controversial issue. . . . Whether or not a country can effectively protect its overseas interests is an issue that directly affects the country's domestic and external image as well as its international standing. But it is also a very sensitive point because it involves the sovereign interests of the host country. . . . Historically, before World War I, the international community generally recognized the legitimacy of using force to protect the lives and property of a country's overseas citizens. . . . But in the past, we [China] completely equated this view with aggression and interference in other countries' internal affairs. This had something to do with our country's historical conditions of being relatively closed off to the world and having relatively weak national power. Inevitably, though, with the development of our reform and opening up to the outside world, as well as the growth of our comprehensive national power, we must protect

---

<sup>19</sup> Chen, “On Development of China's Defensive National Defense.”

<sup>20</sup> Chen recognizes that justifying overseas intervention is especially thorny for China because for years Beijing has vigorously opposed intervention by Western countries aimed at promoting human rights. But Chen argues that China's overseas interests will enjoy “true legality and legitimacy” in contrast to the overseas interests of the Western powers, which were originally obtained “through wars and unequal treaties in the past.” Ibid.

the safety of our energy resources supplies and transportation passages and protect the legal rights and interests of Chinese nationals and legal persons who are overseas, as well as the legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese, and we must treat this as an important aspect of national security. This is the right and the power of the state, as well as its responsibility and obligation. Moreover, the overseas interests of contemporary China's are built upon the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and are completely different from the interests of Western powers that were obtained in the past through wars and unequal treaties. So our interests enjoy true legality and legitimacy.<sup>21</sup>

Major General Chen is but one of many military, diplomatic, and internal security analysts who, over the past several years, have raised questions about China's "noninterference" policy.<sup>22</sup> Several have tried to devise some doctrine of "constructive intervention" that could legitimize China's overseas protection of its own interests, but could not be used to rationalize Western intervention on behalf of secessionism or human rights. These analysts have offered several versions of such a doctrine in their writings and discussions with Westerners. Broadly, China would continue to support the principle of "noninterference in other nations' internal affairs." But they indicate that China might undertake some forms of intervention under the following conditions:

- The intervention could be justified under the UN Charter.
- The operation had the consent of the "constitutional" or "legitimate" government of the territory involved.
- The intervention was based on "international cooperation," possibly under the "UN collective security framework".<sup>23</sup>

On first inspection, these conditions seem to be more suitable for legitimizing some types of overseas operations in which China is already engaged rather than others. Most clearly, they fit peacekeeping or peace enforcement, refugee management, noncombatant evacuations, or antipiracy operations. But the concerns voiced by Major General

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. This extended translation is from pages 69–70 under the heading "A Nation's Right of Self-Defense and the Principle of Non-Interference in the Internal Politics of Other Countries."

<sup>22</sup> For other recent articles that question or challenge the "noninterference" policy, see also Chen Xiangyang, "Seeking Solutions to New Challenges in China's Rise," *Liaowang* (14 June 2010): 60; "Neighboring Ties Not by Business Alone," *Global Times* [in English], 21 June 2010; and Wang Yizhou, "Ten Difficult Problems in Chinese Diplomacy," *Shijie Zhishi* [World Knowledge] (16 May 2010): 14–23. The latter journal is published by a think tank subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>23</sup> The phrase "constructive intervention" (*jianshexing jieru*) has been used by Chinese interlocutors in conversations with the authors.

Chen and others about using force to protect China’s overseas investments and personnel clearly indicate that China is seeking broader policy and doctrinal justifications that it might invoke in the event it decides to undertake additional PLA operations overseas—operations that might not so easily receive the consent of host country officials or fit within the UN’s collective security policies.

### ***Justifying Expanded Overseas Presence, Predeployment, and Basing***

Some senior PLA analysts are also endorsing a more forward-leaning policy on expanding the PLA’s overseas presence and establishing stations or even genuine military bases abroad. Again, AMS’s Chen Zhou has been a leader in challenging “the traditional notion of not dispatching one single soldier outside the country and not setting up any overseas military base.” The PLA’s activities and missions should, in Chen’s words, “stretch

#### **ON EXPANDING PLAN’S OVERSEAS PRESENCE AND BASING**

“We should expand the sphere of maritime activity, strive to demonstrate our presence in some critical strategic regions, use diplomatic and economic means to establish strategic supporting points, and make use of berthing points and supply points to which we legally get access from relevant countries in the relevant sea areas.”

— MajGen Chen Zhou  
PLA Academy of Military Sciences

to wherever the national interests expand to.” These analysts call for strengthening the PLA’s strategic capabilities and enhancing its “strategic predeployment.” Some portray the establishment of military bases overseas as a logical extension of the PLA’s steady expansion of its overseas activities during the 1990s, which has included UN peace-keeping operations (PKO), international anti-terrorism cooperation, disaster relief, and bilateral and multilateral combined military exercises. Analysts recognize the potential political and diplomatic risks that high profile base-establishing efforts would create for China’s reputation as a “peacefully develop-

ing” power that does not seek military alliances and endeavors to hide its military capabilities. But Chen Zhou still stresses the importance of expanding the armed forces’ capacity for rapid response, strategic lift, and building “comprehensive support capabilities.”<sup>24</sup>

To maintain a distinction between China’s efforts and those of established major powers, Chen stresses the limitations of China’s long-term aspirations to establish supply points and bases. He contends that, even when China “becomes really powerful in the future,” it will still not establish “a global network of military bases and station forces in overseas areas on a large scale” as some countries do to protect their overseas national

<sup>24</sup> Chen, “On Development of China’s Defensive National Defense Policy.”

interests. But he closes by encouraging policy analysts to lean forward—to “emancipate the mind [and] actively explore the forms and methods of carrying out” military activities overseas.<sup>25</sup>

### **SECURING MARITIME INTERESTS: CHOICES OVER STRATEGIC DEPTH, OPERATIONAL RANGE, AND NONTRADITIONAL MISSIONS**

For the foreseeable future, the PLAN’s most important mission will continue to be developing a force that is capable of deterring or winning a modern, technologically advanced, limited war to protect China’s territorial claims in its “offshore defense” zone inside the first island chain.<sup>26</sup> As noted in chapter 2, China’s maritime power analysts contend that China’s maritime territorial disputes—especially the dispute over Taiwan, but also those over Diaoyutai and the South China Sea—have surpassed its land border disputes as the most imminent threats to China’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity.<sup>27</sup> In 2009, Hu Jintao emphasized the need to recruit, develop, and deploy a navy capable of winning such a war.<sup>28</sup> This mission includes preparing to confront U.S. forces coming to support Taiwan and establishing “effective control” within China’s EEZ and the rest of this offshore area—a Chinese term that roughly encompasses Western concepts of developing “antiaccess” capability.<sup>29</sup> In 2009, a senior PLAN officer told U.S. analysts that China had “almost completed” developing its capabilities in this area and is increasingly able to defend its national sovereignty in this offshore region. This officer conceded, however, that there are still unnamed “gaps” in China’s ability to defend these offshore areas.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond a Taiwan scenario, however, *China’s National Defense White Papers* since 2006 have increasingly made clear that China’s leaders have reached a consensus

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> PLAN Cdr Wu Shengli noted in December 2009 that “we must view national invasion, subversion, and secession as top security threats; view fighting and winning local naval wars under informatized conditions as top military tasks; and determinedly achieve the strategic intent of Chairman Hu and the Central Military Commission.” See “Speech of Comrade Wu Shengli at the 8th Plenary Session of Navy’s 10th Party Committee (Summary),” *Renmin Haijun* [People’s Navy], 31 December 2009, 1.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 414.

<sup>28</sup> Hu Jintao, speaking in April 2009 at a PLAN base in Sanya, placed particular emphasis on building the navy and recruiting naval personnel with information technology skills necessary to prepare the PLAN to fight and win a modern, limited war under informationized conditions. See Liu Jie and Lin Shihua, “Xin Zhongguo 60 Nian Renmin Haijun Fazhan Zhanlue de Yanjin Ji Jishi” [The Evolution and Record of the Strategy for Developing the People’s Navy over the Sixty Years of the New China], *Junshi Lishi Yanjiu* [Military History Studies] (2009): 15–20.

<sup>29</sup> The author is indebted to Dr. Tom Bickford for this insight.

<sup>30</sup> Discussions with U.S. analysts, 2009.

that in order to safeguard China's various expanding maritime rights and interests, the PLAN must expand its operational range, strategic depth, and capabilities for nontraditional threats and other missions.<sup>31</sup> But these expanding maritime security interests are forcing its leaders to confront tough choices in prioritizing the navy's most pressing future missions and force structure choices. China will not be able to pursue all of its emerging missions at once, and the PLAN's growing capabilities and force structure, moreover, will not be fungible across all these prospective missions. Even assuming a major sustained commitment of funds for the navy, China will be forced to prioritize certain maritime interests, threats, and missions at the expense of others. This decision process, however, is apparently just beginning. A PLAN senior captain recently wrote that China has not yet drafted a formal national maritime security strategy that might embody such priorities and choices.<sup>32</sup>

China's maritime security specialists are currently debating how the PLAN should prioritize and respond to these emerging maritime security interests. This section focuses on three important dimensions of this discussion:

- Expanding strategic depth and operational range
- Broadening nontraditional security missions
- Prioritizing security interests in building the PLAN's force structure

### ***Expanding Strategic Depth and Operational Range***

To safeguard China's established security interests as well as its emerging concerns, the PLAN is continuing to expand its operational range—a process that began under Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. This process accelerated under the concept of the PLA's "New Historic Missions," which called for the PLA to protect China's "expanding" interests in the maritime regions and to participate in safeguarding world peace. This policy continues to prod the navy to complete its transition from a "coastal" navy to an

---

<sup>31</sup> The *National Defense White Paper (2006)* (found at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-12/29/content\\_771191.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-12/29/content_771191.htm)) points out that "the Navy aims at gradual extension of the strategic depth for offshore defensive operations and enhancing its capabilities in integrated maritime operations and nuclear counterattacks" (section II, "National Defense"). The *National Defense White Paper (2008)* (found at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-01/20/content\\_10688124.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-01/20/content_10688124.htm)) notes that the navy is a "strategic service of the PLA" and that "it is responsible for such tasks as safeguarding China's maritime security and maintaining the sovereignty of its territorial waters, along with its maritime rights and interests" (section V, "The Navy").

<sup>32</sup> Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 451.



“offshore defense” force, and then further expand its range to “open ocean defense,” and develop “open ocean mobility operations.”<sup>33</sup>

For Chinese naval officials and maritime analysts, however, simply announcing that the PLAN must increasingly “go out beyond the first island chain” does not address the tough questions of how the navy will extend its operational range and which missions it will emphasize. Each of China’s rapidly emerging maritime security interests—overseas personnel, global trade, energy transport choke points, global piracy, distant territorial claims, disputed energy and resource claims—requires distinctive packages of maritime security strategies, operations, force structures, and domestic and overseas support facilities. Chinese military leaders will have to confront choices among these interests and missions.

Many recent Chinese analyses that call for the PLAN to extend its operational range overlook these difficult trade-offs, however. A number of the writings reviewed for this project are largely nationalistic diatribes that call for China to symbolically establish its global position by building a “blue-water navy,” or constructing aircraft carriers, or “moving out” beyond the “first” or “second island chains.” While these writings do underscore the widespread nationalistic sentiment that “China’s time has come,” which helps to drive this debate, they do not clarify which missions China should emphasize as it “goes out,” or how it should shape its force structure in response.<sup>34</sup>

Since the publication of its *National Defense White Paper (2006)*, the PLAN has shown growing commitment to gradually expand its strategic depth,

### GOING BEYOND THE FIRST ISLAND CHAIN

“In order to defend the security of the national territory, marine territories and the waters within the first island chain . . . [China’s active defense strategy] . . . does not mean that our navy only stays within the first island chain. Only when the Chinese navy goes beyond the first island chain, will China be able to extend its strategic depth of security for its marine territories.”

PLAN RAdm Zhang Zhaozhong  
National Defense University

<sup>33</sup> Zhang Yongyi, ed., *Haijun Junshi Xunlian Xue* [The Science of Naval Training] (Beijing: Academy of Military Sciences Press, 2006), 250, cited in “Extending the First Line of Defense: China’s Naval Strategy and Development Prospects,” by Frederic Vellucci Jr., in *PLA Navy Build-up and ROK Navy-US Navy Cooperation* (Seoul: Korean Institute for Maritime Strategy, 2009), 237–85.

<sup>34</sup> One excellent example of this trend is a widely cited PLA volume on how the military should carry out Hu Jintao’s “New Historic Missions.” The study painstakingly reviews recent trends in aircraft carrier construction by the United States, Japan, India, and other naval powers, and argues that China must also “strive to build up a strong military strategic force commensurate with our national interests.” The discussion closes without addressing the purposes and missions that carriers can and cannot serve. Sun et al., *Zhongshi Luxing Xin Shiji Xin Jieduan Wojun Lishi Shiming* [Faithfully Implement Our Army’s Historical Missions at the New Stage in the New Century] (Beijing: Haichao Chubanshe, 2006), 55–60.

and enhanced strategic depth is one of the prime motivators for expanding the navy's range.<sup>35</sup> In addition to concerns over Taiwan, defense of China's economically critical east coast is an increasingly important PLAN mission. Chinese maritime security experts warn that this region faces greater risk from advanced enemy weaponry with longer ranges. Some senior PLAN officers contend that the PLAN must operate well beyond the first island chain to provide successful deterrence and defense for this region.<sup>36</sup>

Chinese air power analysts echo this interest in expanding depth through enhanced PLAN operational range. They note that shipboard anti-aircraft and anti-cruise missile systems must play an increasingly important role in the frontlines of China's air defense against strikes by a technologically superior opponent (e.g., the United States). Both air and naval analysts recognize that this need for enhanced depth will put greater pressure on the PLAN and the PLAAF to integrate their defensive operations, in particular to protect the eastern coast.<sup>37</sup>

### STRATEGIC DEPTH CONCERNS AND THE JULY 2010 U.S.-ROK EXERCISES

"The drill area selected by the United States and South Korea is only 500 kilometers away from Beijing. . . . The aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* dispatched to the Yellow Sea has a combat radius of 600 kilometers and its aircraft has a combat radius as long as 1,000 kilometers. Therefore, the military exercise in the area has posed a direct security threat to China's heartland and the Bohai Rim Economic Circle."

— *People's Daily*  
16 July 2010

Chinese aspirations to extend maritime strategic depth came to the fore during the July 2010 dispute over U.S.-ROK joint exercises in the Yellow Sea. Beijing's leaders attempted to assert a national prerogative to determine which foreign maritime military activities should not be held in these "offshore" regions because Beijing judged that they constituted an unacceptable threat to China's security interests. Although the exercise zone lay clearly outside of China's territorial waters and EEZ, Beijing "resolutely opposed" any

<sup>35</sup> Tang Fuquan and Han Yi, "China's Maritime Defense Strategy," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2007); and "The Island Chains, China's Navy," *Dangdai Haijun* [Modern Navy], 1 October 2007, 17–20.

<sup>36</sup> "In order to defend the security of national territory, marine territories, and the waters within the first island chain, [China's active defense policy] . . . does not mean that our navy only stays within the first island chain. Only when the Chinese Navy goes beyond the first island chain will China be able to extend its strategic depth of security for its marine territories." RAdm Zhang Zhaozhong, assistant director of the Military Logistics and Military Equipment Department, NDU, cited in Cai Wei, "Dream of the Military of Courtesy for Aircraft Carriers," *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan*, 27 April 2009, 50–57. Adm Zhang's rank and title are identified on the *People's Daily* Web site, [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200704/29/eng20070429\\_370883.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200704/29/eng20070429_370883.html)

<sup>37</sup> Tang and Han, "China's Maritime Defense Strategy."

country's warships and military aircraft undertaking actions that "influence China's security interests" within "the Yellow Sea and China's other coastal waters (*zai huang-hai yiji qita zhongguo jin hai*)."<sup>38</sup> For China, a critical concern was the possible presence of a U.S. Navy carrier whose combat range exceeded its distance from China's shores and major cities.<sup>39</sup>

### *Asserting and Protecting Maritime Territorial and Resource Claims*

In its *Strategic Review 2011*, the AMS Center for National Defense Policy flatly stated its concerns about China's maritime rights and interests, noting that "the West Pacific is becoming the competitive focus area in global marine strategic competition in the twenty-first century."<sup>40</sup> A second mission that motivates efforts to expand the PLAN's range is deterring China's maritime neighbors from "encroaching" on China's territorial claims in the East China and South China Seas.<sup>41</sup>

Several senior PLAN officers and other top Chinese maritime security experts argue that China's neighbors are infringing upon its maritime territorial and resource claims in the East China and South China Seas, and that China has fallen behind its neighbors in asserting and protecting its maritime rights and interests. They contend that, since the UNCLOS came into force, it has given rise to widespread boundary delimitation disputes, an intensification of global struggles over maritime rights and interests, and various "illegal" efforts and military actions by China's neighbors to expand their claims over territory China considers its own.

In reality, even well before China ratified the UNCLOS in May 1996, it too was engaged in similar legislative efforts to assert its maritime territorial claims. And Chinese

---

<sup>38</sup> MFA spokesperson Qin Gang stated, "We resolutely oppose warships and military aircraft from any country conducting activities that affect China's security interests in the Yellow Sea and in other parts of China's coastal waters." See "Transcript of PRC FM Spokesman News Conference on 15 Jul 10," Beijing Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [in Chinese], 15 July 2010.

<sup>39</sup> These comments were made by PLA Col Du Wenlong and RAdm Yin Zhuo speaking on the CCTV program "Focus Today" during the week of 1–5 July; see also "Why China Opposes U.S.-South Korean Military Exercises in the Yellow Sea," *Renmin Ribao* [in English], 16 July 2010; MajGen Zhu Chenghu made a similar comment. See Ouyang Kaiyu, "PLA Major General Characterizes the U.S.-ROK Military Exercise as a Wrong Exercise Taking Place at a Wrong Time and in a Wrong Place," *Beijing Zhongguo Xinwen She* [in Chinese], 19 July 2010.

<sup>40</sup> AMS Center for National Defense Policy, *Strategic Review 2011*, 82.

<sup>41</sup> See Liu and Lin, "Xin Zhongguo 60 Nian Renmin Haijun Fazhan Zhanlue de Yanjin Ji Jishi," 15–20.

analysts, for the most part, describe the UNCLOS as a very important, albeit flawed, treaty for advancing the rights of China and other coastal developing countries.<sup>42</sup>

But from the standpoint of China's maritime interests, Chinese maritime security analysts are painting a picture of UNCLOS having accelerated unfair and illegal infringement of China's territory by aggressive neighbors. And they argue—accurately or not—that China is lagging behind its neighbors in asserting and protecting its interests. A PLAN senior captain from the Dalian Naval Academy sets out this interpretation of recent trends:

Since the 1970s, and especially since the UNCLOS came into force . . . quite a few coastal countries have adjusted their domestic legislation and maritime policies in order to expand the sphere of seas under their countries' jurisdiction and to safeguard their sea rights and interests as specified by the UNCLOS. These include countries that neighbor China, such as the DPRK, the ROK, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, and others, all of whom have gradually moved ahead of us in these areas of maritime legislation. Discussing this objectively, it was only as late as the 1980s that China finally began to emphasize the construction of its system of maritime laws. After that, China successively promulgated a series of sea laws and regulations, such as the "Law of the PRC on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone" (February 1992) and the "Law of the PRC on the EEZ and Continental Shelf" (June 1998). . . . However, after the UNCLOS came into force, every one of these countries surrounding China tried to think up all possible means to expand the sphere of the seas under their jurisdiction. The sea areas claimed by these countries and those claimed by China overlap, and this has given rise to large areas of disputed territory. At the same time that some of these peripheral countries have used military occupation and other illegal methods to infringe upon and occupy (*qinzhan*) some reef islands that fall under China's sovereignty, they have also drafted

---

<sup>42</sup> Some of China's notable efforts in this regard are its 1958 "Declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China on China's Territorial Sea"; its 1992 "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone"; its 1996 "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on the Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea"; and its 1998 "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf." English and Chinese texts of all of these may be found in PRC State Oceanic Administration's Office of Policy, Law and Regulation, ed., *Collection of the Sea Laws and Regulations of the People's Republic of China*, 3d ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Haiyang Chubanshe, 2001), especially 1–14 (Chinese texts) and 199–215 (English translations).

related policies and measures, doing their utmost to plunder (*jieli qiangduo*) the resources inside these disputed areas.<sup>43</sup>

One of the PLA's most influential maritime security experts, Senior Captain Zhang Wei of the PLAN's Naval Research Institute, echoes this view that China's neighbors have moved quickly to infringe China's lawful rights in her analysis of China's jurisdiction over its maritime territories, EEZ, and continental shelf resources. In doing so, she reiterates a claim from Hu Jintao's 2004 "Historic Missions" speech about the magnitude of China's contested maritime territorial claims:

These [territories and resources] are an important support for sustainable economic development for the Chinese people. At present, however, there are many serious disputes regarding the jurisdiction over these maritime regions with [China's] neighboring countries, and this has led to serious plundering of China's maritime rights and interests . . . carrying out the drawing of jurisdictional boundaries regarding the EEZ and the continental shelf in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea has produced serious disputes. Since the 1980s, the maritime consciousness of China's neighboring countries has become stronger, and they have, one after another, promulgated their EEZs and continental shelves, vying to be first to enclose and fix (*juanding*) their own "blue national territories." At present, within the nearly 3 million square kilometers of sea territory over which China claims jurisdiction, a little more than half of it is subject to dispute.<sup>44</sup>

Senior Colonel Lin Dong of NDU likewise contends that the UNCLOS helped touch off a "movement of marine nationalization," with countries competing to expand their EEZs and continental shelves. How China and other countries perform in this competition, Lin

---

<sup>43</sup> Tang Fuquan, Ye Xinrong, and Wang Daowei, "Zhongguo Haiyang Weiquan Zhanlue Chutan" [On the Strategy of Defending Chinese Sea Rights], in *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2006): 56–67. Tang is a professor at PLAN's Dalian Vessel Academy. According to an online description of one of his books, Tang held the rank of senior captain as of 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Zhang's *Maritime National Security*, 419–20, spells out what China sees as efforts by other Pacific countries to infringe on China's energy, mineral, fishing, and other maritime resource rights. In addition to a post as researcher at the PLAN's Naval Research Institute in Beijing, SrCapt Zhang has served as a "specially-invited researcher" for the China International Strategy Research Society and has taken part in the U.S.-China Maritime Military Security Consultations.

argues, will change these countries' "safety and danger" and their "historical destiny." He sees Japan as especially assertive in trying to expand its maritime jurisdiction.<sup>45</sup>

The Philippines' passage in 2009 of its "Baseline Law" was a prominent example that sparked strongly worded calls for the PLAN to enlarge its operations beyond its three adjacent seas and the first island chain so that it could better protect its access to the open seas and adopt a tougher stance on key island claims.<sup>46</sup>

Although this frustration over the activities of China's neighbors appears to be widespread in China, debates continue over the pace and wisdom of Chinese efforts to assert its strength past the first or second island chains, or force a resolution of such hotspots as the Huangyan, Nansha, Diaoyutai, or other territorial issues. Some PLAN analysts oppose undertaking such missions too quickly, arguing that Beijing can and must delay trying to resolve these issues at least until its political, economic, and naval powers roughly equal that of the United States' power in these areas. Not until China's naval power is much greater will other Asian countries defer to China's interests without resorting to combat.<sup>47</sup>

By providing venues for strongly nationalist commentary on the East China and South China Seas disputes, Chinese leaders risk increasing the pressure on themselves to pursue more assertive or aggressive policies and missions. On maritime territorial issues, China still officially maintains its policy of "peacefully resolving maritime disputes through equal consultations and negotiations according to the UN Convention on Law of the Sea and other relevant international laws" and "promoting common development

---

<sup>45</sup> Lin Dong, "Historical Turning Point: Campaigns of Maritime Exploration and Emergence of Maritime Industrial Revolution," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2010): 133–40. Col Lin is associate professor at the Strategy Teaching and Research Department at NDU. See also Lu Rude, "Shuli Haiyang Zhanlue Yishi, Jianshe Haishang Jingji Qiangguo" [Establish a Maritime Strategic Consciousness, Build an Economic Maritime Powerful Country], *Zhongguo Ruan Kexue* [China Soft Science] (April 1997): 13–17.

<sup>46</sup> The PRC-owned Hong Kong paper *Ta Kung Pao* cite CCP Central Party School international strategy professor Gong Li and unnamed "Beijing strategic experts" on these views. See "China Needs To Break Through the Encirclement of First Island Chain; Nansha Cannot Afford To Be 'Harassed'," *Ta Kung Pao* online, 21 February 2009. Another article endorsing quick development of a "blue-water navy" and asserting China's territorial claims is MajGen Luo Yuan's "Call From Blue Sea To Protect Development Interests of Country," *Liaowang* [in Chinese], 9 February 2009, 66–68. On the "Baseline Law" and Beijing's reaction, see also "GMA Signs Baselines Bill. Beijing Protests Spratly's 'Claim'," *Manila Times* online, 12 March 2009, [www.manilatimes.net/national/2009/march/12/yehey/top\\_stories/20090312top1.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2009/march/12/yehey/top_stories/20090312top1.html).

<sup>47</sup> Guo Yadong of the Naval Institute of Strategic Studies, "Chinese Navy Should Not Rush to Flex its Muscles," *Huanqiu Shibao* [Global Times] [in Chinese], 25 February 2009, 11.

through cooperation.”<sup>48</sup> By emphasizing its neighbors’ alleged infringement of its maritime rights, however, Chinese analysts are not only justifying a more forceful defense of these aspects of China’s position, they are also reinforcing China’s concern that the strength of its territorial claims is being eroded, even as the economic importance of the resources in these territories is increasing. In past maritime disputes, these strategic perceptions have been associated with aggressive action by China.<sup>49</sup>

### *Securing Shipping Routes*

As China’s dependence on shipborne trade and oil imports has grown, navy analysts have emphasized the importance of the PLAN being prepared for escort missions and for protection of transport lanes from piracy and other potential enemies. As China began its participation in the Gulf of Aden antipiracy mission, the PLAN’s newspaper employed strong language to stress the importance of these trade protection missions. The naval commentator reminded readers that China’s trade navigation lanes now covered the entire globe, and that China’s two-way trade constituted 70 percent of its GDP. Above all, the article stressed the need to protect China’s energy sources, noting that “the security of the transportation channels for the supply of strategic energy resources” had now become “the most important concern in our national security.”<sup>50</sup>

Beyond these immediate offshore priorities, Chinese analysts disagree as to the long-term priorities for the PLAN in expanding its range. One PLAN officer has argued that between 2020 and 2050 the navy should begin transforming itself into a “regional navy” with the ability to operate and ultimately attain command of the sea in the North-west Pacific. Other PLAN analysts believe that China’s next stage of naval expansion will be shaped by its growing economic dependence on securing its maritime rights and interests and maritime industries. This seems to suggest a focus on protecting critical shipping lanes and maritime energy and mineral resources to China’s south. Over time, some analysts contend, the PLAN will take its place among the world’s great navies,

---

<sup>48</sup> An important recent restatement of this policy was in Wu Shengli’s April 2009 speech to international maritime representatives in Qingdao on China’s “harmonious oceans” policy. See full text of the speech by Adm Wu Shengli, commander of the PLAN, “Make Concerted Efforts to Jointly Build Harmonious Ocean,” *Renmin Haijun* [People’s Navy], 22 April 2009, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Taylor Fravel documents this trend in China’s use of force regarding maritime territorial claims. See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China’s Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> *Renmin Haijun*, special commentator, “Providing Escort on Foreign Oceans Is Proof of the Strengthening of the Chinese Navy,” *Renmin Haijun* [People’s Navy], 27 December 2008, 1.

with the ability to protect China's key interests on critical portions of the open oceans. These analysts stress, of course, that China's direction and capacity for naval expansion will depend upon the availability of sustained large-scale support from China's government and its expanding economy.<sup>51</sup>

The ongoing dilemma of PLAN efforts to expand its operational range remains how best to manage the response from its Northeast and Southeast Asian neighbors and from the United States, and limit their sense of alarm and their reaction. Some Chinese Navy analysts have matter-of-factly asserted that PLAN was "going out" in order to expand its regular presence outside the first island chain, implying that the United States and other countries simply needed to acclimate themselves to this reality.<sup>52</sup> Other PLA specialists have betrayed unmistakable pride that the U.S. Navy and others in the region increasingly regard the PLAN as a growing challenge, even to the security of U.S. carriers out to the second island chain.<sup>53</sup>

It is clear, however, that China's leadership and the PLA as a whole continue to feel a strong interest in minimizing the sense of alarm regional powers feel as the PLAN's activities and operational range extend beyond the first or second island chains and into the Indian Ocean. China's maritime diplomacy, therefore, will continue to focus on publicizing several messages: China's expanding navy presence is a normal trend that is fully justified by China's "defensive" and "developmental" needs; it represents a reasonable, cautious response to expanding deployments by other regional powers; and the PLAN is focused on "nonwar" global security operations.<sup>54</sup> In 2009, PLAN Commander Wu Shengli emphasized that all of these trends were part of China's "harmonious oceans" policy, which the PLAN has presented in meetings with foreign maritime representatives.<sup>55</sup> China is also putting out the message that its recent naval activities demonstrate that its expanding naval range will be a force for regional peace and security, in contrast to the naval activities of the United States and other "imperial" powers. As a constant theme in this diplomacy, Beijing has pointed to ancient mariner Zheng

---

<sup>51</sup> Quan Jinfu, "The Innovation and Development of the Chinese Navy's Strategic Theory in the New Century," *Journal of the PLA Nanjing Institute of Politics* (2004): 85, cited in Vellucci, "Extending the First Line of Defense."

<sup>52</sup> Conversations with Chinese analysts, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Wang Jin and Fu Qi, "Pride and Prejudice: An Interpretation of Keating's Visit to China," *Bingqi Zhishi* [Ordnance Knowledge], 4 March 2008, which describes Adm Timothy J. Keating's January 2008 visit to China.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, "PLA Flotilla Movements in International Waters Is Only Normal Exercises," *Nanfang Zhoumo* [Southern Weekend] online, 21 April 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Wu, "Make Concerted Efforts To Jointly Build Harmonious Ocean."



He's Middle East voyages as proof that China—unlike the West and Japan—has always had a peaceful maritime culture.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Broadening Nontraditional Security Roles***

In response to China's expanding maritime security interests, the navy is preparing to confront a growing array of nontraditional security challenges and undertake a widening array of MOOTW. Senior PLA analysts have pointed out that "for a fairly long time to come, nonwar [operations] will continue to be the major form we use to safeguard our overseas interests." They note that the navy, more than the PLA's other service arms, has been encouraged to devote special attention to developing new forms of nonwar overseas military operations.<sup>57</sup>

By broadening its repertoire of MOOTW, the PLA aims to serve a wide array of strategic goals. Although the PLA officially labels these as "nonwar" activities, PLA publications explicitly point out that some of these are intended to support missions and enhance capabilities that are very much war-related, such as undertaking strategic deterrence and deepening the PLA's abilities for crisis management and rapid reaction.<sup>58</sup> Other strategic goals of these operations include "safeguarding world peace," promoting China's economic development and global "common development," and strengthening China's overall international image as a responsible power.<sup>59</sup> PLA analysts and training

---

<sup>56</sup> "More than 600 years ago, Zheng He, the famous Chinese navigator of the Ming Dynasty, led the then world's strongest fleets to sail to the western seas seven times, reaching as far as the Red Sea and the eastern coast of Africa, and visiting more than 30 countries and regions. They did not sign any unequal treaty, did not claim any territory, did not bring back even one slave. They wiped out pirates for the countries along their course, broadly disseminated benevolence to friendly nations, brought China's tea, silk cloth, chinaware, and Oriental civilian to the countries they visited, brought back other people's trust and friendship toward the Chinese nation, and created a world-level example of peaceful and friendly maritime exchanges . . ." Wu, "Make Concerted Efforts To Jointly Build Harmonious Ocean."

<sup>57</sup> Chen, "On the Development of China's Defensive National Defense Policy under New Situation."

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, one recent article by PLA specialists that points out that "sometimes, non-war military actions are very close to certain war actions, war patterns, or wars, not only completing civil actions in the form of war, but also having no explicit boundary when being converted into war, as deterrence and blockade are forms of quasi-war military actions. In many aspects, the organization, command, operational entities, and operational process of nonwar military actions are basically the same as those of war military actions." Liu et al., "A Study of Non-War Military Actions," *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science]: (2008).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

directives underscore the importance of several nontraditional security challenges.<sup>60</sup> These challenges include

- Deterrence and intimidation operations aimed at warning potential enemies
- Military diplomacy missions
- Establishment of “interdiction zones”
- Armed escort operations
- Peacekeeping, counterterrorism, or antipiracy operations
- Evacuating and protecting Chinese nationals at risk in foreign countries
- Search and rescue operations
- Refugee control and management
- Law enforcement operations (including operations against organized crime, narcotics trafficking, smuggling, and human-trafficking operations)
- Social stability preservation operations
- Emergency natural disaster relief
- Antipollution missions

PLA analysts contend that China should take a more active role in MOOTW operations, but also recognize the potential for China to overextend itself. In an effort to strike a balance, one group of PLA analysts advocates that China embrace a policy of “selectively” but “actively” participating in international and domestic MOOTW activities, according to the Chinese government’s strategic desires.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Maritime Force Structure—Setting Priorities***

On more than one occasion over the past three decades, China’s top leaders have told the PLA that not all of the force structure improvements it needs can be made immediately, and tough choices and sequencing in force development are inevitable.<sup>62</sup> At least

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., also Wang Xibin, “A Study of Issues in Military Training under Informatized Conditions,” *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2007); and Liu Yijian, “Zhongguo Weilai de Haijun Jianshe yu Haijun Zhanlue” [The Future of China’s Naval Development and Naval Strategy], *Zhanlue yu Guanli* [Strategy and Management] (May 1999): 100, as cited in Vellucci, “Extending the First Line of Defense.”

<sup>61</sup> Liu et al., “A Study of Non-War Military Actions.”

<sup>62</sup> For a sample of statements by Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin on the limits of force modernization, see Tang Fuquan and Han Yi, “The People’s Navy Forges Ahead Through the Waves Along the Course Charted by the Party,” *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 12–21.

some PLA officers, and probably most, are aware of this need for choice among missions and forces. In a 2009 article in one of the PLA's flagship journals, a senior captain from the PLAN's Dalian Naval Academy pointedly quoted a remark by former General Secretary Jiang Zemin several years ago to the effect that, for the foreseeable future, the navy will not receive the funding for all of the equipment its various missions may require. So hard budgetary choices, priorities, and sequencing are inevitable:

Comrade Jiang Zemin emphatically pointed out: "It should be noted that [for] a fairly long period of time, our weaponry and equipment cannot possibly be completely updated, but can only be improved in some priority areas." These expositions profoundly clarified the guiding principle of "priority, proportionate, and balanced development."<sup>63</sup>

Many of the emerging national security interests examined in this study would have a great impact on the force structure choices of the PLAN. China's leaders have set the strategic objective of building a navy "capable of protecting China's security and development interests" and commensurate with China's rising international stature.<sup>64</sup> Aside from placing primary importance on the Taiwan mission, however, China's leaders apparently have yet to prioritize the numerous emerging maritime interests and missions that PLA officers and analysts maintain will be increasingly important to China's security.

PLA and Western analysts have identified some of the changes in the balance of the PLAN force structure that would be required for asserting maritime territorial and resource claims, securing shipping (including current Horn of Africa escort operations), or undertaking many of the MOOTW activities for which the navy is being urged to prepare.

### *Taiwan Campaigns*

Because PLAN preparation for Taiwan-related campaigns will continue to drive the navy's most critical force structure decisions, this section briefly notes the impact these campaigns have on force structure. The PLAN must develop forces suitable not just for one, but for multiple possible Taiwan campaign and subcampaign types, each of which would involve different tasks and require distinct sets of forces.

Some of these campaign force requirements are reflected in the 2006 edition of the authoritative PLA guide on campaign planning, *The Science of Campaigns (Zhanyi Xue)*, which analyzes several campaign types that the PLAN might take part in during

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. This article identifies Tang as a senior captain teaching at the academy.

<sup>64</sup> Vellucci, "Extending the First Line of Defense," 237–85.

a Taiwan-related coercion or invasion scenario.<sup>65</sup> The discussion of required forces for each campaign in this study is very general, and each campaign type would employ different packages of naval and supporting forces. Two commonly noted campaigns that are very likely to shape PLAN force structure choices are the “Joint Blockade Campaign” and the “Joint Landing Campaign.”

The Joint Blockade Campaign primarily emphasizes the role of forces required to seize air and space control; to carry out mining, patrol, interception, and exclusion of third country forces; and to ensure the protracted enforcement of the campaign. These forces’ assets include

- Attack submarines<sup>66</sup>
- Heavy surface combatants
- PLAAF and PLAN fighters and interceptors
- Missile and air and space reconnaissance forces
- Logistics units

The Joint Landing Campaign emphasizes the forces and equipment required for the three major phases of the campaign: advance operations, assembly onto ships and sea crossing, and assault and establishment of the campaign landing site. The study emphasizes the following forces:<sup>67</sup>

- Amphibious landing and transport ships (including hovercraft and possibly civilian vehicles)
- Helicopters and other vertical landing craft
- Land, sea, and air logistics equipment
- Tactical missiles
- PLAN and PLAAF aircraft
- Some navy surface combatants and minesweepers

---

<sup>65</sup> *The Science of Campaigns* notes several campaigns involving the navy either alone or as a joint campaign. These include the Joint Blockade Campaign, the Joint Landing Campaign, the Maritime Force Group Campaign to Destroy the Enemy, the Sea-Lane Interdiction Campaign, the Coral Reef Island Offensive Campaign, the Sea-Lane Protection Campaign, and the Naval Base Defense Campaign. Zhang Yuliang, ed., *Zhanyi Xue* [The Science of Campaigns] (Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 12, 292–309, especially 300–8.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 315–16.

- Air and naval defense
- Electronic warfare, jamming, and deception<sup>68</sup>

*Discussions of Force Structure in the Wake of the Antipiracy Mission*

PLAN officers and maritime security analysts are actively discussing and debating the force structure requirements for missions to safeguard China's emerging maritime security interests. China's increased involvement in many of its proposed MOOTW missions, for example, will force Chinese leaders to consider the level of resources they will want to commit to developing an array of more specialized forces—possibly at the expense of other missions or nonmilitary purposes. In 2009, PLAN Commander Wu Shengli called on the PLAN to try to incorporate preparations for MOOTW missions into the navy's ongoing combat preparations, but he also stressed the need for more specialized forces and training for the widening array of noncombat operations.<sup>69</sup>

We must incorporate capabilities building for military operations other than war into the navy's overall modernization drive and preparations for military struggles; incorporate the improvement of open ocean maneuver capabilities and strategic projection capabilities into the navy's military capabilities building system; and incorporate the building of relevant specialized forces for military operations other than war, such as emergency maritime search and rescue, into the navy's military force building as a whole; and scientifically plan, organize, and implement them. In light of the demands of military operations other than war, such as maritime rescue and maritime counterterrorism, we must enhance such work as target-specific training, specialized personnel training, and equipment support, and add teaching and training contents in naval academies on specialized knowledge skills for military operations other than war.

The PLAN's participation in the Horn of Africa antipiracy operations has spurred a good deal of debate about how appropriate the PLAN's force structure is for dealing with its new missions. Some Chinese maritime security specialists have indicated that protecting Chinese shipping routes and other long distance operations will require constructing or purchasing more specialized forces that are more appropriate to these operations. In early 2010, a ship design expert interviewed in the Chinese journal *Naval and Merchant Ships (Jianchuan Zhishi)* argued that the Horn of Africa antipiracy mission had “exposed

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 323–30.

<sup>69</sup> Chen Wanjun and Wu Dengfeng, “The People's Navy: Growing with the Republic,” *Xiandai Haijun* [Modern Navy], 2009, 16–23.

some of our [the PLAN's] problems, mainly the weakness of our armament.”<sup>70</sup> The design specialist also stressed that their great distance from China had revealed many inadequacies, including maintenance and repair, access to reliable quality food, replenishment of appropriate quality fuel and other materials, and arrangements for crew rest.<sup>71</sup>

In the past, the primary task for the Chinese Navy was to resist the imperialist's aggression, followed by defending our territorial integrity. At present, our interests have extended much further. Therefore, we cannot follow the previous thinking path for development; instead, we should make great effort in armament building. . . . In my view, a first-rate navy must have first-rate armament.<sup>72</sup>

Some PLAN officers have pointed out other potential contradictions between the navy's current force structure and the demands of new interests and missions, such as the antipiracy operations. In March 2010, PLAN Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo asserted that China's participation in the Somali antipiracy mission demonstrated China's need to develop and produce smaller, “more economical and practical” ships for such missions. Admiral Yin pointed out that using destroyers and frigates outfitted with “area air defense missiles, ship-to-ship missiles . . . antimissile high-speed artillery . . . very advanced radar and communication facilities” for antipiracy ship escort missions was akin to trying to kill a fly with a cannon.<sup>73</sup> Admiral Yin argued that, as such escort actions became more common, China should construct a number of patrol ships of a “semimilitary and semicivilian standard.” He recommended between 3,000 and 4,000 tons outfitted with heavy artillery and machine guns, but weaponry and communications systems that were otherwise “not too advanced.” It was critical, however, that these ships be outfitted with helicopter landing pads.<sup>74</sup> Yin's comments, though, did not address another trade-off—whether deploying ships of this small size rather than destroyers and frigates would be sufficiently seaworthy to undertake missions as far from home as Somalia.<sup>75</sup>

Some analysts have also examined the potential MOOTW and non-Taiwan combat applications of a vessel whose primary purpose would probably be for a Taiwan scenario: amphibious assault ships. The July 2010 issue of the Chinese journal *Naval and*

---

<sup>70</sup> “Blue Water Escort Support and Shipbuilding Capacity Conversion—Interview with Ship Design Expert, Research Fellow Wu Xiaoguang,” *Jianchuan Zhishi* [Naval and Merchant Ships] (March 2010): 16–17.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> “PRC Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo Proposes Developing Patrol Warships for Escort Missions,” *Zhongguo Xinwen She* [China News Service], 4 March 2010. RAdm Yin's actual phrasing was “crushing a fly on a wheel,” a Chinese expression virtually identical in meaning to the English “use a cannon to kill a mosquito.”

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> The authors are indebted to their CNA colleagues for this point.

*Merchant Ships* carried a series of articles emphasizing both the Taiwan-related and the potential non-Taiwan-related applications of these vessels.<sup>76</sup> One analyst noted the “remarkable performance” current generation amphibious assault ships have shown in emergency rescues, disaster relief efforts, and their potential in noncombatant evacuation operations. This same analyst also pointed out these ships’ excellent utility in projecting power along China’s long coastline and in its large EEZ, noting in particular their use in “contending for islands.”<sup>77</sup> Another analyst underscored that, in contrast to an aircraft carrier, amphibious assault ships were relatively economical for less wealthy countries and did not have the danger of “placing all one’s eggs in a single basket” that a large aircraft carrier did.<sup>78</sup> There were disagreements among these authors, though, about the preferred armament for these vessels, with one stressing the value of amphibious assault ships as a platform for vertical/short take-off and landing (V/STOL) aircraft as well as helicopters, and another contending that, for China’s purposes, it was more appropriate to use only helicopters with these vessels.<sup>79</sup>

The antipiracy mission also encouraged more discussion of China’s need for greatly enhanced long-distance support capability. PLAN Commander Wu Shengli highlighted this need in a published 2009 interview examining the navy’s future needs. Wu underscored that the PLAN has always insisted that its increasing combat strength should be in line with China’s developing national interests. Wu stressed that, in addition to developing “new generation” ships and aircraft, the PLAN must also “strive to improve comprehensive logistics and equipment support capabilities.”<sup>80</sup> Wu specifically noted the need to improve maritime maneuvering support capabilities and strengthen at-sea repair and large-scale rescue and supply. He singled out for attention China’s improvements in comprehensive supply ships since the 1990s and the new records in maneuvering at sea without port supply set by the ships in the antipiracy coalition.

Echoing Commander Wu, PLAN Senior Captain Tang Fuquan has written of China’s “leap” in comprehensive support capability, and its progress toward “quickening the process of changing from shore-based support to sea-based support, and extending offshore support to open sea support.” Captain Tang notes that as a result of building

---

<sup>76</sup> Han Jiang, “Exploration of China’s Amphibious Assault Ship,” *Jianchuan Zhishi* [Naval and Merchant Ships] (July 2010): 46–49; and Wang Yi, “Concept: China’s Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing Shipborne Aircraft,” *Jianchuan Zhishi* [Naval and Merchant Ships] (July 2010): 54–57.

<sup>77</sup> Han, “Exploration of China’s Amphibious Assault Ship.”

<sup>78</sup> Wang, “Concept: China’s Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing Shipborne Aircraft.”

<sup>79</sup> Han Jiang favored limiting these vessels to just carrying helicopters. As the title of his article implies, Wang Yi favored the use of V/STOL aircraft.

<sup>80</sup> Chen and Wu, “The People’s Navy: Growing with the Republic,” 16–23.

ship bases, berthing areas, supply points, docks, and airfields, “a shore-based support system is basically in place,” and the navy has gradually deployed new ships to provide support at sea, including comprehensive supply ships, medical ships, and ambulance helicopters.<sup>81</sup>

Two analysts from the PLAN’s Naval Engineering University in Tianjin, Kou Jinzhong and Bai Wenjie, have noted that as the PLAN operates farther from China, China must explore new models for supporting the navy overseas. In the twenty-first century, mid-distance and open ocean mobile support capabilities have become the “core” of building logistical support for the PLAN. But unlike the United States and other traditional naval powers, “China does not, and will not, have overseas military bases or station military forces overseas.” Kou and Bai make several recommendations instead: developing large tonnage, comprehensive supply ships and rapid-operation support ships; planning in advance of operations to build floating bases; and assigning high priority to establishing overseas replenishment points. The latter, they note, could involve developing “flexible and effective support agent relationships with . . . Chinese businesses in foreign countries and businesses owned by overseas Chinese” with the aim of developing new support channels for open ocean and mid-distance support.<sup>82</sup>

## **INTERNAL SECURITY AND LAND-BASED MISSIONS**

Faced with growing domestic social order and nontraditional security challenges—especially in China’s west—China’s top leaders are increasingly asking the PLA to prepare and train for an array of noncombat missions or MOOTW. The unrest in Lhasa and Urumqi, the debilitating 2008 ice storms, the Wenchuan earthquake, and the recent floods in the northeast have all underscored China’s heavy reliance on the PLA’s noncombat role. But the PLA acknowledged the growing importance of MOOTW well before these incidents. As early as September 2002, when the PLA revised its *Guidelines on Military Training*, it specifically incorporated training for noncombat military operations as “an important education and training” item.<sup>83</sup>

Recent PLA education and training materials—including some published almost two years prior to the Lhasa uprising—call on PLA troops to accept and embrace a full array of noncombat missions. These not only include riot and protest suppression, but also counterterrorism operations, anticrime operations, peacekeeping, and disaster

<sup>81</sup> Tang and Han, “The People’s Navy Forges Ahead Through the Waves,” 12–21.

<sup>82</sup> Kou Jinzhong and Bai Wenjie, “Basic Experience and Thoughts on 30 Years of Naval Logistics Reform,” *Junshi Jingji Yanjiu* [Military Economic Research] (2008).

<sup>83</sup> Wang Mingwu, *Feizhazheng Junshi Xingdong* [Non-Combat Military Operations] (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2006), preface, 1.



relief and rescue. They note that even though the People's Armed Police (PAP) primarily handles internal security missions and the PLA primarily confronts foreign threats, the PLA must still be prepared and willing to do more internal security work. Analysts note some cases in which party leaders have adopted what they call "comprehensive treatments" to dealing with areas plagued by serious social order problems—these "treatments" include joint management of these regions by party, government, police, militia, and the regular PLA.<sup>84</sup> The PLA is still coping with the complex challenges these missions present in terms of coordinating command relations with local governments, civilian security, and emergency forces.<sup>85</sup>

Increased preparation and training for a broad range of MOOTW missions will continue to pose serious challenges for the PLA at a time when it must also transform itself into a smaller, higher-quality military capable of fighting and winning high-tech, data-intense warfare. But PLA educational materials state rather plainly that the PLA should not regard social order and other MOOTW missions as being esoteric. They note that during peacetime, MOOTW should be regarded as "a regular duty and responsibility." They also acknowledge and criticize reluctance from "some comrades" in the PLA who believe that anticrime operations and social order challenges are not their job and should be left to the PAP and the public security forces.<sup>86</sup> The PLA has also faced harsh criticism at home for its failures to respond effectively to some MOOTW activities, most notably when the PLAAF was accused of taking 44 hours to transport troops to the town of Wenchuan in the wake of the May 2008 earthquake.<sup>87</sup>

A critical variable that will determine the level of energy and resources the PLA must devote to its future noncombat operations will be whether or not party leaders promote the further development of the PAP and perhaps other specialized civilian emergency response forces that can free up the PLA from these missions.<sup>88</sup> The PAP and public security forces' inability to contain the Lhasa riot by themselves constitutes one of their

---

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 85–86; also Ji Yafu, "A Study on Handling of Public Emergencies by Joint Military-Local [government] Operation," *Guofang* [National Defense] (2008): 27–29; Yang Huijing and Xie Feng, "Methods of Coordination for the Handling of Armed Mass Conflict Incidents," *Guofang* (2008): 69–70; and Liu Jun, "Strive to Improve the National Defense Mobilization System's Capability for Handling Major Mass Incidents," *Guofang* (2010): 43–44.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Wang, *Non-Combat Military Operations*, 86–87, 220–24.

<sup>87</sup> Fudan University professor and media commentator Shen Dingli termed the PLAAF's performance "shameful." See Harold M. Tanner, "The People's Liberation Army and China's Internal Security Challenges," in *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, eds., Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell, 248–49.

<sup>88</sup> On discussions about creating other specialized emergency forces, see *ibid.*

most serious failures to spare the PLA from participation in protest-suppression work since Tiananmen. According to some Chinese experts, China increasingly must counter domestic and cross-border offenses committed by criminals who are too well armed and too well outfitted technologically for many underbudgeted local PAP and public security forces to confront them, and that this has forced PLA units to assist local officials in some local and cross-border kidnapping cases. But it is far from clear if the PAP has the personnel, resources, or training necessary to successfully undertake all of its rapidly expanding missions and free the PLA from many of its MOOTW missions. China was engaged in a broader nationwide debate over modernizing and professionalizing its various emergency response systems for several years before the riots and natural disasters of 2008–9. For now, China’s leaders recognize that they cannot do without the regular PLA for many such operations.

## **SPACE INTERESTS AND PLA DOCTRINE**

China’s increasing space interests and space program are having a critical impact on the PLA’s evolving military doctrine. Since the early 1990s, when the PLA began focusing more on being able to fight and win information technology wars, it has also become more committed to the belief that achieving space superiority and information superiority are essential to seizing the initiative in combat. PLA analysts have emphasized the importance of space-based assets in winning limited wars and have stressed the army’s need to decrease its vulnerability to high-tech enemy forces. Doctrinal writings emphasize how space-based information assets can accelerate the tempo of combat, extend the battlefield, and enable nonlinear operations. They also underscore the essential role that space-based information resources play in integrated joint operations by “providing the necessary real-time battlefield intelligence upon which integrated joint operations are built.” Seizing control of the high ground in space is therefore critical both to battlefield information dominance and joint operations.<sup>89</sup>

PLA analysts believe that China’s most likely future adversaries would enter a war with significant advantages in high-tech systems supported by space-based information technology. Hence, PLA doctrine increasingly emphasizes seizing space superiority to gain the initiative. Some air and space power analysts see enemy space-based information systems as powerful, but potentially vulnerable, interlinked “systems of systems” that can be incapacitated by carefully targeted space, air, and ground attacks against their key nodes during the early phases of combat. Some analysts also raise the option

---

<sup>89</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, “China’s Space Capabilities and U.S. Security Interests,” *Quaderni di Relazioni Internazionali*, October 2008, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=22595>.

of launching “information soft-kill attacks,” in which air and space combat forces would carry out “ferocious electromagnetic interference, suppression, deception, and confusion” attacks against an adversary’s space-based, aerial, land, and sea-based information collection, transmission, and command and control systems.<sup>90</sup> Although PLA analysts hesitate to explicitly advocate launching attacks on enemy satellites during the opening phases of a war, they often state frankly that terrific advantages might accrue to the first power that incapacitates its enemy’s satellites. Two PLA analysts have written that attacks against enemy space assets will be a prime feature of the early stages of future wars, that space will soon become the “true first battlefield,” and that efforts to inflict “satellite paralysis” on enemy forces will become one of the earliest combat objectives. PLA analysts also emphasize the value of carefully targeted follow-up attacks against ground and sea forces—operations that require space-based resources to undertake rapid battle damage assessments. On the defensive side, Chinese air power analysts increasingly stress the importance of space and information resources in coordinating the multiple layers of China’s air defense structure to prevent or mitigate attacks on its own forces. Chinese maritime analysts are likewise placing greater emphasis on developing effective satellite positional and communications capabilities to support the PLAN as it engages farther from home.<sup>91</sup>

Chinese analysts frequently criticize other powers as having military-oriented space programs that constitute a threat to China—a charge almost certainly intended to justify Chinese efforts to prepare to seize space and information superiority in the event of conflict. In his 2004 speech, Hu Jintao criticized what he saw as the intensifying competition for military advantage and the development of new space weapons by a few unnamed “great powers.”<sup>92</sup> He also argued that, in the military realm, the explosion of information technology has transformed cyberspace into “the ‘fifth battlefield’—following the land, sea, air, and space battlefields.”<sup>93</sup> NDU professor and aerospace combat specialist Yuan Jingwei contends that both the United States and Russia/the USSR

---

<sup>90</sup> These attacks might also be aimed at committing information theft, distortion and falsification, deletion, deception, or obstruction, with the ultimate aim of causing a breakdown in information flows (*zhongduan*) or command malfunction. Yuan Jingwei, *Research on Integrated Aerospace Combat Operations* [Kongtian Yiti Zuozhan Yanjiu] (Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>91</sup> Cai Fengzhen and Tian Anping, *Kongtian Yiti Zuozhan Xue* [The Study of Integrated Air and Space Combat] (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 2006), 204; see also Zhang, *The Science of Campaigns*, 546.

<sup>92</sup> Hu Jintao, “Renqing Xinshiji Xinjieduan Wojun Lishi Shiming” [Understand the New Historic Missions of Our Military in the New Period of the New Century], speech to an expanded meeting of the Central Military Commission, Jiangxi Province, 24 December 2004. The full text is available on the National Defense Education Web site at <http://gfjy.jiangxi.gov.cn/yl.asp?idid=11349.htm>.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

have for decades been developing weapons systems designed to attack space orbital vehicles and that these will play a critical role in the future of air and space combat. Yuan asserts that space attacks will “become one of the principal methods of combat for seizing space supremacy.” He forecasts that, as a result, “every militarily powerful country right now is tensely pursuing research and development on all types of attack weapons for pursuing space orbital vehicles.” Yuan’s remarks clearly imply that, unless China develops its own effective antisatellite weapons, it risks falling further behind its most threatening foes.<sup>94</sup>

## **THE PLA’S EXPANDING ROLE IN SHAPING CHINA’S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

The PLA’s expanding security diplomacy over the past 20 years reflects China’s increasingly self-assured and assertive pursuit of its security interests outside of its borders—very much like the diplomatic and intelligence-related shaping behavior noted at the end of chapter 2. Initially, the PLA promoted itself as a low-profile, globally responsible security actor in the 1990s and 2000s by participating in UN peacekeeping operations, expanding military diplomacy, and engaging with regional multilateral security institutions—most notably its founding role in the SCO. Beginning in 2002 with its SCO colleague Kyrgyzstan, China took part in combined military exercises outside its borders to showcase its growing security partnerships, promote its vision of a more multipolar world, and display its military modernization. The PLA is very likely to continue to deepen its participation in these activities that are aimed at encouraging a more hospitable security environment for China’s emergence as a major power:

- Participation in peacekeeping operations
- Engagement with regional security institutions
- Enhancing military diplomacy
- Engaging in combined exercises with foreign militaries

But as China becomes more assertive in identifying and protecting its emerging security interests, PLA efforts to tamp down fears of a “China threat” will face increasing challenges. This is especially true of the countries along the South China Sea. This issue will grow more difficult as the PLA expands its presence in regions where China’s long-term strategic objectives are already regarded with suspicion.

Looking ahead, an important question is whether China’s assertive pursuit of its new security interests will lead it to use the PLA in alternative ways to secure its international

---

<sup>94</sup> Yuan, *Research on Integrated Aerospace Combat Operations*, 154.

environment. In the past two years, some Chinese security analysts have made broad arguments that China should reconsider its “noninterference” policy when it confronts serious instability in neighboring countries (as in Burma in 2009 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and again in 2010). The danger that these crises could spill over into China raises the question of whether the PLA might face greater pressure to come up with options for dealing with instability on China’s borderlands.<sup>95</sup>

### ***Participation in Peacekeeping Operations***

China has dramatically increased its involvement in UN peacekeeping operations, and now ranks 16th among all countries in the number of troops it contributes to PKO—the highest of any permanent member of the UN Security Council.<sup>96</sup> Since 1990, it has contributed more than 14,000 peacekeepers to UN missions.<sup>97</sup> Chinese peacekeeping troops are now stationed in numerous countries and regions, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D’Ivoire, East Timor, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Sudan, and Western Sahara. The majority of Chinese peacekeepers are taking part in missions on the African continent.<sup>98</sup> Most of these troops are PLA engineering, transport, and medical personnel or internal security forces of the PAP.<sup>99</sup> Currently, China has no troops serving in combat roles, though it has reportedly expressed a willingness to send combat troops to certain missions if asked.<sup>100</sup>

The involvement of large numbers of PLA personnel in UN PKO makes several important contributions to China’s security environment:

- Most directly, it supports the fourth of Hu Jintao’s “New Historic Missions” for

---

<sup>95</sup> This study has not located any solid evidence that the PLA is playing a role in China’s overseas efforts to shape its international security environment by trying to limit and undermine the activities of groups that China regards as a threat to its domestic political security. All the evidence on this issue identified in chapter 2 points to activities by Chinese civilian security organizations and diplomats. Because of the PLA’s cyber capabilities, it is possible to speculate that cyber attacks on overseas political groups are one activity in which the PLA might one day be asked to take part. But this report has found no evidence to indicate such PLA activity is occurring or planned.

<sup>96</sup> “Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations,” UN Web site, 31 August 2012, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2012/august12\\_2.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2012/august12_2.pdf); Bates Gill and Chin-hao Huang, “China’s Expanding Presence in UN Peacekeeping Operations and Implications for the United States,” in Kamphausen, Lai, and Scobell, *Beyond the Strait*, 103–4.

<sup>97</sup> Feng Chunmei and Su Yincheng, “Our Armed Forces Display a New Confident Image,” *People’s Daily*, 8 January 2010.

<sup>98</sup> “UN Mission’s Summary Detailed by Country,” UN Web site, 30 April 2010, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2010/apr10\\_3.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2010/apr10_3.pdf).

<sup>99</sup> Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, *China’s Expanding Role in Peace-Keeping: Prospects and Policy Implications*, SIPRI Policy Paper No. 25, November 2009, 5.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

the PLA: “Play an important role in upholding world peace and promoting mutual development.”<sup>101</sup> The operations also contribute to the “harmonious world” that China sees as conducive to its economic growth and rising power.<sup>102</sup>

- Successful PKO strengthens the role of the UN, an important Chinese goal. In turn, UN PKO helps preclude the likelihood of Kosovo-style unilateral military involvement in security crises by Western powers or alliances, operations that China strongly opposes.
- PKO involvement promotes a peace-loving image of China, and especially of China’s military, among the international community. It also shows that China is willing to cooperate responsibly with other countries in promoting peace.
- PKO participation helps cultivate a viewpoint within foreign countries that the PLA’s expansion and modernization holds benefits for international security, as it makes China a stronger and more capable contributor to multilateral military activities. China also hopes it will showcase to the world the PLA soldiers’ high degree of competence, discipline, and professionalism. As one high-ranking PLA officer contends, PLA peacekeepers have “left a good impression on the local governments and people since they strictly followed various disciplines and respected local laws and customs.”<sup>103</sup>

In addition to benefiting China’s security environment, China’s enhanced participation in UN PKO also contributes to the capabilities of the PLA and the PAP by providing these troops with much-needed field experience and operational knowledge of various overseas environments.<sup>104</sup>

### ***Engagement with Regional Security Institutions***

China’s expanding national security interests are causing its military and security engagement of regional security institutions, such as the SCO and ASEAN (in particular the ASEAN Regional Forum [ARF]), to become more complex and challenging. China has used its participation in these institutions to advance a range of existing and emerging security interests. For China, its military exercises with the SCO have been one of the

---

<sup>101</sup> Hu, “Understand the New Historic Missions of Our Military in the New Period of the New Century.”

<sup>102</sup> Yang Jiechi, “Safeguard World Peace, Promote Common Development—Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of New China’s Diplomacy,” *Qiushi* [Seeking Truth], 1 October 2009.

<sup>103</sup> Luo Yuan, “Call From Blue Sea To Protect Development Interests of Country—In Order To Make Country Rich, Strong, We Cannot Ignore Treasures From Sea, Dangers Are Also From Sea,” *Liaowang* [in Chinese], 9 February 2009, 66–68.

<sup>104</sup> Gill and Huang, *China’s Expanding Role in Peace-Keeping*, 16.

most valuable aspects of its membership. These have served as a showcase for the depth of its partnership with Moscow and its former Central Asian republics. These organizations have also provided China with a venue for easing regional concerns about its rise and its increasing involvement in these regions; organizing military exchanges; and strengthening coordination on counterterrorism, disaster relief, counternarcotics, piracy, epidemics, and other common nontraditional security concerns. China's engagement and security cooperation with these two organizations differs greatly—the result of the two organizations' very different structures and China's histories with them. China was a guiding force in the SCO's establishment and growth, but has always been a more reticent participant in ARF. At the same time, both institutions demonstrate important challenges and choices China faces in shaping its security environment.

Because of the importance of China's combined military exercises with its SCO partners, these exercises are discussed below in the section on military exercises. The remainder of this section focuses on China's engagement with ASEAN and the ARF.

## **ASEAN AND THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM**

China and the PLA's security-related involvement with ASEAN and the ARF have expanded since the late 1990s and have included some important joint declarations and agreements. But the PLA has largely limited its engagement to discussions, dialogues, and scholarly exchanges.<sup>105</sup> Some of the more noteworthy activities have included the following:

- In 2002, China and the ASEAN countries signed a declaration on the conduct of the parties in the South China Sea, which set forth broad principles for promoting regional peace, stability, and nonviolent consultation on maritime territorial disputes.<sup>106</sup>
- In 2005 and 2006, China and the ASEAN countries signed an agreement intended to help manage South China Sea issues and to set up multilateral disaster relief and disaster early warning systems.<sup>107</sup>
- In 2007, China and the ARF cohosted a roundtable discussion on maritime security issues and a seminar on narcotics control.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Li Donghang, "China Actively Promotes Military Exchanges and Cooperation With Its Neighbors (III)," *Jiefangjun Bao* [Liberation Army Daily] online [in English], 19 March 2009.

<sup>106</sup> Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 432.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 433.

<sup>108</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *China's National Defense in 2008* (Beijing: State Council, 2009), 91–92.

- In 2008, China hosted a China-ASEAN dialogue between senior defense scholars and an ASEAN-plus-three workshop on disaster relief by armed forces.<sup>109</sup>
- In 2009, the PLA hosted the first joint forum on nontraditional security for military officers of ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea to discuss such problems as terrorism, transnational crime, piracy, and infectious diseases and develop a proposal for a liaison mechanism between the countries.<sup>110</sup>
- Also in 2009, the AMS hosted a senior defense scholars dialogue concerning “East Asian security situation and China-ASEAN defense cooperation,” and focusing on the impact of the financial crisis on East Asian international and domestic security as well as suggestions for enhancing defense cooperation between China and ASEAN member states.<sup>111</sup>
- In March 2010, the AMS hosted a China-ASEAN defense dialogue concerning “Regional Security Mechanism and Defense Policy.”<sup>112</sup>
- In March 2011, a PLA medical team took part in an ARF disaster relief exercise in Indonesia.<sup>113</sup>

A major focus of PLA security-related participation in ASEAN and the ARF has been and will continue to be countering regional concerns about China’s growing influence and assertiveness, particularly with regard to many of its members’ competing South China Sea territorial claims. Beijing is keenly aware that these countries are increasingly wary of its expanding wealth and influence and may respond by pursuing closer ties with the United States or otherwise “balancing” or hedging against Beijing. Speaking in June 2010 in Singapore, then-PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff Ma Xiaotian tried to reassure China’s ASEAN partners that as China’s power increases, it will never become aggressive, expansionist, or domineering.<sup>114</sup>

But notwithstanding one senior PLAN officer’s characterization of ASEAN and the ARF as China’s “most important maritime security partner” in the region, China has been

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>110</sup> Song Xuan, “Sidelights of First Non-Traditional Security Forum of Armed Forces of ASEAN, China, Japan, and ROK,” *Jiefangjun Bao* [Liberation Army Daily] online [in English], 11 June 2009.

<sup>111</sup> Bao Guojun and Zhou Feng, “2009 China-ASEAN Senior Defense Scholars’ Dialogue Held in Beijing,” *Jiefangjun Bao* online [in English], 31 March 2009.

<sup>112</sup> Lu Desheng, “China-Asean Defense and Security Dialogue Held,” *Jiefangjun Bao* online [in English], 30 March 2010.

<sup>113</sup> Xinhua, “Chinese medical team in ARF Direx,” 17 March 2011, <http://english.sina.com/china/p/2011/0316/364604.html>.

<sup>114</sup> Ma, “Shangri-La Dialogue.”



concerned since the ARF's inception in 1994 that the organization should not become a strong multilateral forum for addressing territorial security issues, such as the South China Sea or Taiwan.<sup>115</sup> China has recently opposed efforts by ASEAN countries to use the organization as a base to form a multilateral mechanism to negotiate disputes over South China Sea territory, believing that separate bilateral structures better favor China's interests. China's efforts to defuse regional concerns over its rise suffered a serious blow in 2010 when China opposed Vietnam's efforts to use its chairmanship of the ARF to promote a multilateral negotiating mechanism for dealing with the territorial issues. Coupled with the PLAN's March and April 2010 major exercises—which many ASEAN members interpreted as related to Chinese-Vietnamese territorial disputes—the ARF dispute demonstrates the growing challenges China faces in containing regional concerns about its growing influence.<sup>116</sup>

At least one senior PLA officer has publicly suggested that China hopes that dialogue with ASEAN will keep regional military tensions under control until China can develop the capabilities to better assert and safeguard its interests. PLAN Senior Colonel Feng Liang, a senior scholar at the AMS, expresses the hope that if China and the ASEAN countries can continue their security and cooperation dialogue for the foreseeable future, the South China Sea region can remain “relatively stable.” Feng is concerned about the “internationalization” of disputes over the South China Sea and military competition in the region. Over the longer term, his desire is that as China's national power

---

<sup>115</sup> China's early reservations about the ARF and its evolving attitudes toward it are analyzed in Gill, *Rising Star*, 29–37. On the characterization of the ARF as a partner, see Zhang, *National Maritime Security*, 432–33.

<sup>116</sup> Robert Sutter and Chin-Hao Huang, “China-Southeast Asia Relations: Trade Agreement Registers China's Prominence,” *Comparative Connections*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (April 2010), [http://csis.org/files/publication/1001qchina\\_seasia.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/1001qchina_seasia.pdf); and Robert Sutter, “China-Southeast Asia Relations: Senior Official Visits: South China Sea Tensions,” *Comparative Connections*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (July 2010), [http://csis.org/files/publication/1002qchina\\_seasia.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/1002qchina_seasia.pdf).

and its “maritime comprehensive combat power” gradually increase, China will be able to expand its “interest space” (*liyi kongjian*).<sup>117</sup>

### ***Enhancing Military Diplomacy***

The PLA continues expanding its security cooperation with various countries in an effort to “create a military security environment featuring mutual trust and mutual benefit.”<sup>118</sup> One key element of this has been China’s military diplomacy. A 2009 Rand study notes that China has used military diplomacy “to reassure Asian nations, to demystify the PLA, to expand China’s influence with militaries, to gain experience and knowledge from more capable militaries, and to shape PLA counterparts’ perceptions of China.”<sup>119</sup>

China reports that by 2008 it had established military ties with more than 150 countries and had attaché offices in 109 countries. From 2006 to 2008, PLA delegations visited more than 40 countries and more than 60 countries sent their defense ministers or chiefs of general staff to China.<sup>120</sup> Chinese military officials have closely tied military diplomacy to image building for the PLA. For instance, Major General Chen Zhou of the Chinese military academy has stated that one of the key achievements of recent Chinese military diplomacy is that it has “displayed the good image of the Chinese military as peaceful, open, and cooperative.”<sup>121</sup>

China has also sought to improve its military ties with other countries by conducting educational exchanges with foreign militaries. From 2006 to 2008, China sent 900 PLA students to more than 30 countries and welcomed more than 1,400 students from more than 130 countries to study at PLA military academies.

---

<sup>117</sup> Feng Liang contends that the future security situation in the South China Sea will be characterized by the following four trends: “First, as security dialogues and cooperation dialogues continue their progress, the overall situation in the South China Sea will hopefully remain relatively stable. Second, there is a very noticeable trend toward the internationalization of the South China Sea issue, which make it even more arduous for us to safeguard our maritime rights and interests. Third, the military rivalry among the South China Seas countries is fierce, and this puts even more pressure on us concerning maritime military struggles. Fourth, as China’s comprehensive national strength and our maritime comprehensive combat capability gradually strengthen, we have the hope of expanding our interest space.” Feng Liang, “Guanyu Wending Zhongguo Haishang Anquan Huanjing de Zhanlue Sikao” [Strategic Consideration on Stabilizing China’s Maritime Security Environment], *Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* [China Military Science] (2009): 61–67, especially 64–65.

<sup>118</sup> *China’s National Defense White Paper (2008)*, 93.

<sup>119</sup> Evan Medeiros, *China’s International Behavior* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2009), 89–90.

<sup>120</sup> *China’s National Defense White Paper (2008)*, 93.

<sup>121</sup> Chen Zhou, “2009 China Military Report: Self-Confidence and Transparency Were Featured in Military Diplomacy,” *Liaowang*, 29 December 2009.

### ***Combined Military Exercises***

Among the most important new means by which the PLA has tried to advance China's interest in shaping its security environment has been its participation in combined military exercises outside of its border. The first of these took place in Kyrgyzstan in October 2002. According to China's successive *National Defense White Papers*, from 2002 to the end of 2008, the PLA conducted 23 of these exercises with more than a dozen foreign militaries.<sup>122</sup> According to one American PLA specialist, "Some of these operations have been small pro forma affairs while others have been large and operationally significant. Regardless, these events get the PLA deployed and engaged and involved with foreign counterparts in an operational context, and this is a new development."<sup>123</sup>

The PLA's participation since 2002 in combined military exercises outside its borders has been aimed at advancing a number of continuing and emerging security interests. These include

- Showcasing the PLA's modernization
- Promoting China's vision of a more "multipolar" world in which the United States plays a less prominent military role, and alternative nonalliance institutions can help guarantee the peace
- Spotlighting China's security partnerships with Russia, Central Asia, and a growing array of other countries. China has also engaged in combined military exercises with U.S. security partners such as Thailand and India<sup>124</sup>
- Developing operational experience and skills by practicing with more advanced militaries
- Signaling diplomatic support for its partners, or displeasure with third parties, as it did with Taiwan during its 2005 Sino-Russian exercise (see below)

Combined military exercises held with Russia or other SCO partners—of which nine have been held from 2002 to 2012 (see appendix 2)—are one of the most prominent features of the PLA's involvement with the SCO. Senior PLA officers and civilian commentators have praised these combined exercises for serving a wide array of China's traditional

---

<sup>122</sup> The dates and locations of these are listed in the appendices of the 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 editions of *China's National Defense White Papers*.

<sup>123</sup> David M. Finkelstein, "Commentary on China's External Grand Strategy," unpublished draft paper, August 2010.

<sup>124</sup> The PLA and Royal Thai Army forces conducted the "Strike 2008" combined counterterrorism training exercise in the area around Chiang Mai on 11–29 July 2008. PLA and Indian Army forces conducted the "Hand-in-Hand" combined counterterrorism exercise in Belgaum, India, on 5–14 December 2008. *China's National Defense White Paper (2008)*, 119.

and emerging security interests. The exercises allow the Chinese to imply criticism of what they call the United States' "Cold War-style" alliances in East Asia and assert that they have found an alternative way to carry out effective multilateral strategic cooperation.<sup>125</sup> Other PLA officers have asserted that the exercises strengthen the SCO militaries' sense of partnership and capacity for cooperation in the event of a crisis, such as actual counterterrorism operations. Central Military Commission Vice Chairman General Guo Boxiong praised Sino-Russian military cooperation during the 2009 exercise for being "pragmatic and effective" and said the two armed forces would try to expand their areas of cooperation in the years ahead.<sup>126</sup>

In the wake of the 2008 Lhasa and 2009 Urumqi riots, PLA officers have in particular emphasized the value of the message that these exercises send in fighting terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism. PLA Chief of Staff Chen Bingde, speaking of a September 2010 exercise involving five countries, stated that they would "significantly contribute to eliminating the Three Evil Forces of extremism, separatism, and terrorism." He also noted their broader contribution to "promoting regional security and deepening SCO-wide cooperation."<sup>127</sup> Then-Defense Minister Liang Guanglie praised the 2009 Sino-Russian exercises for deepening their bilateral ties, fighting "terrorism, separatism, and extremism," and for "safeguarding . . . regional peace and stability."<sup>128</sup> Major General Wang Haiyun, a former military attaché, frankly stated his belief that "to some extent, the July 5 [2009] Xinjiang riot pushed forward antiterrorism cooperation between China and Russia."

China has made some relatively assertive efforts to use these exercises to enhance its strategic leverage by signaling its close partnership with Russia and the other SCO members. These have not always been successful, however. In 2005, Beijing apparently hoped to use the exercises to signal its anger with Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's activities. China reportedly prodded Russia to send a much larger force and tried to schedule the exercises opposite Taiwan in the Nanjing Military Region, but Russia demurred, concerned that such a move would be too provocative during a period of cross-strait tension.<sup>129</sup> China's efforts to demonstrate its military modernization at the

---

<sup>125</sup> Gill, *Rising Star*, 62–64.

<sup>126</sup> "China, Russia Satisfied with Joint Anti-terror Military Exercise," *Xinhua*, 24 July 2009, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/24/content\\_11768198.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/24/content_11768198.htm). See also "Start Made to Mirnaya Missiya-2009," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 July 2009.

<sup>127</sup> "Peace Mission 2010 Staged to Fight Terror," China Central Television online, 11 September 2010, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20100911/100728.shtml>.

<sup>128</sup> "China, Russia Satisfied with Joint Anti-terror Military Exercise."

<sup>129</sup> Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, 48–49.

2009 exercises backfired when a Chinese bomber crashed under circumstances that some military witnesses said suggested crew error.<sup>130</sup>

It is also possible that, as China's military power increases, more suspicion of future Chinese dominance may emerge from Beijing's own security partners. This appears to have happened during "Peace Mission 2009." The Russian newspaper *Pravda* underscored the suspicion many in Russia feel for their Chinese "strategic partners" by inviting one of Russia's most prominent Sinophobes, analyst Alexander Khramchikhin, to serve as a commentator on the exercises. Not unpredictably, Khramchikhin insisted that, while Chinese forces were exercising with Russia, they would also be studying "Russia's strong and weak points . . . in case Russia becomes an adversary in the future."<sup>131</sup>

Finally, military analysts have questioned how much value these exercises really have for strengthening coordination among the participating countries' troops, or whether the exercises, by their nature, really develop useful skills for counterterror operations.<sup>132</sup> Speaking of the PLA's combined foreign exercises in general—including those with the SCO—analyst Dennis Blasko has pointed out that "the operational phase of most exercises is relatively brief, small in scale, and heavily choreographed. . . . When enemy forces are part of the scenario, they are carefully [*sic*] to be comparatively small terrorist or criminal forces, usually with only limited, if any, high technology weapons and equipment."

---

<sup>130</sup> "Sino-Russian Military Drill Set Despite Crash," *People's Daily*, 21 July 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6705408.html>; "Two Chinese Pilots Die in Fighter Crash during China-Russia Exercise," *Vostok Media*, 20 July 2009, <http://www.vostokmedia.com/n51038.html>; and "Russian Military Source Blames Chinese Plane Crash on Crew Mistake," *ITAR-TASS*, 23 July 2009.

<sup>131</sup> The *Pravda* report closed by noting that China and Russia shared common political objectives "for the time being." "Russia and China Hold Peace Mission Drills to Show USA Its Place," *Pravda* online, 20 July 2009, [http://english.pravda.ru/russia/politics/20-07-2009//108250-russia\\_china-0](http://english.pravda.ru/russia/politics/20-07-2009//108250-russia_china-0).

<sup>132</sup> The 2005 joint exercises included no actual interoperability and rehearsal of combined operations between the Chinese and Russian forces, according to military analysts. See, for example, the sources cited in Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, 48–49.

## CONCLUSION

### PURSuing EMERGING INTERESTS ABROAD

Understanding a country's sense of its national security interests does not necessarily allow observers to forecast the policies that country will adopt to promote and defend those interests. We do not believe that any particular security strategy can be theoretically deduced from, or is preordained by, either a country's national interests or its level of power. But an analysis of China's sense of its emerging interests and the challenges it confronts in asserting and protecting those interests offers us an opportunity to better understand some of the forces that will drive its future security policy.

During Hu Jintao's leadership term, China tried to strike a difficult balance in pursuing its expanding national security interests. To avoid having its rise to power sidetracked by instability, war, arms races, or organized opposition, China has sought to maintain a peaceful security environment and minimize the risk of conflict, particularly in its relations with other major powers. Beijing has also worked to ease its neighbors' perception that China's rise is a strategic threat in an effort to prevent them from undertaking competitive arms build-ups, pursuing hostile collaboration with other major powers, or forming multilateral partnerships that erode China's advantage in bilateral relationships.

At the same time, as China's national security interests and power have expanded, its leaders and security analysts have painted a picture of their country that seems likely to raise anxiety levels among their neighbors. China not only portrays its security interests as continually growing but it also depicts the sphere in which Beijing should assert and defend these interests as continually expanding beyond China's territorial boundaries into maritime regions, space, and cyberspace. This is one of the key theoretical innovations of Hu Jintao's "Historic Missions" speech.

China's decade-long national debate over its expanding security interests, and in particular the threats that China's interests face, has the potential to heighten tension and conflict between China and its neighbors. Some aspects of China's recent analyses of its security interests call into question the view widely held among many Western analysts that Chinese security policy is reactive, and not expansionist. For its part, China has long presented a parallel image of its security policy and military doctrine as strategically defensive ("active defense").

But the analyses put forward by Chinese leaders and security experts examined in this study make clear that, at a minimum, the mainstream in China's security community believe that China can and should expand the perimeters and realms within which it legitimately asserts and defends its interests. It should also expand the means—including military means—by which it asserts and defends these interests. Hu Jintao argued for this expansion explicitly in 2004. But we can also see this expansion reflected in such vaguely defined concepts as China's "national interest waters," "national security space," or "national strategic space" that security specialists have invoked in recent years to assert China's authority to limit foreign activities, especially military activities, even in regions beyond its territorial waters and EEZ.

Echoing Hu Jintao's 2004 "Historic Missions" speech, China's security community portrays China as a patient state whose patience is continually being tested and whose legitimate economic and security interests have for years been threatened and infringed by its neighbors and by other major powers. This image is especially prominent in China's discussions of UNCLOS and the alleged scramble to claim maritime resources that it has set off among the other nations of the South and East China Seas. China's leaders and analysts argue that China's forbearance has continually been tested, and China must accelerate its development of military, diplomatic, and other means to more actively assert and defend its security interests, because its neighbors have long been doing the same.

For these reasons, China's security policy community appears to be coalescing around the belief that China should pursue what we might call a "defensive expansion" of China's presence and power in Asia, including its military power. By defensive expansion, we mean that China's interest in expanding its military presence and power are being driven by the following perceptions and reasoning. China sees many of its emerging security interests—expatriate citizens and investments; energy security; maritime sovereignty, access, and strategic depth—as increasingly indispensable to its future development and security, but also increasingly vulnerable to both traditional

and nontraditional security threats. Beijing sees itself engaged in pursuing cooperative strategies and security partnerships with its neighbors, and assuming a more active and responsible security role in the region. By contrast, it portrays many of its neighbors as pursuing their interests competitively.

For many within China's security policy community, these perceptions justify the conclusion that China should pursue a measured expansion of military missions, distant seas presence and support networks, and force structure development that permit China to better assert, protect, and deter potential threats to its expanding interests. At the same time, China's security community appears to support continued security diplomacy that eases concerns about China's expanding power, and also offers China opportunities for cooperation on nontraditional issues, including joint exercises, joint operations, and membership or observer status in multilateral security organizations.

When Chinese leaders and analysts protest what they see as threats to and infringements of their expanding national security interests, it is difficult for Western analysts to be certain whether China truly sees its legitimate interests as threatened, is simply portraying them this way to gain a bargaining advantage, or is seeking a way to justify its more assertive diplomacy. The answer to this question is important. Understanding how China perceives the state of its key security interests will be critical to assessing how it is likely to pursue these expanding interests in the decades to come.

The materials examined in this book make clear that many of the PLA's top strategic thinkers—and not just the PLA's regular corps of ultranationalistic media commentators—have devoted a great deal of consideration in recent years to the nature of China's emerging security interests and the PLA's proper role in helping to assert and protect these interests. Much of this research is in line with the PLA's "New Historic Missions." Senior PLA officers and top civilian security specialists now argue that China's restrained defense of its international interests in past decades should be seen as the result of weakness rather than a morally superior security policy. As a nation's power increases, it is natural that its interests will expand, and many of these analysts appear to believe that China is now, or soon will be, powerful enough to push its security interests far beyond its land borders. Indeed, some explicitly advocate that, as China becomes more powerful, it should look upon the assertive behavior of other great powers in the past as a legitimate reference point for its own future behavior. Some of these PLA thinkers have called for reconsidering longstanding matters of doctrine and policy, such as the "defensive" orientation of the PLA's active defense strategy. They have also endorsed a significant expansion in the PLA's (especially the PLAN's) range of missions



and operations to include numerous MOOTW missions. An important example of this thinking is claiming the right to protect and rescue Chinese citizens and their investments overseas, notwithstanding China's past "noninterference" policy.

There may be another important clue as to how China is likely to expand its military presence and activities to support its interests in China's recent use of its Africa anti-piracy task force and its transport planes to help evacuate Chinese citizens from Egypt and Libya. Although China's strategic thinkers have been debating new ways to assert its interests abroad, its leaders have displayed a pattern of opportunism in making their final decisions to deploy the PLA in pursuit of emerging interests. In early 2011, Beijing took advantage of emerging international crises as opportunities to deploy the PLA in novel ways.

China's leadership may feel that it must rely upon the opportunities presented by crises to overcome reticence, inertia, or bureaucratic stalemate within its own system. It is also true that some in Beijing believe that international crises provide China with a valuable cover for expanding its military activities in ways that its foreign critics and rivals will find hard to criticize or oppose. For example, China is well aware that India and other naval powers in the Indian Ocean believe that China is using its Horn of Africa deployments to develop a permanent presence in those waters. Chinese security analysts have responded to these complaints by noting that China's deployments proceeded under a UN mandate, were small in scale, and came at a time when the United States and others were pressing China to carry a greater share of the cost of international security.<sup>1</sup> Chinese analysts recognize that the simultaneous involvement in this operation of the United States, Europe, and other powers will likely make it easier for China to deflect criticism about its this new assertiveness. It seems unlikely, however, that China's neighbors in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean will be assuaged by this explanation.

Another security perception of China's Communist Party leaders and security specialists—that China faces serious threats to its domestic stability and the CCP's hold on power from all sides—raises additional concerns about how China might pursue its expanding national security interests. As the individual sections of this book make clear, Beijing sees many of these emerging security interests as having a strong direct or indirect impact on its domestic security. Beijing believes it needs to secure access to resources and markets partly to fuel its economic growth, and partly because it genuinely fears that, despite three decades of historic economic growth, a sustained downturn in its growth rate could threaten the CCP's hold on power. Beijing likewise fears that its growing mix of economic, diplomatic, and security interests in its western and

---

<sup>1</sup> A Chinese security specialist on South Asia made this point to one of the authors in 2011.

southwestern border regions are at risk if it cannot maintain the stability of its Muslim and Tibetan regions. The Chinese leadership also believes that its growing diplomatic influence and available resources for security work provide it with increasing opportunities to take its fight against foreign-based opposition groups (including Tibetan and Uighur activists) outside its borders.

As Beijing's concerns about regime survival ratchet up its sense of the stakes underlying its emerging security interests, Western analysts should expect to see more signs that China is using its power to pursue its internal security interests on the international stage, and also legally or illegally within the sovereign territory of the United States and other countries.

Looking ahead, China's rapidly expanding conception of its security interests is pushing it to be more assertive outside of its land borders, and to consider expanded missions for the PLA. Beijing may even genuinely worry that, in some areas, it faces a deteriorating strategic situation, and the longer it waits to push some of these interests, the more competition it will face from its neighbors. But as Beijing has also long known, missteps in advocating its expanding security interests will continue to spur concern among its neighbors and other powers in the region about China's potentially hostile intent. As events of the past year demonstrate, China's neighbors will even, at times, combine with each other or with the United States and other powers to resist what they see as excessive assertiveness from Beijing.

For China, the question of how quickly, aggressively, and even coercively to pursue these emerging national security interests is only likely to get more difficult and ambiguous, not less. Caught between a long-range calculation that it should avoid angering its neighbors in the region, and a short-term desire to employ its growing capability to defend its interests, Beijing may find itself miscalculating, overstepping the mark, and committing more faux pas in the future. Or it may simply determine that asserting its interests and expanding its repertoire of military operations is worth the cost of heightened anxiety among its neighbors. For China's neighbors and the United States, the question of how best to evaluate and respond to China's pursuit of its emerging security interests will certainly present an increasingly complex, risky, and unavoidable challenge.



## **APPENDIX ONE**

### GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN COUNTRIES HOSTING CHINESE LABORERS AND INVESTMENT (END OF 2006)

Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment (end of 2006)

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	World Bank Political Stability Index	Fund for Peace Failed State Index	Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index	World Bank Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Algeria	28,945	-1.02	Warning	3.00	-0.45
Russia	25,275	-0.77	Warning	2.30	-0.45
United Arab Emirates	20,302	0.74	Moderate concern	5.70	0.68
Sudan	11,988	-2.11	Alert	1.80	-1.11
Jordan	11,157	-0.65	Warning	4.70	0.16
Vietnam	11,018	0.43	Warning	2.60	-0.34
Saudi Arabia	10,520	-0.63	Warning	3.40	-0.21
Mauritius	10,055	0.67	Moderate concern	4.70	0.52
Myanmar	9,516	-0.82	Alert	1.40	-1.53
Israel	9,042	-1.34	Warning	6.10	1.25
Kuwait	7,900	0.24	Warning	4.30	0.36
Mongolia	7,268	0.73	Moderate concern	3.00	-0.49
Angola	6,279	-0.49	Warning	2.20	-1.24
Mexico	6,047	-0.48	Warning	3.50	0.10
Qatar	5,777	0.87	Moderate concern	6.00	0.38
Cambodia	5,527	-0.42	Warning	2.00	-0.90
Malaysia	5,441	0.34	Warning	5.10	1.06
Nigeria	4,588	-2.12	Alert	2.20	-0.94
Pakistan	4,400	-1.94	Alert	2.40	-0.53
Bangladesh	3,685	-1.39	Alert	2.00	-0.74

Note: Rankings exclude the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, South Korea, and Australia.

Sources: PRC Ministry of Commerce 2008 Trade-in-Services Report, The World Bank, Transparency International; The Fund for Peace.

Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment  
(continued)

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Indonesia	3,677	-1.21	Warning	2.30	-0.37
Kazakhstan	3,546	0.15	Warning	2.10	-0.44
Thailand	3,214	-0.89	Warning	3.30	0.25
Argentina	3,148	0.06	Moderate concern	2.90	-0.06
Laos	2,912	0.01	Warning	1.90	-0.79
[North] Korea	2,276	-0.23	Alert	N/A	-1.66
Iran	2,192	-1.30	Warning	2.50	-0.71
Ethiopia	2,191	-1.62	Alert	2.40	-0.63
Tanzania	2,143	-0.09	Warning	3.20	-0.45
Trinidad and Tobago	2,005	-0.11	Warning	3.40	0.28
India	1,854	-0.90	Warning	3.50	-0.04
Equatorial Guinea	1,770	-0.06	Warning	1.90	-1.34
Philippines	1,704	-1.30	Warning	2.50	-0.09
Mauritania	1,674	-0.14	Warning	2.60	-0.84
Peru	1,629	-0.89	Warning	3.50	-0.51
Libya	1,627	0.21	Warning	2.50	-0.71
Uruguay	1,540	0.71	Moderate concern	6.70	0.40
Morocco	1,524	-0.26	Warning	3.50	-0.09
Congo (Kinshasa)	1,522	-2.64	Alert	1.90	-1.80
Yemen	1,458	-1.33	Alert	2.50	-1.01

**Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment  
(continued)**

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Lesotho	1,305	0.15	Warning	3.30	-0.44
Ghana	1,293	0.26	Warning	3.70	-0.14
South Africa	1,292	0.00	Moderate concern	5.10	0.71
Namibia	1,270	0.81	Warning	4.50	0.14
Botswana	1,231	0.95	Warning	5.40	0.55
Guinea	1,211	-1.74	Alert	1.90	-1.37
Panama	1,177	0.10	Moderate concern	3.20	0.08
Oman	1,116	0.75	Moderate concern	4.70	0.33
Gabon	1,078	0.09	Warning	3.30	-0.71
Fiji	1,069	-0.06	Warning	N/A	-0.11
Zambia	1,018	0.13	Warning	2.60	-0.73
Sri Lanka	974	-1.54	Alert	3.20	-0.27
Uganda	947	-1.21	Alert	2.80	-0.49
Guinea Bissau	912	-0.40	Warning	2.20	-1.20
Venezuela	911	-1.16	Warning	2.00	-0.79
Liberia	872	-1.32	Alert	2.10	-1.25
Kenya	813	-0.95	Alert	2.10	-0.67
Micronesia	799	1.12	Warning	N/A	-0.31
Afghanistan	718	-2.27	Alert	1.80	-1.37
Mali	716	-0.06	Warning	2.70	-0.63

Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment  
(continued)

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Sierra Leone	709	-0.46	Alert	2.10	-1.10
Tajikistan	673	-1.35	Warning	2.10	-0.91
Madagascar	665	0.08	Warning	3.20	-0.46
Azerbaijan	632	-0.92	Warning	2.10	-0.56
Senegal	589	-0.29	Warning	3.60	-0.21
Mozambique	578	0.52	Warning	2.80	-0.43
Nicaragua	578	-0.41	Warning	2.60	-0.89
New Zealand	551	1.32	Sustainable	9.40	1.86
Zimbabwe	538	-1.16	Alert	2.10	-1.30
Vanuatu	491	1.39	N/A	3.10	-0.41
Kyrgyzstan	449	-1.20	Warning	2.10	-0.76
Antigua and Barbuda	442	0.83	Warning	N/A	0.39
Seychelles	439	1.08	Warning	4.50	-0.07
Suriname	435	0.11	Warning	3.50	-0.08
Central African Republic	422	-1.77	Alert	2.00	-1.44
Nepal	395	-2.05	Alert	2.50	-0.79
Guyana	387	-0.59	Warning	2.60	-0.18
Chile	379	0.70	Moderate concern	7.00	1.15
Cameroon	374	-0.41	Warning	2.40	-0.91
Turkey	352	-0.59	Warning	4.10	0.17



Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment (continued)					
Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Congo	339	-1.12	Alert	2.10	-1.34
Grenada	317	0.45	Warning	3.40	0.08
Egypt	311	-0.86	Warning	2.90	-0.54
Albania	297	-0.41	Warning	2.90	-0.50
Barbados	291	1.07	Moderate concern	6.90	1.22
Papua New Guinea	288	-0.75	Warning	2.00	-0.76
Eritrea	261	-0.91	Warning	2.80	-1.27
Cyprus	246	0.50	Warning	5.30	1.12
Turkmenistan	245	-0.33	Warning	2.00	-1.25
East Timor	241	-1.16	Alert	2.60	-0.97
Cote D'Ivoire	229	-2.18	Alert	2.10	-1.37
Malawi	223	0.01	Alert	2.70	-0.84
Iraq	221	-2.88	Alert	1.50	-1.84
Jamaica	218	-0.27	Warning	3.30	0.13
Djibouti	215	-0.21	Warning	2.90	-0.99
St. Vincent and Grenadines	213	1.10	N/A	6.10	0.80
Cuba	210	0.15	Warning	4.20	-0.59
Malta	207	1.20	Moderate concern	5.80	1.16
Tunisia	204	0.37	Warning	4.20	0.49
Rwanda	196	-0.62	Warning	2.80	-0.37

**Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment  
(continued)**

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Ecuador	191	-0.90	Warning	2.10	-0.95
Dominica	187	0.99	N/A	5.60	0.69
Syria	185	-0.62	Warning	2.40	-0.94
Swaziland	178	-0.13	Warning	3.30	-0.70
Brazil	172	-0.13	Warning	3.50	-0.14
Burundi	167	-1.37	Alert	2.50	-1.22
Saint Lucia	163	0.94	N/A	6.80	0.90
Samoa	151	1.14	Warning	4.50	-0.08
Uzbekistan	143	-1.59	Alert	1.70	-0.94
Gambia	124	-0.04	Warning	2.30	-0.76
Maldives	109	0.73	Warning	3.30	-0.10
Niger	103	-0.36	Alert	2.60	-0.89
Ukraine	93	-0.03	Warning	2.70	-0.46
Cook Island	87	N/A	N/A	N/A	-0.19
Bahrain	79	-0.32	Moderate concern	5.00	0.32
Comoros	79	-0.17	Warning	2.60	-1.72
Benin	73	0.34	Warning	2.70	-0.54
Togo	73	-0.71	Warning	2.30	-1.61
Chad	70	-1.90	Alert	1.80	-1.36
Brunei	69	1.23	Warning	N/A	0.77

**Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment  
(continued)**

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Tonga	67	0.54	N/A	1.70	-0.63
Honduras	55	-0.50	Warning	2.50	-0.55
Hungary	52	0.83	Moderate concern	5.30	0.89
Bahamas	51	0.88	Warning	N/A	1.09
Poland	50	0.33	Moderate concern	4.20	0.54
Republic of Palau	46	1.11	N/A	N/A	-0.64
Salvador	41	-0.14	Warning	4.00	-0.20
Bulgaria	31	0.38	Warning	4.10	0.05
Lebanon	28	-2.06	Alert	3.00	-0.49
Cape Verde	26	1.00	Warning	4.90	0.16
Colombia	25	-1.61	Warning	3.80	-0.01
Romania	24	0.23	Warning	3.70	0.00
Czech Republic	22	0.87	Moderate concern	5.20	1.14
Costa Rica	22	0.85	Moderate concern	5.00	0.18
Republic of the Marshall Islands	18	1.11	N/A	N/A	-0.82
Georgia	17	-0.88	Warning	3.40	-0.22
Macedonia	15	-0.66	Warning	3.30	-0.14
Armenia	12	-0.28	Warning	3.00	-0.25
Iceland	8	1.59	Sustainable	9.20	2.15
French Polynesia	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Governance Challenges in Countries Hosting Chinese Laborers and Investment  
(continued)**

Country	Total Number of Chinese Workers (2006)	Political Stability Index	Failed State Index	Corruption Perceptions Index	Governance Effectiveness Index
		Most stable quartile	Sustainable	Least corrupt quartile	Most effective quartile
		Second quartile	Moderate concern	Second quartile	Second quartile
		Third quartile	Warning	Third quartile	Third quartile
		Least stable quartile	Alert	Most corrupt quartile	Least effective quartile
Sao Tome and Principe	5	0.36	Warning	2.70	-0.89
Bhutan	4	1.29	Warning	5.00	0.18
Bolivia	3	-0.94	Warning	2.90	-0.73
Estonia	2	0.76	Moderate concern	6.50	1.16
Somalia	0	-2.73	Alert	1.40	-2.21
Monaco	0	1.04	N/A	N/A	0.38
Latvia	0	0.76	Moderate concern	4.80	0.67
Slovakia	0	0.69	Moderate concern	4.90	0.84



**APPENDIX TWO**  
COMBINED CHINESE MILITARY EXERCISES WITH RUSSIA  
AND OTHER SCO PARTNERS

Exercise Date	Countries	Exercise
10–11 October 2002	Kyrgystan, China	Counterterrorism exercise on Sino-Kyrgyz border carried out within SCO framework
6–12 August 2003	China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan	Counterterrorism exercise in China-Kazakhstan border region carried out within SCO framework
17–25 August 2005	China, Russia	“Peace Mission 2005” joint exercises in Vladivostok, Russia, and Shandong Peninsula, China, involving consultation, planning, execution of landing, airborne operations, etc., involving nearly 10,000 army, navy, air force, airborne, and marine units, of whom approximately 8,000 were from China, and 2,000 from Russia. By far the largest joint Chinese-Russian military exercise to date
22–23 September 2006	China, Tajikistan	Counterterrorism exercise in Hatlon Prefecture, Tajikistan
9–17 August 2007	China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	“Peace Mission 2007” counterterrorism exercise in three stages carried out in Urumqi and Chelyabinsk, involving more than 4,000 troops, of whom 7,500 troops were Russian, and 1,600 were Chinese (Russian sources say 6,000 troops)
20 July 2009	China, Russia	“Peace Mission 2009” counterterrorism exercise near Shenyang, Liaoning, involving more than 30 jets, 100 tanks and armoured vehicles, and 2,600 troops of whom 1,300 were Chinese
9–25 September 2010	China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan	“Peace Mission 2010” Counterterrorism exercise in Almaty and Ottar, Kazakhstan. Total troops more than 5,000 of whom Chinese forces comprise 1,000 servicemen
<p>Source. <i>China’s National Defense White Papers</i> (2004, 2006, 2008 eds.); RIA Novosti, <a href="http://en.rian.ru">http://en.rian.ru</a>; Russian Ministry of National Defense Web site, <a href="http://www.mil.ru">http://www.mil.ru</a>; <i>Liberation Army Daily Online</i>, 7 September 2010; CCTV Online, 11 September 2010.</p>		

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### MURRAY SCOT TANNER

is a senior research scientist in the China Studies Division at CNA Corporation. Dr. Tanner has published widely on Chinese and East Asian politics and on military and security issues. His books, monographs, and reports include *Distracted Antagonists, Wary Partners: China and India Assess their Security Relations* (2011); *China Confronts Afghan Drugs: Law Enforcement Views of “The Golden Crescent”* (2011); *Chinese Economic Coercion Against Taiwan: A Tricky Weapon to Use* (2007); and *The Politics of Lawmaking in Post-Mao China: Institutions, Processes, and Democratic Prospects* (1999). He is also coauthor of *A Question of Balance: Political Context and Military Aspects of the China-Taiwan Dispute* (2009), and *Chinese Responses to U.S. Military Transformation and Implications for the Department of Defense* (2006). His articles and book chapters, which have appeared in such journals as *The Washington Quarterly*, *Comparative Politics*, *The China Quarterly*, and *The China Journal*, include “The Missions of the People’s Liberation Army Air Force” (Richard P. Hallion et al., eds., *The Chinese Air Force: Evolving Concepts, Roles, and Capabilities*, 2012), and “The Evolution of Chinese Maritime Strategy: Continental Roots of China’s Maritime Expansion” (The National Maritime Foundation, ed., *China as a Maritime Power* [forthcoming]). Before joining CNA, Dr. Tanner served as a professor of Chinese and East Asian politics at Western Michigan University, as a senior political scientist at the Rand Corporation, and as the cochair’s senior staff member for the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. He holds a PhD in political science, and bachelor’s degrees in political science, East Asian languages and literature, and Asian studies from the University of Michigan.



## **PETER MACKENZIE**

works for Interpeace—an independent, international peacebuilding organization and a strategic partner of the United Nations—as the senior program officer for the Somali Region Democratization Programme. Prior to joining Interpeace, Mackenzie served as an Asia security analyst in the China Studies Division at CNA, where he was author or coauthor of numerous studies on China and its military-security policy and international relations, including *Behind the Periscope: Leadership in China’s Navy* (2013), *Red Crosses, Blue Water: Hospital Ships and China’s Expanding Naval Presence* (2011), *A Closer Look at China-Iran Relations* (2010), and *The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict: Deterrence, Escalation, and the Threat of Nuclear War in 1969* (2010). He has also worked on China and/or African affairs for the National Committee on United States–China Relations, the International Republican Institute (IRI), where he was IRI’s East African office director based in Nairobi, Kenya, and for the Atlantic Council of the United States. Mackenzie holds a master’s degree in public policy and administration from Columbia University, and a bachelor’s degree in Asian studies from Williams College. He studied Mandarin Chinese at Capital Normal University in Beijing and the Harbin Institute of Technology, and has taught English at the Sun Yat-sen University of Medical Sciences in Guangzhou.



For China, the Arab Spring was not merely an unwelcome reminder that seemingly ironclad regimes can be toppled by popular discontent. It also forced China to consider the impact that these distant revolts might have on its emerging security interests. As a result of 30 years of China's rapid development and increasing global engagement, these interests extend well beyond Chinese shores. China now sees the effect of foreign developments on its energy supplies, commodity prices, overseas investments, citizens abroad, global security environment, and domestic stability.

Beijing's response to the Arab Spring underscores how the growth of China's global security interests may be threatened even by distant events. At the same time, its emerging interests—and calls from within the security community for greater assertiveness in their pursuit—have attracted attention and concern among China's neighbors and other major powers in Asia.

### THIS BOOK FOCUSES ON TWO MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze evolving perceptions by China's national security community of its national security interests and the potential threats to those interests; and
- Examine the challenges that China's emerging security concerns creates for the PLA, and how these challenges shape its roles, missions, and activities.

Front cover: Official Department of Defense photo  
by Spec1 Chad J. McNeeley

