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## Chinese Army Building in the Era of Jiang Zemin

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CHINESE ARMY BUILDING  
IN THE ERA OF JIANG ZEMIN

Andrew Scobell

August 2000

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## FOREWORD

To many in the United States, China looms large and threatening. What are the national security and national military goals of China's leaders? What strategies are Chinese leaders considering in pursuit of these goals? What is the likelihood that these goals will be attained?

This monograph attempts to answer these questions through an analysis of China's defense establishment under the leadership of Jiang Zemin. It assesses the political and economic determinants of China's effort to modernize its armed forces. Four possible strategies are outlined: (1) "playing the superpower game," (2) "playing to its strengths," (3) "changing the rules of the game," or (4) "don't play that game." The factors that will determine the selection of a strategy are examined. The most likely strategy is identified and its outcome evaluated. Lastly, the implications of the study for the U.S. defense community are addressed.

Forthcoming studies by Dr. Andrew Scobell will assess the substance and future of China's "strategic partnership" with Russia and analyze China's use of force. A third monograph will examine more broadly trends in the Asia-Pacific region and their policy implications for the U.S. defense community.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

ANDREW SCOBELL joined the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) in August 1999 and is SSI's expert on Asia. He taught at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, and Rutgers University, New Jersey. Since 1988 Dr. Scobell has published articles in such journals as *Armed Forces and Society*, *Asian Survey*, *China Quarterly*, *Comparative Politics*, *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, *Political Science Quarterly*, and *Problems of Post-Communism*. Recent articles have focused on China-Taiwan tensions, the Korean War, and paramilitary formations. He is currently completing a book about China's use of force since 1949. Dr. Scobell holds a B.A. in History from Whitman College, an M.A. in International Studies from the University of Washington, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University.

## CHINESE ARMY BUILDING IN THE ERA OF JIANG ZEMIN

Mao Zedong enabled Chinese to stand tall;  
Deng Xiaoping let the people get rich;  
the third generation leadership, with Jiang Zemin  
at its core,  
will enable China to become a strong country.

-Zhang Wannian (1997)<sup>1</sup>

To many in the United States, China looms large as a strategic threat. Some anticipate a threat emerging in the foreseeable future, while others believe that one already exists. Any rising power, as it seeks to find its place on the global stage, poses challenges to the world community. So it is merely prudent to consider the possibility that Beijing might become an adversary.<sup>2</sup>

One can point to either positive or negative trends to support polar opposite judgments about China. It can be argued that the country is evolving into a peaceable responsible global citizen, or that China is a burgeoning, belligerent power. There are positive signs that China is becoming increasingly integrated into the world economy. Beijing has a substantial material stake in preserving a peaceful international environment and maintaining cordial relations with Washington. On the negative side, China, already a nuclear power with the world's largest number of men and women under arms, is actively engaged in modernizing its nuclear and conventional systems. And some of its leading strategic thinkers consider Washington an adversary or potential adversary (see below). It is only sensible to ask how China's military capabilities are likely to change during the early years of the 21st century.

The central challenge that China's Communist Party leaders face today is how to proceed with military modernization in order to ensure a military strong enough

to be victorious in war without spending the regime into oblivion. In other words, how does the People's Republic of China (PRC) avoid what might be dubbed the "Soviet trap" of economic decline coupled with the emergence of a politically unreliable army? The Soviet collapse was systemic in origin but precipitated by the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>3</sup> From the Chinese perspective, the collapse was due to excessive military spending.<sup>4</sup> The triggering event, however, was the military's abandonment of the communist party's paramount leader.<sup>5</sup> Beijing's challenge is at the heart of the "conflicting principles" in civil-military relations: how to maintain armed forces sufficient to defend successfully a regime from its enemies while at the same time ensure that the military does not undermine the regime by consuming too many resources.<sup>6</sup>

While the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is 2.5 million strong and has made significant strides in upgrading its forces, it remains quite backward with limited capabilities.<sup>7</sup> At the dawn of the 21st century, Beijing very much desires a stronger military able to project force swiftly beyond its borders in order to defend its territorial claims in the South China Sea and possessing greater conventional and nuclear deterrence.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Beijing wants to be capable of projecting force within its current borders to deal with ethnic rebellion in frontier regions and worker or peasant unrest in China proper without outside interference. The fear expressed by Chinese leaders about the potential for the emergence of an "Asian" Serbia or Kosovo is a strong indication of this. The level of alarm is evident from the bald statement made by one PRC researcher in a Hong Kong newspaper in late 1999: "Taiwan is not Kosovo."<sup>9</sup> Even before Kosovo, however, concern was expressed that China's efforts to deal with internal ethnic unrest in the 21st century might be used as the pretext for external intervention. Military operations against Tibet separatists could, for example, prompt the imposition of a "no fly zone" by an outside power.<sup>10</sup>

## RICH COUNTRY, STRONG ARMY

However, China's civilian leaders do not want defense spending to serve as a brake on economic growth. The political question of how Beijing can balance the need to further modernize its military forces with the imperatives of continued economic growth and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule falls squarely in the realm of political economy. How much (defense spending) is enough? The answer of course depends on where China wants to go. What are China's national security objectives for the medium term (next 10-15 years)? David Finkelstein has cogently argued that these comprise sovereignty, modernity, and stability.<sup>11</sup> At a minimum, these translate into full control over the geographical areas that the PRC currently occupies, continued economic growth and prosperity, and the survivability of the communist regime. At a maximum, these mean full control of all territories claimed by Beijing, and a wealthy, technologically advanced and economically robust society with a powerful and state-of-the-art security apparatus.

Chinese leaders and common people have long yearned for a "rich country and strong army" (*fuguo qiangbing*). This aspiration has been articulated during both the 19th and 20th centuries. It is instructive to note that in the so-called "Democracy Wall" movement of late 1978 and early 1979, a recurring desire expressed by the people on the streets of Beijing—at least as frequently as calls for greater freedom and openness—was that China should become prosperous and possess a powerful military.<sup>12</sup> A similar theme was evident in the May 1999 popular protests against the U.S. bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade.<sup>13</sup> The four-character mantra was also very much a part of Deng Xiaoping's vocabulary.<sup>14</sup> More recently this call has been repeated.<sup>15</sup>

Chinese political and military leaders clearly have great power ambitions.<sup>16</sup> Beijing is not satisfied with being a regional power—it wants to be a world power. It is not



surprising then that the yardstick by which China's leaders measure their progress is the United States. And the prime example of superpower failure—to be avoided at all costs—is the Soviet Union.

This monograph analyzes China's defense establishment under the leadership of Jiang Zemin and assesses the political and economic determinants of Beijing's effort to modernize its armed forces. First, four possible army building strategies are outlined. Second, the domestic and foreign factors that will determine the selection of a strategy are examined. Finally, the most likely outcome is presented and its implications analyzed.

## ARMY BUILDING STRATEGIES

What are China's national military objectives for the new decade and beyond? David Finkelstein contends these are to: (1) protect the CCP and safeguard stability; (2) defend China's sovereignty and defeat aggression; and (3) modernize the military and build the nation.<sup>17</sup> In this monograph I focus on the first element of the third dimension: modernizing the military or what might be called "army building." As I see it, China can pursue one of four different defense policy or army building strategies. It can: (1) "play the superpower game"; (2) "play to its strengths"; (3) "change the rules (of the game)"; or, (4) "don't play that game." While these are analytically distinct strategies, in practice, elements of one can very easily be combined with elements of another in any number of different variations.

### Playing the Superpower Game.

The first alternative is to "play the superpower game." What I mean by this is that Beijing strives to attain all the trappings of a late 20th century superpower. The prime example of such a state is, of course, the United States. The other obvious example was the Soviet Union. The strategic accouterments of a Chinese superpower would include such

things as aircraft carriers, an active space program, and sizeable nuclear arsenal with adequate delivery systems (including fleet ballistic missile submarines [SSBNs] and intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBMs]). According to a recent RAND study, China is currently pursuing an across-the-board modernization strategy.<sup>18</sup> This policy option is what June Dreyer labels “fighting high technology with high technology.”<sup>19</sup> In the 1990s China geared up to develop a modern, high-technology air force. Military leaders appear to believe that the *sine qua non* of a turn-of-the-century regional power is a capable combat ready air force. The PLA has set its sights on a long-term plan to modernize completely its aircraft through a combination of off-the-shelf purchases, technology transfers, and pilot training programs mostly from the Russian Republic. The primary lesson of the Gulf War in the eyes of many PLA leaders is the primacy of airpower, particularly the importance of controlling airspace or at least denying it to a hostile power.<sup>20</sup>

“Playing the Superpower Game” appeals to conventional military thinking because it involves large concentrations of troops, large formations of heavy armor, hundreds of high performance fighter aircraft, not to mention battle ships and aircraft carriers. This option also plays to public consumption because it focuses on the acquisition and development of weaponry and forces that can be readily displayed in National Day parades and military exercises that show well in news footage on national television.<sup>21</sup> The depth of popular desire for higher global status for China is evident in such things as the yearning for China to acquire an aircraft carrier.<sup>22</sup> And the major impetus to China’s space program is national prestige. There are, of course, significant commercial applications for this program as well as spin-offs for military technology. Formal planning for a manned space flight began in 1992, and preparations continue apace. China successfully tested an unmanned spacecraft in November 1999, and expectations are high

that China will succeed in putting a man in space early in the 21st century.<sup>23</sup>

## Playing to Your Strengths.

The second strategy is what might be called selective development of weapons systems and technologies that play to China's existing strengths and areas of greatest potential.<sup>24</sup> China should avoid the temptation of seeking to match its opponent's strengths and instead build on its own strengths.<sup>25</sup> As Admiral Liu Huaqing said in 1993:

The mission of our armed forces is to safeguard our inviolable territory... and sea rights and interests. . . . Therefore, we pursue . . . (a) military modernization (that) serves the needs of territorial and offshore defense . . . in order to win a high-tech local and limited war with the available weapons and equipment.<sup>26</sup>

This option is what June Dreyer calls "doing more with existing equipment."<sup>27</sup>

This army building strategy stresses that China should pursue a defense policy which makes the most sense to China for several reasons. Financially, it means that the PLA does not need to fund modernization across the board but can funnel money into "pockets of excellence." Shortcuts can accelerate the process: foreign technology can be acquired by purchase or through espionage. The prime target for the former is Russia, while the prime target for the latter is the United States. That China has purchased significant quantities of Russian arms in the 1990s is fact. That China has targeted the United States as the prime territory for obtaining military technology and actively sought such intelligence through stealth purchases and spying is also beyond dispute. According to a Chinese spy manual published in 1991, intelligence gathering in the United States is "necessary to make breakthroughs on key technologies."<sup>28</sup> What is in dispute is the degree of success the Chinese have had. According to the Cox Report, China

obtained the plans to the W-88 warhead (better known as the neutron bomb). China, while it has officially acknowledged possessing the neutron bomb, has pointedly denied achieving this technological breakthrough through spying.<sup>29</sup>

In practical terms, the strategy of playing to one's strengths is simply a continuation of what is being done now. Particular attention is being given to upgrading its nuclear weapons program to exploit missile technology and to deploy nuclear warheads not only strategically but also tactically.<sup>30</sup> And, as one expert noted, the development of nukes is "relatively cheap compared to efforts to achieve a similar level of deterrence based on developing high-tech conventional weapon systems."<sup>31</sup>

### Changing the Rules.

The third army building strategy is to change some of the fundamental rules and assumptions of conventional (Western) thinking about defense and national security policy. That is, rather than perceiving defense requirements as separate and distinct from other national (civilian) needs, Beijing would view them as integral and intertwined. This, in essence, would mean infrastructure projects and economic ventures should be evaluated not only from the perspective of how they meet peacetime needs, but also how they would contribute to wartime needs.

This ideal was present in Mao's thinking on the importance of the military contributing to nonmilitary projects, and of the armed forces being an organic extension of the people. Under Mao, Beijing sought to subvert the laws of political economy as they relate to defense spending by making the PLA a productive force and an educative force, in addition to a fighting force. Soldiers could contribute to their own upkeep by, for example, engaging in crop cultivation and animal husbandry. Soldiers could also assist in economic construction through participation in public works projects. Politically Mao viewed the PLA as

ideological shock troops who could lead the masses by example, serving as a “great school” for the entire country.

This concept of meshing military and civilian spheres is also a logical extension of Deng Xiaoping’s thinking. Deng rationalized placing a priority on economic modernization over military modernization by emphasizing that the former made important long-term contributions to the latter.<sup>32</sup> And under Deng, China sought to circumvent the constraints placed on military modernization through two creative initiatives.

First, the military was given a green light to utilize its extensive economic holdings, expertise, and other resources to raise extra-budgetary funds to supplement the modest defense outlays it received from the state budget.<sup>33</sup> On the one hand, Jiang Zemin’s initiative of the late 1990s to divest the PLA of its business empire represents a reversal of this thinking. On the other hand, this initiative appears to be foundering.<sup>34</sup> The second initiative was to diversify military industries so that they could pursue civilian production. A phrase widely used in China was “civil-military integration, peacetime-wartime integration” (*junmin jiehe, pingzhan jiehe*).<sup>35</sup> The idea was to facilitate technological transfers from civilian to military use. Thus, the purpose was to upgrade the technological level of military industries. The term widely used in English, defense conversion, was really a misnomer.<sup>36</sup> The recent stress on giving greater attention to national projects that will serve peacetime and wartime needs indicates a continuation of this line of thought.<sup>37</sup>

Don’t Play That Game.

The goal of the fourth army building strategy is to avoid having to play the superpower game altogether. That is, Beijing does not need to get involved in a potentially disastrous full-blown arms race such as that during the Cold War. According to one source, the West sought to “lure China into the trap of increasing military spending so that the Chinese would step into the shoes of the former Soviet

Union.”<sup>38</sup> According to one strategic thinker, the outcome of superpower competition between Washington and Moscow was “one defeated, one wounded” (*yi bai, yi shang*). As the Soviet Union and the United States focused on military competition, the thinker noted, West Germany and Japan were able to concentrate on making themselves into global economic powers.<sup>39</sup>

This army building strategy is geared to waging “asymmetric warfare.”<sup>40</sup> An oft-quoted phrase—attributed to Mao—is very relevant here: “You fight your kind of war and I’ll fight mine” (*ni da ni de, wo da wo de*).<sup>41</sup> The publication of such works as *Unrestricted Warfare* in 1999 by two PLA Air Force colonels points to the considerable thought and discussion this policy has received in China. The book has also received much attention in the United States.<sup>42</sup>

In this alternative, the PLA essentially opts out of the orthodox defense development model. China does not seek to build thousands of state-of-the-art tanks, aircraft carriers and attendant support ships, a massive nuclear arsenal, and pursue a vast array of conventional weapon systems. Instead of seeking to match up against the United States head-to-head in battle space, China will focus on developing capabilities that can indirectly negate these apparent insurmountable strengths in technology and numbers. These capabilities would include such things as ballistic missiles, computer network attacks, and other information operations, aimed at undermining the economic, transportation, and communications infrastructures of a technologically superior power. Academy of Military Sciences researchers discuss computer warriors forming “network guerilla units” to hack into the Pentagon’s computer systems.<sup>43</sup>

A high priority is information warfare.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, “information warfare” as conceived of by strategists in China is not a means to attain battlefield dominance but a key dimension of asymmetric warfare in its own right.<sup>45</sup>

China also attaches a high priority to “counterspace operations.” Chinese analysts believe that the PLA should focus on exploiting a weakness in U.S. intelligence, communication, and navigation: excessive dependence on satellites. There is considerable discussion among Chinese strategists about antisatellite warfare.<sup>46</sup> This effort by China to grasp the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) is not aimed at seeking to match the United States measure for measure but rather asymmetrically with a regional instead of a global focus.<sup>47</sup>

Chinese thinkers urge attention to how concepts and principles from “People’s War” can be adapted to fighting modern warfare. In early 1998, for example, Chinese Minister of National Defense Chi Haotian gave a lecture at the PLA’s National Defense University titled “People’s War Under Modern High Tech Conditions.”<sup>48</sup> And in the wake of the Kosovo campaign, some PLA analysts have sought to highlight the continued relevance of the principles of People’s War in modern warfare.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, “Don’t Play That Game” is an application of many of the principles of classical Chinese strategists such as Sun Zi and concepts of Mao’s People’s War. Essentially this army building strategy addresses the issue of how the weak might overcome the strong.<sup>50</sup> It has been suggested that the Chinese style of strategy may be better suited to dealing with war in the information age than Western styles.<sup>51</sup>

## DETERMINING FACTORS

The factors likely to determine which army building strategy China will pursue in the medium term are (1) doctrine and warfighting scenarios; (2) domestic economic and political variables; and, (3) elite perceptions of the international environment.

## Doctrine and War Fighting Scenarios.

Current doctrine is known as “limited war under high-tech conditions.” While a “strategic shift” from People’s War to “Limited War” occurred in the mid-1980s, the incorporation of a high-tech focus appeared in the 1990s as a response to the Gulf War, reportedly at the prompting of Jiang Zemin.<sup>52</sup> It is important to recognize that Chinese strategic thinking is not monolithic, and there are differences of opinion on military doctrine. According to Michael Pillsbury, there are three very distinct and different schools of thought within the PLA concerning the type of future warfare China should be prepared to fight. He identifies a “People’s War” school, a “Local (or Limited) War” school, and an “RMA” school.<sup>53</sup> While Pillsbury views these schools separate with no overlap, elements of People’s War and RMA seem readily transferable to Limited War doctrine.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, as noted above, Chinese strategic thinkers do tend to take concepts from People’s War and RMA and apply them to Limited War. And as Pillsbury notes, limited (or “local”) war “seems to include a broad range of scenarios, almost any war smaller in scale than a global or major nuclear war.”<sup>55</sup>

Many Chinese strategic thinkers believe that small or medium-scale wars are likely and indeed inevitable in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>56</sup> While medium-scale wars in the region may or may not involve China, certainly the PLA must be ready. According to Dr. Cheng Guangzhong, a research fellow at the Academy of Military Sciences, the “probability of territorial disputes (in the Asia-Pacific) sparking partial war and armed conflict is very high.” Cheng’s October 1999 interview in a leading Chinese newspaper paints a very sobering strategic appraisal of the region.<sup>57</sup>

Even leaving aside this trend, the principle of active defense central to Chinese doctrine increases the odds that China will resort to force when faced with a crisis. The ultimate form of “active defense” is a preemptive strike.<sup>58</sup>



This, combined with Chinese attitudes toward the importance of the first offensive strike in future war replacing the traditional preference for a carefully prepared and timed counterattack, significantly raises the potential for China to launch a surprise offensive move.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, the PLA's primary warfighting scenarios and training exercises involve Limited War. And the nexus of the prime warfighting scenario, Limited War doctrine, and National Security goals is Taiwan. Indeed, in the view of many Chinese strategic thinkers, Taiwan is the dispute most likely to drag China to the brink of war in the foreseeable future.<sup>60</sup>

Other scenarios for possible rapid military deployment include the South China Sea, and China's central Asian border regions.<sup>61</sup> The central Asia scenario might involve operations to counter domestic unrest in Tibet or Xinjiang or border clashes with India. Beijing is particularly concerned about stability in Tibet and Xinjiang, especially the emerging insurgency and terrorism campaign being waged by Uighurs.<sup>62</sup> To combat the Uighur challenge, ". . . China is far more ready to employ military force within its borders than without."<sup>63</sup> This concern and fears of urban unrest in China proper have prompted an increase in the size of the paramilitary People's Armed Police to more than one million men.<sup>64</sup>

#### Domestic Variables.

The PLA on the one hand is used to being revered and privileged, while on the other hand having to place its bureaucratic interests second behind the economic and social needs of the country and the political demands of the CCP. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the PLA was expected to play political, economic, social, and internal security roles in addition to being responsible for China's external defense. From the birth of the PLA in 1927 until Mao's death in 1976, Chinese military leaders were severely constrained ideologically and technologically as to doctrine,

weaponry, and training. Then, during approximately 2 decades under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (late 1970s to mid-1990s), a more restrictive role was delineated, and the military was encouraged to focus on defense modernization. The constraints on the PLA during this period were primarily resource-based as military upgrading took a backseat to overall economic development.

In the era of Jiang Zemin, the defense challenge has become more acute from Beijing's perspective. This new political era, which began in the mid-1990s when Deng Xiaoping became too ill to function as paramount leader,<sup>65</sup> coincides with a period of flux in Beijing's strategic outlook. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), and the conclusion of the Kosovo campaign (1999), China now sees the global strategic environment in a very different light.<sup>66</sup>

*Economic.* Boom or bust, there are likely to be persistent tensions between defense needs and sustaining economic growth. Economic slowdowns, such as the one following the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, will swell the ranks of the unemployed. This in turn will increase the potential for unrest. While official estimates of urban unemployment are low, unofficial estimates are considerably higher—at least as high as 8 or 9 percent, and perhaps as high as 25 percent.<sup>67</sup> China has appeared largely to avoid serious fallout from the 1997-98 financial crisis, but its economy is extremely vulnerable in several ways.<sup>68</sup> There are two particularly serious weaknesses. The first is how to reform inefficient state owned enterprises. Most are perennial loss makers, and closing them down or even making them more efficient would mean massive layoffs. The specter of worker unrest is a frightening one for Chinese leaders and employees as state owned enterprises constitute almost three-quarters of all urban workers.<sup>69</sup> The second problem is the “enormous buildup of nonperforming loans”—that is, loans have gone unrepaid for longer than 3-6 months—and these comprise more than one-fifth of all outstanding loans of China's largest banks.<sup>70</sup> This raises the

possibility of bank and business failures and a stock market crash. Such events could also trigger unrest when personal savings and investments are wiped out. This scenario is not so far fetched, judging by the October 1998 collapse of the Guangdong International Trust and Investment Corporation. Foreign investors in this case, however, suffered the overwhelming majority of the losses.

For more than 2 decades China has been able to sustain high rates of economic growth. Even the lower growth rates of approximately 7 percent have been sufficient to sustain prosperity. Chinese officials seem confident of continued growth of this order of magnitude for 2001.<sup>71</sup> As of early 2000, these leaders seem determined to proceed with market-oriented reforms, especially initiatives aimed at revamping China's financial system and state owned enterprises.<sup>72</sup>

While unemployment continues to be a social problem and of serious concern to Chinese leaders, the matter has proved largely manageable. Although Chinese officials and foreign observers have continued to express concern about the destabilizing effects of a vast "floating population" estimated to be as large as 100 million persons, this vast pool of mobile labor, to the contrary, has had a positive impact on social order and economic growth. The transients provide a ready pool of labor in areas where there is under-supply, thereby sustaining growth in economic dynamic regions while at the same time moderating the income inequalities of poorer regions that otherwise would not benefit from the boom times in other regions.<sup>73</sup>

Corruption is another intractable but so far manageable problem. Corruption is endemic, corrosive, and of major concern to Beijing. The question is what negative impact it has. Corruption is arguably less destructive and destabilizing in China than in other countries.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, in China's case it may actually stimulate economic growth.<sup>75</sup>

Overall, China's leaders can be cautiously optimistic about the economic outlook. As of this writing, Beijing

seems on course to receive Permanent Normal Trading Relations status from the U.S. Congress and is on track to join the World Trade Organization.

*Political.* Many observers of Jiang Zemin era elite politics point to the growing power and influence of the PLA in foreign and domestic policymaking.<sup>76</sup> There are differences of scholarly opinion as to the nature and impact of this influence. Some argue it is largely limited only to national security matters and that much of the lobbying is strictly on an individual basis and is not coordinated institutional or bureaucratic lobbying.<sup>77</sup> Others insist it is more extensive and more institutional in nature.<sup>78</sup>

I contend that senior military leaders in contemporary China are very influential in national policymaking. Of course they are more active in some areas than others—particularly in those that fall within the parameters of the national security objectives mentioned earlier. PLA leaders, however, do not dictate policy or control the agenda. Civil-military relations in the PRC are perhaps best characterized as a process of continual bargaining.<sup>79</sup>

The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-96 was a watershed in civil-military relations in China.<sup>80</sup> I argue that it was the first crisis of the post-Deng Xiaoping era.<sup>81</sup> It heralded the emergence of a new configuration in military politics. It was the last gasp of the dual-role elites prevalent in the Mao era, and in the Deng era at the highest echelons. China entered the Jiang era with civilian and military leaders clearly differentiated. Jiang, unlike Mao or Deng, has no significant military experience. While the episode marked a significant change in civil-military relations and highlighted the growing influence of the PLA, it also probably marked the high water mark of military influence. This is because the two key military figures in the crisis, Long Marchers Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen, have since retired. The words of subsequent military

spokesmen are unlikely to carry the same weight.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the modes by which the PLA influences policy have changed. Rather than make the concerns of the military known only at the highest echelons of power through informal discussions in smoke-filled rooms, in the Jiang era the PLA also lobbies more publicly in the media, through books, journals, and to political leaders through letters and visits.<sup>83</sup> The National People's Congress was also a key forum for PLA lobbying in the 1990s.<sup>84</sup>

Jiang Zemin has moved adroitly to establish his authority in the PLA. As a consummate bureaucrat he quickly grasped the importance of managing the military nomenklatura—at the dawn of the 21st century, the top ranks of the PLA are filled with men Jiang has appointed and promoted.<sup>85</sup> Jiang moved to exercise the power of the purse more slowly. The commercial ventures of the PLA were allowed to go unchecked for almost 2 decades, and the negative impact of this became more and more evident as the 1990s progressed. Finally, Jiang acted, primarily nudged by the rampant corruption that he believed was depriving the party-state of much needed revenues.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, corruption in the armed forces was of even greater concern because it is viewed as an “early symptom of the erosion of combat readiness and party control.”<sup>87</sup> Also, in banning the PLA from commerce, Jiang was making a one-time commitment of state funds to compensate the military for divestiture and increasing defense outlays in the long term.<sup>88</sup> The divestiture has been stymied by fallout from the May 1999 Belgrade embassy bombing though. Consequently, it is unlikely that the PLA will be dispossessed fully of its commercial holdings anytime soon.<sup>89</sup>

Still, grasping the powers of appointment and the purse do not a civilian controlled military make. There is still weak institutional civilian control of the army in China. On the CCP side, the tripod of party committees, the political commissar system, and the political work committees do ensure party control of the PLA for the moment.<sup>90</sup> However,

if the past is any guide, political officers will tend to adopt the military's perspective instead of representing the party's interests.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, political indoctrination of the military in the 1990s takes an instrumental form that stresses blind loyalty to the party without articulating a theoretical underpinning or rationale.<sup>92</sup> The major organ through which actual party control is exercised is the Central Military Commission (CMC) which, although chaired by Jiang, is dominated by soldiers.

And the state apparatus for controlling the military is very weakly institutionalized. While there is formally both a party and a state CMC, they are one and the same—the point is made clearly by the constant reference simply to the *Zhongyang Junwei* and omitting the prefix “Party” or “State” altogether.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the Ministry of National Defense serves purely ceremonial/diplomatic and coordinating functions—it is a place to greet foreign military delegations, etc.<sup>94</sup> It is significant that in key pieces of legislation such as the 1982 Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the National Defense Law of 1997, there is no mention made of the Ministry of National Defense or Minister of National Defense.<sup>95</sup>

The current PLA leadership owes its political loyalty to the abstract entity of the CCP and its personal allegiance to Jiang Zemin who presently holds the troika of PRC President, CCP General Secretary, and CMC Chairman. While the personal dimension may be quite firm,<sup>96</sup> the political link is less ironclad (see below). Still, a remarkable and significant development is the establishment and adherence to retirement norms established by the party.<sup>97</sup> There appears to be an unwritten pact that the PLA supports the CCP, and in exchange the CCP gives the PLA autonomy over military affairs and appropriate levels of funding and guidance.<sup>98</sup> Thus Jiang Zemin has stressed the high-tech nature of warfighting and sought to provide the PLA with sufficient resources to develop accordingly. Still, there is a sense among soldiers that the CCP leadership has incurred a substantial debt to the PLA during the reform

period, and at some point the armed forces will call this in. That is, as noted in the introduction, military modernization has taken a backseat to national economic development. The impact of the organizational changes announced in 1998 remains unclear. The creation of a “new” civilian Committee on Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND) to replace the “old” military CONSTIND and the formation of a General Armament Department (GAD) could be a more coherent and focused PLA research, development, and acquisition effort. According to one analyst, the “most important people and organizations” from the old CONSTIND shifted to the GAD. And the “biggest organizational winners” in the defense establishment reshuffle are the PLA and the GAD.<sup>99</sup> One analyst aptly characterizes party-military relations in post-Deng China as a “bargaining” system in which the PLA must be consulted on all major policy issues.<sup>100</sup>

Increasingly, military sentiment appears to question the heretofore sacrosanct party-army link. This takes the form of advocating the statification or nationalization (*guojiahua*) of the army.<sup>101</sup> The concern over the political reliability of the PLA that was raised in dramatic fashion in 1989 continues to be evident from periodic condemnations that appear in the official media of statification and “depoliticization” of the armed forces. Despite the massive political campaign launched in the aftermath of June 1989, Beijing continues to be perturbed by the penetration of the military by Taiwanese intelligence and the Falun Gong sect in the late 1990s.<sup>102</sup>

### Elite Perceptions of the International Environment.

While the environment in the Asia-Pacific region is now peaceful, this is considered rather a superficial condition. When a region has such dynamic economic growth, some kind of military conflict is inevitable even if it is only minor,

according to one scholar from the Academy of Military Sciences. Therefore, according to the analyst: “. . . the overall peace(ful) situation can be termed worrying and moreover conflicts and crises are always occurring in east Asia. . . .”<sup>103</sup>

In the 1990s China’s military leaders frequently have been depicted as hardliners—the leading advocates of tough, uncompromising policies toward the United States, Taiwan, and territorial claims in the South China Sea.<sup>104</sup> PLA leaders are regularly depicted as belligerent or bellicose. The most widely read work of the “China Threat” school, *The Coming Conflict with China*, begins with a highly incendiary quotation on page 1 by a senior Chinese military strategist. Lieutenant General Mi Zhenyu is quoted as saying:

[As for the United States] for a relatively long time it will be absolutely necessary that we quietly nurse our sense of vengeance. . . . We must conceal our abilities and bide our time.<sup>105</sup>

This quote is, to put it mildly, very misleading. While it appears that Lieutenant General Mi did indeed write this, the quote is taken out of context for dramatic effect, with misleading results. First of all, this is a most inflammatory translation. “Quietly nurse our sense of vengeance”—a key phrase—could also be translated “endure hardship in order to wipe out our national humiliation” (*woxin cangdan*).<sup>106</sup> Second, the quote is portrayed inaccurately as evidence of a bellicose PLA. In fact the second key phrase, “conceal our abilities and bide our time” (*taoguang yanghui*), is taken directly from the famous 28-character policy guideline issued some years earlier by Deng Xiaoping. Third, the original Chinese text does not explicitly mention the United States.<sup>107</sup>

Chinese military men have also been quoted extensively, threatening war against Taiwan and a nuclear strike against the United States. These verbal barrages are to



warn the U.S. armed forces not to meddle in Taiwan unless they were prepared to risk a major conflict with China.<sup>108</sup> The saber rattling in the Taiwan Strait of late 1995 and early 1996 was interpreted by some as reflecting a military takeover of Taiwan policy.<sup>109</sup> The truth of the matter is far more complex. Saber rattling was strongly favored by the PLA, but it was the result of a consensus between Beijing's political and military leaders.<sup>110</sup> There is strong sentiment for unification with Taiwan at an early date among both soldiers and civilians.<sup>111</sup>

While the anger and outrage expressed by Chinese military leaders during the 1995-96 crisis reflected genuine feelings of frustration, this does not mean the PLA was itching to go to war over Taiwan.<sup>112</sup> In fact, the thinking of Chinese soldiers appears to be quite close to the "military mind" outlined by Samuel Huntington more than 40 years ago.<sup>113</sup> That is, they appear conservative, pessimistic, and wary of initiating hostilities. Indeed, in most cases, Chinese soldiers appear no more eager and often less willing than their civilian counterparts to resort to war. In short they seem to react much like their U.S. counterparts.<sup>114</sup>

The U.S. Threat to China: "It's Taiwan, Stupid."

Beijing sees the United States as its principle threat.<sup>115</sup> This is not to say that China sees war with the United States as imminent, but rather Beijing has believed for the last decade or so that Washington is working to undermine communist rule and to stymie Chinese efforts to develop a more powerful military. Since the mid-1990s, Beijing concluded that Washington had reversed its "one China" policy and was now actively working to prevent China from unifying with Taiwan. In fact, Taiwan is now viewed as a means by which the United States is actively preventing China from being a "unified, powerful socialist country."<sup>116</sup> According to a group of strategic thinkers led by Deputy Director Zhu Chenghu of the Institute for Strategic Studies of the National Defense University, "After the end of the

Cold War, Taiwan has been increasingly used by the United States as an extremely important chess piece to contain China."<sup>117</sup> Researcher Cheng Guangzhong from the Academy of Military Sciences calls Taiwan an "ace [in the game of] containing Mainland China."<sup>118</sup> Moreover, according to Cheng, there is a "... sharply increasing danger of Taiwan independence [that] poses a serious threat to China's internal security."<sup>119</sup>

With the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and the resumption of control over Macao in 1999, China has unification with Taiwan high on its agenda. Beijing is particularly sensitive to anything it perceives as moves to sabotage efforts at making progress on unification whether these are seen to come from the island itself or from elsewhere.<sup>120</sup> As a result of this and the deepening frustration over the lack of progress toward political unification with Taiwan, China issued a White Paper in February 2000 in an attempt to clarify its position. One of the most important of the policy's new features is a third justification for the use of force. In addition to a declaration of independence and military intervention by a foreign power, China is now on record as also considering indefinite refusal by Taiwan to engage in talks leading to unification as grounds for Chinese military action.<sup>121</sup> China is also deeply suspicious of the man who was elected as Taiwan's president in March 2000. Chen Shui-bian has a long history of advocating Taiwanese independence. While he has publicly rejected pursuing independence, except as a last resort if China attacks, doubts remain in Beijing about the new Taipei leader's real intentions. China, however, has adopted a "wait and see" approach to give Chen some time to reveal his hand. But Chinese leaders appear pessimistic about prospects for progress on unification, and their patience waiting for concessions from Taiwan's new leader is likely to wear thin before very long.<sup>122</sup>

Chinese officials repeatedly insist that any military action will be targeted at a minority of troublemakers who are encouraged by "foreign forces."<sup>123</sup> While China's leaders

were surprised by the forceful response of the United States in sending two aircraft carriers to the vicinity of Taiwan during the Strait Crisis, there is a firmly held belief in some circles that the United States does not have the stomach for a war with China over Taiwan.<sup>124</sup>

China is concerned about the emergence of theater missile defenses (TMDs) in the region, particularly the proposal for a TMD for Taiwan. Such a move would not only be viewed as serious intervention in China's internal affairs, but also as a hostile and aggressive act that would almost certainly prompt military action.<sup>125</sup> The "state-to-state" concept floated by Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui in mid-1999 and discussion of TMD for the island prompted a barrage of hardline and bellicose rhetoric warning of the prospect of hundreds of Chinese missiles raining down on Taiwan and U.S. forces.<sup>126</sup> The new administration of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian, while adopting a conciliatory and moderate tone toward China, has also refused to capitulate completely to Beijing's political formula for unification. Taipei's new defense minister quickly indicated a desire to rapidly develop a missile defense system for the island.<sup>127</sup>

It is possible that at some future date China could feel sufficiently threatened by the United States that it would seek some kind of military alliance or alignment with Russia. While China has tended traditionally to avoid formal treaty commitments, over the long term this possibility should be taken seriously. Should Beijing and Moscow become increasingly disenchanted with the West and find common cause on a number of issues, such as missile defense, a strategic partnership of some kind may coalesce. Certainly China and Russia have an active and on-going trade in arms and a program of research cooperation. Moscow has been particularly enthusiastic about establishing some kind of alliance with Beijing and Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin is on record as an avid supporter of a Russia-China axis.<sup>128</sup> An alliance would be all the more inviting if Beijing detected a serious

effort by Tokyo to beef up its defense capabilities. China is acutely sensitive to the specter of a militarized Japan. Moreover, if the Korean Peninsula formed a single military establishment either as a result of the two Korean states confederating or the North being absorbed by the South, China might feel further threatened. But the most important triggering factor would be a serious deterioration in Beijing's relationship with Washington.

On the positive side, a welcome trend in Chinese foreign policy is a new receptivity toward developing a multilateral security mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region. This marks a significant change in what had been an abiding Chinese preference for bilateralism.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, China's paramount interest is in maintaining economic growth through the continued promotion of foreign trade and investment. Beijing has a vested interest in maintaining good relations with its neighbors. At present China holds a significant trade surplus and continues to attract foreign investment. Of course, if the terms of trade changed, making China a net importer of goods and/or foreign investors withdrew their funds, this could affect China's security calculus.

## CONCLUSION

China is likely to adopt some combination of the four different army building strategies set out above. However, at least in the medium term it should fail to achieve its goals of becoming a military world power. I now focus on the former point before returning to the latter. Although, as noted earlier, China has, in practice, already adopted a patchwork of elements from all four army building strategies, the inclination of China's civilian and military leaders will be for China formally to select one.

Army building strategies three and four are least likely because neither offers the prestige and glory to the PLA in the same way that aircraft carriers, armor, and high performance fighters do. Strategy four ("Don't Play That

Game”) is highly touted by some Chinese military thinkers and some analysts in the West but probably enjoys limited appeal in the Chinese defense establishment as a whole. It will also be difficult for civilian leaders to advocate this strategy. Strategy three (“Changing the Rules”) can be largely eliminated—but not completely—because of inter-service rivalry. The various branches of the PLA will likely be competing head-to-head more and more intensely for limited resources.<sup>130</sup>

The first and second army building strategies are more likely. Doctrine and warfighting scenarios, and perceptions of the international environment all tend to favor the selection of strategy one (“Playing the Superpower Game”) and, to an extent, strategy two (“Playing to Your Strengths”). Domestic variables point the same way except these suggest budget battles will likely lead to strategy one being rejected and strategy two being adopted. Strategy two is more astute budget-wise but probably not politically viable. Strategy one is the most appealing to China’s political and military leaders and to the masses, but too ambitious to implement properly.

Ultimately, probably by default, strategy two will be selected officially, but a combination of the four options will actually be implemented. The powerful appeal of “Playing the Superpower Game” is likely to win out among China’s civilian and military leaders over the attraction of “Don’t Play That Game.” For civilian leaders, the craving for international respect and the desire for China to be seen as a *bona fide* military power will probably win out. The prestige, size of budget share, manpower, etc., are all factors that make military leaders desire conventional military armaments.

Despite the above forecast, there are still reasons for China’s neighbors and the United States to be concerned. It is likely that China’s defense establishment will strengthen over time. However, rather than obsessively focus on the emergence of a more powerful threatening dragon, other

countries should give more attention to the strategic implications of a weak China. Indeed, China today is not as powerful or as significant a player as it is often made out to be.<sup>131</sup> And there is the possibility that China might become weaker militarily and economically and perhaps evolve into a looser federal system or in a more extreme case, even to fragment. While the probability may be low, it cannot be completely ruled out, and this eventuality must be seriously considered as a future scenario.<sup>132</sup> The dangers of not contemplating the unthinkable are evident when one recalls that few analysts in the 1980s anticipated or even entertained the possibility of a Soviet collapse.

Moreover, China's prospects for democratization tend to be rated as minimal. While the likelihood of China making rapid strides toward democracy in the short term is virtually nil, long-term trends are more promising.<sup>133</sup> Recent survey research reveals the presence of attitudes receptive toward multiparty democracy among Chinese entrepreneurs and local government officials.<sup>134</sup> Whether China is making great strides or small steps toward democracy, this does not necessarily mean that China will become pacifistic. While a widely-held rule of thumb is that democracies do not fight democracies, research suggests that democratizing states tend to be bellicose.<sup>135</sup>

In many ways it can be far easier to deal with a strong, centralized great power than a sick or dismembered one. When the Soviet Union existed, one knew that negotiating with the regime meant dealing with Moscow. If an agreement was worked out with some kind of verification mechanism in place, one could be fairly sure that it would be implemented. In the post-Soviet era, an agreement in Moscow is more difficult to achieve, and one has less confidence that it will be implemented. Even if the provinces tow the line, 14 additional republics must be consulted. Today in China, what goes in Beijing does not necessarily hold true for Guangzhou or Shanghai.

Although I argue that China will not succeed in becoming a military world power during the next 10-15 years, this does not mean I believe that China poses no threat to the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, the widely-held conviction that the PLA poses a modest or nuisance threat gives rise to a dangerous tendency to downplay or dismiss the very real threat China's military presents.<sup>136</sup> Despite assurances that China will be too preoccupied with domestic matters to have time to get involved in foreign adventures,<sup>137</sup> it should be remembered that China's leaders seem particularly prone to perceiving foreign threats if the country is beset by domestic upheaval—especially if Beijing concludes that there is “collaboration” between internal and external hostile forces as in the case of the popular protests of spring 1989.<sup>138</sup> It is precisely at these moments when Beijing is likely to lash out in order to demonstrate to its enemies that China remains ever vigilant and prepared.

However, rather than fear a highly capable PLA winning stunning victories, the militaries of the Asia-Pacific region should be more concerned about the prospect of spectacular failure. The most plausible scenario is Taiwan. Failure on a grand scale can come about either if China's leaders mistakenly believe the PLA can win in a specific scenario and so proceed to launch an attack, or if Beijing believes it is unlikely to win but has no choice but to go ahead and attack anyway. Either way the results of a failed military strike may be worse than victory, particularly in the case of action in the Taiwan Strait. This is because where Taiwan is involved, China is unlikely to admit defeat and desist. If the PLA is vanquished on the battlefield China is likely to persist in its quest. Beijing will seek to rebuild its military might in order to ensure success next time. Thus defeat, rather than clear the air, will probably prolong and heighten tensions in the region. It may well spark a serious arms race, as China's neighbors perceive an increasingly threatening security environment and respond.

In sum, China's national military and national security strategies in the Jiang Zemin era merit careful scrutiny, not merely in the context of the specific military capabilities that the PLA is acquiring or seeking to acquire, but also in terms of China's aspirations. China's expressed intentions and goals, as reflected in the statements of top officials and the writings of strategic thinkers, must be constantly monitored.

### Implications for the U.S. Defense Community.

The foregoing analysis holds three key implications for the U.S. defense community. First, and most immediate, is the question of missile defense for Taiwan. As noted above, China is adamantly opposed to a TMD for Taiwan to the point that some Beijing researchers have warned that deployment would constitute grounds for China to initiate hostilities against the island. The sensitivity of TMD to China is important for the United States to recognize, and it is foolhardy, indeed dangerous, not to take these Chinese threats seriously.<sup>139</sup> Having said this, we must take every opportunity to remind China about the destabilizing and threatening effect of the recent missile buildup it has undertaken in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>140</sup> China should recognize that it is only natural with such a proximate and growing threat that Taiwan would want to improve its missile defenses. Moreover, if Beijing wants to prevent Taipei from deploying TMD, it should ask itself what steps China could take to eliminate or minimize Taiwan's desire for such a system. In the meantime, in the absence of any constructive moves by China to decrease the missile threat, the United States should assist Taiwan to develop the component elements of a TMD that best suits the island's security needs.

Second, China is unlikely to become a peer competitor of the United States at least not in the short to medium term. This means that if the U.S. military were to confront the PLA, it should be prepared to wage a limited asymmetric



conflict in which the enemy will use surprise and deception to exploit U.S. weak points. While a Major Theater War cannot be ruled out, any confrontation with China is more likely to require “small-scale contingencies” and the ability to repel attacks on U.S. critical infrastructures. This underscores the wisdom of following through on a stated commitment to “full spectrum dominance.”<sup>141</sup>

In a regional conflict between the Chinese and American armed forces, it would likely be primarily a U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force fight. However, if the war was prolonged and/or escalated, it would also become an Army conflict. No matter what the duration or scope of a U.S.-China war, the Army would be involved in some shape or form. In the event of the outbreak of war in the Taiwan Strait, the most immediate impact on the Army would likely be pressure to reinforce its forward presence in the region. Indeed, the United States could expect its friends and allies in the region to request immediate assistance in the form of U.S. force buildups to provide added psychological reassurance. The second impact on the Army would be a heightened state of alert and readiness to deter an attack by another state or nonstate actor seeking to take advantage of the diversion provided by a U.S.-China conflict. Despite the June 2000 summit between the leaders of the two Koreas, tensions on the peninsula remain. It is conceivable that North Korea might launch an attack on the South if Pyongyang believed that with a distraction in the Taiwan Strait, a surprise attack would have a good chance of succeeding. A third impact on the Army could be the order to deploy a force on Taiwan either after the outbreak of war or following the cessation of hostilities. While military leaders would probably not favor such a move, under certain circumstances the National Command Authority might direct it. This may simply be a small military assistance advisory group to provide training for new weapons systems provided to the Taiwanese military; or it may be a token combat force deployed on the island after the hostilities have subsided to

serve a tripwire function—one similar to that played by U.S. forces along the 38th Parallel in Korea.

Third, military-to-military relations between the U.S. armed forces and the PLA are extremely important and must be rebuilt. The *U.S. National Security Strategy's* stress on engagement and the *U.S. National Military Strategy's* emphasis on shaping activities will never be more critical than in the case of China. Initiatives by the U.S. branch services should be substantive, noncontroversial, and undertaken with a clear roadmap. Military-to-military activities should not simply stem from the impulse to “do something” but instead spring from a coordinated and carefully crafted strategic plan that promotes our national interests. For example, careful thought must be given to the advisability of allowing Chinese military observers to watch U.S. exercises. Any access should be conditional on balance and reciprocity whereby U.S. personnel can engage in similar activities.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, any roadmap must factor in presence of “traffic cops” on both sides.<sup>143</sup> There are political constraints in both countries that limit the feasibility of certain activities, or completely rule out other types of events. An example of the former would be the likely refusal of China’s political leaders to permit PLA officers to participate in a U.S. sponsored “role of the military in a democracy” workshop. An example of the latter would be the American military demonstrating cutting-edge U.S. high-tech weaponry to PLA leaders. Avoidance of controversial subjects will minimize the likelihood of disruptions to the relationship due to partisan political squabbles in either country.

While fully cognizant that we cannot expect dramatic, short-term results, we can engage in a long-term effort on matters of substance to further U.S. national interests. This effort should consist of four types of activities, which one could call the “pillars” of U.S.-China defense diplomacy: (1) high-level visits, (2) functional exchanges, (3) routine military confidence-building measures, and (4) integrating China’s defense establishment into multilateral fora.

High-level bilateral exchanges hold not merely symbolic importance, but also help develop key personal relationships providing continuity for the larger relationship to develop.

Functional exchanges provide the greatest potential for substantive interaction and learning but can also be the most controversial. These exchanges should not be limited to educational field trips by U.S. National Defense University students. Exchanges and conferences between research institutes and military education institutions could focus on nonsensitive matters. Possible themes to pursue are joint studies of classic military campaigns in history, professional military education in the two countries, and the military's role in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

Routine military exchanges, such as port visits, are valuable for establishing goodwill and as confidence-building measures. These kinds of interaction promote important American values such as the principle of civilian control of the military and increased transparency in defense matters by the Chinese. At the very least, continued contacts can improve understanding between the two militaries and help decrease tensions. The significance of these outcomes should not be underestimated. A greater appreciation for the differences in areas such as national culture and service cultures—easy to overlook but extremely important—can minimize the chances of one side misinterpreting the acts of the other side.

Integrating the PLA into multilateral defense fora is also highly desirable. It permits the Chinese military to realize the common challenges and aspirations they share with their colleagues in other countries. This kind of interaction helps PLA leaders gain a better sense of the characteristics of a modern military beyond crack troops and possession of high-tech weaponry. Furthermore, PLA leaders may come to value the formal and informal dialogues with their counterparts in other countries and

find the interaction useful and professionally rewarding. The United States is well-equipped to build this pillar with well-developed multilateral mechanisms already in place in the Pacific. The PLA should be encouraged to attend regularly the annual Pacific Armies Management Seminar (PAMS) typically hosted jointly by the U.S. Army and the land service of another Pacific Rim country. China's attendance has been somewhat erratic to date. In addition, it would be hoped that the PLA would send a representative to the recently created Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference. The inaugural session was held in Singapore in 1999 in conjunction with PAMS. Moreover, Chinese defense professionals should be frequent attendees at seminars hosted by the Pacific Command's Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu.<sup>144</sup>

Careful attention to the issue of TMD for Taiwan, persistence in maintaining capabilities across the full spectrum of military operations, and reconstructed military-to-military relations with China will enable the U.S. military to be truly "persuasive in peace, decisive in war, and preeminent in any form of conflict," as envisioned by *Joint Vision 2020*.

## ENDNOTES

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3. And the failed coup attempt led by KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov. See Jack F. Matlock, Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, New York: Random House, 1995, chap. XXIII.

4. A widely held belief in China is that the Red Army's quest to keep up technologically with the U.S. military directly contributed to the

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6. See, for example, Peter D. Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematic: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter 1996, pp. 151-152.

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13. See Peter Gries, "Between Tears and Rage: Popular Chinese Reactions to the Belgrade Embassy Bombing," unpublished manuscript, June 2000, p. 18. See also the photograph of a demonstration in Wenzhou, China taken on May 8, 1999. The photo appears at [www.China.org.cn/ChinaEmbassy/PhotoNews\\_e/990508-76ct.html](http://www.China.org.cn/ChinaEmbassy/PhotoNews_e/990508-76ct.html). The poster reads: "China must become rich and powerful" (*zhongguo yao qiangda*).

14. See, for example, Wang Chenyan and Cui Haiming, "Deng Xiaoping de junshi sixiang chutan" ("A preliminary exploration of Deng Xiaoping's military thinking"), in Pan Shiying, ed., *Dangdai Zhongguo junshi sixiang jingyao (Essence of Contemporary Chinese Military Thought)*, Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1992, p. 124.

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16. See, for example, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, Report to Congress Pursuant to FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act accessed on [www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2000/China06222000.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2000/China06222000.htm) Wu, "China," p. 115-156; Susan V. Lawrence, "Yearning to Lead," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 16, 1999, pp. 18-19; Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "PLA Confident of high-tech victory," *South China Morning Post*, December 30, 1999.

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25. Lawrence, "Doctrine of Deterrence."

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32. See, for example, Wang and Cui, "*Deng Xiaoping junshi*."

33. Ellis Joffe, "The PLA and the Chinese Economy: The Effect of Involvement," *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Summer 1995, pp. 24-43; Thomas J. Bickford, "The Business Operations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 46, No. 6, November/December 1999, pp. 28-36; James C. Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military Business Complex*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc, 2000, forthcoming; Andrew Scobell, *Going Out of Business: Divesting the Commercial Interests of Asia's Socialist Soldiers*, East-West Center Occasional Papers, Politics and Security Series No. 3, Honolulu: East-West Center, January 2000, pp. 6-7.

34. Mark Magnier, "Chinese Military Still Embedded in the Economy," *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2000.

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44. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, chap. 4.
45. James Mulvenon, "Information Warfare," in Mulvenon and Yang, eds., *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age* pp. 175-186.
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106. It appears that the authors did not examine the actual original but took the quote verbatim from a translation in Bruce Gilley, "Potboiler Nationalism," in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 3, 1996, p. 22.

107. Admittedly, the comment was made almost certainly with the United States in mind. For Mi Zhenyu's irate response, see "Stupid Lies—Commentary on 'The Coming Conflict with China'," Beijing *Xinhua* domestic, April 17, 1997, in *FBIS*, April 21, 1997.

108. Scobell, "Show of Force."

109. Especially by Hong Kong media outlets. See, for example, Matt Forney, "Man in the Middle," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 28, 1996, pp. 14-16.

110. You Ji, "Making Sense of the War Games in the Taiwan Strait," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 6, No. 15, 1997, pp. 287-305; Scobell, "Show of Force."

111. Susan V. Lawrence and Julian Baum, "Target Taiwan: Reunification with Taiwan Moves Up Beijing's Political Agenda. But the Next Steps Won't Be Easy," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 30, 1999, and January 6, 2000, pp. 10-11.

112. It is important to distinguish between hawkishness, bellicosity, and belligerency. The first word indicates a willingness to pursue brinkmanship and military actions short of actual conflict, while the latter two terms suggest a general warlike nature and eagerness to resort to war, respectively. PLA leaders, I have suggested elsewhere, are best described as "hawkish." See Scobell, "Show of Force."

113. See David Shambaugh, "China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Winter 1999/2000, pp. 52-79; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957, chap. 3.

114. Andrew Scobell, "Explaining China's Use of Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March" (manuscript, 1999); Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, 2nd ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

115. See, for example, Allen S. Whiting, "The PLA and China's Threat Perceptions," *The China Quarterly*, No. 146, June 1996, pp. 607-609; Gurtov and Hwang, *China's Security*, pp. 70-73.

116. Mi, "China's Strategic Plan of Active Defense," p. 58; and Author's Interviews. But Beijing has long suspected that Washington does not want to see Taiwan unify with China. See, for example, Wu, "China," p. 132. Yet there is also bafflement on the part of some analysts

about the logic behind American support for Taiwan. Author's Interviews.

117. Zhu Chenghu, chief editor, *Zhongmei guanxi de fazhan bianhua ji qi qushi* (*Changing Developments and Trends in China-U.S. Relations*), Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chhbanse, 1998, p. 194.

118. Cited in Zhao, "The Current Situation."

119. Zhao, "The Current Situation."

120. Lawrence and Julian Baum, "Target Taiwan."

121. "White Paper on Taiwan and Unification Policy," February 24, 2000.

122. See, for example, Lo Ping, "CPC Issues Document on Taiwan's New Situation: Jiang Zemin Tells Military to Observe Taiwan's Political Situation Before Resorting to War," *Cheng Ming*, April 1, 2000, in *FBIS*, April 5, 2000; Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "Beidaihe's triple cocktail dilemma," *South China Morning Post*, June 7, 2000.

123. See, for example, "Jiang Zemin's Eight Point Proposal," Beijing *Xinhua* Domestic Service, January 30, 1995, in *FBIS*, January 30, 1995, pp. 85-86.

124. On the surprise over the dispatch of two aircraft carriers, see John W. Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States and Taiwan's Democratization*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, chap. 10. On the belief that the United States is unlikely to intervene, see, for example, Professor Zhuang Zhaozhong, Director of the Science and Technology Teaching Office of National Defense University, "Will Any Foreign Country Militarily Intervene in a Taiwan Crisis?" *Ching Pao* (Hong Kong), September 1, 1999, in *FBIS*, September 17, 1999; Author's Interviews. By hyping PLA capabilities to inflict casualties, Beijing hopes to deter the U.S. from intervening. Lawrence, "Doctrine of Deterrence."

125. "Beijing Will Not Hesitate to Go to War if Taiwan Joins TMD," *Tai Yang Pao* (Hong Kong), March 18, 1999, in *FBIS*, March 18, 1999. For balanced assessment of the pros and cons of TMD for Taiwan, see Thomas J. Christensen, "Theater Missile Defense and Taiwan's Security," *Orbis*, Vol. 44, No. 1, Winter 2000, pp. 79-90.

126. See the PRC analysts and officials quoted in Jim Mann, "China Snarls Again at 'Paper Tiger'," *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 2000.



127. Sofia Wu, "Taiwan to Establish Comprehensive Missile Defense System," Taipei Central News Agency in English, May 30, 2000, in *FBIS*, May 30, 2000.

128. Stephen Blank, "Strategic Context of Russo-Chinese Relations," *Issues and Studies*, forthcoming, 2000.

129. See Jen Hui-wen, "China's Multipolarization Concept and New Ideas on Peripheral Diplomacy," *Hsin Pao* (Hong Kong), July 9, 1999, in *FBIS*, July 10, 1999; Cheng in Zhao, "The Present Situation"; Jing-dong Yuan, *Asia-Pacific Security: China's Conditional Multilateralism and Great Power Entente*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2000. Beijing very likely views multilateralism as a useful way to offset U.S. influence in the Asia-Pacific.

130. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, pp. 14-15.

131. Gerald Segal, "Does China Matter?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 5, September/October 1999.

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133. Andrew Scobell, "After Deng, What?: Reconsidering the Prospects for a Democratic Transition in China," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 44, No. 5, September/October 1997, pp. 22-31.

134. More than 50 percent of local officials and more than 50 percent of entrepreneurs do not think a multiparty system would result in political chaos. While this is not strong evidence of activist democratic beliefs and difficult to interpret conclusively, the implications of these findings are enormous. See Bruce J. Dickson, "Private Entrepreneurs and Political Change in China," Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Boston, MA, March 1999, p. 18 and table 11. For more on the democratic attitudes and prospects for democracy in China, see the special issue on "Elections and Democracy in Greater China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 162, June 2000.

135. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Summer 1995, pp. 5-38. For a study that applies this idea to China, see Garver, *Face Off*.

136. Solomon Karmel, "The Maoist Drag on China's Military," *Orbis*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1998, pp. 375-386; Bates Gill and Michael

O'Hanlon, "China's Hollow Military," *The National Interest*, No. 56, Summer 1999, pp. 55-62; Patrick Tyler, "Who's Afraid of China?," *New York Times Magazine*, August 1, 1999, pp. 46-49; Segal, "Does China Matter?," pp. 29-32.

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142. On the promise and perils of military-to-military contacts, see Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, Report #32, Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1999, Section VII. See also David Shambaugh, *Enhancing Sino-American Military Relations*, Asia Papers, No. 4, Washington, DC: Sigur Center for Asian Studies, George Washington University, July 1998.

143. Lieutenant Colonel Jer Donald Get, *What's With the Relationship Between America's Army and China's PLA?: An Examination of the Terms of the U.S. Army Strategic Peace-Time Engagement with the PLA of the PRC*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Fellowship Research Project, March 25, 1996, p. 16.

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