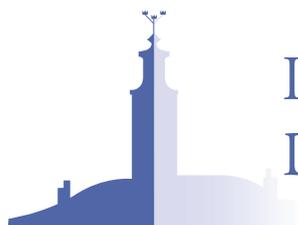


The PLA's Evolving Global Role and New Security Initiatives

Wu Xin

ASIA PAPER
March 2015



Institute for Security &
Development Policy

The PLA's Evolving Global Role and New Security Initiatives

Wu Xin

Institute for Security and Development Policy
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
www.isdp.eu

The PLA's Evolving Global Role and New Security Initiatives is an *Asia Paper* published by the Institute for Security and Development Policy. The *Asia Papers Series* is the Occasional Paper series of the Institute's Asia Program, and addresses topical and timely subjects. The Institute is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and cooperates closely with research centers worldwide. Through its Silk Road Studies Program, the Institute runs a joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. The Institute serves a large and diverse community of analysts, scholars, policy-watchers, business leaders, and journalists. It is at the forefront of research on issues of conflict, security, and development. Through its applied research, publications, research cooperation, public lectures, and seminars, it functions as a focal point for academic, policy, and public discussion.

The opinions and conclusions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute for Security and Development Policy or its sponsors.

© Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2015

ISBN: 978-91-86635-87-9

Printed in Singapore by Stallion Press

Distributed in Europe by:

Institute for Security and Development Policy
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
Tel. +46-841056953; Fax. +46-86403370
Email: info@isdpeu

Distributed in North America by:

The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute
Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
1619 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. +1-202-663-7723; Fax. +1-202-663-7785
E-mail: caci2@jhuadig.admin.jhu.edu

To order hard copies and for editorial correspondence contact Alec Forss at:
forss@isdpeu

Contents

Executive Summary5

Introduction6

The PLA's Global Role: An Overview.....8

China's New Security Concept: Analysis and Trends17

About the Author23

Appendix 1. China's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations24

Executive Summary

China's increased openness, accelerating economic development, and the emergence of new security challenges and relationships in the post-Cold War world have cast the Chinese military and its role in a new light. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has adapted accordingly, and has become an important actor in international security affairs, shedding its prior isolation. This paper outlines the various international and regional security initiatives the PLA takes part in today, and links these to an evolution of the Chinese national security concept.

The reader is introduced to the PLA's role in UN peacekeeping missions and humanitarian and disaster relief efforts, as well as to its trust building with other countries' militaries through exchanges and joint exercises. Chinese participation in these initiatives is placed in the context of China's modification of its national security objectives which have moved from a singular focus on traditional means of warfare, to a multifaceted concept focusing on peace and development and international cooperation in countering emerging security threats in the twenty-first century.

Finally, the author concludes by arguing that the PLA faces important challenges which will have to be met in order to further strengthen its international role. These include antagonistic rhetoric from other nations who wrongly perceive China as a threat and developing mechanisms and capabilities to better handle non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and natural disasters.

Introduction

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1978, China entered into a new era of “Reform and Opening Up.” According to the Committee’s analysis of China’s domestic and international strategic situation, it was judged that the threat of renewed world war had receded and that international relations would increasingly be characterized by an emphasis on peace and development.¹ In accordance with this judgment, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) altered its policy regarding participation in international and regional security affairs. Furthermore, with the development of economic globalization and informationization, the interdependence of different aspects of security has since also increased. As a result, the old ways of conducting security policy by waging war and providing military aid have become obsolete.

Based on a willingness to safeguard world peace, China has made maintaining peace and stability one of its goals of national defense and, in so doing, has established a new security concept. In March 1999, then Chinese President Jiang Zemin comprehensively explained this new security concept for the first time. At its core lies “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation.” Guided by this new concept, following the five principles of peaceful coexistence,² and in accordance with its responsibilities, rights, and strengths, along with a focus on its “national conditions and different stage of development,”³ China now combines the goals of security and peaceful development for itself with the common security of the world.

In the past three decades, the PLA’s role has undergone considerable development as the PLA has made use of new strategies while facing new opportunities and challenges. In order to better understand the PLA’s

¹ Party Literature Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping Anthology, volume 3 (Beijing: People's Press, 1993), 127.

² Editor’s note: The five principles are: 1) Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; 2) Mutual non-aggression; 3) Non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; 4) Equality and mutual benefit; and 5) Peaceful coexistence.

³ Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, China’s Peaceful Development, http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2011/Document/1000031/1000031_3.htm.

diversified role, the multitude of tasks and missions presently undertaken by the PLA will be described, followed by a discussion of the evolution of China's national security concept and a look at what challenges the PLA will face in today's more complex and less stable world.

The PLA's Evolving Global Role: An Overview

The PLA is today engaged in a new pattern of comprehensive, multi-level participation in international and regional security affairs—a participation which is characterized by an increased focus on openness, sincerity, and transparency. Accordingly, the PLA undertakes a multitude of tasks and activities within the international arena which can broadly be divided into the following areas: traditional military operations, diverse missions including peacekeeping and disaster relief operations, trust building including military exchanges and regional security cooperation, and arms control. Each of these is examined in turn.

Traditional Military Operations

China's official military objective is to pursue a security policy which aims to resolve international problems by peaceful means, while opposing hegemony and power politics. At times, however, traditional military measures have been resorted to. In the last few decades, China's participation in outright military conflict has centered on Vietnam. Since the 1970s, China and Vietnam have been engaged in armed conflict on numerous occasions. Border skirmishes and incursions into Chinese territory,⁴ along with the perceived threat of Vietnam's hegemonic ambitions in Southeast Asia, led the PLA to engage the Vietnamese in counterattacks.⁵ During the fighting, China announced that it was not interested in annexing any territory in Vietnam and that the goal of military intervention was to enforce a stable border between the two countries. When this was deemed to have been achieved, the PLA withdrew and relations between Vietnam and China became normalized. The Sino-Vietnamese conflict demonstrates that the PLA's traditional military operations have had limited goals—that is, pursuing the objectives of protecting Chinese interests and enforcing integrity as opposed to being concerned with territorial ambitions.

⁴ Editorial Committee of Contemporary China Series, *The Chinese People's Liberation Army*, Volume 1 (Beijing: Contemporary China Press, 1994), 330.

⁵ Xu Tianxin and Liang Zhiming, *World History*, Contemporary Volume (Beijing: People's Press, 1997), 361.

Diverse Missions

Participating in UN Peacekeeping Operations

China began to show an active attitude towards UN peacekeeping operations in 1978. These operations included monitoring ceasefires and containing conflict as well as providing engineering, transport, and medical aid; China has also taken part in social reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. At the end of 1980, China expressed its support for peacekeeping operations compliant with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. It was not until 1990, however, that the PLA actively participated in UN peacekeeping for the first time,⁶ sending five military observers to the UN mission area in the Middle East as part of UNTSO. Another landmark contribution was the sending of 400 personnel to Cambodia in 1992 as part of UNTAC.

Between 1990 and 2012, Chinese peacekeepers had in total built and repaired over 10,000 km of roads and 284 bridges, cleared over 9,000 mines and other explosive devices, transported over 1 million tons of cargo, and treated 120,000 patients.⁷ The Chinese Minister of Defense, General Chang Wanquan, stated that as of November 2014, China had 27,000 personnel serving in peacekeeping operations.⁸ This is not only more than any other UN Security Council permanent member, but China has also contributed more to the financing of peacekeeping operations than any other developing country (see Appendix 1 for full list of China's participation in UN peacekeeping operations).

Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid

China's participation in international disaster relief efforts first became notable when it sent supplies to Afghanistan in 2002. Since then, China has played an important role in other relief efforts, such as in the aftermaths of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the Haitian earthquake, the Pakistan floods

⁶ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, IV. Deployment of the Armed Forces, http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2011/Document/883534/883534_4.htm.

⁷ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2013), 34.

⁸ Chang Wanquan, "China forces and security in Asia and the Pacific," Xiangshan Forum Keynote Speech, <http://www.chinanews.com/mil/2014/11-21/6801086.shtml> (in Chinese).

of 2010, and recently in the fight against Ebola in West Africa. In 2001, the Chinese International Search and Rescue (CISAR) team began to participate in international disaster relief operations. From 2010 to 2011, the naval hospital ship Peace Ark (和平方舟) visited nine countries, providing medical services to nearly 50,000 people.⁹ To help contain the Ebola virus, moreover, the Chinese army has sent one thousand doctors and nurses to affected areas as well as established an observation center in Sierra Leone and a medical center in Liberia. In total the PLA has undertaken a total of 39 urgent missions in 30 disaster-stricken countries since 2002, and has transported relief material valued at more than RMB 1.3 billion.¹⁰

Safeguarding International Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)

From December 2008 onward, the Chinese navy (PLAN) has carried out regular escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and in the waters off Somalia together with other navies. As of December 2012, the number of foreign ships whose protection is provided by Chinese naval task groups accounts for 49 percent of the total of escorted ships in the waters mentioned above.¹¹ Chinese naval task groups have sent out 18 convoys and provided protection for nearly 6,000 Chinese and foreign vessels. Additionally, China, India, and Japan have established a convoy coordination system, which greatly enhances escort efficiency. The escort task forces of the Chinese navy have maintained smooth communication and information sharing, as well as coordination and liaison with other navies in the areas of joint escort. They have conducted joint anti-piracy drills together with vessels belonging to the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and the U.S. China also plays an active role in the conferences of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and “Shared Awareness and Deconfliction” (SHADE) meetings on international merchant shipping protection.¹²

Joint Training with Foreign Armed Forces

The PLA has held more than 80 joint exercises and training sessions with over 50 countries since 2002, all in accordance with relevant cooperation

⁹ The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces, 34.

¹⁰ Chang Wanquan, “China forces and security in Asia and the Pacific.”

¹¹ The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces, 36.

¹² Chang Wanquan, “China forces and security in Asia and the Pacific.”

agreements or arrangements.¹³ Joint exercises and training missions have featured multiple levels, domains, services and arms and can be categorized into five areas. The first area encompasses bilateral and multilateral joint military exercises within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This includes, for example, a series of Sino-Russian joint military exercises, "peace missions," and a number of joint anti-terrorism military exercises. The second is China's participation in bilateral or multilateral joint maritime exercises and training, such as in the "Peace" series of multinational joint maritime exercises which have been organized by Pakistan since 2003. Additionally, naval cooperation also includes the China-Russian navy joint maritime military exercises and a series of joint training exercises by the Chinese and Thai marine corps under the moniker "Blue Strike." The third area is comprised of joint army training. From 2007 the PLA has joined the "Hand-in-Hand" series of joint anti-terrorism training exercises with the Indian Army, and the "Friendship Action" series of joint mountain training with the Romanian Army. Fourthly, the Chinese Air Force (PLAAF) has participated in joint aerial exercises and has held combat training with the Pakistan air force. In 2011 and 2012, furthermore, China and Belarus cooperated in exercises such as "Eagle 2011" and "Eagle 2012." The fifth and final area involves joint training in the provision of medical services. The PLA medical team held the "Peace Angel" joint operations for humanitarian medical assistance from 2009 to 2011 with Gabon and Peru.

While executing missions in all of the above four areas, the PLA has adhered to the principles of non-alignment, non-confrontation, and not directing military activities against any third party. The joint exercises and training have contributed to the promotion of mutual confidence (trust-building activities are further outlined below) in the political and military domains between China and the participating partner countries, and to the safeguarding of regional security and stability.

Building Trust

The PLA believes that building mutual trust between militaries is an effective way to maintain and promote peace and stability, and it thus makes

¹³ Ibid.

efforts to establish equal, mutually beneficial, and effective mechanisms to facilitate trust building. The PLA's practices in this area cover several areas, including military exchanges with foreign nations, developing mechanisms to resolve border issues, and participating in regional cooperation more generally.

Military Exchanges

There are several ways to develop military exchanges. The first step is to develop military relations. As of 2012, China has established military relations with more than 150 countries and sent military officers to 112. Meanwhile, 104 countries have sent military officers to China.¹⁴ In 2005, the PLA invited then U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to visit the Second Artillery Command. This was the first time that China had opened its doors to a foreign military leader. In 2007 and 2008, senior Chinese military delegations visited more than 40 countries, and more than 60 Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of General Staff of foreign nations visited China.¹⁵

Another way to build mutual trust in military matters is to carry out naval exchanges. The first Chinese vessels to be involved in an exchange were the destroyer *Hefei* and supply ship *Fengcang* which both visited Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh in 1985. Subsequent naval exchanges between China and foreign countries such as Britain, France, and Sweden have also been conducted.

Inviting foreign military officers to observe the military actions which Chinese troops participate in is another pillar of trust building between militaries. China invited an American military delegation to observe Chinese military exercises for the first time in November 2000, and since then the scale and range of such actions has continuously expanded. In 2014, China invited military observers from more than 60 countries to observe the "Peace Mission 2014" military exercise.

Military education exchanges have also been carried out by the PLA. China provides training to incoming foreign military officers and sends its own officers abroad, and the PLA has established exchange relationships

¹⁴ Zhang Fang, *Contemporary Chinese military diplomacy: History and reality* (Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2014), 179.

¹⁵ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *China's National Defense in 2008* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2009), 93.

with more than 20 foreign military colleges.¹⁶ In 2007-8, China received more than 4,000 military students from some 130 countries, and sent over 900 military students of its own to study abroad.¹⁷

Increasing military transparency is a final way to strengthen reciprocal trust in military matters. For example, China participated in the UN Register of Conventional Arms Military Transparency Mechanism in 1992 and 2007. The establishment of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) spokesperson system in 2008 has also boosted transparency, and China now releases a defense white paper every two years.

In sum, the above measures have served to some extent assuage fears which some foreign observers may have regarding the development of China's military capacity.

Consultations and Dialogues

China has established mechanisms for defense and security consultation and dialogue with 22 countries, allowing for the enhancement of mutual understanding and trust and the strengthening of communication and coordination.¹⁸ In 1992, China and Russia issued a joint statement in which both countries pledged never to be the first-user of nuclear weapons against the other. In 1997 the Chinese and Russian armed forces furthermore took the lead in establishing a strategic consultation mechanism, and the General Staffs of the two countries have held more than ten rounds of strategic consultation. This has resulted in consensus on the international strategic situation, military cooperation, and other issues.

To avoid conflicts, China and the U.S. have also established consultation mechanisms. They have held the Defense Consultative Talks (DCT) and Defense Policy Coordination Talks (DPCT) on issues of common concern since 1997. These talks concluded in the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), and the two countries began to conduct consultations on maritime security issues in 1998. Ten years later, the Chinese and U.S. defense ministries established a direct telephone line between the two ministries. In addition, China has introduced defense consultation mechanisms with Mongolia, Japan, India, Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan, South Africa, and

¹⁶ China's National Defense in 2008, 95.

¹⁷ Editor's note: these are the most recent statistics available to the author.

¹⁸ China's National Defense in 2008, 62.

others. In 2013, Chinese border forces held more than two thousand talks with neighboring countries, and in 2014 the departments of defense of China and the United States agreed to create a trust mechanism whereby each country would inform the other of major military actions. They also signed two memoranda of understanding on issues of safety concerning air and maritime encounters.

Securing Peaceful Borders

China has 22,000 km of land borders and 18,000 km of continental coastline. It is therefore not surprising that some territorial disputes and controversies over territorial waters have occurred with neighboring countries. China accordingly attaches great importance to the establishment of confidence-building measures with neighboring countries on territorial issues. In 1993, 1996, and 2005, respectively, China and India signed three agreements regarding territorial integrity, the line of actual control, and agreed that any border issues should be solved in a peaceful and friendly fashion.

In 1996 and 1997, China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed an agreement to strengthen military trust in border areas and to reduce the military presence there. This agreement included provisions ruling out attacking military forces in border areas, and committed the parties to refrain from carrying out military exercises against each other. The countries also carry out annual mutual inspections as well as supervision and verification of the implementation of mutual trust measures in border areas. These diplomatic measures have enabled China to largely settle the problems of the integrity of land borders with its neighbors.

Regional Security Cooperation

No comprehensive security mechanism similar to NATO exists in the Asia-Pacific region. However, a regional security cooperation framework with a multi-level and complex structure has nevertheless evolved. China actively participates in dialogues and mechanisms of the Asia-Pacific region, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Asia-Pacific Council for Security Cooperation (CSCAP), the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue Council (NEACD), the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The latter has created a new pattern of regional security cooperation which abides by the principles of non-alignment, non-confrontation, and not directing military activities against any third party. In order to fight against the three regional threats of terrorism, separatism, and extremism, the SCO's five member states (China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) signed a series of treaties on information security, military cooperation, and anti-terrorism through the defense forum of the SCO. This has served to strengthen mutual trust within the organization, and has led to the establishment of numerous "peace missions" and joint anti-terrorism exercises.

Arms Control and Disarmament

China is a leading participant in efforts to promote international arms control, disarmament, and the non-proliferation system. China has publically committed itself not to be a first user of nuclear weapons and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states or in a non-nuclear zone. During the process of negotiating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), China put forward the proposal of "the two superpowers first," which argued that the two superpowers of the time, the U.S. and USSR, should cease testing, improving, and producing nuclear weapons, as well as greatly cut stocks of various types of nuclear weapons. China has been responsible for setting up 12 international monitoring stations and laboratories on its soil to scrutinize the development of nuclear weaponry. Furthermore, China accepts the verification and investigation powers of the International Convention on the Treatment of Chemical Weapons, has contributed to efforts to destroy hundreds of thousands of old landmines, and trains other countries' troops to improve their capabilities in disarming landmines.

China has also participated in all international treaties on non-proliferation as well as in relevant international organizations. In 1998, China joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and has consistently advocated resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula peacefully through dialogues and consultations. Although China's military capability was far behind that of the U.S. in 1998, China still signed an agreement—a "non-targeting accord"—with the U.S. to not regard each other as the targets of their strategic nuclear weapons. The 1998 United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region pointed out that this was "an

important symbolic measure which can ensure and rebuild our constructive relations.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Liu Lin, *A Study on the United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region*, Appendix (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2008), 354.

China's New Security Concept: Analysis and Trends

The last 30 years has seen the PLA increase its cooperation with other countries in world and regional security affairs in a variety of ways. The integration of the PLA into UN peacekeeping efforts and disaster relief operations has displayed China's ambitions to be an important force for peace and stability in the world. In addition, China has sought to build trust with other militaries by undertaking military exchanges and establishing dialogue and working relations with neighbors, channels through which any eventual disputes can be sensibly mediated. Finally, China has participated in nuclear non-proliferation and has argued for the prudent management of nuclear arsenals.

Taken together, these initiatives display that the Chinese concept of national security has evolved significantly, allowing it to shed its focus on traditional warfare and encompass the wide range of roles outlined above. The success of the reform of the concept of national security is particularly important considering the emergence of non-traditional security challenges in the world since the end of the Cold War. In meeting these, and in asserting China's more active role in the international arena, the PLA has developed a number of new features and deepened its involvement in international security missions. These new focus areas of the reformed national security concept are briefly discussed below.

Non-traditional Security Challenges

Prior to 1978, and mainly considering the security interests of the socialist and third world countries, the Chinese armed forces participated in international and regional security affairs mainly through waging war, providing military aid, and by using other traditional means. After the 1990s, the PLA's concept of security has been extended to include a wide range of other areas. As explored in the previous section, these include but are not limited to: participating in UN peacekeeping operations, taking part in international disaster relief and anti-terrorism operations, bolstering maritime security, conducting border patrols, and so on.

In undertaking these missions, Chinese armed forces have become versed in carrying out a variety of different tasks. In 2008, for example, the Chinese engineer team to the Democratic Republic of the Congo leveled an area of 16,000 square meters of volcanic rock to aid housing reconstruction, while in Liberia Chinese transport units provided transportation for about 50 UN peacekeeping units. During the conflict between Israel and Lebanon in 2006, Chinese engineer troops not only disarmed more than 3,500 unexploded bombs, but also supervised the building and repairing of roads, buildings, parking areas, fortifications, and contributed to humanitarian relief in Southern Lebanon. The range of these activities indicates the increased importance of non-traditional security threats, and the need to develop the requisite skills and competencies to counter them.

Diversified Partners and Missions

With the PLA's role in international and regional security affairs increasing in scope, it no longer mainly develops its military exchanges with socialist and third world countries, but does so with all friendly countries. China has therefore not only established relatively frequent cooperation with the U.S. and Russia, but has also developed defense and security consultations with Pakistan, India, Mongolia, Vietnam, the Philippines, as well as other neighboring and developing countries. Furthermore, the form and method for carrying out its missions has become more diverse and flexible with many forays into new areas of security policy. Table 1 on the following page presents some selected highlights in terms of the milestones of China's diversifying role and security engagements.

The PLA conducts its various missions on three main levels: under the framework of the United Nations, regional or multilateral security cooperation, and cooperation on the bilateral level. Between 1999 and 2009, for instance, the PLA participated in 10 emergency disaster relief operations under the framework of the UN in 14 countries. At the regional level, China initiated and hosted the first ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference in 2004. Bilateral cooperation is well-developed with the PLA having established bilateral defense security consultation mechanisms with the armed forces of the United States, Russia, Japan, Australia, the UK, Mongolia, and other nations. As of 2012, China and the U.S. have held 9 annual

meetings, 15 working meetings, and 2 special meetings, and are active partners in anti-piracy and peacekeeping efforts.²⁰

China currently attaches great importance to the establishment of constructive security mechanisms. The PLA has increasingly participated in international and regional affairs in a manner which shows initiative and enthusiasm, not only by taking part in existing mechanisms, but also by endeavoring to establish and develop new ones. Such mechanisms help to maintain security through lasting institutional arrangements.

Table 1. Milestones of China's Security Engagement, 1980-2010

1980	First participation in the UN Disarmament Commission
1985	The Chinese Navy conducts first visits to foreign ports (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh)
1990	First participation in UN peacekeeping operations
1992	Dispatches "Blue Helmet" troops to peacekeeping operations for first time
2002	Provides relief supplies to Afghanistan as part of commitment to humanitarian-aid missions
2002	Holds first joint military exercises abroad (with troops from Kyrgyzstan)
2003	Invites foreign military observers to observe military exercises
2003	Runs a joint maritime search-and-rescue exercise with Pakistan, the first ever between China and a foreign country
2004	Holds the first ARF Conference on Regional Security Policy
2008	Establishes the MND spokesperson system
2008	Conducts the first escort operation in the Gulf of Aden and waters off Somalia
2009	Holds multinational naval activities to celebrate the 60 th anniversary of the Chinese Navy

Source: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, China's National Defense in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2010.

²⁰ Wang Jingguo, "China and the U.S. hold the 2012 annual meeting of maritime military security in QingDao," <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2012-09-29/0916702512.html> (Chinese).

Future Opportunities and Challenges

Compared with the situation during the Cold War, the relationship between China and the rest of the world has changed greatly. In light of the development of the internal and external security environments, the PLA's participation in international and regional security affairs can on the whole be deemed to have been successful. However, some problems and challenges for the future remain.

Complex International Strategic Situation

From the Second World War to the end of the 1980s, and under conditions of isolation from Western countries, the PLA's participation in international and regional security affairs was limited. However, as the trend towards a more multi-polar world continues, pragmatic exchanges and cooperation are gradually being extended. These bring the possibility for China to become more integrated into the international system and become more involved in international and regional security affairs. As examined in the previous section, China has already expanded its role and will continue to do so in the future with a focus on upholding peace and development.

And yet, in spite of the fact that the Cold War ended more than twenty years ago, there are still some countries which have been behaving with a Cold War-mentality in the international arena. For China, this has led to the complication of the fulfillment of its international and regional responsibilities and the straining of its relations with other countries. An arguable example of the persistence of a Cold War-mentality is the perception of China as a "threat." The notion of China as a threat presumes that a continued increase in China's power will lead to a destabilization of the existing international order, as opposed to its strengthening. The reasons for perceiving China as a threat range from worries about China's rapid development to misunderstandings or misgivings about China's strategy and fledgling great power role. Comments made by Japan's prime minister drawing parallels between contemporary China and the expansionist Germany of the early twentieth century provide one example of the "China as threat" rhetoric.²¹

²¹ Liu Ge, "Abe affirms that there must be a war between China and Japan," <http://mil.huanqiu.com/paper/2014-01/4786168.html> (Chinese).

Although China's experience of conflictual relations has substantially decreased since the Cold War, this is not to say they are non-existent. Indeed, the Taiwan Strait crises as well as China's territorial disputes with Japan and Vietnam are evidence of this. Nevertheless, it is important that such disputes are managed effectively and that they do not contribute to the undermining of confidence in China's international role, nor restrict its breadth and depth of responsibilities as an emerging global power.

Traditional and Non-traditional Threats

Today's security threats are interconnected, complex, and volatile. Traditional security problems caused by ethnic, religious, and territorial disputes have not disappeared, while non-traditional security problems such as information security and anti-terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational crime, and the spread of epidemic disease and natural disasters continuously arise. Moreover, conventional security concerns blend with non-conventional ones and domestic security issues interact with international ones, making it hard for traditional security approaches and mechanisms to respond effectively to the various security challenges present in the world. This has required new thinking and bolstered the need for cooperation. As Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye has pointed out, American power is limited, and the U.S. must enhance its cooperation with other countries in order to achieve its goals.²² The same holds true for China.

As this paper has demonstrated, China is actively taking part in international security cooperation. However, just how to further deepen China's cooperation with other countries in fields such as anti-terrorism remains an important issue. A good start would be for China and other countries to begin cooperating more closely in non-sensitive fields such as disaster relief and medicinal aid and then proceed to expand cooperation to other domains. In turn, this can lead to the building of mutual trust regarding the interpretation and handling of non-traditional threats.

Capabilities

Since the 1980s Chinese military strategic guidance has shifted from pre-

²² Zhang Fang, *Contemporary Chinese military diplomacy*, 170.

paring for war to peace-building. During this period the PLA has made advances in weapons and equipment, combat theory, and military training, all of which have improved China's abilities to undertake its increasingly international security responsibilities. For example, the Chinese fleet has bolstered maritime training, established new training models for non-combat military operations, and developed new logistics support methods for long-range ocean missions. Thus, bolstering and adapting capabilities to meet new and complex security demands will remain a constant responsibility for the Chinese armed forces in looking to the future.

Concluding Remarks

China is the world's largest developing country and also an increasingly responsible state when it comes to world affairs. Since 1978, in the face of a complex security environment, the understanding that only common security can truly realize world peace and stability has prevailed in China. This notion has caused the PLA to change its methods of participation in international and regional security affairs, with the result that it today participates in a multitude of missions of an all-round, wide-ranging, and multi-level character. These diverse tasks are carried out to the extent that China can manage and implement them effectively, and has allowed China to strike a balance between its own military development and its international responsibilities. In the future, with the development of China and the PLA, continued adherence to the new concept of security will allow China's role in international affairs to continue to expand in a way which promotes peace, development, and cooperation.

About the Author

Colonel Wu Xin is an Assistant Research Fellow at the Department of Military History and Encyclopedia Studies at the Academy of Military Science (AMS) of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Law from the Academy of Nanjing Politics and a Master's Degree in Military Science from the AMS. She was a guest researcher at ISDP in November-December 2014.

**Appendix 1. China's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations
(as of Dec. 31, 2012)**

UN Peacekeeping Mission	Time Frame	Total Number of Troops	Total Number of Military Observers and Staff Officers
UN Truce Supervision Organization	Apr. 1990 to present		108
UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission	Apr. 1991 to Oct.2003		164
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	Sept.1991 to present		352
UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia	Dec.1991 to Sept.1993	800	97
UN Operation I Mozambique	June1993 to Dec. 1994		20
UN Observer Mission in Liberia	Nov.1993 to Sept.1997		33
UN Special Mission to Afghanistan	May1998 to Jan. 2000		2
UN Mission in Sierra Leone	Aug.1998 to Dec. 2005		37
UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations	Feb. 1999 to present		18
UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea	Oct. 2000 to Aug. 2008		49
UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Apr. 2001 to Jun. 2010	2,180	116
UN Mission in Liberia	Oct. 2003 to present	7,182	98

UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire	Mar. 2004 to present		58
UN Operation in Burundi	June 2004 to Sept. 2006		6
UN Mission in the Sudan	Apr. 2005 to Jul. 2011	3,480	135
UN Interim Force in Lebanon	Mar. 2006 to present	3,197	58
UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste	Oct. 2006 to Nov. 2012		15
UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone	Feb. 2007 to Feb. 2008		1
AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur	Nov. 2007 to present	2,205	42
UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Jul. 2010 to present	1,090	47
UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	Feb. 2011 to present		5
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei	Jul. 2011 to Oct. 2011		2
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan	Jul. 2011 to present	676	13
UN Supervision Mission in Syria	Apr. 2012 to Aug. 2012		9
TOTAL		20,810	1,485

Source: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2013), Appendix III.