

PLA: MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR (MOOTW)

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Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) focus on deterring war, resolving conflict, promoting peace, and supporting civil authorities in response to domestic crises. The phrase and acronym was coined by the United States military during the 1990s, but has since fallen out of use. The UK military has crafted an equivalent or alternate term “Peace Support Operations” (PSO). Both MOOTW and PSO encompass peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-enforcement and peace-building.¹

MOOTW not involving the use or threat of force include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Special agreements exist which facilitate fire support operations within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the ABCA quadripartite working group, which includes the American, British, Canadian and Australian military contingents. Cooperation is organised in advance with NATO Standardisation Agreements (STANAGs) and Quadripartite Standardisation Agreements (QSTAGs). Many countries which need disaster support relief have no bilateral agreements in place; and action may be required, based on the situation, to establish such agreements.² MOOTW also involves arms control and peace-keeping.

The United Nations (UN) recognises the vulnerability of civilians in armed conflict. Security Council Resolution 1674 (2006) on the protection of

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1. Hugh Segal, *Geopolitical Integrity*, (2005), p. 275.

2. “US Army Field Manual,” “Military Operations Other Than War”, GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/japan/ddh-x.htm>, retrieved September 28, 2009.

The non-traditional missions of the Chinese armed forces have evolved as an increasingly used tool of statecraft.

civilians in armed conflict enhances international focussed attention on the protection of civilians in UN and other peace operations. The implementation of paragraph 16 anticipates that peace-keeping missions are provided with clear guidelines regarding what the missions can and should do to achieve protection goals; that the protection of civilians is given priority in decisions about the use of resources; and that protection mandates are implemented.³

Chinese military operations other than war focus on deterring war, resolving conflict, promoting peace, and supporting civil authorities in response to domestic crises. The non-traditional missions of the Chinese armed forces have evolved as an increasingly used tool of statecraft.⁴ China has deployed forces in more than a dozen UN peace-keeping missions.⁵ The People's Liberation Army (PLA) established specialised forces for military operations other than war. Current planning anticipates five specialised groups, including (a) flood and disaster relief forces; (b) post-earthquake emergency rescue forces; (c) emergency rescue forces for nuclear, chemical and biological disasters; (d) emergency relief force for transportation facilities; and (e) international peace-keeping force.⁶

MOOTW have been a subject of study at the National Defence University (NDU), which became a venue for examining the practical experience of equipment utilisation and support. The characteristics, rules, contents and methods of equipment utilisation and support in MOOTW were evaluated.⁷ The General Logistics Department (GLD) of the PLA printed and distributed the "Measures on the Military Financial Support of Military Operations Other than War" and the "Regulations on War-time Financial Support of

3. Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Peacekeeping and Related Peace Operations.
4. Cynthia Watson, "The Chinese Armed Forces and Non-Traditional Missions: A Growing Tool of Statecraft," *China Brief*, vol. 9, no. 4, February 20, 2009.
5. Bonny Ling, "China's Peacekeeping Diplomacy," *China Rights Forum*, No. 1, 2007.
6. "PLA Constructs MOOTW Arms Force System," *People's Liberation Army Daily*, May 24, 2009.
7. Wu Yulin and Liu Demao, "Academic Symposium on MOOTW Equipment Utilisation and Support Held in NDU," *People's Liberation Army Daily*, January 9, 2009.

the PLA" on March 20, 2012, which have come into effect since January, 2012.

The Measures on the Military Financial Support of Military Operations Other than War is composed of 34 Articles in 6 chapters, mainly including the tasks, ways and plans of the financial support of military operations other than war and the provision, expenditure and final account management of the funds. The Regulations on War-time Financial Support of the PLA is composed of 42 Articles in 8 chapters, mainly including the scope of guarantee of operational funds, budgets and final accounts, money supply, expenditure management and financial work of rear bodies. Both the legal documents stipulate the allocation of funds in advance and the responsibility of payment by chief military and political officers in the event of an emergency, which has greatly enhanced the effect of financial support.⁸

CHINA'S MILITARY: EXPEDITIONARY CAPABILITIES

China's military is in the process of becoming an expeditionary force. The PLA's expeditionary capabilities will grow significantly in the coming years. The country's anti-piracy deployment to the Gulf of Aden and the use of its naval and air assets to support the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya in February and March 2011 have shown the PLA's real capability in this arena.

The US Department of Defence defines expeditionary power as "an armed force organised to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country." Additionally, such a force should be able to transport, sustain, and protect itself so that it has the freedom to conduct independent missions necessary for the defence of national interests. The PLA's gradual but important evolution toward greater expeditionary capability coincides with China's steadily rising economic presence and the increasing number of Chinese seeking their fortunes in volatile but often fast-growing countries in places like Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East, both as employees of large state conglomerates and as private entrepreneurs.

8. Source: *PLA Daily*, March 21, 2012.

For now, however, due to cost and perception reasons, China's expeditionary capabilities will most likely be tailored to handling threats to Chinese citizens and economic interests abroad. Foremost among these are non-traditional threats to resource security, such as piracy and terrorism, as well as threats to the People's Republic of China (PRC) citizens overseas, such as the internal chaos seen in Libya. Compare this with the US military, which possesses highly sustainable expeditionary capabilities that enable it to fight large wars halfway across the world and simultaneously handle other contingencies. The platforms and operational infrastructure that make high-intensity missions possible can also be scaled down to deal with non-traditional security missions like humanitarian relief after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami or suppression of piracy off Somalia. Therefore, the PLA's naval, air and ground capabilities for out-of-area operations are likely at least a decade away from achieving the ability to handle the range of missions that the US Department of Defence possesses today.

But the Chinese military is improving its capacity for dealing with smaller-scale threats that do not involve potential forcible entry into a hostile area, but still involve long-range deployments. Improved abilities to show the flag and assist with humanitarian missions and other military operations other than war can potentially allow a limited expeditionary military capacity to yield substantial diplomatic benefits for China.

MISSIONS TO DATE

The PLA Navy (PLAN) anti-piracy mission to the Gulf of Aden, now over two years old, is proving highly successful. The 2010 China Defence White Paper noted that by the end of 2010, the PLAN had dispatched 7 sorties with 18 ship deployments, 16 embarked helicopters, and 490 Special Operation Force (SOF) soldiers. Using means including accompanying escort, area patrol, and onboard escort, the PLAN has safeguarded 3,139 ships sailing under both the Chinese and foreign flags, rescued 29 other ships from pirate attacks and recovered 9 ships released from captivity by pirates.

The Gulf of Aden (GoA) anti-piracy mission, in turn, helped improve the Chinese military's readiness to take part in the February/March 2011

operation to evacuate more than 30,000 PRC citizens from strife-torn Libya. While the majority of these left via chartered ships and aircraft or overland, the operation marked the first time China has deployed military assets to protect PRC citizens overseas. Beijing deployed the *Xuzhou*, one of its most modern missile frigates, and also sent four IL-76 long-range military transport aircraft to help evacuate PRC citizens trapped near Sabha in central Libya.

A key reason the *Xuzhou* was a useful asset in the Libya contingency was because it was already forward deployed as part of China's anti-piracy mission in the GoA. Senior PLAN and civilian leaders are receiving a first-hand lesson in how useful forward deployed military assets are for a country like China that increasingly has global interests. The anti-piracy missions cracked open the door, but in the wake of the Libya evacuation, there is a strong likelihood that the PLAN will seek to assume a more sustained presence in the Indian Ocean region, perhaps extending toward the Persian Gulf as well.

The PLA Navy led the way on China's first expeditionary mission, the GoA anti-piracy deployment, but the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) has also been gaining experience in long-range operations through increasingly challenging military exercises that are helping it improve relevant capabilities such as aerial refuelling and long-range strikes. In September 2010, the PLAAF deployed SU-27s to the Operation Anatolian Eagle exercise in Turkey and the planes reportedly made refuelling stops in Pakistan and Iran. In addition, during the September 2010 Peace Mission multilateral exercise with Kazakhstan and Russia, Chinese J-10s operating from bases in Xinjiang and supported by aerial refuelling, conducted a 2,000-km strike mission with live ordnance against targets in Kazakhstan, according to reports.

Expeditionary military operations require access to regional replenishment and repair facilities. The PLA's long-range exercises and GoA deployment are boosting its access to regional ports and airfields,

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which can be used to provide logistical support for future missions. China is most likely to pursue a 'places, not bases' model, as the US experience shows that maintaining large fixed bases on foreign soil poses major diplomatic and security challenges. Areas for potential deepening of PLA logistical support and access during times of crisis that merit close watch in the coming years include: Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar, Djibouti, Salalah (Oman), Aden (Yemen), Gwadar and Karachi (Pakistan), Chittagong (Bangladesh), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Mauritius (where Port Louis has sufficient draft to accommodate a large warship), Sittwe (Burma), and Singapore.

As China builds the appropriate diplomatic and logistical infrastructure for supporting expeditionary operations, it is also important to look at the platforms the PLAN and PLAAF are acquiring that could help facilitate expeditionary military operations in theatres 'beyond Taiwan.' Certain naval, air, and space platforms will become relevant to potential future expeditionary missions that the PLA might be called upon to perform.

EXPEDITIONARY PLA NAVY

Large amphibious warfare ships known as Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) and Landing Helicopter Docks (LHDs) are essential to expeditionary operations because of their versatility, as they can host troops, carry vehicles and hovercraft, and serve as operating bases for heavy helicopters for mission support such as a vertical evacuation of Chinese citizens trapped in a hostile area.

China has now reportedly built two Type 071 LPDs. One is operational and one has been launched, but is still being fitted out, and a third vessel is under construction. Amphibious warfare vessels were instrumental in the US Navy's responses to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and 2010 Haiti earthquake, and China is likely to build several additional LPDs, and perhaps LHDs as well. China is currently in the process of testing and certifying a domestically built heavy lift helicopter called the AC313 that is basically a reverse-engineered Super Frelon (27 person capacity). The AC313 and follow-on heavy helicopters could likely operate from any PLAN LPD or LHD.

China also appears to be rapidly refurbishing the ex-Soviet carrier *Varyag* that will become operational in 2012. In addition, China has decided to embark on a national carrier programme in which it would build domestically a 50,000-60,000 tonne conventional carrier by 2014 [US Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) project that will be completed after 2015] and a nuclear powered carrier by 2020. China certainly faces substantial challenges in equipping a carrier, training pilots in carrier operations, and building a carrier group. That said, the country's rising defence budget, officially \$91.5 billion in 2011 and the experience of domestic shipyards in building increasingly complex large commercial ships make it likely that physical construction barriers can be overcome in a reasonable span of time.

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A carrier group would offer immense diplomatic benefits in providing a visible Chinese naval presence in the South China Sea, in Southeast Asia, along key sea-lanes in the Indian Ocean, and for humanitarian missions such as the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Several carrier groups would be necessary for persistent presence in these areas, however, to allow for periodic maintenance. Greater focus on carrier battle group development would suggest that Chinese leaders want to bolster their capacity to handle higher-intensity expeditionary missions than would be the case if ship procurement focusses more on LPDs and/or helicopter carriers.

A strong corps of replenishment ships is vital for supporting expeditionary operations, as the PLAN currently has only three long-range replenishment vessels, according to the defence news forum IHS *Jane's*. For comparison, the US Navy has a fleet of around 30 long-range combat replenishment ships. China could surge production of underway replenishment vessels given the vessels' relative similarity to commercial ships and China's large commercial shipbuilding capacity. As such, the replenishment vessel construction rate will be a key barometer of the PLAN's future expeditionary intentions.

China's most modern surface combatants can handle the non-traditional security contingencies that China is most likely to face, as long as they have adequate replenishment support. For expeditionary operations beyond the South China Sea region, submarines can provide critical security and support for intelligence gathering, making long-range nuclear submarine operations an important topic for moving forward the PLAN training. If China makes a stronger push to upgrade its surface combatants' anti-submarine capability, this could signal the intent to create expeditionary naval forces suited for high-intensity conflict as well.

China has found a near justifiable way of modernising its defence forces, particularly its navy, by emphasising on the importance of non-traditional roles that such forces can play. The 2008 White Paper on China's national defence enunciated for the first time that China now sees military operations other than war as an important form of applying military force. The PLA Navy has accordingly widened its scope of operations in line with this concept, to include "integrated offshore operations in distant waters, strategic deterrence, and counterattacks." The Central Military Commission (CMC) of China also issued the "Military Operations Other than War Capacity Building Plan" that provides the guidelines and measures for the accomplishment of diverse non-military tasks.

China, accordingly, has intensified its non-traditional military activities since 2008 and considers this to be the most active period for its armed forces, during which it deployed the largest scale of military force and performed various kinds of tasks with increasing regularity in peace-time. A Chinese media report quoting statistics from the PLA sources states that the Chinese military has employed more than 2.44 million servicemen, organised 7.82 million militiamen and reservists and operated more than 6,700 aircraft sorties for MOOTW since 2008. The uninterrupted anti-piracy patrols mounted by the PLA Navy ships since December 2008 in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast, wherein nine task forces, each comprising three of its warships have been deployed till date for escort duties, is the most notable instance of MOOTW.

Many an international eyebrow has been raised at the rapid pace

of the Chinese defence modernisation over the last decade. The US has been an active proponent in questioning China's 'peaceful rise', a term used for the very first time at the scenic beach resort town of Bo'ao in the tourist paradise of Hainan in 2003. Though the Chinese have, since then, toned down the underlying alarmist connotation of 'peaceful rise' to that of 'peaceful development', the international community continues to be concerned about the fast-paced modernisation of the PLA, which is the ultimate agency to execute the peaceful development concept propagated by the Chinese leadership. The Chinese leadership and government, on the other hand, have taken great pains to convince the international community about their genuineness towards "peaceful development". In the White Paper on Chinese 'peaceful development' released on September 6, 2011, it has been mentioned that 'peaceful development' is a strategic choice voluntarily exercised by China and that Beijing hoped that the world would have confidence in the sincerity of the Chinese endeavour. The Chinese State Councillor, Dai Bingguo, reiterated this very position in an open article written and released in the United Kingdom on September 25, 2011, wherein he averred that the Chinese declaration of "peaceful development" was "not merely empty talk," and he exhorted the world to welcome rather than obstruct it.

Navies the world over, by the very nature of their operational role and additional characteristics of institutional flexibility, manoeuvrability, adaptability and reach are ideally suited to be appropriate instruments of their state's foreign policy and its diplomatic propagation in their respective national interest. The British, in the 19th century and till the mid-20th century as also the US thereafter, have continually utilised their naval power in the furtherance of their respective countries' foreign policy and achievement of their political objectives. The PLA Navy or for that matter, any navy of consequence, therefore, should be no different and may be deemed to follow the same route to achieving major power status.

It is evident that in the context of the current world order, the occasions and opportunities for using navies in their conventional role as instruments of coercive diplomacy are few and far between. However, there are numerous

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opportunities for these navies to be engaged in non-traditional activities which project the benign face of the state while keeping the force well trained, equipped and operationally active, at the same time. These non-traditional tasks also help in justifying the capacity building, force modernisation, infrastructure upgrade and greater financial outlay to a certain extent. The international community in such a situation also has to grudgingly accept such justifications and feels a little out of a place in questioning the 'real motive' for such grand force expansions.

There have been many positive benefits for the PLA Navy on account of various maritime and diplomatic activities which were either associated with, or complemented, the presence of its ships in the Gulf of Aden. These warships have been visiting various Indian Ocean littoral countries, including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand on goodwill visits, while transiting these waters for anti-piracy missions. The PLA Navy ships even crossed the Suez, ventured into the Mediterranean and visited ports in Egypt, Italy and Greece during August 2010. These ships, while on deployment, have regularly visited ports in Oman, UAE, Yemen and Djibouti, either for operational turnaround, rest and recreation or to evade bad weather. The frigate *Xuzhou* was diverted from the anti-piracy task to the Libyan coast in end February 2011 to assist in the withdrawal of Chinese citizens from the crisis struck Libya and worked in tandem with the PLA Air Force and civil aviation evacuation effort.

The PLA Navy hospital ship *Peace Ark* sailed for the Indian Ocean from China on August 31, 2010, on a 90-day "Mission Harmony-2010". The ship operated in the Gulf of Aden for some time with the sixth task force and then called on ports in Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles and Bangladesh. The ship's medical teams provided free health services, diagnostics and treatment to the local public and military personnel, conducted medical

cooperation with local hospitals, primary schools, orphanages, nursing homes and the poor communities. This voyage of the *Peace Ark* achieved much more international mileage for China as well as the PLA Navy in spreading its message of 'peaceful development' than what mere words in White Papers and rhetorical statements from back home could do.

China, having realised the immense benefit of exposing the benevolent facet of its navy towards its larger image building exercise, has again sailed the *Peace Ark* hospital ship on a long voyage to the Latin American countries of Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Costa Rica in the Atlantic Ocean. The ship sailed on September 16, 2011, under the "Mission Harmony 2011" and returned after more than 100 days at sea, covering a distance of more than 23,500 nautical miles. The PLA Navy Rear Admiral in charge of the mission stated that the aim of the current expedition following the "Harmonious Mission 2010" was to "strengthen the non-war operations of naval forces and perform diversified missions". He further emphasised that "the mission was of great significance in publicising the ideas of 'Harmonious World' and 'Harmonious Ocean', demonstrate China's friendly relations between the Latin American countries, and highlight the PLA's image as a peaceful and a civilized force." The above statement needs to be taken note of by the international community and its wider connotations require to be analysed in greater detail.

There are vital lessons to be learnt from the above Chinese approach of naval capacity building by highlighting the relevance of the non-traditional role of this service, in the current global maritime environment. It is nothing new or extraordinary that the PLA Navy is doing and which other navies have not done before or are not doing now. However the Chinese are projecting their achievements to the world in an organised and relentless manner so as to lend credence to their 'peaceful development' formulation.

The Chinese have, in fact, institutionalised the whole process of laying more than required emphasis on even routine activities through an interesting concept known as the "Three Warfares". This entails the shaping of domestic and international opinion in their favour through the 'soft' trio-instruments of media, psychological and legal warfare. The Chinese

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leadership, in fact, exhorts its state machinery and the people to be continuously engaged in these three warfares, so that the sought for objectives are met without recourse to the hard options.

Needless to say, the investment of so much national effort, resources and international relations capital can really be considered to stand China in good stead in the long run, as the PLA Navy organisation and personnel have developed strong sea legs in a multinational operating environment, gained vital lessons in interoperability and above all, a reasonably acceptable presence in global maritime matters. It can, thus, be inferred that China considers this course of action as a win-win situation, one of continuing modernisation, but with a benign pretence. Whether or not the international community is convinced about these Chinese overtures, is a moot question.

EXPEDITIONARY PLA AIR FORCE

Overseas and cross-border exercises have given the PLA a unique opportunity to practice long-distance deployment. The PLA recognises that one of the prerequisites for becoming a major military power is mastering forward deployment away from China. Peace Mission 2010 was an opportunity for the PLA to test its power projection capabilities. It used a mix of air and rail transport to rapidly move an expeditionary force of over 1,000 men and their vehicles from eastern China to Kazakhstan. The success of this undertaking was a testament to the PLA's improved logistics. In addition, Peace Mission 2010 was the first time the PLAAF simulated a long distance air strike outside China. In previous Peace Mission exercises, the PLAAF had forward deployed only a handful of strike aircraft for close air support. But on this occasion, the PLAAF tested its newly developed integrated air strike capabilities. Four H-6 bombers with two J-10 fighter escorts, supported by tankers and an airborne command aircraft, took off from a base in Xinjiang and struck their targets in Kazakhstan.

The PLAAF is likely to press harder for longer-range transport aircraft in the wake of the Libya evacuation, where the 4 IL-76 Candid transports performed well. At present, the PLAAF has 14 IL-76s and 25 Y-8 long-range transports, according to *Jane's*. This would likely create a capacity shortfall in the event that the PLAAF is called upon to bear the brunt of a large-scale evacuation from an inland country where the PLAN struggles to directly assist. In the event of an evacuation or intervention operation under hostile conditions, long range, highly capable SU-27, J-11, or SU-30 fighter bombers could provide limited tactical air cover provided they can access a regional airfield such as Khartoum in Sudan. The transit of four PLAAF SU-27s to Turkey for the Anatolian Eagle exercises in September 2010, for example, showed that the PLAAF is able to deploy tactical aircraft to areas far from China even without aerial refuelling.

Also, Chinese commanders operating in unfamiliar locales will likely clamour for improved Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) efforts to support their missions. Thus, space-based sensors and air-breathing observation platforms like the WJ-600 drone unveiled at the 2010 Zhuhai Air Show will play a vital role in maximising the commanders' situational awareness. In 2010, the number of Chinese space launches equalled the US launch figure for the first time. More importantly, a significant portion of China's launches involved satellites that are helping to build up a persistent and survivable ISR capability along China's maritime periphery and beyond.

China has launched 7 Yaogan surveillance satellites since December 2009, suggesting that a more robust spaced-based reconnaissance capability is a high priority for the PRC. China is also building up a constellation of Beidou navigation satellites that will likely give Chinese forces an independent regional navigation and weapons guidance system by 2012, with global capabilities coming into existence around 2020. Lastly, China is reportedly preparing to launch a second Tianlian data link satellite in June 2011, which, in conjunction with the existing Tianlian-1, could provide coverage over as much as 75 percent of the earth's surface.

EXPEDITIONARY GROUND FORCES

For the expeditionary ground forces missions, Special Operation Forces (SOF) and PLAN Marines are the most relevant ground forces. Their roles might include securing airfields and ports, and protecting evacuation operations. Putting boots on the ground abroad for virtually any mission outside the context of a UN peace-keeping operation is a bridge China has not yet crossed and is likely to be prompted only by an extremely serious provocation such as large scale anti-Chinese violence in a country with many PRC expatriates.

China is gradually building up a cadre of soldiers with significant international operating experience gained through participation in UN peace-keeping operations, many of which take place in locations and security environments like Congo and Sudan, which are similar to areas where the PLA might actually have to help protect an evacuation of Chinese citizens in the future. The country's 2010 Defence White Paper stated that as of December 2010, it has dispatched 17,390 military personnel to 19 UN peace-keeping missions. In February 2011, China had 1,878 troops participating in UN peace-keeping missions, according to the UN.

China's expeditionary military capabilities are currently limited, but set to grow significantly in the coming years, as will Beijing's propensity to use them to protect PRC citizens and economic interests abroad. While the PLA is decades from having US-style expeditionary forces capable of sustained high-intensity combat even if it wants to go that route, the potential for more regular and capable Chinese military deployments to distant portions of the South China Sea, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and Africa is now real.

Diplomatic engagement needs to incorporate discussions to assess how China intends to use its growing power projection abilities and also explore ways to de-conflict Chinese expeditionary operations and those of other militaries in strategic regions like Africa and the Middle East. China's developing expeditionary capabilities makes it a more useful partner for cooperation on non-traditional security issues and the United States should try to increase discussions on this topic with its Chinese partners, both bilaterally and in multilateral forums.

PLA: MOOTW SINCE 2008

Since 2008, the PLA and the Chinese People's Armed Police Force (PAPF) have fulfilled a series of tough MOOTW which have become an important way to use military power. The CMC has made a series of decisions and plans to strengthen the capacity building of military operations other than war, and issued the Military Operations Other than War Capacity-Building Plan that provides the guideline and measures for the accomplishment of diverse non-military tasks.

The years since 2008 proved to be the most active period of the Chinese military, during which it deployed the largest scale of military force, performed various kinds of action and was responsible for the most concentrated tasks in peace-time. According to the statistics from the operations department under the PLA General Staff Headquarters (GSH), since 2008, the Chinese military has called out 2.444 million servicemen, organised 7.82 million militiamen and reservists, and dispatched more than 6,700 aircraft/sorties for MOOTW.

The military has set up a leading group to handle emergencies. The four general headquarters/departments, major military area commands, and services and arms of the PLA also set up corresponding leading groups, and established joint coordination mechanisms with state agencies and local governments to ensure that they promptly launch emergency mechanisms once the CMC makes the decisions. Emergency command agencies at all levels in the military have also participated in national and local governments' corresponding leading agencies for disaster prevention and reduction, flood control, disaster relief, production safety, forest fire prevention, and so on, to establish an action coordination mechanism.

Currently, a system of mapping, meteorology and communication support that serves MOOTW is under construction. The emergency office of the GSH of the PLA is in close communication and contact with more than 20 departments, including those of public security, civil affairs, water conservancy, forestry, earthquake, oceans and weather to enable information sharing at the headquarters level. The GSH of the PLA and relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry

The PLA has also organised and participated in international joint anti-terrorism exercises, including the China-Pakistan “Friendship 2010”.

of Transport established the GSH – PLA Navy – Escort Taskforce “Blue Shield Action”, a three-tier command system. The command centre in Beijing has video calling and data transmission capabilities to communicate with warships. In the East China and South China Seas, the PLA Navy has established a maritime sea right-safeguarding-action coordination mechanism with the departments of maritime surveillance,

fishery administration and public security marine police to effectively safeguard national maritime rights and interests.

Relying on the current command system, the military has also established cooperation relations of anti-terrorism command and stability maintenance with state and local governments. Under the unified leadership of local Party committees at all levels, the provincial military area commands, garrisons and PAPF played a part in the joint-command agencies of anti-terrorism and stability maintenance at the corresponding level. The PLA has also organised and participated in international joint anti-terrorism exercises, including the Sino-Russian “Peace Mission 2009,” China-Pakistan “Friendship 2010”, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) joint anti-terrorism exercises and China-Romania anti-terrorism training, improving its emergency command capacity on international communication platforms.

Efficient and versatile emergency rescue forces of the PLA and PAPF have developed combat power. It is learned from the GSH of the PLA that as of the end of 2010, with the support of the national authorities and local governments, the Chinese military had built professional state-level emergency response teams of 50,000 people in 8 categories, and all the Military Area Commands (MACs) of the PLA had set up provincial emergency response teams of 45,000 people in 9 categories. These professional teams, including engineering, medicine, transportation, Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC), emergency communication, maritime search and rescue and others, are equipped with helicopters, large-scale engineering machinery, field medical equipment and life detection devices

and other advanced equipment, and basically have the capabilities of rapid response, force projection, specialised rescue, command and coordination and comprehensive support as well as the capacity to support political work.

A national earthquake disaster emergency rescue team, mainly comprising the engineer regiment from a group army under the PLA Beijing MAC, has been recognised by the United Nations as the world's 12th and Asia's 2nd international heavily armed rescue team. In the relief work for the Wenchuan earthquake, on the average, every three personnel of the China International Rescue Team saved one earthquake sufferer and all the rescued people survived. The Zhouqu landslide rescue work was a typical case of the deployment of the PLA professional soldiers. The PLA mainly deployed engineer, chemical defence, pontoon bridge, hydropower, transportation, communication and hygiene and disease control troops for disaster relief and rescue. The day after the landslide, an engineer regiment of a group army under the PLA Lanzhou MAC conducted 8 underwater demolitions of barrier dams. A hydropower troop unit under the Chinese PAPF used large machines to timely dredge up the river channels.

The PLA Air Force, Navy, army aviation, air defence, engineer, chemical defence, medical service, diving, nuclear, chemical and biological security inspection and monitoring troops played an important role in security and guard tasks for such significant events as the Beijing Olympic Games and the Shanghai World Expo. The Chinese peace-keeping force cleared nearly 10,000 landmines and explosives buried in an area of 85,000m in various task areas. Having accomplished quality projects following high standards, the Chinese peace-keeping engineers are being hailed as the creators of "The China Speed" and "The China Miracle" by the international community. Some of the important MOOTWs are listed below:

- After the Wenchuan earthquake, 146,000 PLA soldiers rapidly travelled to the disaster areas by air and land from around the country. They dug out 3,338 survivors from the debris and rescued over 1.4 million trapped people. During the earthquake relief and disaster rescue work in Yushu county, the PLA deployed 16,000 officers and men to rescue 1,564

people. In the rescue and relief efforts during the Zhouqu landslide, the PLA dispatched over 7,600 officers and men to search and rescue 53 survivors and treat and cure 25,000 people.

- On December 26, 2008, a naval escort task force from the PLA Navy sailed to the Gulf of Aden and the waters off the Somali coast to perform escort tasks for the first time. As of the end of June 2011, the PLA had organised nine naval escort task forces, dispatched 27 ships and vessels and fulfilled 316 escort tasks for 3,681 ships. In 2011, after the outbreak of civil war in Libya, the *Xuzhou* warship of the PLA Navy, on an escort mission in the Gulf of Aden, sailed to the Mediterranean Sea at top speed to escort a passenger liner carrying Chinese evacuees.
 - In the disaster rescue work for the Wenchuan earthquake, the PLA Air Force and the aviation troops of the PLA urgently deployed over 200 airplanes and helicopters of all types to transport 39,000 people and over 7,700 tons of materials via a total of more than 5,400 flights. It was the largest air transportation operation in the history of the PLA's disaster rescue and relief work. In order to speed up the pace of evacuating Chinese people from Libya, the PLA Air Force urgently dispatched 4 IL-76 transport planes, with each plane flying over 30,000 km in 46 hours. The 1,655 Chinese evacuees in the last batch all successfully left Libya.
 - In recent years, the PLA and the PAPF dispatched more than 260,000 officers and men, 200 airplanes and 102 ships and warships to undertake security and guard tasks for such grand events as the Beijing Olympic Games, Shanghai World Expo, Guangzhou Asian Games and Shenzhen Universiade.
- In recent years, the PLA and the PAPF dispatched professional forces to fight forest fires in the Greater Khingan mountains, Funing county of Hebei province, Taian city of Shandong province and other places, effectively protecting China's forest resources. A water supply engineering troop unit of the PLA implements tasks nationwide such as digging wells to fight against drought and contributing numerous streams of life to the people.
- In June 2008, a troop unit of the PLA airborne force urgently blocked

off the dam in the Mianyu river. In July 2010, an engineer regiment of a group army under the PLA Lanzhou MAC successfully blocked off the crevasse of the Luofu river in Weinan city of Shaanxi province. In June 2010, a transportation troop unit of the PAPF successfully blocked off the crevasse of the Changkai Dam of the Fuhe river in Jiangxi province.

- Since 2008, the PLA has dispatched 7,735 officers and men to participate in international peace-keeping operations and sent 291 officers and men to take part in disaster rescue work in Indonesia and other countries. At present, China has a total of 2,100 peace-keepers implementing peace-keeping operations within the framework of the United Nations, contributing the biggest number of peace-keeping officers and men among the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council.

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LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Chinese military's internal security responsibilities fall within the broad category of "diversified military tasks." The concept of diversified military tasks, first introduced at least as early as 2004 and emphasised at the Chinese Communist Party's 17th Congress in 2007, calls for the PLA, the PAPF, the militia, and the reserves to be prepared to handle a range of responsibilities far wider than simply deterring and, if necessary, defending against aggression by foreign armed forces. Although the concept is only loosely defined, commentators in China understand it as including both the wide variety of tasks that a modern army would have to perform in conducting "local wars in conditions of informatisation" and a number of responsibilities that fall under the rubric of "military operations other than war."

MOOTW cover a wide range of responsibilities, including conduct of operations meant to deter foreign aggression, border control, counter-

terrorism, response to serious incidents of mass violence, emergency response, rescue, humanitarian aid, participation in UN peace-keeping operations, and even drought alleviation measures such as cloud-seeding. All of these MOOTW and other “diversified tasks” are seen as being related. China’s leaders see themselves and their military as facing a world in which “issues of existence security and development security, traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats, and domestic security and international security are interwoven and interactive.”

The legal basis for the Chinese armed forces’ internal missions is ultimately derived from Article 29 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). After stating that the purpose of the armed forces is to “strengthen national defence, resist aggression, and defend the motherland,” Article 29 goes on to assign three other broadly defined tasks: “safeguard the people’s peaceful labour, participate in national reconstruction, and work hard to serve the people.” This flexible definition of the tasks of the armed forces supplies a constitutional basis for virtually any internal deployment of military force for the accomplishment of any specific task that the Chinese leadership might wish to accomplish.

The PRC only began to build a formal emergency response management system in the post-Mao era. Prior to that, emergency response was handled largely on an ad hoc basis by the Communist Party leadership on all levels, who tended to employ small temporary crisis management groups to lead a “mass movement” style of social mobilisation to deal with crises. Since 1979, economic reform, the growth of a market economy, greater respect for property rights, an increasingly complex bureaucracy, and greater awareness of the models of emergency response in other countries have combined to move China toward the development of a specialised emergency response system. A growing body of law seeks to define the Chinese military’s roles and responsibilities and its relations with the state, society, and economy. One of the regular complaints emerging in the Chinese literature on the PLA’s internal security missions is that this body of law is still woefully inadequate. As the Asian Development Bank pointed out in its report on

the Wenchuan earthquake response: "The Chinese government does not have a stand-alone disaster risk management agency with a dedicated disaster risk management function." However, there are laws and emergency response plans that lay out some of the internal security roles and responsibilities of the PLA, the PAPF, the militia, and the reserves.

China's laws describe "contingencies" or "public emergencies" as including natural disasters, accidental disasters, public hygiene incidents, and social security incidents. Contingencies are classified into four levels: I - Very Severe; II - Severe; III - Relatively Severe; and IV - Average. In general, the laws and contingency or emergency response plans envisage local police, militia, and reserves as the initial and, in lower-grade incidents, the only necessary, responders to contingencies. However, in severe and very severe incidents, the PAPF and/or the PLA are called upon to operate as "shock troops" and even as the main forces in handling natural disasters and other emergency situations.

The emergency response law of the PRC states the military's role in typically flexible terms: "The Chinese People's Liberation Army, the Chinese People's Armed Police Force, and militia join in emergency response, rescue, and management in accordance with this law and other relevant laws, administrative regulations, and military laws and the commands of the State Council and the Central Military Commission." The regulation on army participation in disaster rescue and relief describes the PLA's role in disaster rescue and relief as that of a "strike force," and its responsibilities as rescuing, transferring, or dispersing victims; protecting the safety of important targets; rescuing and transporting important materials; participating in specialised tasks, including repair of roads, bridges, and tunnels, rescue at sea, nuclear, chemical, and biological rescue, control of infectious disease, preventing or controlling other serious dangers or disasters, and when necessary, assisting local government in reconstruction. The PLA began formally including rescue and disaster relief operations in its training programmes in 2002.

CHINA'S GROWING DEFENCE BUDGET

Beijing has given the military double-digit budget increases for well over a decade and some Chinese security analysts are calling for a larger-than-usual boost this year. Whatever the exact amount of China's official defence budget, the announcement will once again highlight China's growing military power. Widely dismissed as a "junkyard army" for many years, the Chinese military is now raising quite a few eyebrows with its growing capability. In recent years, China has deployed increasingly potent anti-access capabilities, including modern surface ships, advanced submarines, fourth generation fighter aircraft, and conventional cruise and ballistic missiles. China is also enhancing its Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C4ISR), space and cyber warfare capabilities; developing an anti-ship ballistic missile designed to target US aircraft carriers; and modernising its nuclear forces.

The PLA's growing capabilities in these areas, along with other recent notable events, including Beijing's controversial anti-satellite missile test in January 2007; its January 2009 missile defence intercept test; and the Chinese Navy's unprecedented and continuing participation in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia since December 2008 are raising questions about whether an increasingly powerful China represents a looming military threat. In an article for the Centre for Security Policy, the author Frank Gaffney argues, "China is responding to what it perceives to be US declining power by becoming ever more well armed, assertive and contemptuous, a formula for serious, and possibly major, conflict ahead."⁹

At the outset of the economic reform era in the 1970s, China's leaders stated that military modernisation would take a backseat to domestic economic development. Deng Xiaoping argued that it would be necessary to delay major increases in defence expenditure until China had achieved a higher level of economic development. By the end of the 20th century, Deng predicted that China would be much more powerful economically and would then be able to spend more on military modernisation without

9. Frank Gaffney, "Obama vs. the All-Volunteer Military," Centre for Security Policy, February 1, 2010.

short-changing other national priorities. In line with this guidance, the PLA's share of the budget declined throughout the 1980s. While it saw nominal increases in the late 1980s and early 1990s, much of that gain was devoured by inflation. It was not until the late 1990s when rapid economic growth began and Beijing became determined to develop more credible military options against Taiwan and the US in a cross-Strait conflict that the PLA finally started to enjoy major increases in the defence budget.

The number of funding sources and the involvement of multiple levels of government further complicate attempts to estimate China's defence spending.

This trend has continued and China's official figures put defence spending at about 1.4 percent of the country's rapidly growing Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The official numbers tell only part of the story, however. The true level of China's current defence budget is difficult to calculate, largely because some items are not reflected in the announced defence budget. Among these are expenditures on foreign weapons procurement, paramilitary expenses, state subsidies for the defence-industrial complex and some defence-related R&D programmes. Moreover, the number of funding sources and the involvement of multiple levels of government further complicate attempts to estimate China's defence spending. Consequently, outside estimates range from about one-and-a-half to three times the official budget figure.

Attempting to project future trends in Beijing's military spending is even more complex. Forecasts of Chinese military spending over the next 10 to 20 years vary widely, depending on the methods employed and the underlying assumptions about China's future economic performance. For example, in 2005, the US Department of Defence predicted a possible three-fold or greater increase in China's defence spending over the next 20 years, which would place its military budget at \$210 billion to \$315 billion or more in 2025.¹⁰ In contrast, a RAND Corporation report released at about the same time, projected that in 2025, Chinese defence spending would reach about \$185 billion. That's still an impressive sum, but considerably lower than the

10. Office of the Secretary of Defence, Annual Report to Congress, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2005*, pp. 21-22.

Pentagon forecast.¹¹ These divergent estimates reflect uncertainty not only about future economic performance, but also about how China's leaders will choose to allocate budgetary resources when faced with a variety of new security challenges, on the one hand, and competing domestic priorities, on the other.

NEW MISSIONS FOR THE PLA

Because MOOTW enhances China's soft power, Beijing has been more supportive towards externalising the military's non-combat activities. As China's political, economic and security interests become more global and complex, the PLA's roles and missions are evolving to contend with an increasingly diverse set of security challenges. In December 2004, President Hu Jintao assigned the "New Historic Missions" to the PLA, which encompass four key roles:

- Help the Communist Party maintain and consolidate its ruling position.
- Provide a strong security guarantee for national development.
- Safeguard national interests.
- Safeguard world peace and promote common development.

To fulfil these expanded missions, the Chinese leadership has tasked the PLA with enhancing its capabilities to successfully conduct combat operations and participate in military operations other than war. Specifically, President Hu's concept of "multiple military tasks" provides a conceptual framework for the PLA to properly balance the development of the capabilities required to fulfil its evolving combat duties along with other military missions.

The PLA's participation in bilateral and multilateral military exercises is a remarkable evolution in China's approach to military diplomacy and national security. These exercises are better understood when viewed within the context of Beijing's confidence-building strategy, recognition of non-traditional threats, emphasis on force modernisation and military operations other than war, and the desire to counter-balance the United

11. Keith Crane, Roger Cliff, Evan Medeiros, James Mulvenon and William Overholt, *Modernizing China's Military: Opportunities and Constraints* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005).

States. In addition, the analysis of both the benefits and implications that these exercises have for the Chinese military provides observers with a better understanding of the People's Liberation Army and its approach to military diplomacy.

As Chinese CMC Vice Chairman Gen Xu Caihou has indicated, MOOTW are emerging as "routine and constant missions for the military," adding: "We believe that in the current era when the tides for peace, development and cooperation are ever more keenly felt, to conduct military operations other than war is becoming an increasingly important form of applying military forces".¹² Chinese strategists indicate that Beijing's conception of such operations covers a wide variety of activities, including counter-terrorism operations, participation in UN peace-keeping operations, non-combatant evacuation operations, emergency disaster relief operations, international humanitarian assistance and counter-piracy patrols.

But while the military's participation in such activities, like its counter piracy patrols off Somalia, is clearly seen as important, the PLA's core mission remains clear. As Gen Xu declared, "To deter and win wars remains the top priority of the armed forces."¹³ As part of the concept of "multiple military tasks," Chinese strategists envision several potential types of combat operations, including, but not limited to, large-scale island attack, air defence and border-area defence operations.

The PLA faces the challenge of balancing the relationship between enhancing combat operations and ramping up military operations other than war. Chinese analysts argue that such activities can help improve the PLA's ability to win wars by giving it experience in critical areas such as command and decision-making, projection of military strength, logistics and support operations, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities. Growing involvement in such missions can enhance China's image and offer valuable operational experience that will help improve its

As Gen Xu declared, "To deter and win wars remains the top priority of the armed forces."

12. Gen Xu Caihou, "The Chinese Military: A Force for Multiple Military Tasks," speech at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, October 26, 2009.

13. Ibid.

ability to conduct combat operations and support the core goal of deterring and winning wars.

POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

Even as the PLA's involvement in non-traditional security missions grows, it seems likely that the demand for greater defence spending may increasingly come into conflict with the rising costs of China's domestic priorities. Indeed, calls for increased defence spending are likely to be matched by growing demands for government outlays to cope with a range of social problems. Such problems, which emerged as consequences of Beijing's economic reforms during the Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin eras, include a growing income gap, the glaring inadequacies of the Chinese health care system, worsening environmental degradation and rising social unrest. Tensions that have arisen from these challenges could worsen if the pace of China's economic growth slows.

Under the leadership of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, China has been shifting from an economic strategy that emphasised rapid GDP growth above all else to an approach that devotes more attention to reducing income inequality and promoting sustainable economic development. As part of this new approach, Chinese leaders stress that the country's economic policies must promote the development of a "harmonious society" based on balanced growth and sustainable economic development.¹⁴ Hu and Wen are likely to have their hands full, as top officials historically have been evaluated using metrics associated with the rapid growth strategy. The shift in orientation may also begin to impose serious constraints on further dramatic increases in military spending in the future.

CONCLUSION

Rapid economic growth has allowed Beijing to dramatically increase defence spending since the late 1990s. It has been able to do so without having to

14. For a detailed explanation of this approach, see "Communiqué of the Sixth Plenum of the 16th CPC Central Committee," *People's Daily*, October 12, 2006.

make tradeoffs between military modernisation and other policy priorities. China remains determined to continue modernising its military for at least two major reasons. First, China still sees military power as an important aspect of its Taiwan policy even in a time of warming relations. Second, Beijing appears convinced that China's growing global interests require a much more capable military. Indeed, the concepts of "new historic missions" and "multiple military tasks" provide a more expansive rationale for Chinese military modernisation beyond Taiwan.

As the PLA embraces missions that require its forces to deploy regionally and globally, it is likely to participate in more exercises to test its capabilities in foreign environments and learn from experienced counterparts.

As the PLA embraces missions that require its forces to deploy regionally and globally, it is likely to participate in more exercises to test its capabilities in foreign environments and learn from experienced counterparts. Simultaneously, the PLA's participation in overseas exercises has become an invaluable means for Beijing to exert its regional and global influence. Finally, China's participation in international exercises represents an important stepping stone in the PLA's transition into a modern fighting force. The recent developments reflect the PLA's rising confidence and China's growing assertiveness in the 21st century.

To the extent that new roles and missions ultimately require a greater global presence for the PLA, we could see growing concerns about China's expanding military capability in some countries, rising tensions within China over some of its traditional foreign policy principles and potentially new challenges for their security relationship. However, it should be noted that international maritime exercises so far only offer limited improvements to the PLAN's MOOTW capabilities. The activities have been more useful to Beijing as public relations events, rather than sophisticated exercises that strengthen the navy's conduct at sea. This may reflect the PLAN's still limited capacity in cooperating with foreign navies under complex conditions. However, in the long-term, sustained

operational experience in the Gulf of Aden and ongoing engagement in regional forums on maritime security will no doubt contribute to China's maritime MOOTW capabilities.

This paper reflects the views and conclusions of the author and not necessarily the opinions or policy of the Centre or any other institution.