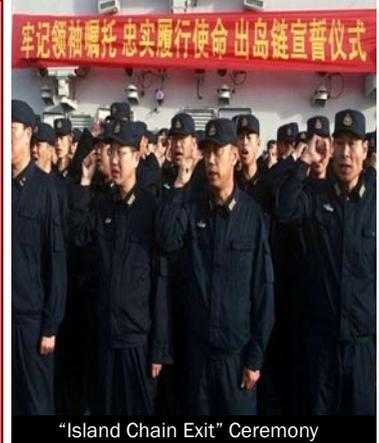




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"Island Chain Exit" Ceremony

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For comments or questions about *China Brief*, please contact us at [hsiao@jamestown.org](mailto:hsiao@jamestown.org)

1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 483-8888  
Fax: (202) 483-8337

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**In a Fortnight**

**PLA POSTURING FOR CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA?**

By L.C. Russell Hsiao

The recent revelation of a Second Artillery Corps (SAC) facility that is under development in China's southern coastal province, Guangdong, and the "unprecedented" maneuvers undertaken by the combined naval fleets of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the South China Sea are only the latest in a string of developments that suggest changes in Chinese strategic posture may be underway (AsiaEye, August 3; *South China Morning Post*, July 30). These developments appear to be part of a larger effort by the Chinese military to accelerate the re-posturing of its strategic forces in light of thawing cross-Strait relations and to add strength to China's increasingly assertive claims to the South China Sea and other areas that Beijing considers of "core interest."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry's rhetoric of cooperation in resolving territorial disputes in the South China Sea has been replaced by a tone that has grown increasingly assertive in recent years. The latest escalation of tension in the South China Sea is widely seen as a Chinese response to U.S. efforts to mediate competing claims in the region. Growing tensions have been accompanied by an increased level of Chinese naval activity and advances in military modernization that appear directed at countering U.S. capabilities to intervene in the region. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi even went so far as to characterize the most recent U.S. overture as "an attack on China" (PRC Foreign Ministry website, July 26).

Following the tense exchange between Beijing and Washington, Chinese state-media reported that the PLAN was organizing a large-scale exercise in the South China

Sea. PLA Chief of General Staff Chen Bingde and PLAN Commander Wu Shengli supervised the exercise. “We must pay close attention to changes in [regional] situations and the development of our mission; prepare ourselves for military struggle,” Chief General Staff Chen was quoted by the state media as saying (*South China Morning Post*, July 30).

According to Xu Guangyu, a senior researcher of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, the three fleets of the PLAN regularly conduct separate exercises to mark the PLA’s founding anniversary on August 1. “But of course, this time there is a strategic necessity to bring all three together for such a big joint mission” (*South China Morning Post*, July 30). The South China Sea exercise exhibited the PLA’s comprehensive array of long-range attack capabilities, including missiles launched from submarines and fast-attack craft. More significantly, the exercise displayed the PLA’s increasing capability to project force across a wide range of platforms.

China’s force posture appears to be evolving in tandem with the PLA’s growing capabilities and adapting to shifts in the changing security environment. This trend is not limited to the Chinese Navy and Air Force but also the SAC.

The SAC’s relocation of a new brigade in the Guangzhou Military Region (MR) was highlighted by an August 3 entry on the Project 2049’s *AsiaEye*, which reported that the Chinese state-run media unveiled a project to construct a new Second Artillery missile brigade—the 96166 Unit—in the northern Guangdong municipality of Shaogun (*AsiaEye*, August 3).

While the exact motive of relocating the brigade to Shaogun is not known, experts speculate that it may be equipped with the DF-21C medium-range ballistic missile or DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM). According to Retired Major Mark Stokes and Tiffany Ma, the authors of the Project 2049 report, the 96166 Unit’s move to Shaogun also coincides with the permanent deployment of another possible DF-21-related unit in Guangdong. The 96219 Unit—which has been attached to a host DF-21 brigade in Chuxiong, Yunnan province—has reportedly been moved to Guangdong’s Qingyuan municipality. Another Second Artillery facility, which may be a forward deployment base for ground launched cruise missiles, is reportedly also under construction in the eastern suburbs of Sanya City on Hainan Island off the coast of Guangdong. These recent developments, they argue, “signal a possible broadening of the Second Artillery’s capabilities in alignment with China’s widening ‘core interests’ in the region” (*AsiaEye*, August 3).

Coupled with the over the horizon radar (OTHR) system under development on Hainan Island, these systems combined would provide the SAC with long-range, accurate targeting of United States carrier battle groups and other important naval assets in the region (See “China’s Conventional Cruise and Ballistic Missile Force Modernization and Deployment,” *China Brief*, January 7). To be sure, China’s development of anti-access capabilities could seriously complicate any U.S. ability to maneuver the maritime terrain in this region.

In the final analysis, China’s force posture appears to be evolving with the PLA’s growing capabilities and adapting to shifts in the changing security environment. As the SACs’ force modernization gains speed with the development of more advanced missiles, the role of the SAC in securing the strategic sea-lanes surrounding China’s coast appears to be growing. These new SAC assets could free up China’s growing navy and air force to undertake operations farther from shore. As China continues to develop, field and expand its stock of weaponry, the possible deployment of anti-access capabilities, longer-range conventional ballistic missiles and anti-ship ballistic missiles—which are all under development—could seriously challenge U.S. strategic posture in the region. As time progresses, the PLA may have the ability to hold at risk all classes of targets in the western Pacific and South China Sea.

*L.C. Russell Hsiao is Editor of The Jamestown Foundation’s China Brief.*

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## China’s Brain Drain Dilemma: Elite Emigration

By Willy Lam

A popular Internet writer recently caused a stir when he asserted that “all Chinese who earn more than 120,000 yuan (\$17,650) a year want to immigrate.” While this view is exaggerated, there is no denying the upsurge in Chinese emigration to Western countries—particularly the United States, Canada and Australia—since the mid-2000s. Most worrying for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership is the fact that despite widespread publicity given to the supposed viability of the “China model,” an increasing amount of China’s elite are choosing to leave the fast-rising quasi-superpower for the West (*China News Service*, July 16; *Asiasentinel.com*, July 16).

China became the biggest worldwide contributor of emigrants in 2007. According to the official Chinese media, 65,000 Chinese last year secured immigration or

permanent resident status in the United States, 25,000 in Canada and 15,000 in Australia. Chinese are outnumbered by only Mexicans as the largest ethnic group who acquired green cards in the United States in 2009. Particularly in the area of investment-related immigration (see below) to major Western countries, Chinese are tipped to become the largest cohort within the next few years (Xinhua News Agency, June 4; Time-weekly.com [Guangzhou], June 24; Finance.ifeng.com, July 1).

Despite the downturn in Western economies in the wake of the financial crisis, more Chinese students are expected to stay on after getting degrees and professional qualifications. Among the 270,000 Chinese who are going to foreign universities as self-paying students this year, only around 25 percent are projected to return to China upon graduation. Then there are middle-class and affluent Chinese who take advantage of liberalized travel regulations to give birth to children in the United States and other Western countries. It is little wonder that, according to the Overseas Affairs Office of the State Council, there are more than 45 million *huaqiao* or “overseas Chinese” worldwide (China News Service, July 24; *China Youth Daily*, July 15; China Daily, July 3; Beijing.neworiental.org, July 20; Apple Daily, July 21).

Emigration to the West started not long after late patriarch Deng Xiaoping inaugurated the era of reform and open door policy in 1978. Deng’s second, son Deng Zhifang, who gained a Ph.D. in physics from Rochester University and subsequently became a wealthy businessman in China, was among the first members of the Chinese elite to settle in the United States. Emigration picked up speed by the mid-1990s even as coastal China became the “world factory.” Prominent among members of this first wave of emigrants are corrupt officials who find it safer to park their ill-gotten gains in Western countries. Their *modus operandi* is sending spouses and children overseas before slipping away themselves. By the end of 2009, an estimated 4,000 corruption-tainted cadres had gone abroad. Each of them reportedly carried with them illicit fortunes worth at least 100 million yuan (\$14.7 million) (*Outlook Weekly* [Beijing], May 24; *Chongqing Morning Post*, January 10).

Owing to China’s opaque business and tax laws, most private entrepreneurs deem it prudent to transfer a good part of their fortunes to Western countries. This can be legally—and easily—done through investor immigration schemes. The trend has intensified despite the passage in 2007 of the landmark Property Rights Law, which guarantees the inviolability of private property in the socialist country. A recent investigation by the official *Hangzhou Daily* noted that around 1,500 businessmen from coastal Zhejiang Province emigrate to the West every

year—and the numbers are expected to rise by up to 20 percent annually in the near future. In the past decade, emigrants from Zhejiang, known as a haven for private business, have taken at least 60 billion yuan (\$8.82 billion) of assets overseas. Apart from opportunities of developing their businesses in different markets, these “red capitalists” have cited the “hate the rich” mentality in China as an important reason for emigration. Partly owing to the growing gap between the poor and rich, nouveau riche businessmen often become targets of crimes including kidnapping and murder (*Hangzhou Daily*, June 24; Finance.ifeng.com, June 25; *United Daily News* [Taiwan] May 23).

Yet the largest group of emigrants consists of professionals and experts with a middle-class background, who, according to well-known immigration consultant Qi Lisun, outnumber entrepreneurs by a large margin. The official Chinese media admit that professionals, and to some extent businessmen, are leaving the country due to dissatisfaction with harrowing contradictions in Chinese politics and society. In other words, as a result of China being a country that does not recognize global norms such as civil and democratic rights, many of its best-trained, most qualified citizens may be “voting with their feet” by settling in the West. Indeed, a commentary in the official Xinhua News Agency last month indicated that many members of China’s elite had chosen to relocate to Western countries “in search for a sense of safety”—a way out of “the pain and aberrations brought about by social transformation” in the past decade or so (Xinhua News Agency, July 12; Tudou.com, July 25; Apple Daily [Hong Kong], July 26). Nie Xiaoyang, vice-chief editor of the popular *Globe* magazine, said emigrants destined for the United States were not just after a higher standard of living. “A very important point is the tolerance and energy of American society,” Nie said. “Its multifaceted cultural environment can give people more confidence.” A recent article on the China Broadcasting Corporation website noted that the authorities must “boost their respect for talents and furnish them with more humanistic concern” to persuade high caliber personnel to remain in China. The commentary also cited the importance of “a transparent system of regulations and a sense of security” as well as “a fairer environment in which people can develop their talent” (Sina.com, June 29; China National Radio Net, June 29).

Partly to counter the brain drain, the State Council unveiled last month “The Mid-to Long-term National Plan for the Development of Talents,” which spans the years 2010 to 2020. Beijing’s goal is that by the year 2020, “China will have entered into the front ranks of countries with superior human resources.” According to Director of the

CCP Organization Department Li Yuanchao, “human resources constitute the core competitiveness in scientific development.” Li, also a Politburo member, pointed out that party-and-state authorities “will not waver in embarking on the road of [turning China into] a country with outstanding talents” (*People’s Daily*, June 7; *Guangzhou Daily*, June 7). Earlier, Beijing had in January 2009 launched the so-called “Thousand Talents Program” to lure accomplished Chinese back from overseas. Organization Chief Li claimed recently, “China is going through the third wave of talents returning to the motherland.” Li said that the first wave, which included “Father of the Republic” Dr. Sun Yat-sen and former Premier Zhou Enlai, came back from abroad to overthrow feudalism. The second wave was a reference to scientists such as rocket experts Qian Xuesen and Qian Sanqiang, who left high-paying jobs in the U.S. and Europe in the 1950s. “The third wave is taking place now,” Li said, adding that more foreign-based Chinese than ever are eager to contribute to the modernization enterprise (*People’s Daily*, July 31; China News Service, May 30).

Statistics, however, do not seem to support Li’s claims. As of May this year, central-government units had only attracted 600-odd high-caliber experts and entrepreneurs under the “Thousand Talents Program.” Moreover, most of these prized *haiguipai* or “returnees” are businessmen; and many of them have chosen to hang on to their overseas passports and green cards (China News Service, May 30; *People’s Daily*, May 25). One basic reason behind Beijing’s less-than-successful effort to boost the number of returnees could be that the latter face a glass ceiling in party-and-government units. Without a record of accomplishment in political reliability and service to the CCP, it is difficult for the *haiguipai* to be given major responsibility (See “CCP Party Apparatchiks Gaining at the Expense of Technocrats,” *China Brief*, December 16, 2009). It is perhaps for this reason that while meeting a group of returnees who have come back under the “Thousand Talents Program,” Vice-President Xi Jinping said Beijing would “fully respect talents, enthusiastically support [their work] and give them free rein in their pursuits.” Xi pledged that *haiguipai* experts would be “put in key positions” and that “they would be allowed to take part in professional decision-making, and be put in charge of big projects” (Xinhua News Agency, July 29; *People’s Daily*, July 30).

In a Xinhua News Agency article that ran in July entitled, “The United States is ‘co-opting’ elites from around the world,” author Ran Wei saluted American soft power, particularly the country’s ability to attract gifted personnel from different countries. Apart from the allure of high caliber universities and cutting-edge high-tech firms, Ran cited institutions and systems that “encourage gifted people to achieve breakthroughs. America puts a lot

of stress on the rational use of human resources and on retaining outstanding personnel,” Ran wrote. “Much emphasis is put on the free flow of talents and the abolition of restrictions and discrimination” (Xinhua News Agency, July 24; *People’s Daily*, July 24). It is significant that in its policies regarding retaining talents as well as enticing *huaqiao*, Chinese authorities appear to have given top priority to hardware such as salaries, promotion prospects and seed money for starting new ventures. Yet until the CCP leadership is willing to pay more attention to software, particularly modernizing and democratizing socio-political institutions, the wave of emigration is expected to continue even as China narrows its gap with the United States in terms of conventional yardsticks such as GDP and military might.

*Willy Wo-Lap Lam, Ph.D., is a Senior Fellow at The Jamestown Foundation. He has worked in senior editorial positions in international media including Asiaweek newsmagazine, South China Morning Post, and the Asia-Pacific Headquarters of CNN. He is the author of five books on China, including the recently published “Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges.” Lam is an Adjunct Professor of China studies at Akita International University, Japan, and at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.*

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## Assessing the PLA’s Promotion Ladder to CMC Member Based on Grades vs. Ranks – Part 2

By Kenneth W. Allen

On July 19, Central Military Commission (CMC) Chairman Hu Jintao promoted 11 military officers to three stars (general/admiral), bringing the total since 1988 to 129 officers (Xinhua News Agency, July 27) [1]. Based on previous patterns, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) will most likely promote a few more officers to three stars during at least one ceremony per year in mid-2011 and 2012. Together, these promotions will help determine the next cadre of members and vice chairmen of the Party’s CMC to be elevated during the 18th Party Congress in late 2012. These promotions will also help determine the next Minister of National Defense, as General Liang Guanglie will have met his mandatory retirement age by the next Party conclave.

Although these rank promotions are important indicators of who the next leaders might be, the purpose of this two-part series is to provide China watchers with another

important analytical tool—the PLA’s grade structure—to use in discerning patterns in the promotion ladder within the PLA. While rank and grade promotions, as well as an officer’s age, are visible indicators, personal relationships (*guanxi*) and an Army-dominated system add a less predictable but arguably equally important layer, especially for ascertaining who the next CMC vice chairmen will be. China watchers therefore must use all of these tools to help predict who the next cadres of Chinese military leaders will be.

AGE AS A KEY FACTOR

Age is also a key factor in predicting who the next CMC vice chairmen and members will be. According to Dr. Alice Miller of the Hoover Institution:

“The retirement age of 68 for Politburo members is based on the year they were born and the year that a Party Congress opens or closes. Specifically, if the Party continues to adhere to this rule for the 18th Party Congress in 2012, any Politburo member who was born in 1944 or before will retire, and anyone who was born in 1945 or after is eligible to remain in their position until the next Party Congress. The year 1945 would be the cutoff date for Politburo members. So *if* [emphasis added] the 1994 PLA regulations still hold, then 1) the retirement age for CMC members is 70, which means their cutoff date to retire would be 1942, and 2) they could remain in their position if they were born in 1943 or later. However, if the age for CMC retirement has been lowered to 68, then 1945 is the cutoff date” [2].

CMC VICE CHAIRMEN

As Figure 1 shows, there does not appear to be a set pattern for the appointment of CMC vice chairmen, except that each appointee previously served as a CMC member.

FIGURE 1: CMC VICE CHAIRMEN (1995-2010)

Vice Chairman	Concurrent Positions	Previous Position
Guo Boxiong (2002-2010)	Member, 16th and 17th CCP Politburo	Executive DCGS and CMC Member (1999-2002)
Xu Caihou (2004-2010)	Member, 17th CCP Politburo Member, 16th CPC Secretariat	Director, GPD and CMC Member (2002-2004)
Cao Gangchuan (2002-2007)	Member, 16th CCP Politburo Minister of National Defense (2003-2007)	Director, GAD and CMC Member (1998-2002)
Zhang Wannian (1995-2002)	Member, 15th CCP Politburo	CGS and CMC Member (1992-1995)
Chi Haotian (1995-2002)	Minister of National Defense (1993-2003)	CGS and CMC Member (1987-1993)

Whereas the 16th Party Congress’ CMC had three vice chairmen, one of whom served concurrently as the Minister of Defense, the 17th Party Congress has only two vice chairmen, neither of who is serving concurrently as the Minister of Defense. In light of the current circumstances, it is safe to say that the 18th Party Congress will have at least two vice chairmen, but it is not clear if one of them will also be the Minister of Defense.

Of note, although two military officers have served on the CCP Politburo for at least the past two decades, none have served on the Politburo Standing Committee since Liu Huaqing retired in 1996 [3].

MINISTER OF DEFENSE

Whereas Chi Haotian and Cao Gangchuan served concurrently as CMC vice chairmen, members of the CCP Politburo and Minister of National Defense, the current Minister of National Defense, Liang Guanglie, is concurrently a CMC member but not a vice chairman or Politburo member. As a result, it is difficult to predict who the next Minister of National Defense will be and whether he will be a CMC member or a vice chairman. Even if he is appointed as a vice chairman, there is no guarantee he will also be a concurrent Politburo member. Finally, because the Ministry of National Defense is subordinate to the State Council, the next Minister of National Defense will most likely not be appointed until the 12th National People’s Congress (NPC) in early 2013.

CMC MEMBERS

Part 1 identified the CMC member billets and briefly discussed the protocol order and difference between the directors of the four General Departments and commanders of the PLAN, PLAAF and Second Artillery. The following paragraphs discuss the Military Region (MR) leader-grade billets and how they are a stepping-stone to the CMC member grade.

The MR leader grade is the most complicated grade to understand, because the PLAN, PLAAF and Second Artillery are MR leader-grade organizations, but their commanders are CMC member-grade officers. Figure 2 shows the key billets with MR leader grades.

FIGURE 2: MILITARY REGION LEADER-GRADE BILLETS AND RANKS [4]

Grade	Billets	Ranks (Primary and Secondary)
M R leader	Commander and PC, MR Commander and PC, PLAN Commander and PC, PLAAF Commander and PC, Second Artillery Commandant and PC, AMS Commandant and PC, NDU Deputy chiefs of the General Staff Deputy directors, GPD	General and Lt. General

According to Retired Colonel John Corbett, the July 2010 group of promotions demonstrates the path to full general, which combines rank and grade promotions consisting of three observable steps:

- Step One: Lieutenant generals (LTGs) in a Military Region (MR) deputy leader-grade *move laterally* to a second position in the same grade
- Step Two: After three or so years, they receive a *grade promotion* to an MR leader-grade position, and
- Step Three: After three years or so as a LTG in a MR leader-grade position, they receive a *rank promotion* to full general [Note: Since the rank-to-grade adjustment in 1994, all MR leader-grade officers in the PLA have received their third star.] [5].

In order to become a CMC member-grade officer, an officer first serves in one of the above MR leader-grade billets; however, not every officer who serves in one of these billets becomes a CMC member.

FIGURE 3: CHIEFS OF THE GENERAL STAFF (1987-PRESENT)

GSD Director	Previous Position	Previous Position
Chen Bingde (2007-Present)	Director, GAD	Commander, Jinan MR
Liang Guanglie (2002-2007)	Commander, Nanjing MR	Commander, Shenyang MR
Fu Quanyou (1995-2002)	Director, GLD	Commander, Lanzhou MR
Zhang Wannian (1992-1995)	Commander, Jinan MR	Commander, Guangzhou MR

An analysis of previous CMC members, the following paragraphs, along with John Corbett’s three-step cycle, identify some basic patterns in the PLA promotion ladder. See below for more information about the PLAN, PLAAF and Second Artillery commander grade situation.

CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

The Chief of the General Staff (CGS) is the director of the General Staff Department. As shown in Figure 3, the CGSs have always served in at least one assignment as an MR commander. The current CGS since 2007, Chen Bingde, served previously as the commander of the Nanjing MR (1996-1999), commander of the Jinan MR (1999-2004) and director of the GAD (2004-2007) [6].

The GSD generally has four to five deputy Chiefs of the General Staff (DCGS) billets. Until the early 2000s, Army officers held almost all of those billets. Since then, however, PLAN and PLAAF officers, but no Second Artillery officers, have served as a DCGS. To date, no Army officers who have served as a DCGS have become the CGS; however, Guo Boxiong served as the executive DCGS and concurrently as a CMC member before being promoted directly to CMC vice chairman. On the other hand, serving as a DCGS is one of three possible MR leader-grade billets, along with serving as the commandant of the Academy of Military Science or National Defense University, for Navy and Air Force officers to become their respective service commander and a CMC member.

DIRECTOR, GENERAL LOGISTICS DEPARTMENT

A review of the career track for the PLA’s four GLD directors since 1978, as shown in Figure 4, provides some indications of the qualifications required to become the next director. Of particular note, the last three officers were military/command track officers rather than logistics track officers, while Zhao Nanqi was a political officer [7]. In addition, Fu Quanyou moved from the GLD to become the CGS in 1992.

FIGURE 4: GLD DIRECTORS (1987-PRESENT)

GLD Director	Previous Position	Previous Position
Liao Xilong (2002-Present)	Commander, Chengdu MR	Deputy Commander, Chengdu MR
Wang Ke (1995-2002)	Commander, Shenyang MR	Commander, Lanzhou MR
Fu Quanyou (1992-1995)	Commander, Lanzhou MR	Commander, Chengdu MR
Zhao Nanqi (1987-1992)	Deputy Director and Deputy Political Commissar, GLD	Political Commissar, Jilin Military District, Shenyang MR

DIRECTOR, GENERAL ARMAMENT DEPARTMENT

A review of the career track for the PLA’s four GAD directors since 1998, as shown in Figure 5, provides some indications of the qualifications required to become the next director. As can be seen, there is no specific pattern for selecting the GAD director. While Cao Gangchuan, who later became the Minister of National Defense and a CMC vice chairman, spent his career on the equipment/armament track, Li Jinai was a political officer, and Chen Bingde and Chang Wanquan were military/command track officers. Of particular note, no deputy directors of the GLD or GAD have become the director. The main reason for this is that, unlike the DCGS and GPD deputy director billets, the GLD and GAD deputy director billets are MR deputy leader-grade billets, not MR leader-grade billets, and their primary and secondary ranks are one and two stars. As a result, they would most likely not skip a grade to become the GLD or GAD director. As with every PLA rule, however, there are occasional exceptions. For example, one of the GAD deputy directors since 2001, Li Andong, was promoted to three stars during the July 2010 ceremony [8]. It is not clear what this promotion means for Li Andong’s next assignment.

FIGURE 5: GAD DIRECTORS (1998-PRESENT)

GAD Director	Previous Position	Previous Position
Cao Gangchuan (1998-2001)	Director, CMC Military Trade Office	General Planning Division, Military Equipment Department, GSD
Li Jinai (2002-2003)	Political Commissar, COSTIND	Deputy Political Commissar, COSTIND
Chen Bingde (2004-2007)	Commander, Jinan MR	Commander, Nanjing MR
Chang Wanquan (2007-Present)	Commander, Shenyang MR	Chief of Staff, Lanzhou MR

PLAN, PLAAF AND SECOND ARTILLERY COMMANDERS

The situation is also complicated for the PLAN, PLAAF and Second Artillery commanders. As shown in Figure 2, the grade for these three organizations is that of MR leader; however, the commander of each organization was designated a CMC member with the equivalent grade in 2004 [9].

As noted in Part 1, although the protocol order within the PLA for the three organizations is always Navy, Air Force and Second Artillery, the protocol order for the three commanders at the 16th and 17th Party Congress was based on their seniority as commanders.

According to the author’s interviews with various PLA officials during meetings in Beijing, the reason for this is that the three commanders are CMC members based on a “policy promotion” (*zhengce shengji*), which is not an automatic promotion upon becoming the commander. As a result, they are listed by their individual seniority rather than their organization’s protocol order. The fact that they are “policy promotion” CMC members may imply that they do not have the same authority as the directors of the four General Departments.

To replace the PLAN, PLAAF and Second Artillery commanders as CMC members, their successors must first serve in an MR leader billet and have the rank of three stars. The three MR leader-grade billets that are logical stepping-stones for the PLAN and PLAAF commander position are DCGS, AMS commandant and NDU commandant. For example, Zhang Dingfa served as the AMS commandant from November 2002 until he became the PLAN commander in 2003 and CMC member in September 2004. Both Xu Qiliang and Wu Shengli served as a DCGS until they became their service’s commander.

Second Artillery, which is an independent branch (*bingzhong*) rather than a service (*junzhong*) like the Army, Navy and Air Force, may have to delay placing Jing Zhiyuan’s successor immediately on the CMC. As of now, no Second Artillery officers are in an MR leader-grade billet. Although Jing Zhiyuan became a CMC member in 2004, no Second Artillery officers have ever served as a deputy in any of the Four General Departments or as the commandant of AMS or NDU. The possibility exists that Jing’s successor, like Wu Shengli in 2006, will serve as the commander with the grade of MR leader for a period of time before being appointed as a CMC member.

Figure 6 provides information concerning Jing Zhiyuan’s, Wu Shengli’s and Xu Qiliang’s path to the CMC member grade and three stars, which is helpful in illustrating the situation. Any possible successors must meet the grade, rank and age requirements to be eligible. This is particularly important because, in the PLA, one cannot skip a grade and must serve in a grade for a certain period before being promoted to the next.

FIGURE 6: PLAN, PLAAF AND SECOND ARTILLERY COMMANDER PROMOTIONS

Officer	DOB	CMC Member	Commander	3 Stars	Previous Position
Jing Zhiyuan, Commander, Second Artillery & CMC member	1944	Sep 2004	Jan 2003	Sep 2004	Chief of staff, Second Artillery
Wu Shengli, Commander, PLAN & CMC member	1945	Oct 2007	Aug 2006	Jul 2007	DCGS
Xu Qiliang, Commander, PLAAF & CMC member	1950	Oct 2007	Oct 2007	Jul 2007	DCGS

Given their birth years, Jing will be required to retire at the time of the 18th Party Congress in 2012, while Wu and Xu will not be required to retire until at least the 19th Party Congress in 2017.

CONCLUSIONS

As noted, the purpose of this two-part series is to encourage China watchers to focus on the PLA’s grade system rather than just the rank system. While promoting officers to three stars is an indicator of who might be assigned as the next cadre of leaders, the officers must apparently also meet certain time-in-grade requirements before moving to the next higher grade. This is especially important when trying to predict who will replace Jing Zhiyuan as the Second Artillery commander and when he will be appointed to the CMC. In addition, grade considerations are important in predicting who will be appointed as the next CMC vice chairmen and the Minister of National Defense. While the two-part series examines the grade and rank structure, it is still too early to definitively predict who will assume all of the key positions in 2012.

*Kenneth W. Allen is a Senior China Analyst at Defense Group Inc. (DGI). He is a retired U.S. Air Force officer, whose extensive service abroad includes a tour in China as the Assistant Air Attaché. He has written numerous articles on Chinese military affairs. A Chinese linguist, he holds an M.A. in international relations from Boston University.*

## NOTES

\* The author would like to recognize the input of John Corbett, Dennis Blasko and Dr. Alice Miller whom provided valuable information for this two-part series.

1. Since the PLA reintroduced ranks in 1988, the CMC has promoted 125 PLA and 4 People's Armed Police (PAP) officers to three stars in 17 ceremonies. From 1994 through 2006, ceremonies were held every two years. Special ceremonies have been held since 2004 for certain officers assuming CMC member- or MR leader-grade billets. During 2007-2009, four ceremonies were held, but for only 10 officers altogether.

2. Correspondence with Dr. Alice Miller on July 28, 2010.

3. In August 1982, Liu Huaqing became the third PLA Navy commander and a member of the CCP's 12th Central Committee. In January 1988, he replaced his Navy uniform with an Army uniform to begin the final phase of his military career in the CMC, where he eventually became the senior vice chairman. From 1992 to 1996, he also served as a member of the 10th CCP Central Committee's Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee.

4. See [www.22826.com/question-109717182.html](http://www.22826.com/question-109717182.html) and [http://mop.com/topic/main/readSubMain\\_10495434\\_0.html](http://mop.com/topic/main/readSubMain_10495434_0.html).

5. Correspondence and discussions with John Corbett on July 27, 2010.

6. Background information for all of the officers discussed in this series comes from their internet biographies on *China Vitae* plus more detailed information from *Profiles of China Communist Party Central Committee Members from 1921-2003*, Chinese Communist Party School Press, October 2004.

7. The PLA has five officer career tracks: military/command, political, logistics, equipment/armament, and special technical.

8. Li Andong has served most of his career in equipment and armament-related billets within the GSD and then the GAD after it was formed in 1998. [http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Li\\_Andong/career](http://www.chinavitae.com/biography/Li_Andong/career).

9. In 2004, the PLAN, PLAAF and Second Artillery commanders were appointed to the CMC as members. Zhang Dingfa and Jing Zhiyuan became the first PLAN and Second Artillery commanders to be appointed as CMC members; however, Qiao Qingchen was the third PLAAF commander to be a CMC member. The first PLAAF commander, Liu Yalou, was a CMC member from November 1956 to May 1965, and the fourth commander, Zhang Tingfa, was a member from August 1977 to September 1982. To further complicate the situation, the political commissar for the Navy, Air Force, and Second Artillery—each of whom hold the grade of MR leader—are the Party Secretary for their respective organization's Party

Committee, while the commanders serve as the deputy Secretary.

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## The Japanese Archipelago through Chinese Eyes

By Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes

China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) forces took to the East China Sea in late June for live-fire maneuvers. These naval exercises were widely interpreted as expressions of preemptive Chinese displeasure over U.S.-South Korean exercises slated for the Yellow Sea. Washington dispatched the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *George Washington* to Korean waters in late July as a gesture of solidarity with Seoul following the North Korean sinking of the South Korean corvette, *Cheonan*. The exercise, dubbed "Invincible Spirit," thus was directed not at Beijing but at Pyongyang. Chinese leaders, however, ratcheted up their rhetoric while stepping up military activity in peripheral waters that China now explicitly defines as a "core interest." Deterring U.S. Navy entry into the waters along the Asian seaboard has been a matter of utmost importance for military planners in Beijing since 1995 to 1996, when the United States sent two carrier groups to the vicinity of Taiwan to discourage Chinese military intervention in the island's democratic election. In that conflict, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces proved unable to detect, let alone threaten, U.S. Navy assets operating at China's maritime door. Beijing vowed never again to let such an affront pass without responding. Tellingly, the U.S. leadership shifted Invincible Spirit to the Sea of Japan seemingly to placate Chinese sensibilities.

The recent posture adopted by the PLAN, however, underscores that there may be more to growing Chinese maritime activism than sending the United States a message. As China continues its ascent to great sea power, Chinese strategists increasingly view Asia's complex maritime geography as a barrier to their nation's rightful maritime ambitions. A glance at the map of the Western Pacific rim shows that PLAN formations cannot reach the Pacific high seas—whether to menace the east coast of Taiwan or for some other purpose—without passing through the islands that enclose the Chinese coastline. Japanese territories comprise the northern arc of this lengthy island chain. Geography, therefore, has situated two great seafaring nations in close quarters, leaving one astride the other's access to the maritime commons. China cannot fulfill its maritime destiny without breaching this natural barrier.

## PATTERNS OF CHINESE NAVAL PENETRATIONS

After decades of hugging Chinese shorelines as a coastal-defense force, it only makes sense for the PLAN to practice the tactics, techniques and procedures needed to engage farther away from the Chinese seas in wartime. In light of Asia's cramped maritime geography, it comes as little shock that Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) units routinely discover PLAN units cruising near Japanese islands. As of this writing, PLAN warships have entered and exited the East China Sea through Japanese-held narrow seas on at least six occasions since 2004. Three incidents were particularly noteworthy.

**Tsugaru Strait** - In October 2008, a surface action group led by a *Sovremennyy*-class destroyer steamed through the Tsugaru Strait (marking the first time PLAN units had essayed such a transit), circumnavigated Japan, and circled back to port by way of the international strait between Okinawa and the Miyako Islands (Asia Times, April 22).

**Okinotorishima** - In June 2009, a Chinese flotilla centered on a *Luzhou*-class guided-missile destroyer—a vessel armed with an advanced air defense system—voyaged to waters near Okinotorishima through the same maritime gateway (Asia Times, April 22).

**Miyako Strait** - In April 2010, the JMSDF destroyers *Choukai* and *Suzunami* unexpectedly encountered eight PLAN warships and two submarines in international waters southwest of Okinawa, near the Ryukyus. The Chinese squadron transited the Miyako Strait—evidently Chinese commanders' passage of choice—before turning south toward Okinotorishima. The Japanese government lodged a diplomatic protest with Beijing, to little avail [1].

Though modest in scale compared to U.S. naval operations, these expeditions demonstrate the PLAN's capacity to operate east of the Japanese archipelago while testifying to its growing reach in the Western Pacific. Recent Sino-Japanese encounters offer a foretaste of East Asia's nautical future.

Unsurprisingly, China's naval activities sounded alarms within the defense community in Tokyo. In its annual white papers, Japan's Ministry of Defense has reported with increasing granularity on the character of PLA operations in or near Japanese waters. The 2009 issue for the first time included charts depicting the courses taken by China's flotillas. The graphics revealed the patterns of Chinese naval penetrations through the southern Ryukyu chain [2]. According to the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), the Defense Ministry's internal think-tank, "Given the noticeably greater amount of activity by Chinese naval

vessels in the Pacific in recent years, it seems undeniable that China is envisaging operations between the so-called 'first island chain' (connecting the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan and the Philippines) and the 'second island chain' (connecting the Bonin Islands and Guam)" [3]. The NIDS researchers are onto something. The Japanese archipelago constitutes not only the northern segment of the first island chain but also the northern terminus of the second island chain, which meanders southward from northern Japan to Papua New Guinea. As PLA forces start operating between the inner and outer island chains, consequently, it will be increasingly commonplace for them to pass through Japanese-held straits and passages and cruise along Japan's eastern maritime frontier.

## JAPAN AND THE ISLAND CHAINS

Japan's centrality to the island-chain construct, then, is difficult to overstate. Japan finds itself in a geo-strategic plight akin to 19th-century Cuba's. Sea-power theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan declared that Cuba was so wide along its east-west axis that it formed a barrier between the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. This made it an outstanding base, even for a lesser navy. The weaker fleet could shift assets among numerous harbors overland while tapping the island's abundant natural resources. It could defy a stronger fleet's blockade. At the same time, however, geography positioned Cuba near a burgeoning, continent-spanning sea power that naturally took an interest in Cuban affairs. Then as now, this made for chronically tense relations between Cuba and the United States. This was especially true as engineers dug a canal across the Isthmus of Panama, beckoning American attention to the new sea-lane that was in the making in the Caribbean. Safe transit through the straits and passages connecting U.S. seaports with the Isthmus was critical for American merchantmen and warships bound for the Pacific [4].

## CHINESE VIEWS OF JAPANESE ISLANDS

Some Chinese analysts strike a Mahanian note, depicting the Japanese islands as occupying the intersection between rival great powers' maritime interests. As Zhang Songfeng of the PLA's Institute of International Relations observes, "The maritime lifeline that Japan depends upon for its imports and exports is also the only passageway for China's eastward entry into the Pacific, the United States' westward entry into East Asia, and Russia's southward movement" [5]. Others view the Japanese archipelago as home to the combined military power of the U.S.-Japan alliance, a strategic bloc that possesses the resolve and the capability to frustrate Chinese maritime ambitions. Writing in *Modern Navy*, a publication of the PLAN's Political Department, Bai Yanlin asserts, "Along the northern line

of the island chain closest to the Chinese mainland, the main military powers are the United States and Japan. As such, this area constitutes the very front line of the U.S.-Japan alliance's containment of China" [6].

Geopolitically-minded commentators pay special attention to the Ryukyu Islands. Some fret that this crescent-shaped archipelago essentially closes off China from the Pacific Ocean. Three naval combat-systems engineers from the Marine Design and Research Institute describe Beijing's maritime predicament in stark geopolitical terms [7]. Of the 16 major straits and channels critical to China's oceanic access, they claim 11 are located along the Ryukyus, under Japanese control [8]. PLAN flotillas have passed through two of these narrow seas to date: (1) Miyako Strait, which separates Okinawa from Miyako, is 145 nautical miles (nm) wide and 500-1,500 meters deep; (2) Ishigaki Strait, which separates Miyako from Ishigaki, is 26 nm wide and 70-500 m deep [9]. Professor Shen Weilie of the PLA's National Defense University views Okinawa as the "forward position" of the U.S. "westward strategy" in Asia [10]. He argues that cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou and Xiamen are within striking distance from the island, while the Osumi and Miyako Straits could be monitored and blockaded from there.

Chinese strategists have been quite candid about the operational importance of this island perimeter to Japan during a cross-strait scenario. Aviation units forward deployed along the Ryukyu chain, contends Li Zhi, would play a critical part in contesting Chinese control of the air and sea [11]. As such, Chinese analysts carefully track the military disposition of the Self-Defense Forces along the Ryukyus. Every shift in posture, including minor deployments, is assessed under a microscope. For example, an announcement from the Japan Defense Ministry that a small army unit may be stationed on Yonaguni, an island only 110 kilometers from Taiwan, prompted *Naval and Merchant Ships* to dedicate a three-part feature to the strategic implications for China [12].

Gripped by anxieties about maritime encirclement, Chinese writers beseech Beijing to break out of the island chain. Some Chinese strategists maintain that the island chains are part of a U.S. strategy crafted after the Cold War to encircle China. For instance, Huang Yingxu of the China Academy of Military Sciences contends, "the U.S. assembled a C-shaped strategic formation" incorporating "the first and second island chains formed in the 1950's." This refers to the "defense perimeter of the Pacific" famously sketched by U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson in 1950. In Huang's view, the United States has transposed its Cold War containment strategy to the post-Cold War era, inscribing a "C shaped encirclement, or encirclement

arc" on the map of Eurasia. While this strategy "may not be entirely aimed at China," he concludes, "it surely has the intention to curb and contain China" [13]. Beijing therefore must stymie this U.S. effort to shackle China's great-power aspirations.

In a similar vein, a *People's Daily* editorial proclaims, "For China ... to make a breakthrough into the chain is also the first step for the Chinese Navy to achieve its blue dream, strengthen the defensive capability on the sea by gaining more maneuvering space and, hence, more effectively defend the security and integrity of territorial waters" (*People's Daily*, April 22). Guo Yadong of the PLAN's Naval Studies Institute defended the April 2010 transit of a ten-ship flotilla through the Ryukyus on more concrete military grounds. Rapid advances in precision-guided weaponry, the need to train realistically under complex meteorological and electromagnetic conditions, and the requirement to bolster logistics on the open ocean all demand access to the high seas. Consequently, exclaims Guo, "The first island chain has already become the bottleneck that the Chinese navy's march to the deep blue must shatter" (*Global Times*, May 5).

Some analysts see the PLAN's capacity to operate freely along the first island chain as a source of enormous leverage vis-à-vis Tokyo. Ni Lexiong, a professor at Shanghai University and an outspoken advocate of Chinese sea power, perceives the two nations' mutual dependence on the sea lines of communication as a strategic opportunity for Beijing to secure a decisive advantage. This logic holds that China can hold Japan's economic well-being at risk by constructing a first-rate navy. A pliant Tokyo may result. Explains Ni, "As we obtain absolute security of our own maritime lifeline, it also implies absolute control over Japan's maritime lifeline" [14]. Zhan Huayun concurs, opining, "Japan has already oriented toward the strategic direction of China's 'three seas [Yellow, East China and South China Seas]' in a desperate effort to expand its 'survival space.' If China possesses the capability to defend its national sea rights, then commanding the 'three seas' would mean control of Japan's strategic lifeblood" [15].

#### CONCLUSION

To Chinese thinkers of neo-Mahanian leanings, then, naval power is a blunt instrument of statecraft that Beijing appears to be brandishing with increased frequency. Such strategists appear to attach vast importance to managing affairs along the Asian seaboard—particularly the Japanese archipelago—where they see that one of China's chief rivals occupies important strategic features and has aligned itself with the preeminent sea power of the day to multiply its own naval strength. This demands PLAN operations of

increasing vigor.

Yet strategy is a dynamic process. In effect, Tokyo has granted Beijing free rein to define and shape the Western Pacific since the Cold War, by declining to contest Chinese access to these waters. That may no longer remain true as the PLAN builds up its strength and asserts itself around the Japanese maritime periphery, and as American rule of Asian waters comes into question. Tightening up defenses along the Ryukyus and pursuing a modest naval buildup are obvious steps for Japan that Japanese leaders are undertaking. One hint at things to come: the Japanese press recently reportedly obtained a preview of the National Defense Program Guidelines slated for release at the end of 2010. The guidelines reportedly declare that the JMSDF will expand its submarine fleet from 18 to 20 boats (*Sankei Shimbun*, July 26; AFP, July 26). This marks the first such increase since the 1976 guidelines fixed the number at 18. It is reasonable to infer from this that the Japanese take the PLAN even more seriously than they did the Soviet Navy during its heyday. The next installment of this series on Japanese sea power, accordingly, will appraise the strategy and forces Tokyo is putting in place to cope with its resurgent seagoing neighbor.

*James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara are Associate Professors of Strategy at the Naval War College and co-authors of Chinese Naval Strategy in the 21st Century: The Turn to Mahan. These are their views.*

#### NOTES

1. "Chinese Navy's New Strategy in Action," *IISS Strategic Comments* 16, no. 16 (May 2010), International Institute for Strategic Studies Website, <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-16-2010/may/chinese-navys-new-strategy-in-action/>.
2. Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2009*, July 2009, 56-57.
3. National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review* (Tokyo: NIDS, 2010), 127.
4. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1897): 59-106, 271-314.
5. Zhang Songfeng, "Sino-Japanese Relations in the Process of China's Peaceful Rise from a Geopolitical Viewpoint," *Modern Economic Information* 23 (2009): 215.
6. Bai Yanlin, "The Unsinkable 'Fleet' -- The First Island Chain and Navies," *Modern Navy* 10 (2007): 12.
7. Declares the institute's website, "MARIC-Marine Design & Research Institute of China, founded in 1950, is the largest and comprehensive ship and offshore structure researching, developing, designing and engineering organization in China. MARIC is the mother company of

- Ship Design Technology National Engineering Research Center (SDT-ERC). MARIC is the backbone of the high tech R&D forces in merchant ship and marine industry." MARIC Website, [http://www.maric.com.cn/index\\_e.html](http://www.maric.com.cn/index_e.html).
8. Yu Kaijin, Li Guansuo, and Zao Yongheng, "Island Chain Analysis," *Ship and Boat* 5 (October 2006): 14.
  9. The next two widest straits are Tokashi Strait (23 nm wide, 400-600 m deep), between Kuchino, Yaku, and Kuchinoeraba; and Tokunominami Channel (18 nm wide, 350-600 m deep), between Tokuno and Okinoeraba. Presumably these also make attractive candidates for a PLAN breakout.
  10. Shen Weilie, "Ryukyu, Island Chain, Great Power Strategy," *Lingdao Wencui* 5 (2006): 63.
  11. Li Zhi, "Japanese and South Korean Aviation Units: Application to Naval Operations and Influence on China," *Shipborne Weapons* 12 (2007): 50.
  12. See for example Gao Hui, "Japan's Military Deployment at Yonaguni Island and China's Maritime Security," *Naval and Merchant Ships* 9 (2009): 26-29.
  13. Huang Yingxu, "On the C Shaped Encirclement by the U.S.," *Study Times* 154 (2010), <http://www.studytimes.com.cn:9999/epaper/xxsbs/html/2010/06/21/07/0m>.
  14. Ni Lexiong, "Highlighting China's 'Maritime Lifeline' Problem," *Tongzhou Gongjin* 11 (2009): 17.
  15. Zhan Huayun, "The Influence and the Foreshadowing of the Maritime Security Environment on Strategy," *Modern Navy* 8 (2007): 11.

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## Will Linguistic Centralization Work? Protesters Demonstrate against Restrictions on Cantonese

By Arthur Waldron

A new and potentially potent type of grievance has raised its head in China. Linguistic grievance, which is to say anger over the central government's relentless promotion of *Putonghua* (or Mandarin) at the expense of older and regional tongues (namely Cantonese), has taken center-stage in a simmering conflict that is exposing a growing central-local disconnect and a Beijing further out of touch with the nations it purportedly serves.

On Saturday July 31, local police in Guangzhou arrested a man who was allegedly accused of organizing a demonstration a week earlier (see below) demanding greater respect for the local Cantonese language. Police warned that future demonstrations would not be tolerated and their organizers punished (*Taipei Times*, July 31). Meanwhile, a similar protest had already been called for the following

day in Wanchai, Hong Kong (*South China Morning Post*, July 31). The protests, the arrest in Guangzhou and the warnings are simply the latest—and probably not the last—in a growing chorus of widespread alarm in China over the enforced marginalization of traditional forms of speech and perhaps the reach of the central government.

In July, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)—the top advisory body to China's rubberstamp congress—wrote to the Guangzhou provincial government with the suggestion that ahead of the Asian Games in September, local television stations should broadcast prime-time shows in Mandarin instead of Cantonese. Doing this, the Committee asserted, would promote unity, “forge a good language environment” and cater to non-Cantonese speakers visiting the city. Guangzhou television responded by saying that it had no plans to alter its programming mix of Mandarin and Cantonese (*Taipei Times*, July 28).

The dispute was quietly swept under the official carpet. Yet it was too late, the cat was already out of the bag. According to the *New York Times*, “[T]he proposal sparked a backlash from local residents. They say it threatens the livelihood of their language, which is an integral part of the local culture. Of 30,000 people who voted on the issue in an online poll, about 80 percent were against the proposal” (*New York Times*, July 26).

In the late afternoon of July 25, a crowd, estimated at a thousand and reportedly summoned by internet postings over the preceding two weeks, gathered outside the Jiangnanxi Guangzhou Metro Station to protest the measures. A local band turned up at 16:30 to sing Cantonese songs, and from 18:00 to 19:30 local police blocked one of the main exits from the Metro.

According to the *South China Morning Post*, “Many people gathered around the exit, some displaying posters and wearing T-shirts with slogans in support of the local dialect. One poster said, “Languages slaughterer” in English and showed a skull and bloody bones . . . The protesters also shouted “Support Cantonese” and “Shut up, Ji Keguang.” [Ji was the central government official who suggested the switch of languages for local television] (*South China Morning Post*, July 26).

“One netizen composed his own song to voice his disapproval. Titled, ‘You Can Take Down Anything, But You Can’t Take Down Cantonese.’ He sings, ‘Houses along the streets have been taken down, taking away our memories. Now you want to take down Cantonese, who knows what will be left of it’” (*New York Times*, July 26).

In a videotape of the demonstration, the chant “Phou Tong Khwa Sau Pei” can be heard clearly. “Phou Tong Khwa” is the transliteration of *Putonghua* or Mandarin into Cantonese, while “sau bei” means roughly “f\*ck off!” [1].

Most participants expressed themselves by terms that are more reasonable. Said one, “We want to express our dissatisfaction and worry. We don’t hate *Putonghua*, and it’s OK for us to speak it in the schools, but the government has gone too far with its plan to use more *Putonghua* on local TV channels.” (*South China Morning Post*, July 26).

Meanwhile a second demonstration, which was announced in Hong Kong for August 1, saw several hundred, including some from China, march on government headquarters (AFP, August 1; *South China Morning Post*, August 2). Choi Suk Phong, one of the organizers in Hong Kong, said, “Cantonese was often portrayed as a second-class language when Hong Kong was under British colonial rule. Sadly the use of our mother tongue is now being attacked again, only this time the perpetrator is our Chinese government” (*Taipei Times*, July 28). At a separate protest, more than a thousand protesters turned out at the People’s Park in Guangzhou, where hundreds of police awaited them. Many were carried away or questioned, while onlookers hurled obscene epithets at the police (Xinhua News Agency, August 3).

None of these developments bode well for the central government. Debates about what should be the national language bubbled at scholarly and official meetings through the teens and the twenties of the last century, with the issue being whether the southern forms of Chinese, which preserve more traditional characteristics (e.g. the *ru* or entering tone) should be taken as the basis for the new speech—or alternatively, the dialect of the Beijing area, somewhat Mongolicized (e.g. the distinctive Beijing expression *hutong* or alley is thought to be of Mongol origin) and without the entering tone, be extended nationally. Northern and southern linguists could not agree, with the result that the Nationalist or *Kuomintang* government simply promulgated the “national language” (or *Guoyu*) in 1932 [2]. The Nationalist’s standardization project enjoyed a good deal of success, particularly since exile to Taiwan, where Mandarin is now commonly spoken—at least in the north of the island—by people whose mother tongue was Taiwanese (or Japanese), a language that draws heavily on the Min-nan speech of Amoy, just across the Strait.

Contrary to its concerted effort to nationalize Mandarin, the original communist policy—before the party took power in 1949—was that local forms of speech should be encouraged. Such preservation of local linguistic

identity, however, collided head-on with the communist government's intent to centralize control over social life. The communist equivalent of *Guoyu* called *Putonghua* (common speech)—they are the same language with slight variations—was promulgated as the national standard and in 1982 made the national language of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Along with this initiative came intensive instruction (e.g. the forbidding of local speech in schools, etc.). Nevertheless, China is a big enough country to resist, and composed of many nations with sizeable constituencies that could perhaps even defeat such an ambitious effort by central authorities at social engineering.

Mandarin is an artificial language, created by a committee and formed by conventions, but having roots in mostly northern forms of Chinese speech. Cantonese by contrast is an organic language that has evolved over millennia. It is written in the same characters as Mandarin, with some unique additions. Sometimes it is called a “dialect” of Chinese, but more properly a “topolect” as it is used mostly in the southeast and in overseas communities, but it has all the attributes of a language. As one observer notes:

“Cantonese speakers have demonstrated an intriguing ability to seamlessly incorporate foreign words, particularly English ones, into the lexicon and proved more than adept at creative use of the language by employing puns and synonyms that makes Cantonese quite distinctive and worth treasuring not only for historical reasons ... And, of course, Cantonese enhances a sense of identity. It is this that scares the rulers in Beijing; officials ... are already accusing the defenders of Cantonese of having ‘ulterior motives’ (*South China Morning Post*, July 31).

While imposition of Mandarin has not proved universally popular, most have gone along with it. (Interestingly, through World War II the U.S. government taught Cantonese as well as Mandarin, as had the British government for use in her territories such as Malaya.) Cantonese is still the *lingua franca* of many ethnically Chinese communities overseas. Yet Western language teaching soon shifted to Beijing Mandarin, as did that of Singapore. So it may have seemed natural to the Chinese authorities to attempt to impose Mandarin on local television in Guangdong (e.g. as Mandarin has been imposed in Tibet). Furthermore, this might seem to simply be a natural extension of Beijing's increasing might, prestige and standardization.

Yet a raw nerve has been soundly struck by the suggestion that Mandarin be substituted for Cantonese on local television. The response to the turmoil over Cantonese

has been that speakers of other Chinese languages have been alerted to the steady decline in the number of their speakers, as Mandarin floods from the official media—and this is not to mention places like Tibet and East Turkestan (aka Xinjiang) where Mandarin is being imposed to replace non-Chinese languages in the name of promoting unity (*South China Morning Post* July 25).

Most importantly, to tamper with language is to play with fire. *Nationalism and Social Communication*, a classic text by Karl Deutsch (1912-1992) (MIT Press, 1953) shows how local topolects or under-developed local forms of speech—Cantonese would be a good example—are *strengthened* rather than weakened as the populations speaking them become more affluent, higher in status, and more confident. In this context, the local backlash could be seen as efforts to resist what might appear to be a conscious attempt by the central government to prevent different political power centers from emerging other than Beijing. Deutsch chooses the example of how farmer's Finnish displaced German in Helsinki around the turn of the last century, as Finland's rural majority became empowered by new prosperity. The same story can be told of “peasant” languages like Polish, Belorussian, Ukrainian. etc. at about the same time, which likewise over came German in the cities, as well as official Russian, and became languages in their own right, not Slavic dialects. A more recent example is from the 1960s when the Flemish of Belgium (Flemish is simply Dutch—in grammar and vocabulary—but pronounced variably and more softly) became a focus of proto nationalist feeling in Flanders, opposing the hitherto standard Belgian French. The process involved mass demonstrations and protests in the 1960s style. The upshot was that Louvain (French), home to a great medieval university became Leuven (Flemish).

Against this backdrop, one wonders whether similar processes could take place in China. It is one thing to have a grasp of Mandarin for official uses. It is something quite different to give up one's historical identity as a cultured southern Chinese in favor of the identity of Beijing. The reaction in Guangdong, which encompasses a region every bit as rich, international and sophisticated as Beijing or Shanghai (whose own language is also being lost in the flood of enforced Mandarin), may be a sign of things to come, as local cultures, now wealthy, self-sufficient, and proud prove unwilling to abandon the languages they learned from their parents and grandparents and insist rather that they receive the same respect as the centrally-mandated national language.

Furthermore, it is a historic fact that other grievances can congeal around the linguistic, so awareness of speech may be the first step toward broader awareness of regional

differences, an awareness made more confident by rising levels of income and education. Centralization in China has traditionally gone only so far. It may be reaching its limit now, as yet another element, affinity and loyalty toward local language and resentment of imposed forms of speech, enters the already long list of causes of social unrest in China.

*Arthur Waldron, Ph.D., is Lauder Professor of International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania (1997 to present) and a Board Member of The Jamestown Foundation. He is author of or contributor to over twenty books in English and Chinese.*

#### NOTES

1. See <http://languagelog ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=2488>, and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Eara3FTGes>.
2. For this see S. Robert Ramsay, *The Languages of China* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1987).

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