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Chinese high-speed train

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In a Fortnight

CHINA AND BURMA TO FINALIZE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

By L.C. Russell Hsiao

China and Burma (Myanmar) are reportedly finalizing a detailed plan that could start work on a high-speed railroad connecting the two countries in as quickly as two months, with some reports indicating that the railroad will be completed by 2015 (*China Daily*, November 22, Xinhua News Agency, November 30). According to Wang Mengshu, an academic of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, the line from Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, to Rangoon, Burma's largest city, will be 1,920 kilometers (km) long and the trains will run as fast as 200 km/h (124 mph) (*China Daily*, November 22).

China's Ministry of Railroad spokesperson Wang Yongping stated, "The construction plan to link a railroad between China and Southeast Asian countries has not yet been finalized, but the Chinese government has formed a working group with neighboring countries and a detailed construction plan will be announced soon" (Xinhua News Agency, November 22).

The China-Burma high-speed rail project is one of three long-distance transnational "mega-railroad" networks being planned and developed by Chinese engineers. A long-distance line within China, which opened in December 2009, already links inland Wuhan to coastal Guangzhou. Two of the planned transnational railroad networks will connect China to Europe via Central Asia—and the third will link to Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

A high-speed railroad between southwestern China and Cambodia (passing through Vietnam) is also under discussion, and an exploratory survey for another route linking Yunnan and Vientiane, the capital of Laos, is underway. The three new rail connections being developed will form a pan-Asian high-speed rail network that could be completed within 10 years (*China Daily*, November 22). According to some reports, the line to Rangoon would be an especially important stepping stone for the network's westward expansion that could see the route crossing through India and eventually terminating in Iran (Gokunming.com, November 29).

During an interview with the Chinese media, Wang Mengshu revealed that "an expert delegation from the Ministry of Railroad visited Burma and Laos in mid-November to conduct a survey; as soon as a route for the China-Burma railroad is determined, construction could start in as early as two months, and may serve as the main transportation route of China's [railroad] link with countries in Southeast Asia" (Xinhua News Agency, December 1).

Chinese planners believe that these railroad networks would vastly improve China's ability to transport energy resources from suppliers in developing countries. More importantly, it could provide an alternative route to transfer China's strategic resources and diversify its risk of overdependence on sea and pipeline transport. Additionally, "If there is a route on land, then it will take half the distance for the oil being transported from the Middle East and Africa to reach than by sea transport," said Liu Yong of the State Council's Development Research Center's Strategic Development and Regional Economic Research Department (Xinhua News Agency, December 1). The alternative infrastructure links embodied by the new transport networks appear aimed at diminishing Chinese reliance on traditional trade routes and enhance China's energy security.

Explaining the practical rationale behind the China-Southeast Asia route, Liu stated: "China's northern border transportation route is the Eurasia route, but the region is low in population and with comparatively less economic trade; to the east there is the East Asia route to North Korea, but the situation along its periphery is tense; and even though China and Southeast Asia's railroad is not yet complete, but the region is the most populated and with close relations to China, the Southeast Asia route has the most potential and the most valuable international route" (Xinhua News Agency, December 1).

In a separate interview with the German-newspaper

Der Spiegel, Wang Mengshu was more direct: "We will obtain commodities that the huge Chinese population needs. Burma, for instance, has no money but plenty of resources. We will help such underdeveloped countries to build railroads and to exploit their resources. Many countries have oil, gas and water resources" (*Der Spiegel*, March 22).

Beijing apparently sees that it is in its interest to invest in building infrastructures that could serve strategic purposes (e.g. high-speed rails, roads, railways, ports, pipelines), especially in less developed countries that lack experience or financing for such projects. That way in return, China can secure long-term transport or supply contracts for natural resources. For instance, it was reported that Beijing is building a rail system for Burma in exchange for Burmese lithium (Newsweek, April 30).

According to Hong Yuan, a military strategy expert at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, "Burma, Laos and Cambodia are all China's traditional neighbors, high-speed rail could be used as a tie to integrate the three countries' economy and people, it will help consolidate friendly relations between the four countries, and have important significance for strengthening development of China's southwestern economic belt, as well as ASEAN and Indo-China peninsula's economic development" (*Wen Wei Po* [Hong Kong], November 23).

With these massive infrastructure plans in the works, China is clearly laying the groundwork for a region-wide economic corridor consisting of high-speed railroads, roads, railways, waterways and pipelines that will incorporate all of Southeast Asia. This massive push will help China extend its economic and political penetration and influence over the region. Against the backdrop of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, which came into effect at the start of 2010, the economic corridor would help to accelerate Chinese trade with partners in the region, and give it an advantage over outside competitors in the future.

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Beijing's Stance on North Korea Challenged by Yeonpyeong Island Incident

By Willy Lam

Beijing has suffered serious collateral damage in the wake of Pyongyang's attack on South Korea last week. Despite the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) administration's generous material and moral support, the Kim Jong-Il regime has refused to mend its roguish ways. North Korea's shelling of Yeonpyeong Island—which came on the heels of Pyongyang's admission that it had built a new uranium enrichment facility equipped with 2,000 centrifuges—has exacerbated Beijing's nightmare scenario, that is, the consolidation of the military alliance between the United States and Asian allies such as South Korea and Japan. Hawkish elements in South Korea and Japan are also expected to redouble their calls for boosting their countries' arsenal against the growing threat from the DPRK.

Last Sunday, the Hu Jintao administration sought to salvage its reputation as an honest broker in the Korean crisis by calling for an emergency meeting of the senior representatives of the six countries—China, the two Koreas, the United States, Japan and Russia—that had taken part in the stalled Six Party Talks on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Yet, the lukewarm responses of the United States, South Korea and Japan has cast doubt on the efficacy of the Chinese initiative (*Global Times*, November 28; *The Associated Press*, November 28; *Los Angeles Times*, November 29). What is certain is that lapses in Beijing's North Korean policy have called into question China's qualifications as a "responsible stakeholder" in the global community. Despite the fact that China is the primary provider of economic, fuel and technological aid to the impoverished Stalinist state, the CCP leadership has repeatedly failed to rein in the Kim regime's increasingly reckless brinksmanship (*Wall Street Journal*, November 23; *Ming Pao* [Hong Kong] November 28).

Beijing's perceived connivance of Pyongyang's excesses was evidenced last March by its refusal to criticize Pyongyang for the sinking of the South Korean corvette Cheonan, which killed 46 South Korean sailors. On the contrary, Beijing has deepened its "lips-and-teeth" relations with the pariah state during Dear Leader Kim's two visits to China this year. Chinese authorities have continued to flout United Nations sanctions imposed on the DPRK as punishment for its nuclear tests last year. According to American diplomatic cables leaked by Wikileaks,

senior American officials had as early as 2007 repeatedly urged Beijing not to allow Pyongyang to ship missile parts to Iran via commercial flights originating out of China (*The Guardian*, November 28; *AFP*, November 28). President Hu and his colleagues have also given their blessings to the elevation of Kim's third son, Kim Jong-un, as the successor of the ailing 68-year-old dictator. Ironically, last week's artillery bombardment of South Korea was widely believed to be an effort by Dear Leader Kim to bolster the North Korean army's support for his inexperienced successor (*Sydney Morning Herald*, November 24; *Apple Daily* [Hong Kong] November 24).

Beijing's reaction to the Yeonpyeong Island mishap was predictable: not a word of censure on the DPRK. The day of the shelling, Beijing merely appealed to all sides for calm. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said, "China hopes that the relevant parties will do more to contribute to peace and stability in the region." Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi indicated that the two Koreas should "solve problems through negotiations and dialogue." "The pressing task now is to prevent a recurrence of similar incidents," he said. Yang also called upon countries with a stake in regional stability to "actively work for peace and facilitate talks, jointly safeguard peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula while adopting responsible attitudes" (*Xinhua News Agency*, November 23; *People's Daily*, November 26).

Senior Chinese academics have tried to defend the leadership's stance on the DPRK. Yu Yingli, a Korean expert at the Shanghai Research Institute on International Relations, said pinning the blame on China was unfair since it was U.S.-South Korean war games that triggered the North Korean attack on South Korea. "Beijing is right to insist that all sides remain calm before the facts [behind the shelling] are ascertained," Yu said. Renmin University Professor Shi Yinhong noted that owing to North Korea's proximity to China and the traditional China-DPRK friendship, "there are limits as to what Beijing can do" (*Ming Pao*, November 26; *Yonhap News Agency* [Seoul], November 26).

Equally problematic is the fact that instead of scolding Pyongyang, Chinese officials have laid into Washington and Seoul, who decided to hold a four-day-long war game in the Yellow Sea this week. Reacting to the U.S.-South Korea naval drills, Premier Wen Jiabao said Beijing opposed "any provocative military behavior" on the Korean peninsula. Added Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong, "We oppose any party to take any military acts in our exclusive economic zone without permission." Popular military

commentator Luo Yuan went so far as to say that the Yellow Sea maneuvers were like “pouring oil on flames.” “The U.S.-South Korean action will heighten tension in the Korean Peninsula,” Major-General Luo told the foreign media (Yonhap News Agency, November 25; Xinhua News Agency, November 26).

The major reason why Beijing was so disturbed by the Yellow Sea exercises was that the Kim regime’s shenanigans had significantly bolstered America’s military alliance with South Korea and Japan. The Yeonpyeong Island incident provided the Obama administration with a good justification for finally sending the nuclear-driven USS George Washington to the Yellow Sea. This was despite the fact that owing to Chinese protests, the Pentagon had for four months desisted from dispatching the state-of-the-art aircraft carrier to the sensitive region (*Global Times*, November 24; China News Service, November 26; *Chongqing Evening Post*, November 28). Moreover, ties between Beijing and Seoul, which had grown substantially due to South Korea’s trade dependence on China, have been hard hit by the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong Island mishaps. Sino-Japanese relations, which had been badly frayed by sovereignty disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, could also be adversely affected by widespread Japanese perception that Beijing is supporting an anti-Japanese dictatorial regime (Arirang News [Seoul] November 28; *Asahi Shimbun*, November 25).

Both South Korea and Japan—which is also exposed to North Korean missiles—are set to expand their military spending, much of which will be used to purchase American weapons. The Lee Myung-Bak administration has already announced a 5.8 percent boost in defense outlay for the purpose of procuring U.S.-made F-16 jetfighters and other hardware. Support is also growing for the redeployment of U.S. nuclear weapons, which had been withdrawn from South Korea in 1991 as a peace gesture to the North (Yonhap News Agency, November 23; Reuters, November 27). At the same time, the administration of Prime Minister Naoto Kan, which has been criticized for its “weak” response to Chinese territorial claims, is under pressure to bolster Japan’s defense capacity in view of tangible threats from the DPRK (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 24; *Mainichi Shimbun*, November 25).

The Korean crisis has also exposed a considerable degree of disarray in Beijing’s diplomatic policymaking. In an apparent demonstration of China’s unhappiness with Seoul’s reactions to Pyongyang’s provocations, Foreign Minister Yang last Thursday abruptly cancelled a visit to South Korea that had

originally been scheduled for Friday. State Councilor Dai Bingguo, however, suddenly visited Seoul on Saturday with a view to persuading President Lee to restart the Six Party Talks (AFP, November 25; *New York Times*, November 27). Diplomats in the United States, South Korea and Japan have indicated that the talks will not be meaningful unless Pyongyang were to show sincerity in winding down its nuclear program—and in abiding by global diplomatic norms. “The Six-party Talks cannot substitute for action by North Korea to comply with its obligations,” a State Department spokesman said over the weekend (Reuters, November 29; *Ming Pao*, November 29).

The Hu Jintao leadership’s well-nigh unconditional support of the Kim dynasty also seems to go against the views of a growing number of Chinese opinion-makers and Netizens. Peking University international affairs professor Zhu Feng blasted Pyongyang for “wanting to make a big bang [so as to] force the negotiations back into their favor.” He noted that if the DPRK was responsible for the Yeonpyeong Island bombardment, Beijing should condemn its close ally. A commentary in the *Global Times* characterized Pyongyang’s provocative acts as a “public humiliation of the surrounding big countries’ painstaking diplomatic efforts.” More significantly, the majority of Netizens who discussed the Korean crisis in the chat rooms of Chinese websites gravitated to the view that China should not be “dragged into the water” by the Kim clan’s irrational strategies (People’s Daily website, November 28; *Wall Street Journal*, November 23; Reuters, November 23).

Indeed, diplomatic cables revealed by Wikileaks cited senior Chinese officials as expressing frustration over the DPRK’s irresponsible brinkmanship. For example, former vice-foreign minister Hu Yafei reportedly told a senior American diplomat in 2009 that the Kim regime was acting like a “spoiled child” by blasting a rocket over Japan into the Pacific (CNN, November 29; Bloomberg News, November 29). After the Yeonpyeong incident, respected Korean expert in the CCP Central Party School Zhang Liangui deplored the fact that Pyongyang was “playing the China card” against South Korea, Japan and the United States. “The DPRK has never followed suggestions from Beijing” despite China’s economic aid, Professor Zhang said (*Ming Pao*, November 26; *Washington Post*, November 25). The scholar’s remarks, however, begged the question of why the Hu leadership should have risked its diplomatic reputation by giving unreserved support to an apparently ungrateful pariah state.

Meanwhile, there is no evidence that the show of force by the American and South Korean navies

has deterred Pyongyang from persevering with its diplomatic poker game. The legitimacy of Dear Leader Kim and his son now appears to rest on its ability to blackmail its Asia-Pacific neighbors—and to become a member of the “nuclear club.” While Kim had during his China visit last August reassured the CCP leadership of Pyongyang’s commitment to upholding peace and stability in the region, the wily dictator seems only interested in the perpetuation of the Kim dynasty. How to defuse the time-bomb ticking away in the Korean Peninsula has become the toughest foreign-policy challenge of the last two years of the Hu Jintao administration.

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The Changing Political Landscape in Taiwan: Implications of the Special Municipality Elections

By H.H. Michael Hsiao

Taiwanese voters cast their ballots on November 27 under the shadow of an unexpected and mysterious gunshot on the eve of five special municipality elections. These five municipalities are home to 60 percent of Taiwan’s 23 million people. In the lead up to the elections, political observers had branded this vote as a midterm election for the Ma Ying-Jeou administration, which could have significant implications for the party’s and administration’s domestic as well as foreign policies, particularly toward China. While the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) held on to three northern and central cities (i.e. Taipei City, Taipei County, which will be renamed New Taipei City [Sinbei City] after its upgrade), and Greater Taichung City, the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) maintained control of two southern cities, Greater Tainan City and Greater Kaohsiung City. Immediately after the election, President Ma Ying-jeou proclaimed that the results of special municipality elections clearly show that the government’s cross-Strait policy is acceptable to the majority of Taiwan’s people (Taiwan Today, November

29; *China Post*, November 29). Yet, taking the overall result at face value is misleading for both the ruling KMT and the opposition DPP. A closer look at the results reveals a few important changing currents already appearing under the existing “status quo.”

The shooting was an ill-fated incident. The victim was the son of ruling KMT Honorary Chairman Lien Chan, Sean Lien. According to the information released by the police investigation so far, Lien was shot by a local gangster who had reportedly mistaken Lien for the Taipei County councilor candidate, Chen Hung-yuan, whom Lien was campaigning for on the evening of November 26. Lien is in stable condition after surgery, but the shooting’s impact on the election is still open for speculation. Having taken place on the eve of the election, the consensus among political observers was that the shooting likely generated sympathetic votes among the pan-Blue supporters. The former and current honorary KMT chairman, Wu Bo-Hsiung, openly stated that “to say there is no effect is a lie” when he appeared in the KMT headquarters right after the election results were revealed (*The Liberty Times*, November 28). A KMT insider even estimated that the shooting at least drew an additional 4-5 percent turnout rate in the north and central elections in favor of KMT, while a DPP source claimed that this single gunshot may have cost DPP at least one mayoral seat, namely, Greater Taichung City (*The Liberty Times*, November 29). Furthermore, a post-election poll showed that the 66.5 percent of the respondents also believed it had turned around the election results to favor KMT, and 53.5 percent even maintained that the shooting in fact had “saved” KMT (Taiwan Thinktank press release, December 1).

Some observers of Taiwanese politics believe that the fear of social and political instability provoked by the shooting, plus the tactful victimization of Lien’s shooting by KMT campaigns in the wee hours of the race, and the constant news broadcasts based on the incomplete fact and speculative information of the shooting have increased the turn out of conservative over progressive voters. If these factors are indeed true, then the shooting accident may have saved KMT from losing more than two out of five competitive mayoral seats.

Contrary to what various polls suggested prior to the election, the DPP did not succeed in gaining one more city beyond the south, although it was very close to achieving victory in the central Greater Taichung City race, losing by a very small margin of 2.5 percent. For the KMT, it was also frustrating that it only maintained the north and center and failed to make any significant gains in the south, though

it is politically significant that it kept the Capital Taipei City. Therefore, at first glance, the election results confirm the “status quo” as far as the general political landscape is concerned (*Taipei Times*, November 28). Yet, taking the overall result at face value would be misleading for both the ruling KMT and the opposition DPP.

The DPP has succeeded in narrowing the gap in popular support in both the northern and central urban areas. The difference of votes between DPP and KMT in Taipei City is 55.65 percent vs. 43.81 percent, almost 12 percent behind, but in New Taipei City the gap has narrowed to 52.61 percent vs. 47.39 percent, only a little more than 4 percent behind. In Greater Taichung City, the differential has been closer to 48.88 percent vs. 51.12 percent, just a slight higher than 2 percent loss. On the other hand, DPP has won a landslide victory in both Greater Tainan City and Greater Kaohsiung City with much more significant margins. In Greater Tainan City, DPP received 60.41 percent in comparison to KMT’s 39.59 percent, a victory by more than 20 percent. In Greater Kaohsiung City, the situation is even more dramatic, as the DPP candidate (52.80 percent) overwhelmed both KMT (20.52 percent) and Independent (26.68 percent) rivals by securing more than half the vote. The winning margin is as high as 26 percent and 32 percent. The above statistics clearly demonstrate that DPP has not only secured and consolidated its political base in the south, but also appears to be marching toward the center in terms of its good showing in Greater Taichung City.

Although the DPP did not make significant advances in the north in terms of number of seats, these elections have accumulated over a total of 400,000 more votes for the DPP than KMT, a comparison between 49.87 percent (or 3.8 million votes) for DPP and 44.54 percent (or 3.4 million votes) for KMT. It reflects a continuous rise in the level of popular support, which the DPP has enjoyed since its embarrassing loss in the 2008 presidential election. It is also a sign that DPP has moved upward to the highpoint of the voting pattern back in 2004 when DPP won 50.11 percent over KMT’s 49.89 percent in the one-to-one presidential election.

On the contrary, KMT has climbed to its peak in the 2008 presidential election and has steadily declined since. The contrasting rise and fall of voting patterns for the two major Taiwanese political parties in the past six years shed some light on party politics in Taiwan (see Table 1) and its current trajectory.

The voting trend reflected above also has a direct implication for the declining public support of Ma Ying-jeou’s KMT government since his landslide victory in 2008. President Ma defeated the DPP candidate by 2.2 million votes in the 2008 presidential election, but he lost 1.0 million in those cities and counties in the 2009 local (rural) election and in this special municipality election Ma lost another 1.2 million votes in the five (urban) centers. In other words, Ma appears to have lost much of the edge he had between 2008 and 2010 in these electorates. Such decline of KMT’s public support could be interpreted as a reflection of Ma’s sagging popularity in the midterm test of Ma’s KMT government performance. Although the KMT has tried to play down the link between the municipality election results and Ma’s overall evaluation in the public mind, it is actually what many political analysts and media commentators had in mind right before the election (Taiwan Brain Trust seminar, November 24). Therefore, the apparent “status quo” is in fact a setback to Ma and his KMT government in gaining sustained public support by means of good performance and progressive reforms. The KMT regime must not ignore the increasing collective dissatisfaction and frustration when facing the upcoming Legislative Yuan election in 2011 and the presidential election in 2012.

The Taiwanese electorate seems to be increasingly unsatisfied with Ma’s poor overall domestic policy performance in solving the worsening unemployment, widening income inequality, resentment toward Ma’s detached and alienated attitudes toward grassroots organizations, and the government’s reactionary policies against freedom of speech, labor welfare, and the environment, which have all made the public even more resentful.

TABLE 1: VOTING PATTERNS 2004-2010 (IN PERCENT)

	2004 Presidential Election	2004 Legislative Election	2005 City & County Election	2008 Legislative Election	2008 Presidential Election	2009 City & County Election	2010 Special Municipality Election
DPP	50.11	35.72	41.95	38.17	41.55	45.32	49.87
KMT	49.89	32.83	50.96	53.50	58.45	47.88	44.54

Source: *Taipei Times*, November 29, 2010.

As for the promised positive and beneficial effect of the signing Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China that might bring to Taiwanese society, the critics and the public alike are suspicious and question who would benefit and who would suffer (Taiwan Advocate, 2009; Taiwan Thinktank, 2010; Taiwan Brain Trust, 2010). In light of the above analysis, some foreign press in their post-election assessments have asserted that the showing of KMT to keep 3 to 2 "victory" in the election proving Ma's pro-China policy and improved cross-Straits relations have gained public support might be too hasty and too superficial (cited in *United Daily*, November 29).

Another important dimension of the election results is that for the first time in any previous related elections, DPP has won an equal number of city councilor seats as KMT, with each claiming 130 seats. DPP even dominated Greater Tainan City Council with 27 vs. 13 over KMT, while in New Taipei City, Greater Taichung City and Greater Kaohsiung City, DPP seats are close to that of KMT, despite the fact that KMT still dictates the Taipei City Council. This unprecedented change may indicate that local politics are no longer in the hand of KMT, and the DPP has finally proven successful in its efforts to deepen its power base at the grassroots level. It is indeed a significant step of progress to witness how the DPP has begun to root itself in the local politics.

Moreover, the election seems to reflect that the DPP was able to distance itself from the legal, political and even moral liabilities attached to its former leader, Chen Shui-bian. During the course of the election, under the severe attacks of KMT to link DPP with Chen's family corruption, all DPP candidates correctly stated that they supported Chen's judiciary rights as a citizen under the Constitution and respected the judiciary process in which Chen is being tried. In other words, the election may mark the first large scale election since 2008 where the DPP has effectively overcome Chen's mixed legacy in the eyes of the electorate.

Finally, the aforementioned poll also reveals that from the course of election campaigns, 42.7 percent of the public found DPP to be more determined to push reforms, while only 33.2 percent believed that KMT is more reform-minded. Even the self-identified independent voters argued that DPP rather than KMT is more ready for reforms; the ratio of the observation is 35 percent vs. 19 percent, which represents a significant cleavage. Ma should heed the warning signs of losing 2.2 million votes since 2008 and the lost 400,000 votes this time. It will be interesting to examine whether or not the KMT

government will seriously implement Ma's pledge to continue reforms after the election when Ma asked his party leaders for a thorough review to find the factors causing the party to fall behind in votes. At this moment, it is unclear if Ma will learn a lesson from the election and carry out progressive reforms and take more a measured stance toward China in the remaining years of his first, and possibly last, term.

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The Arctic: A Future Source of Russo-Chinese Discord?

By Stephen Blank

Since 2007, in large part due to aggressive Russian posturing, the Arctic region has become a bone of contention among members of the Arctic Council as well as a subject of international concern. While the signing of the Russo-Norwegian treaty on September 15 put an end to disputes over seabed and maritime borders between two claimants of the region, the Arctic issue has seen the emergence of a critical Asian dimension as it becomes the source of cooperation as well as simmering tension between Russia and China [1].

BACKGROUND

Climate change and technological developments are opening up the Arctic region for more year-round navigation through the Northwest Passage and even straight across the North Pole, which make the provision of energy from the Arctic to Asia a matter not just of energy policy but of security policy for Russia. Thus, the security of Arctic energy matters to both Russian and Asian policy. The shortest route for maritime transport between Europe and Asia may then transit via the Barents Sea, reducing the distance between Western Europe and Asia by over 7,400 kilometers, and potentially making China a key player (due to its shipping industry and dependence on foreign energy) in the Arctic (See "China and the Arctic: The Awakening Snow Dragon," *China Brief*, March 18, 2009) [2].

According to a Chinese press report, "Russia hopes to make the Arctic route a competitor to the Suez Canal and increase cargo traffic along its Siberian coast from two million tons a year now to 30 million

tons annually" (*China Daily*, August 26). Leopold Lobkovskiy, deputy director for geology at the Institute of Oceanology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, claimed that Russia discovered reserves of hydrocarbons in the Arctic comprising 51 billion tons of oil and 87,000 billion cubic meters (BCM) of natural gas, making it the third largest reserve in the world after the Persian Gulf and Western Siberia. Consequently, Moscow intends to sharply raise hydrocarbon supplies along the Northern Sea Route in 2011 and its officials say that the value of mineral resources in the Arctic exceeds \$30,000 billion (ITAR-TASS, September 22).

Finally, according to Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, the Arctic's development "is directly linked to solutions to long-term political, economic, defense, and social problems of the state and will ensure our [Russia's] country's competitiveness on global markets" (ITAR-TASS, October 2; October 6). "Two-thirds of the estimated wealth of the Arctic's resources lie in Russian territory and the region produces about 15 percent of Russia's GDP and about a quarter of its exports," said Ivanov (ITAR-TASS, October 2). Moscow appears to be accelerating its plans to explore the Arctic region (e.g. beginning design work on Arctic carriers for transport of liquefied natural gas [LNG]) (*Interfax*, August 31; September 9; *Eyjam*, September 23; Reuters, September 28), and enhancing its overall capabilities for conducting Arctic explorations in the near term as the routes become more accessible. Indeed, Moscow intends to boost its LNG exports to 10 percent of its total export deliveries by 2020 in order to exploit this new trend in gas exports (*Interfax*, September 17).

COOPERATION

Given the Arctic's centrality to Moscow's vital interests and Russia's lack of capital to develop this high-cost region, it has been inviting all polar countries to develop a mutually acceptable regime of exploration and exploitation of Arctic resources (*Interfax*, September 17). Reportedly in May of this year, China was among the countries invited for this joint exploration with Russia. Rosneft, Russia's top oil producer, and China National Petroleum Corporation are reportedly looking into joint exploration of Russia's Arctic offshore hydrocarbon deposits, Russia's top energy official said on November 24 (Reuters, November 24).

Officials in the Russian North and Northeast invited China to explore and exploit local resources. For instance, the governor of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous region, Dmitry Kobylkin, reportedly expressed interest in forming a partnership with the

Chinese in oil and gas development. The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous region accounts for more than 90 percent of the natural gas production and around 12 percent of the oil production in Russia. Kobylkin made this statement while attending the World Expo 2010 Exhibition in Shanghai. Kobylkin also said he was ready to offer partners in China a "mutually advantageous and constructive cooperation" in the regional natural resources sector. Furthermore, "We are ready to act as intermediaries between an investor country and the oil and gas sector and create a good investment climate," said Kobylkin (UPI, May 3).

CHINESE INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC

Stimulated by the lure of these resources, China has begun to advance its interests in the region. Not only do these interests consist of a very strong polar research capability, China's dependence on exports and greatly increased shipbuilding capabilities naturally had led it to examine closely the prospects or greater exploitation of the Northern Sea Route and the commercial possibilities along its length. According to Chinese experts, the melting Arctic region's huge untapped resources and potential for shorter transportation routes figure high on the radar screen of Chinese global strategy (Maritimemag.com, November 18).

Since China is also flush with capital, a SIPRI report noted that,

Another potential multilateral joint venture in which China's capital could be used in exchange for the opportunity to gain the experience it seeks in deep-water drilling projects is the ongoing cooperation between Statoil, Total and Gazprom to develop the first phase of the Shtokman gas fields in the Barents Sea. This is regarded not only as a huge commercial opportunity but also a formidable technological challenge [3].

In particular, China could invest in Russia's Arctic energy projects that require huge foreign investments if they are to materialize, thus giving it a major stake in this critical Russian region and energy sector [4].

Accordingly, China has publicly stated its interests in the Arctic and demands that they be taken into account. Chinese Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Hu Zhengyue, outlined China's overall Arctic agenda while attending an Arctic forum organized by the Norwegian Government on Svalbard in June 2009. The assistant foreign minister said, "When determining the delimitation of outer continental

shelves, the Arctic states need to not only properly handle relationships among themselves, but must also consider the relationship between the outer continental shelf and the international submarine area that is the common human heritage, to ensure a balance of coastal countries' interests and the common interests of the international community" [5].

Guo Peiqing, associate professor of polar politics and law at the Ocean University of China, put it more directly: "Circumpolar nations have to understand that Arctic affairs are not only regional issues but also international ones." Guo estimated that about 88 percent of the seabed of the Arctic Ocean would be under the control of the Arctic littoral states if the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf were to approve all the existing or expected claims to the Arctic Ocean continental shelf [6]. Furthermore, Mr. Guo claimed that the Arctic could become "a new energy corridor that would be safer than the Indian Ocean where piracy is such a plague on the world's shippers, including China" (Maritimemag.com, November 18).

These statements imply that China, though not a member of the Arctic Council, may dispute any claims of sovereignty in the Arctic waters beyond littoral countries' 12 mile limit or economic exclusion zone if it signed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

While Arctic problems and issues, as China knows and admits, have hitherto been resolved by peaceful means like the Russo-Norwegian treaty, China is noticeably wary of Russia's intentions in the Arctic.

According to the well-sourced SIPRI report:

Chinese observers have made note of Russia's decision in August 2007 to resume long-distance bomber flights over the Arctic and the planting of a Russian flag on the Arctic seabed that same month. Guo [Peiping] has said that the disputes in the Arctic are in fact 'Russia and some other states' challenge to the international order and international law after the end of the cold war.' China and the rest of the world would be at a disadvantage if Russia's claims over the underwater terrain between the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges are legitimized because, in that case, Russia alone would have rights to the resources in that area. Even if that claim is unsuccessful, some Chinese Arctic specialists have expressed concern that the commercial advantage of the Arctic routes

would substantially decrease if Russia were to unilaterally charge exorbitant service fees for ships passing through its EEZ waters [7].

Yet, the signs of Chinese interest in the area have also clearly worried the Russian leadership despite the endless protestations that Russo-Chinese relations are at their peak and that an identity of interests exists between the two states. Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky, commander in chief of the Russian Navy—probably speaking with authorization from above—stated that,

There are a lot of people who wish to get into the Arctic and Antarctic from an economic point of view. --- We have already been observing how a number of states, which are not members of the Arctic Council, are setting out their interests quite intensively and in various ways. In particular, China has already signed agreements with Norway to explore the Arctic zone. We know about the economy and infrastructure that exist in China today, which is becoming our serious partner from both positive and problematical sides. --- Therefore Russia needs to form its rational position and, at the same time, not give up any of its interests. – There are not long-standing relationships, overt opponents, or overt allies in the Arctic yet. But I believe the most problematic relations will be with those countries which are not traditional members of the Arctic Council (ITAR-TASS, October 4).

Given the strategic importance Russia attaches to the Arctic and the fact that it already serves as a maritime "highway" for shipping oil to Japan and China, Russia has steadily augmented the defense element in its approach to the Arctic (Kyodo News, September 2; *Oil & Gas Journal*, March 22). Admiral Vysotsky also highlighted the increase in naval, air, and submarine capabilities that will be assigned to the region, which will heighten concerns in the area (*RIA Novosti*, October 1; October 2). Thus, the Arctic region, like arms sales issues, may become a future source of tension between Moscow and Beijing. Furthermore, the Russian military, perhaps with official support, appears to be no longer shy about singling out China as a possible future competitor. This is a development that bears watching.

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NOTES:

1. Moscow, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, www.mid.ru in Russian, September 30, 2010, Weekly Foreign Ministry Briefing.*"
2. Espen Barth Eide, "The Return of Geopolitics and Energy Security," Rose Gottemoeller and Rolf Tamnes, Eds., *High North: High Stakes: Security, Energy, Transport, and Environment*, Bergen, Norway: Fagbokforlaget, 2008: 42-43.
3. Linda Jakobson, "China Prepares For an Ice-free Arctic," *SIPRI Institute (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute)*, SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security no. 2010/2, 2010: 9.
4. *Ibid.*
5. China's perspective on Arctic matters, *Shijie Zhishi*, vol. 55, no. 15 (2009). Quoted in Jakobson, 9.
6. Guo Peiqing, Associate Professor, Ocean University of China, Interview with the author, Qingdao, 25 June 2009, Quoted in *Ibid.*, 10.
7. *Ibid.*, 12.

China's Marines: Less is More

By Dennis J. Blasko*

On November 3, the *Global Times* reported that "some 1,800 naval forces and at least 100 warships, submarines and combat aircrafts [sic]" of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "Marine Corps" held a live-fire exercise called "Jiaolong-2010" (Dragon-2010) in the "disputed South China Sea" (*Global Times*, November 3). In light of rising tension in the region, a live-fire exercise with 100 ships, submarines, and planes by the Chinese "Marine Corps" would indeed be a big deal. A big deal— if true. Unfortunately, based on reporting about that same exercise in the official Chinese military papers and what can be seen on Chinese television, *Global Times* got the story wrong.

The *Global Times*, associated with the *People's Daily* newspaper, is a relatively new Chinese source known for its stridently nationalistic articles and opinions. It is not part of the official Chinese military media system. Indeed, "Jiaolong-2010" was an important, but not uncommon, multi-battalion marine amphibious landing exercise supported by the PLA Navy. Yet, only a handful of "warships" were actually involved, along with a few helicopters, but no submarines—illustrating that for the PLA marines, often, less is more.

HISTORY OF THE CHINESE MARINES

Consisting of two brigades with a total strength of approximately 12,000 personnel, the PLA "Marine Corps" is not really a "Corps," and it is certainly not equivalent to the United States Marine Corps [1].

The first PLA marine unit (a division) was formed on December 9, 1954, and within weeks was deployed to fight in the battle for Yijiangshan Island during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Over the next few years, 110,000 troops returning from Korea were formed into eight marine divisions. Yet, during the military reforms of the late 1950s the marine units were disbanded and their personnel and equipment transferred to the PLA Army. In 1974, a poor performance by the Army during the Xisha (Parcel) Island campaign caused the Central Military Commission to reassess the need for a dedicated marine force in the PLA Navy. On May 5, 1980, a marine brigade was formed in Ding'an County, Hainan and later relocated to the Zhanjiang area in Guangdong province on the mainland (Xinhua News Agency, October 3, 2009).

This brigade, known as the 1st Marine Brigade, is subordinate to the South Sea Fleet (SSF) of the PLA Navy. For nearly 20 years, it was the Navy's only marine unit. During the three-year, 500,000-man reduction in force announced in September 1997, the 164th Division of the Army, also stationed in the vicinity of Zhanjiang, was downsized and converted into the 164th Marine Brigade and re-subordinated to the SSF [2].

The physical location of these two brigades as well their training patterns and partners indicate the marines' primary area of operations is the South China Sea. Over the past decade, as the two marine brigades have received new generations of equipment, they have also matured through a variety of training and operational missions.

ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

The 2008 Chinese White Paper on National Defense provided a brief outline of the PLA marine organization: "The Marine Corps is organized into marine brigades, and mainly consists of marines, amphibious armored troops, artillery troops, engineers and amphibious reconnaissance troops." Analysis of Chinese military media reports adds more detail to that description, though some uncertainties remain.

Both marine brigades appear to have roughly the same organizational structure while differing in the specific equipment assigned. Each brigade is

estimated to consist of:

1. One or two amphibious armored battalions each composed of 30-40 amphibious tanks or assault vehicles.
2. Four or five infantry battalions, some are mechanized with 30-40 amphibious infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) or armored personnel carriers (APC).
3. An amphibious reconnaissance unit probably composed of two or more smaller "frogmen" and special operations (SOF) units, including a unit with roughly 30 female scouts.
4. A self-propelled artillery battalion.
5. A missile battalion with an anti-tank missile company and an anti-aircraft missile company with man-portable surface-to-air missiles.
6. An engineer and chemical defense battalion.
7. A guard and communications battalion.
8. A maintenance battalion.

Under brigade headquarters, an amphibious armored regiment headquarters commands the armored battalion(s), one or two mechanized infantry battalions, and the self-propelled artillery battalion. This regiment is considered the main maneuver and strike unit for the brigade.

Numbers of personnel per battalion depend on the unit type, with infantry battalions probably numbering from 600-750 personnel while other battalions may be only about half as large. Total manpower for each brigade is estimated to range from 5,000 to 6,000 [3].

Unlike the U.S. Marine Corps, PLA marines are not assigned organic aviation assets. Instead, the helicopter regiment subordinate to the South Sea Fleet provides both transport and firepower support to the marines. The marines have a similar relationship for sea transport with the SSF landing ship flotilla composed of roughly 30 large and medium amphibious ships including the Navy's one Type 071 Landing Platform Dock [4].

Over its 30 years, the 1st Marine Brigade has been equipped with four types of armored personnel carriers/infantry fighting vehicles and tanks. The Type 77 APC (copied from the Soviet BTR-50) was followed by the Type 63 APC (an indigenous design), the Type 86 (Soviet BMP), and finally the ZBD05 IFV, deployed beginning in 2005/6 and seen in the 2009 military parade. The brigade initially was equipped with Type 62 non-amphibious, light tanks (based on the Type 59 main battle tank, but smaller) and Type 63 light amphibious tanks (modified Soviet PT-76). Around 2000, Type 63A light amphibious tanks entered the PLA followed by ZTD05 Amphibious

Assault Vehicles in the middle of the decade [5].

New equipment has been introduced gradually, battalion by battalion, so that the brigades often have a combination of multiple types of tanks and APC/IFV. When the 1st Brigade is upgraded, older equipment appears to be transferred to the 164th Brigade. Currently the 1st Brigade is equipped with ZBD05 IFVs and ZTD05 Amphibious Assault Vehicles while the 164th has a mix of Type 63A tanks and Type 86 and Type 63 APCs [6]. The 1st Brigade has also been equipped with the new PLZ07 122mm self-propelled howitzer; the older Type 89 122mm self-propelled howitzer is found in the 164th.

Marines, like units throughout the PLA, plan for a period of new equipment training lasting several months to years, culminating in readiness tests, before the units and armament are considered operationally capable. The marines are among the PLA's rapid emergency response units, with the primary combat missions of amphibious operations and defense against enemy amphibious landings.

TRAINING

PLA marine units recruit personnel based on standards for Special Operations troops. They must be physically fit, senior middle school or higher graduates, and 5 feet 6 inches or taller (Xinhua News Agency, September 22, 2009). The marine physical fitness regimen is extremely challenging with standards such as swimming five kilometers in full combat gear within two and a half hours, running the same distance in 23 minutes, and performing 500 push-ups, sit-ups, and squats daily [7]. All marines receive hand-to-hand combat instruction.

New recruit training is conducted by the two brigades themselves (as is the practice throughout the PLA) for about three months beginning in December. Afterwards professional skill training begins for individuals and units. Small unit amphibious training starts in April or May increasing in size throughout the summer and fall. Units may spend two to three months in the field at amphibious training areas on the Leizhou Peninsula and at Shanwei or at firing ranges in northern Guangdong.

Marine amphibious reconnaissance and SOF personnel train in multiple forms of parachute, helicopter, overland, sea surface, and underwater insertion methods resulting in them having "triphibious" capabilities. They also train on underwater demolitions to clear obstacles from beaches.

Most marine amphibious training is conducted in

the South China Sea with SSF amphibious lift and helicopter support, but generally not with units from other services. A major exception was Peace Mission 2005, a combined Sino-Russian exercise held in Shandong province. In August 2005, elements of the 1st Marine Brigade's amphibious armored regiment and a Russian naval infantry unit performed a beachhead assault during the second of three phases of this 10,000-person air-sea-land exercise.

Five years later, the 1st Marine Brigade conducted its first overseas exercise in "Blue Strike 2010" from October 28 to November 11, 2010 in Sattahip, Thailand. Both sides contributed 115 marines to this four-phased exercise focused on small unit amphibious operations and anti-hijacking and hostage rescue missions. During the exercise, marines formed small Sino-Thai units to conduct segments of the training (*PLA Daily*, November 12) [8].

As "Blue Strike 2010" was underway, the 1st Marine Brigade also deployed multiple battalions to "Jiaolong-2010" in the South China Sea. Official PLA news sources provided more reliable and better information about the exercise than the *Global Times*. *PLA Daily* reported "1,800-plus officers and men of a marine brigade" along with "100-plus armed helicopters, mine-sweeping vessels, submarine chasers, landing ships, amphibious armored vehicles, assault boats and various direct-[fire] weapons" took part in the exercise (*PLA Daily*, November 4). Unlike *Global Times*, these reports did not mention submarines or imply participation by fixed wing aircraft, but more accurately described the array of forces involved.

CCTV-7, China's state-run television network, carried a video report showing two Jianghu-V missile frigates providing fire support and three large and two medium amphibious landing ships launching numerous small 10-man boats carrying troops and over a dozen ZBD05s and ZTD05s swimming ashore. Two Zhi-8 helicopters delivered troops and two Zhi-9 helicopters provided aerial fire support [9].

Based on the equipment observed, one or more battalions from the brigade's amphibious armored regiment plus elements probably from another marine battalion (in the small boats) made up the bulk of the 100-plus weapons, ships, and aircraft involved in the exercise. While relatively large for a marine exercise, "Jiaolong-2010" was not unusual and included less than half of the full brigade.

Foreign military students studying at PLA professional military education institutions observed

"Jiaolong-2010."

FOREIGN CONTACTS AND NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY MISSIONS

The 1st Marine Brigade routinely hosts visitors from foreign militaries to their garrison in Zhanjiang. The Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and Commandant of the Marine Corps visited in 2006 and 2008, respectively. PLA marines have conducted competitions with small units of marines from the United States, France, and Australia and trained with Pakistani and Nigerian marine special forces during exercise "Peace-09" off of Pakistan. In one of the earliest instances of the PLA opening its exercises to foreigners, military observers from France, Germany, Britain, and Mexico, along with foreign military students studying in China, attended the amphibious exercise "Jiaolong-2004" at Shanwei in September 2004 [10]. These visits are part of the PLA's expanding program of conducting foreign military relations.

While the marines train for their primary combat missions, they also prepare for and conduct a variety of real world, non-traditional security missions. In recent years, they have been deployed on several disaster relief efforts, most notably to Sichuan in 2008 after the Wenchuan earthquake. Marine frogmen also provided underwater security for the Olympics and other high-profile events.

Marine SOF detachments have been deployed with each of the PLA Navy's anti-piracy task forces in the Gulf of Aden [11]. These deployments give the marines valuable experience in small boat and helicopter operations during extended periods at sea.

One non-traditional security mission Chinese marines have not been assigned is UN peacekeeping duty. PLA engineer, transportation, and medical troops, but no combat units, from all over the country, along with People's Armed Police border defense and civilian police forces, have taken part in about 10 UN peacekeeping missions in the past decade (*Xinhua News Agency*, January 19). In addition to their rapid response status, the marines have only small elements of these types of support forces, which probably contributes to why they have not been deployed on peacekeeping missions.

A few companies of marines are stationed on a handful of reefs and islands in the South China Sea along with Navy forces, including surface force, coastal defense, and naval aviation personnel. These outposts appear to fall under the SSF headquarters command through the Xisha (Paracel) Naval Garrison

and Nansha (Spratly) Patrol District.

CONCLUSION

PLA Army amphibious and marine units comprise only a small fraction of the PLA's overall ground forces [12]. On the other hand, the small size of Army amphibious and marine units allows them to be more rapidly modernized with new equipment than many other ground units. Amphibious forces also appear to receive priority for training and are in the field for long periods of time during the unit training season. As such, they are among the most operationally ready PLA units. Though other Army units train for amphibious operations, the small number of standing specialized amphibious troops and lift suggests that the Central Military Commission is not anticipating large-scale landing operations in the near to mid-term.

Without massive civilian support, Navy (and Army) amphibious lift capacity can transport only about one-third of the total amphibious force and then mostly only over limited distances (out to a few hundred miles) [13]. Depending on the enemy, weather, sealift and air support available, and the amount of armor and logistics forces to be transported, PLA marines could probably launch a multi-battalion (perhaps twice the size of "Jiaolong-2010") amphibious operation in the South China Sea without extensive preparation [14].

PLA marines provide a model of what a smaller, modernized, highly trained and motivated 21st century Chinese force may look like. Yet, to increase their effectiveness, they need additional logistic and air support, not more infantrymen. Based partly on the example of marine force, in the coming decade, the overall PLA force structure could afford to undergo further downsizing and rebalancing among the services and within the branches of each service. To do so would continue the trend that fewer, smaller Chinese forces are now more capable than the PLA of the past.

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NOTES:

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1. As of September 2010, the U.S. Marine Corps has 202,441 active duty personnel. See [http://siadapp.](http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms0.pdf)

[dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms0.pdf](http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms0.pdf).

2. At the same time, two other Army divisions, one in the Nanjing Military Region and another in the Guangzhou Military Region, were transformed into amphibious mechanized infantry divisions, adding to the existing Army amphibious tank brigade. See "PLA Amphibious Capabilities: Structured for Deterrence," *China Brief*, August 19, 2010.

3. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 402 and Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, Naval Institute Press, 2010, p. 76. While it may be possible for the self-propelled artillery battalion and missile battalion to be subordinate to an artillery regiment headquarters, the only marine regiment headquarters identified in recent Chinese press articles is the amphibious armored regiment headquarters.

4. Office of Naval Intelligence, *A Modern Navy with Chinese Characteristics*, 13. Internet sources report the launch of the second Type 071 Landing Platform Dock in mid-November 2010. It is not yet known to which fleet the new LPD will be assigned. This class of LPD is estimated to be capable of carrying a battalion of marines, 20-30 amphibious vehicles, and two helicopters several thousand miles over a period of weeks or months. This type of ship gives the PLA a true "blue water" amphibious capability not found in the more numerous large and medium amphibious ships, which do not have living facilities for the troops embarked. The U.S. Navy has 12 ships of this class in the force with three more under construction. See "Amphibious Transport Dock - LPD" at http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=600&ct=4.

5. The ZBD05 and ZTD05 designators were used during the October 1, 2009 military parade in Beijing. Technical information on these vehicles (and other) can be found at the Sinodefence.com website at <http://www.sinodefence.com/army/armour/zbd2000.asp>. Army amphibious units have similar equipment as the marines. Marine vehicles are painted in blue camouflage patterns and have turret/side numbers beginning with an "H"; Army units have different green pattern camouflage, including some digital camouflage.

6. Some older tanks and APC/IFV may remain in the two brigades as modernized equipment is introduced.

7. "Women Soldiers," webpage, August 22, 2008, at <http://www.goxk.com/shehuixue/200808/22-466528.shtml>.

8. Though this was the first overseas combined training exercise for the PLA marines, PLA and Thai SOF units had conducted three rounds of joint training in 2007, 2008, and 2010. The latest of the series of "Strike" anti-terrorist exercises had just taken place in October. See ""Strike 2010": China, Thailand kick off joint drill," October 9, 2010, at

<http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20101009/100578.shtml> sealift available.

9. Video available at *People's Daily*, November 3, 2010, at <http://tv.people.com.cn/GB/166419/13123836.html>. Still photography showing many of the same scenes is available at *People's Daily*, November 3, 2010, at <http://military.people.com.cn/GB/43331/13120067.html>. The large and medium amphibious landing ships observed could have launched somewhere in the range of 40 amphibious armored vehicles and probably as many small 10-man assault boats. These 10-man assault boats appear to be the vessel of choice in recent years for getting disembarked marines ashore. The forces seen in the television and photo reports probably were only part of the entire force engaged in the exercise.

10. Shirley Kan, "U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, August 6, 2009, at <http://china.usc.edu/App/Images//crs-china-military-2009.pdf>, documents these U.S. visits. The other foreign contacts described above are found at Xinhua News Agency, September 2, 2004, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2004-09/02/content_1939064.htm; *PLA Daily*, March 3, 2009, at http://english.chinamil.com.cn/site2/special-reports/2009-03/09/content_1681284.htm; *PLA Daily*, June 7, 2010, at http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2010-06/07/content_4163115.htm; *People's Daily*, September 30, 2010, at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90783/91300/7155664.html>.

11. Marine SOF personnel have been observed on every deployment to the Gulf of Aden. Marines can be seen in photos of the sixth and seventh rotations at *PLA Daily*, "China's sixth naval escort flotilla arrived in Jeddah," November 29, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/photo-reports/2010-11/29/content_4343300_2.htm and *PLA Daily*, "China's 7th naval escort flotilla begins escort mission," November 26, 2010, at http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/photo-reports/2010-11/26/content_4342290.htm.

12. The PLA Army has approximately 76 infantry and armored divisions and brigades broken down into roughly 35 divisions and 41 brigades. The Air Force commands another three airborne divisions. The 12,000 or so Navy marines are less than five percent of the service's estimated 290,000 personnel.

13. The U.S. Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009 states, "PLA air and amphibious lift capacity has not improved appreciably since 2000 when the Department of Defense assessed the PLA as capable of sealift of one infantry division."

14. This estimate is based on the author's analysis and can vary according to the composition of the marine force to be employed and the amount of
