



IN THIS ISSUE:

IN A FORTNIGHT
By L.C. Russell Hsiao.....1

XI JINPING'S CHONGQING TOUR: GANG OF PRINCELINGS GAINS CLOUT
By Willy Lam.....2

CHINA'S MISSTEPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: LESS CHARM, MORE OFFENSIVE
By Ian Storey.....4

PLA'S GROWING FORCE PROJECTION CAPABILITIES
By Jeffrey Engstrom.....7

CHINA'S DOCTRINE OF NON-INTERFERENCE CHALLENGED BY SUDAN'S REFERNDUM
By Tom Rafferty.....10



Chinese Naval Flotilla

China Brief is a bi-weekly journal of information and analysis covering Greater China in Eurasia.

China Brief is a publication of The Jamestown Foundation, a private non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. and is edited by L.C. Russell Hsiao.

The opinions expressed in China Brief are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Jamestown Foundation.



For comments or questions about *China Brief*, please contact us at hsiao@jamestown.org

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

Copyright © 2010

In a Fortnight

CHINA EXPANDS NAVAL PRESENCE THROUGH JEDDAH PORT CALL

By L.C. Russell Hsiao

China's naval presence on the global stage is expanding. While counter-piracy and escort operations in the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea have significantly contributed to the Chinese navy's growing profile, foreign port visits by its naval vessels to the Gulf region are emerging as an important element in Chinese naval strategy. China's overseas naval presence is an important measure of its great power status, and port visits are an effective means of projecting naval power. The Chinese Navy's growing naval activism was recently highlighted by an unprecedented visit by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) at Jeddah Port in Saudi Arabia. On November 27, China's sixth naval escort flotilla arrived at the port of Jeddah. The port call was officially billed as a five-day "goodwill" visit and marks the first ever call to Saudi Arabia by Chinese naval vessels (Xinhua News Agency, November 28; Fmprc.gov.cn, November 29). In light of the apparent expansion of the diplomatic mission of the PLAN, a careful study of Chinese port visit activities may provide useful insights into Chinese foreign policy objectives.

The sixth naval escort flotilla just completed a five-month long escort mission in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia. According to the official Xinhua News Agency, the flotilla, which is under the command of the chief of staff of the PLAN South Sea Fleet, Rear Admiral Wei Xuanyi, included the Chinese Navy's largest surface combatant, the amphibious dock landing ship *Kunlunshan*, missile destroyer *Lanzhou*, and supply ship *Weishanhu* (Xinhua News Agency, November 28). A reception that was reportedly organized on the deck of *Kunlunshan* was attended by Rear Admiral Abdullah Al-Sultan, the commander of the Saudi Navy's Western Fleet and other officers. Chinese

Ambassador Yang Honglin, Consul General Wang Yong, Military Officer Zhang Zhuoyong, and hundreds of people from the business community were also in attendance (China Review News, November 28; Fmprc.gov.cn, November 29).

The Chinese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Yang, hailed the sixth naval flotilla's port call as an important milestone in the two countries' military exchanges that will benefit the deepening of their "strategic friendly relations" (China Review News, November 28). Rear Admiral Abdullah Al-Sultan expressed hope that the visit will help advance the two countries' military exchanges and cooperation, and contribute to the comprehensive development of bilateral relations (China Review News, November 28). Indeed, the port visit will likely enhance cooperation between the Chinese and Saudi navies, promote mutual understanding, and further strengthen lines of communication between the two militaries.

The notable uptick in port calls made by the PLAN seems to reflect the Chinese renewed appreciation of the value of naval presence for its foreign policy implementation. For instance, the missile destroyer *Guangzhou* was sent through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean to conduct port calls in Egypt, Greece, Italy, and then later visited Burma (Myanmar) and Singapore earlier this year (*PLA Daily*, July 26). The Chinese Navy's increasing role as an instrument of state policy follows in line with President Hu Jintao's 'New Historic Missions,' which underscores the PLA's role in safeguarding Chinese interests overseas. Through extended port calls, the PLAN is demonstrating its capacity and capability to promote the nation's global interests.

While the exact purpose of the Jeddah port visit is uncertain, the motives behind the visit appear both strategic and political-diplomatic. The rapid modernization of China's naval forces coupled by its growing naval diplomacy illustrate the rise of China as a naval power with global ambitions. The first ever port call also occurred in the context of China's broader engagement with the Middle East region, and signals the deepening of relations between Beijing and Riyadh. To be sure, Saudi Arabia is now China's leading overseas oil supplier—oil import from Saudi Arabia in 2009 stood at 41,857,127 tons—and the current impasse over Iran offers a political backdrop for the visit (See "Hobson's Choice: China's Second Worst Option on Iran," *China Brief*, March 18). Furthermore, the protection of China's oil interests in Sudan may have also factored into the overall calculation.

In the final analysis, increasing Chinese port visits is not itself a military feat, but does indicate a willingness to commit the PLAN in promoting Beijing's foreign policy initiatives. It is not simply a demonstration of "showing the flag." While Beijing is eager to portray its military expansion as in the interest of global stability, conducting port visits is a useful tool that extends China's naval presence and exhibits the country's soft power. As China expands its naval presence on the international stage and projects naval power in new theaters, Chinese leaders appear to be taking careful steps to balance the use of hard and soft power.

L.C. Russell Hsiao is the Editor of China Brief at The Jamestown Foundation.

Xi Jinping's Chongqing Tour: Gang of Princelings Gains Clout

By Willy Lam

Vice-President Xi Jinping's brief visit to the western-China metropolis of Chongqing earlier this month has given important clues about the "crown prince's" political orientations and his relations with key Chinese Communist Party (CCP) factions. After his induction into the Central Military Commission (CMC) last October, there is little doubt that the 55-year-old Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) member will succeed Hu Jintao as Party General Secretary at the 18th Party Congress slated for late 2012. According to long-standing tradition, however, Xi has largely kept his beliefs to himself so as not to be seen as upstaging his superiors. During his "Chongqing tour," however, Xi dropped strong hints about his deeply-held ideology and aspirations. Equally significantly, Xi's bonding with Politburo member and Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai shows that the vice-president may be putting together his own team in the run-up to taking over the helm in less than two years' time. Seeds of conflict between Hu and Xi, respectively the "core" of the CCP's Fourth- and Fifth-Generation leadership, might also have been sown.

Since Bo became party chief of China's most populous city in late 2007, the flamboyant former minister of commerce has made headlines with his no-holds-barred advocacy of Maoist norms. In his speeches, the charismatic Bo has profusely cited Mao-era slogans such as "plain living and hard struggle" and "human beings need to have [a revolutionary] spirit" (*People's Daily*, June 7; *Chongqing Evening News*, June 28). He has resuscitated Cultural Revolution-

vintage revolutionary operas. Bo, who is the 61-year-old son of conservative party elder Bo Yibo, even asks his secretaries to regularly text-message Mao quotations to the city's students (See "The CCP's Disturbing Revival of Maoism," *China Brief*, November 19, 2009). On the economic front, the high-profile "princeling" has made waves with his attempts to go after "red GDP," a reference to economic construction that exemplifies Maoist egalitarianism. Chongqing has emerged as a national pacesetter in social-welfare policies such as providing subsidized public housing to the city's masses (*Chongqing Evening News*, May 1; China News Service, April 20).

While top central leaders including President Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao have refrained from commenting on Chongqing's Maoist exploits, Xi heaped lavish praise on the city's achievements during his two-day visit. Xi, who is also a ranking princeling, enthusiastically applauded the Chongqing tradition of "singing red songs, studying the [Maoist] canon, telling [Mao-era] stories, and passing along [Maoist] dictums." "These activities have gone deeply into the hearts of the people and are worthy of praise," Xi said. He indicated that they "were a good vehicle for educating the broad masses of party members and cadres about [politically correct] precepts and beliefs." The former party secretary of Shanghai added that *changhong*, or singing the praises of the party's "red" heirlooms, was "essential to propagating lofty ideals and establishing core socialist values in society." Moreover, Xi seconded Chongqing's myriad social security policies, especially its renowned subsidized housing schemes. "Chongqing's public housing is a virtuous policy, a benevolent effort and a positive exploration," Xi said. "We have to come up with more concrete measures that bring benefits to the people" (Xinhua News Agency, December 8; *Chongqing Daily*, December 12).

No less remarkable was Xi's unreserved secondment of Bo's controversial *dahei* or anti-triad campaign. While having pep talks with public security officers in Chongqing, Xi had this to say about the city's "hair-raising struggle to 'combat triad gangs and extirpate evil criminals': "Police and law-enforcement officers took the lead and went through the test of life and death to realize outstanding achievements." "The Chongqing party committee has scored a major victory in safeguarding the basic rights and interests of the broad masses," Xi noted. "The anti-triad campaign is deeply popular and it has brought joy to the people's hearts" (*People's Daily*, December 9; *Ming Pao* [Hong Kong], December 9). It is notable, however, that neither President Hu nor Premier Wen Jiabao has given Chongqing's *dahei* movement public endorsement. Moreover, quite a number of

triad bosses nabbed by Bo had flourished during the tenures of several of the city's former party bosses and mayors who happened to be affiliates of Hu's powerful Communist Youth League (CYL) Faction. The latter include Bo's immediate predecessor, Wang Yang, who is currently Politburo member and Guangdong Party Secretary—and a key Hu protégé. Particularly in light of allegations that Xi had used extra-legal methods including harassing the attorneys of triad suspects, the princeling's *dahei* campaign has been characterized as a political ploy against the CYL Faction (*South China Morning Post*, September 2; *AsianCorrespondent.com*, March 2; *Washington Post*, March 8).

Irrespective of the motives of Bo's *changhong* and *dahei* maneuvers, Xi's wholehearted championship of the "Chongqing experience" is most revealing of the future supremo's political orientations. Unlike his father, former vice-premier Xi Zhongxun, who is a *bona fide* "rightist" and ally of the late party chief Hu Yaobang, Xi is believed to harbor much more conservative views (*Wall Street Journal*, October 19; *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, October 22). When delivering speeches in his capacity as President of the CCP Central Party School, Xi has indicated that while cadres must pass muster in morality and "Marxist rectitude" in addition to professional competence, the former comes before the latter. This is reminiscent of Chairmao Mao's famous dictum that officials should be both "red and expert." The Vice-President has repeatedly urged up-and-coming cadres to steep themselves in Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. One of Xi's favorite homilies is that leading officials must "firm up their political cultivation and boost the resoluteness of their political beliefs, the principled nature of their political stance... as well as the reliability of their political loyalty" (See "PLA Gains Clout: Xi Jinping Elevated to CMC Vice-Chairman," *China Brief*, October 23).

Since being inducted into the PBSC at the 17th Party Congress in 2007 as the most senior Fifth-Generation cadre, however, Xi has mostly discussed political ideals and slogans in abstract settings. His zealous affirmation of the Chongqing model is the most concrete indication the heir-apparent has given to date as to how he will run the country after succeeding Hu in late 2012. As well-known *People's Daily* commentator Wen Hai indicated in his article "What important message has been transmitted by Xi Jinping's inspection of Chongqing?", the Chongqing model of upholding "core socialist norms" was tantamount to laying down "for all members of society basic yardsticks and criteria for discriminating between good and evil, and for differentiating between meritorious and detrimental

behavior.” Wen noted that Xi’s secondment of the Chongqing experience was a signal that the city’s “system of core socialist values should be applied in other regions” (*People’s Daily*, December 13; Sina.com, December 10).

Equally importantly, Xi’s apparent decision to join forces with fellow princeling Bo says a lot about the jockeying for position that is expected to intensify in the run-up to the 18th Party Congress. Despite having equally illustrious “revolutionary bloodlines,” Xi and Bo had until recently not been deemed to be close. Firstly, their career paths have never overlapped. More significant is the widespread impression that the differences and rivalry between Bo Yibo and Xi Zhongxun might have percolated down to their sons. Indications are aplenty, however, that partly owing to the encouragement of ex-president Jiang Zemin and ex-vice president Zeng Qinghong— both of whom played a pivotal role in Xi’s elevation at the 17th Party Congress— Xi is anxious to quickly assemble a team of like-minded colleagues prior to taking power. Zeng, who is often dubbed the “big brother among princelings,” has reportedly advised Xi to consolidate his links with the senior-ranked offspring of party elders. This is particularly in view of the fact that compared to recent CCP chieftains such as Jiang and Hu, Xi lacks a solid factional base in the party-and-state apparatus. The 71-year-old Zeng has also recommended several of his former aides to serve as Xi’s political advisers. Prominent among the latter is Deputy Director of the Policy Research Office of the CCP Central Committee Shi Zhihong, who used to be Zeng’s personal secretary (*Apple Daily* [Hong Kong], December 6 and December 14; *Frontline* monthly [Hong Kong], December 2010).

The big question, of course, is whether Xi can afford running afoul of President Hu, who seems determined to ensure the predominance of his CYL Faction beyond the 18th Party Congress. It is hardly a secret that Hu, 68, wants to promote as many as four CYL Faction affiliates to the nine-member PBSC to be set up at the pivotal conclave. There is also innuendo that following in the footsteps of ex-president Jiang, Hu hopes to remain CMC Chairman for at least a few more years beyond the Congress (See Jamestown Foundation Occasional Paper, “Changing of the Guard: Beijing Grooms Sixth-Generation Cadres for 2020s”). Given that these moves will constitute substantial constraints on his clout, Xi seems to be fighting back with the help of fellow princelings as well as still-influential elders such as Jiang and Zeng. After all, it is not the first time that Xi seems to have slighted Hu so as to play up his special relationship with ex-president Jiang. During a tête-à-tête with Angela Merkel in Berlin in

October 2009, Xi presented the German Chancellor with two books written by Jiang before passing along the ex-president’s greetings to Merkel. According to official Chinese news agencies, the Vice-President did not even once mention Hu during the entire meeting (Xinhua News Agency, October 13, 2009; Asiasentinel.com, October 14, 2009). One reason for this apparent breach of protocol could have been that Xi was unhappy about having failed to make the CMC at the CCP Central Committee plenum earlier that month. Seen from this perspective, it is possible that Xi and his powerful supporters may employ even tougher tactics to rein in the inordinate ambitions of the soon-to-retire CYL supremo.

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.

China’s Missteps in Southeast Asia: Less Charm, More Offensive

By Ian Storey

At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Hanoi in July, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi—fuming at the temerity of 12 countries who had raised the contentious South China Sea dispute—stared at his Singaporean counterpart and thundered “China is a big country and other countries are small countries and that is just a fact.” Yang’s less than subtle message was emblematic of China’s diplomatic missteps in Southeast Asia over the past year, which have sent ripples of concern across the region, undermined Beijing’s “peaceful development” thesis and led to a renewed appreciation of America’s diplomatic role and military presence in Asia.

As tensions in the South China Sea ratcheted up in 2010, the United States looked on with growing concern that its strategic and economic interests—and those of its friends and allies—were being undermined. At the Shangri La Dialogue in June, for instance, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates identified the South China Sea as an “area of growing concern for the United States” (See “Shangri-La

Dialogue Highlights Tensions in Sino-U.S. Relations," *China Brief*, June 24). Yet it was not until Secretary of State Hillary Clinton raised the issue at the ARF a month later that Asia's long-running sovereignty dispute hit world headlines. Clinton reiterated that freedom of navigation was a vital U.S. interest and that it opposed the use of force to resolve the problem. In a departure from past policy, Clinton suggested that the United States stood ready to facilitate talks on implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC), the agreement drawn up by ASEAN in China in 2002 to manage the dispute but which the two sides have singularly failed to implement.

Clinton's comments at the ARF were provoked in part by reference to the South China Sea as a "core interest" by Chinese officials, even though the exact context of their comments remains unclear. The issue first surfaced in April, when it was reported that during a visit to Beijing by Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg and Asia Director of the National Security Council Jeffrey Bader in March, several senior Chinese officials, including Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Cui Tiankai and State Councilor Dai Bingguo (President Hu's point man on foreign affairs), had described the South China Sea a "core interest"—the implication being that China would brook no interference from the United States (*New York Times*, April 23; *Washington Post*, July 30). Whether the PRC officials were referring to the South China Sea as a whole—including the disputed Paracel and Spratly Islands—or just the Exclusive Economic Zone where China has protested the surveillance activities of the US military is uncertain.

Beijing has never officially described the sea as a "core interest" and government officials claim that Steinberg and Bader "misinterpreted" comments made at the March meeting (Interviews, Beijing, October). Yet according to Clinton, at the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in May in Beijing, Dai Bingguo repeated that the South China Sea was Beijing's "core interest" (Interview with Greg Sheridan of *The Australian*, U.S. Department of State, November 8). Reference to the South China Sea as a core interest was interpreted in Washington as elevating the problem on a par with Taiwan and thus an issue over which China was prepared to go to war.

The United States was not the only country to push back against Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea. Twelve countries raised the issue at the ARF, including the four ASEAN claimants (Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei) and Indonesia which has an overlapping maritime boundary

claim with China near the gas-rich Natuna Islands. Southeast Asia's anxieties were further fueled by the Sino-Japanese standoff in the East China Sea in September when the Japanese Coast Guard detained a Chinese fishing trawler that had rammed one of its vessels near the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Even Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, the leader of a country that has traditionally downplayed tensions in the South China Sea, described the PRC as "more assertive than ever before" (*China Daily*, September 29). Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong described Clinton's comments as a "useful reminder" of America's role in Asia, a role "which China cannot replace ... because of America's security contributions in maintaining the peace in the region" (*Straits Times*, September 24).

Since the ARF, the United States, ASEAN and China have all moved to tamp down tensions over the South China Sea.

In September, Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell denied that Clinton's comments had been aimed at China or that Washington was "taking sides or stoking tensions" and that the Administration's goal was to "create a more stable, predictable environment" (AP, September 29). A month later, in recognition of the fact that Clinton's offer to facilitate talks on implementing the DoC was strongly opposed by China and viewed as unfeasible by ASEAN because Beijing would walk away from the agreement if a third party attempted to mediate, Campbell told journalists in Tokyo that it would be inappropriate for the United States to play a direct role in the talks (Media Roundtable at the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, October 6). Washington has more pressing problems to deal with than the South China Sea, though Honolulu-based U.S. Pacific Command continues to monitor developments with concern.

The ASEAN states have had to strike a careful balance: they do wish to be seen as siding with America on the South China Sea, but nor do they want to be perceived as appeasing China. Thus while the 2nd U.S.-ASEAN Summit in New York on September 24 provided another opportunity to discuss the territorial problem, member states softened the language in the final communiqué. Prior to the meeting, a leaked draft had made explicit mention of the South China Sea and the importance of freedom of navigation and non-use of force (AP, September 19). The final communiqué, however, merely noted the importance of "regional peace and stability, maritime security, freedom of navigation... and the peaceful settlement of disputes" (White House, Joint Statement of the 2nd US-ASEAN Leaders Meeting, September 24). The

White House “Read-out” on the luncheon meeting, however, did make explicit mention of freedom of navigation and the non use of force in the South China Sea (White House, Read-out of President Obama’s Working Luncheon with ASEAN Leaders, September 24).

According to Campbell and Bader, Clinton’s comments in July have served to move China “back to a more collaborative approach” on the South China Sea (AP, September 19). There is some evidence to support this contention. After the ARF, Chinese officials stopped referring to the South China Sea as a core interest in meetings with their American counterparts, though mainland academics continued to muddy the waters by arguing that sovereignty was, by definition, a core interest and that China had “indisputable sovereignty” over the atolls in the sea (Author interviews, Beijing, October 2010). In recent months, however, Chinese academics have also gone quiet on the issue.

Senior Chinese officials have also sought to play down the issue on visits to Southeast Asia. At the inaugural ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus)—which brought the 10 ASEAN defense ministers and their counterparts from the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Russia, Australia and New Zealand together in Hanoi on October 12—Chinese Defense Minister General Liang Guanglie reacted rather mildly when eight countries raised the South China Sea dispute, even though prior to the meeting he had insisted it was not an appropriate venue to discuss the problem. During October Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun was dispatched to four Southeast Asian countries on a “listening and reassurance” mission, while in November Vice President Xi Jinping—Hu’s heir apparent—on a trip to Singapore to mark 20 years of formal diplomatic relations stressed that a “prosperous and stable China does not pose a threat to any country,” that Beijing would “continue to undertake its responsibilities for regional peace and development” and in an obvious attempt to counter Yang’s statement at the ARF, that “China sees all countries, big and small, as equals” (*Straits Times*, November 16).

By raising the South China Sea at the ARF and ADMM-Plus, both ASEAN and the United States hoped that Beijing would be forced to recalibrate its position and adopt a more flexible and accommodating stance. The acid test of this expectation is whether meaningful progress can be achieved over the next 12 months on implementing the DoC. There are cautious grounds for optimism. At the ASEAN-China Summit in October, Premier Wen Jiabao told ASEAN

leaders that the PRC was committed to implementing the agreement (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 30). On December 22-23 the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the DoC will meet in Kunming to discuss implementation guidelines, the results of which will be discussed by an ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting early in the New Year. Indonesia took over the rotating ASEAN Chair in December, and Foreign Minister Marty Natelagawa has indicated that meaningful progress on the South China Sea problem will be among Jakarta’s “leading priorities” (*Straits Times*, September 19). Yet acute problems remain in implementing the DoC, including the modalities of the discussions (China objects to ASEAN caucusing on the issue) and the precise definition of “disputed waters.” And although Philippine President Benigno Aquino has called for ASEAN solidarity on the South China Sea, arriving at a consensus will be problematic because membership is made up of claimant and non-claimant states, and some members have close ties to the PRC. Moreover, even though the DoC contains some potentially useful confidence building measures, given that the problem has become overlain by nascent Sino-US maritime rivalry, it remains doubtful whether its implementation will fundamentally change the dynamics of the dispute.

For its part China has been incensed at what it perceives as U.S. collusion with some Southeast Asian states at the ARF. At the time the meeting took place Vietnam occupied the ASEAN chair, and Beijing suspects Hanoi encouraged the United States and other participants to raise the issue so as to “internationalize” the problem. Stepped-up military cooperation between the United States and Vietnam has also raised Beijing’s ire, including the repair of a U.S. navy supply ship in April, a visit by the hospital ship USNS Mercy in May, and in August a port call to Danang by the destroyer USS John McCain, the transit through Vietnam’s EEZ of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington and high level defense talks between the two countries. Vitriolic commentaries in the PRC press have warned Hanoi of the dangers of becoming a “strategic pawn” of the United States (*Global Times*, July 28).

As a result, Vietnam continues to pursue multiple strategies with China vis-à-vis the South China Sea dispute. First, it holds regular dialogue with the PRC in an attempt to manage tensions but also assuage Chinese concerns. In August, for instance, Deputy Defense Minister Nguyen Chi Vinh visited Beijing and reiterated Vietnam’s “3 nos” policy: no foreign alliances, no foreign bases and no relationship with another country to be directed at a third (VNA, August 26). Second, Hanoi continues to coax ASEAN to implement the DoC and move forward with a

formal Code of Conduct. Third, Vietnam highlights the issue at international forums, including a second major conference on the South China Sea in Ho Chi Minh City in November. Fourth, the government has accelerated the modernization of the armed forces, particularly the navy and air force, including an order for 12 SU-30 MKK fighters and six Kilo-class submarines from Russia, the first two of which could be delivered in 2014. Fifth, and most controversially, Vietnam seeks to facilitate the military presence of major external powers in Southeast Asia. Thus in October Hanoi and New Delhi agreed to increase the frequency of Indian navy ship visits to Vietnam (PTI, October 13) and, most noteworthy, an announcement by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung that the strategically located former US naval base at Cam Ranh Bay would be opened to foreign navies for repair and re-provisioning, including submarines and aircraft carriers (*Bangkok Post*, October 31). Dung's announcement thus paves the way for increased US Navy ship visits to Vietnam in the coming years.

After nearly a decade of adroit statecraft, China's diplomatic posturing has substantially drained the reservoir of goodwill it had built up in Southeast Asia, forced ASEAN governments to question anew Beijing's peaceful rise, and pushed regional governments closer to the US. Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew has spoken of 2010 as marking the beginning of a "decades-long tussle between the US and China for pre-eminence in the Pacific" (*Straits Times*, October 2). Events this year suggest that tussle will increasingly be played out in Southeast Asia.

Ian Storey is Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

PLA's Growing Force Projection Capabilities

By Jeffrey Engstrom

China's assertiveness along its littoral—underscored by recent diplomatic disputes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea—has raised international concerns about how Beijing intends to project its growing military power. While certainly worthy of attention, a narrow focus on Chinese activities along the periphery obscures a more profound trend, whereby the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is modernizing in ways that will allow it to project forces farther beyond its borders. In the wake of President Hu Jintao's promulgation of the "historic missions of the armed

forces in the new period in the new century" (*xin shiji xin jieduan wojun lishi shiming*) or "new historic missions" for the PLA in 2004, China has engaged in a variety of missions abroad, including counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, disaster relief in Haiti, and non-combatant evacuation operations in the Kyrgyzstan. Indeed, Beijing has invested resources in a number of platforms—such as large amphibious ships, long-range transport aircraft, at-sea replenishment vessels, and hospital ships—that cannot be explained in the context of preparing for a Taiwan conflict. Meanwhile, the PLA has begun training and equipping for a wider range of activities, some of which have already been demonstrated on the international stage. These types of activities are likely harbingers of Chinese force projection over the next few decades [1].

FORCE PROJECTION ACTIVITIES TO DATE

Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO):

As Beijing's foreign interests and holdings continue to grow, its citizens are increasingly living abroad to manage and engage in a variety of business, manufacturing, energy, and mineral extraction activities. This trend increases the likelihood that foreign disasters, either natural or manmade, could affect Chinese citizens overseas. In the wake of ethnic unrest in southern Kyrgyzstan this past June, China evacuated nearly 1,300 nationals using a total of nine chartered flights (BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, June 17). Similar small-scale Chinese non-combatant evacuation operations have also occurred in Haiti (2010) and the Solomon Islands (2006).

Peacekeeping Operations (PKO):

China's first foray into United Nations peacekeeping operations occurred in 1989, when Beijing sent 20 election observers to Namibia in support of UNTAG [2]. In subsequent years, the number of Chinese deployed at any one time has swelled to over 2,000 peacekeepers [3]. During this period, Chinese personnel have also participated in a wider range of activities well beyond their original observer duties, including peacekeeping and civil policing, as well as providing engineering, transport, and medical services. Today, Chinese peacekeeping personnel can be found in Cote D'Ivoire (UNOCI), Lebanon (UNIFIL), Liberia (UNMIL), Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Sudan (UNAMID & UNAMIS), Timor-Leste (UNMIT), and Western Sahara (MINURSO). Participation in UN missions provides the PLA with a number of benefits such as training in a multinational context, experience in conducting military operations other than war (MOOTW), and operational knowledge of different political, ethnic, and geographic environments [4].

Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Response

(HA/DR): China has contributed to at least 10 HA/DR missions since 2002 [5]. These include taking an active role in responding to Cyclone Nargis in Burma in 2007 and sending a 60-person search and rescue team to Haiti in January 2010. Meanwhile, the recent seventh revision of the PLA's Outline of Military Training and Evaluation (OMTE), which delineates specific training requirements, underscored the importance of humanitarian assistance/disaster response. Both the recently built Anwei-class hospital ships and multipurpose large amphibious ships (of which one was recently added to the fleet) will contribute to the deployment of emergency response personnel overseas [6].

Sea-lines of Communication (SLOC) Protection:

In December 2008, days after Chinese sailors were rescued from a pirate attack by Malaysian naval forces, the PLAN dispatched a flotilla of three ships. This original flotilla consisted of two destroyers, an at sea replenishment ship, included helicopters and approximately 70 naval special forces, and sailed over 4,600 nm to the Gulf of Aden [7]. Now two years later, China has deployed its seventh flotilla and has maintained a continuous presence in the Gulf. Two Fuchi-class at-sea replenishment ships have alternated duties refueling a pair of deployed PLAN surface ships (a combination of various destroyers, frigates, and recently a landing platform dock), as well as re-stocking them with drinking water and food. The at-sea replenishment ships have made extensive use of local ports to re-supply (See "The Chinese Navy's Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean," *China Brief*, July 22).

CURRENT AND FUTURE CAPABILITIES

As the PLA's force projection capabilities continue to improve over time, China will have the means to participate in a wider range of operations outside of its borders, to potentially include counterinsurgency, foreign internal defense, and even forcible entry operations. Considered below are five categories of key platforms that will be crucial to China's future force projection capabilities: transport aircraft, aerial refueling, large amphibious ships, aircraft carriers, and satellites. The PLA will undoubtedly have to develop associated doctrine as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) to effectively employ these platforms, but the actual development of the platforms is an important and necessary ingredient for force projection.

Transport aircraft: Transport aircraft are the quickest means to move troops and most materiel long distances and to send forces far inland, often

necessary when infrastructure such as road and rail are lacking. Provided a friendly airfield (or at least permissive skies for airborne insertion or drop), transport aircraft are essential arrows in the quiver of force projection as they can deliver mission critical materiel to overseas units in hours or days, rather than weeks typically required by cargo ships. While only the United States and Russia possess numbers of transport aircraft ranging in the hundreds, China currently has a small but not insignificant fleet of approximately 47 large and medium transport aircraft (the Il-76M and Y-8, respectively) [8]. Augmenting China's military airlift capability is a growing civil aviation fleet that consists of two dozen large transport aircraft and is composed of Boeing 747F, McDonnell Douglas MD-11F, and Airbus A-300F aircraft [9].

Aerial refueling: Aerial refueling presents another vital component for the projection of military force, without which many expeditionary capabilities are severely hampered. China currently possesses approximately 13 aerial refueling aircraft that can deliver slightly over 35 percent of France's total refueling capacity at a range of approximately 1,000 nm [10]. Cognizant of the need to improve capabilities in this realm, China has sought to purchase tankers abroad, as well as indigenously produce more aircraft capable of carrying out this task (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 12, 2008). Currently, the indigenously produced H-6U (converted from the B-6 medium bomber) is only capable of refueling PLA Air Force and Navy J-8s and J-10s through a probe-and-drogue system. China recently demonstrated its aerial refueling capability in support of simulated long-range operations this past September during the Peace Mission 2010 multilateral exercise in Kazakhstan (See "China Showcases Expeditionary Military Power in Peace Mission 2010," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, September 28).

Large amphibious ships: More than any other platform, large amphibious ships arguably most embody force projection because they allow a country to place forces ashore almost anywhere. Based on sealift capability alone, China can currently transport a theoretical maximum of nearly 12,000 PLAN marines and PLA amphibious infantry for relatively short distances to potential hot spots in the East and South China Seas with its fleet of 50+ medium and tank landing ships (LSM and LST, respectively) [11].

With the recent acquisition of a landing platform dock (LPD), Beijing has begun to develop amphibious capabilities that can achieve global reach. As a result of its single Type-071 LPD, an amphibious battalion of up to 800 PLAN marines can potentially be placed

on nearly any undefended or lightly defended shore in the world without the need to secure basing rights or over-flight permission (Globalsecurity.org). This ability of the Type-071 LPD to operate worldwide was demonstrated recently in the aforementioned SLOC protection operations in the Gulf of Aden and could also be used to support other types of operations in the future such as an out of area HA/DR or NEO.

Though its goals are currently unknown, China is likely to develop more large amphibious ships in the future. For example, the theoretical acquisition of an additional two Type-071 LPD would provide enough sealift for a Marine Expeditionary Unit-sized force—a unit that is arguably the United States' most flexible tool for force projection. However, to achieve true MEU-like ability China would still need to develop or acquire a helicopter carrier such as a landing helicopter assault (LHA) or landing helicopter dock (LHD) to provide air support.

Aircraft carriers: China is by some accounts currently pressing ahead with refurbishing the Soviet-built, Ukrainian-supplied carrier Varyag. Others have suggested that Beijing is seeking to build an indigenous carrier from scratch (See "Is the PLA Navy Making Plans for a Three Carrier Battle Group?", *China Brief*, January 4, 2008; "China's 'Charm Offensive' Loses Momentum in Southeast Asia [Part I]," *China Brief*, April 29). Further speculation exists over whether the PLAN will purchase Russian built aircraft such as the Su-33 or develop an aircraft carrier capable version of the J-10, tentatively named the J-15 [12]. A future Chinese aircraft carrier would provide defensive air cover and a platform for strike aircraft, a capability that would vastly enhance force projection capabilities and flexibility, but is certainly not the only means to prosecute such operations.

Satellites: China is developing satellites for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and navigation purposes. The Jianbing/Haiyang series of electro-optical and synthetic aperture radar (SAR) reconnaissance satellites has grown over the past decade and is currently supplemented by one Tianlian data relay satellite [13]. China is expected to eventually develop a future network of six data relay satellites that will provide near real-time feeds of its various ISR satellites [14]. Not willing to fully rely on unimpeded access to the U.S. maintained GPS network in the future (a system that Washington can turn off), China sees its Beidou series of satellites as an important means of navigation. That said Beijing has yet to expand the system for extra-regional use [15].

CONCLUSION

Although still relatively nascent compared to France or the United Kingdom, two countries that regularly send forces abroad, Chinese force projection capabilities are growing and expanding under the broad rubric of President Hu's "new historic missions." The development witnessed in these growing operational capabilities along with an expanded strategic-level focus potentially is a double-edged sword, likely to have profound implications for both the U.S.-Sino relationship and international politics more broadly.

On the one hand, Washington's call for China to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system implies burden sharing in the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, a more active and capable PLA will enable China to better contribute to multilateral efforts seeking to provide global public goods. The ability to identify and capitalize upon opportunities for military-to-military collaboration will be a crucial task for U.S. policymakers. On the other, even in the defense of the global commons—the policing of sea-lanes, for instance—Chinese force projection capabilities have the potential to erode or displace American leadership. A more active PLA also increases the possibility of encountering U.S. forces abroad or, even possibly, of the PLA operating at cross-purposes to American interests. Finally, future expeditionary activities, even of a non-combat nature, will further improve the war-fighting capabilities of the PLA, a point clearly not lost on Chinese strategists.

Jeffrey Engstrom is with the Arlington, Va., office of the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis.

NOTES:

1. I define Chinese force projection capability as the ability of the PLA to send military equipment and personnel from Mainland China to engage in overseas military operations across the full spectrum of combat and non-combat missions.
2. Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, "China's Expanding Role in Peacekeeping," *SIPRI Policy Paper*, No. 25, November 2009: 4-5.
3. As of February 28, 2010 China was the 14th largest contributor of currently deployed peacekeepers, ahead of the United States, France, or the United Kingdom. "Factsheet: United Nations Peacekeeping," United Nations, accessed: December 13, 2010, <http://www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/2010/factsheet.pdf>.
4. Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, "China's Expanding

Role in Peacekeeping," *SIPRI Policy Paper*, No. 25, November 2009: 15-16.

5. *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense: 56.

6. The OMTE is "the authoritative guide to how the PLA organizes, implements, and evaluates training." *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense: 51; Jane's Information Group, "Anwei (Type 920) class," *Jane's Fighting Ships*, February 2010 and Jane's Information Group, "Procurement, China," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, April 2009.

7. China did not undertake this operation lightly. Beijing acted only after the passage of four related United Nations Security Council resolutions, an invitation from the Somali Prime Minister to join the operation, and public statements testing the waters of international opinion by senior PLA officials. Peter Kammerer, "Shot Across the Bow," *South China Morning Post*, January 9, 2009: 13.

8. *The Military Balance 2010*, London: IISS, 2010: 402-404; Jane's Information Group; "Infrastructure, China," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, January 2010; Jane's Information Group; "Air Force, China," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, August 3, 2010.

9. "Infrastructure, China," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, January 2010 and "Jade Cargo International – Details and Fleet history," *Planespotter.net*, accessed: December 15, 2010, <http://www.planespotter.net/airline/jade-cargo-international>.

10. It is also important to note that the B-6 has a much more limited range than France's aerial tankers which have refueling reach well beyond 1,000 nm. These estimates are approximate and are based on simple modeling using data provided by *The Military Balance 2010*, London: IISS, 2010: 129; Jane's Information Group, "XAC H-6," *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, May 25, 2010; *Air Force Pamphlet 10-1403: Air Mobility Planning Factors*, Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, DC: U.S. Air Force, December 18, 2003.

11. These numbers exclude the Yulian-class (a ship that is limited to coastal use) and are derived from data from *The Military Balance 2010*, London: IISS, 2010: 402; Jane's Information Group, "Sea Lift," *Jane's Amphibious and Special Forces*, August 27, 2009; and "Type 079 (Yulian Class) Medium Landing Ship," *Sinodefence.com*, accessed: December 14, 2010, www.sinodefence.com/navy/amphibious/type079_yulian.asp.

12. Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell, eds., *Beyond the Strait: PLA Missions Other Than Taiwan*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute,

2009: 371.

13. Kim Nodskov, *The Long March of Power: The New Historic Missions of the People's Liberation Army*, Copenhagen: Royal Danish Defence College Publishing House, 2009: 246-258.

14. *Ibid.*, 248.

15. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2010*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense: 36.

China's Doctrine of Non-Interference Challenged by Sudan's Referendum

By Tom Rafferty

As South Sudan's referendum on independence draws nearer, the international community is preparing for the possible division of Sudan into two independent states. With signs of growing tensions and several issues still to be resolved by negotiations—notably agreements on the demarcation of a north-south border and the distribution of oil revenue—there is a risk of a return to the decades-long civil war fought between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) that was ended by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has called Sudan a "ticking time bomb" and launched a fresh diplomatic drive aimed at applying pressure on both sides to avoid conflict (*World Politics Review*, September 23).

Amidst the uptick in high-level diplomacy, however, the role to be played by China remains a crucial but unexplored factor in discussions about the referendum and beyond. China is the key external power in Sudan as a result of the substantial assets that one key state-owned enterprise—China National Petroleum Company (CNPC)—has developed in the country. Yet despite its apparently compelling interest in ensuring stability in Sudan, China has so far adopted a policy of "wait and see" with regards to the referendum. At the root of this hesitancy is a lack of consensus in Beijing about how to balance growing overseas economic interests and international "responsibilities" with China's traditional foreign policy doctrine of "non-interference" in another state's internal affairs. Any renewal of north-south violence in Sudan will likely put that principle under further strain.

THE DILEMMAS OF NON-INTERFERENCE

Non-interference has been fundamental to Chinese foreign policy since Zhou Enlai articulated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. It was designed to reflect solidarity with newly independent post-colonial states and to indicate respect for territorial sovereignty. Although the principle was regularly violated by the support China lent to revolutionary movements across Africa and Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, it reassumed a central position under the “independent foreign policy” of the post-1978 period. China’s own sensitivities about perceived external interference, particularly in the context of Taiwan and Tibet, have led it to conceive of sovereignty in traditional Westphalian terms. Today the principle of non-interference remains oft-repeated in official foreign policy rhetoric.

The policy of non-interference, however, is being complicated by China’s expanding global interests. The globalization of its economy has given China a stake in the stability of a number of countries with which it previously only had limited contact. Encouraged over the past decade by the central government to “go out,” state-owned and private enterprises have pursued overseas markets and new sources of natural materials, investing an estimated \$178 billion in the process [1]. China’s rapid economic growth has also led to increasing clamor in western capitals for it to assume the “responsibilities” requisite with global power status. Rather than “free-riding” on the security arrangements established by the United States and its allies, this argument proceeds, China should take a more proactive stance toward regional and international security issues. These dynamics are stimulating a debate within China about the continuing value of non-interference.

On one side there is concern about how China’s “overseas interests” can be protected in the event of political and economic instability (Xinhua News Net, October 14). Concerns are increasingly expressed about the security of the growing number of Chinese citizens working abroad following repeated incidences of Chinese workers being kidnapped—and occasionally killed—as they find themselves caught up in internal conflicts between state forces and rebel groups (BBC News, April 24, 2007). An estimated 24,000 PRC citizens are said to work and live in Sudan alone, with comparable numbers in other African states. Solutions proffered to this problem typically focus on providing better consular protection services, engaging more deeply with international legal mechanisms, and building better intelligence about local investment environments. Yet there are calls for the government to play a more

direct role, either by using its influence to shape the domestic politics of states in which China has strategic interests or even through the use of military force (China.org.cn, January 28; *Asahi Shimbun*, June 12). The anti-piracy mission of the Chinese navy off the Somali coast is widely perceived as a first step towards developing a more assertive approach to protecting China’s overseas economic interests. Others urge a reevaluation of non-interference because it is not a policy befitting a global power with growing international “responsibilities.” Some worry that a willingness to partner with regimes that commit flagrant human rights abuses comes with significant image costs. International criticism during the run-up to the Beijing Olympics of China’s ties with a Sudanese regime complicit in committing atrocities in Darfur was fundamental in this sense. China’s subsequent behind-the-scenes diplomacy, which was instrumental in getting Khartoum to accept a joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur, has since been held up as an example of what a more proactive—and responsible—Chinese foreign policy might consist [2]. In that vein, Chinese scholars have since developed new paradigms, such as “creative interference” and “conditional interference”, to describe how China could further expand its role in peacekeeping operations or support interventions under the rubric of “responsibility to protect” [3]. In this case, the desire to craft a policy “beyond” non-interference is shaped through engagement with international norms rather than by narrow economic self-interest.

Although the debate about non-interference is now a hot topic in China’s foreign policy community, several factors work against there being any dramatic reevaluation of the official stance. The first is a lack of capabilities and resources. China remains under-experienced in the field of conflict prevention and there exist no domestic academic or policy institutions that conduct in-depth research into these issues. The second is a belief that non-interference has been a valuable policy tool in building burgeoning relations with African and other developing world states exhausted by the prescriptions and conditionalities of the West. Beijing is concerned that any step toward playing a more consequential role in domestic politics might be perceived as evidence of China adopting the imperialist dispositions of another “northern” power [4].

RESPONDING TO THE REFERENDUM

Developments in Sudan over the past five years have demonstrated that debates about non-interference have had a mixed impact on policy. China’s perceived interests in Sudan stem from the investments that

CNPC (and, to a much lesser extent, Sinopec) have been making in its oil industry since western companies began to retreat in the mid-1990s. CNPC now has controlling stakes in the two biggest energy consortiums operating in Sudan, giving it an estimated 60 percent share of the 480,000 barrels of crude produced daily. It also constructed the 1500km pipeline which connects the oilfields of the south, where 85 percent of reserves are found, to the export point of Port Sudan in the north. CNPC views Sudan as having been a successful testing ground for its overseas investment strategy, with those involved in managing its operations in Sudan since assuming senior positions elsewhere around the world [5].

The secession of the south will likely complicate the management of CNPC assets. A number of key leases on oil concessions originally signed with Khartoum will soon need to be renegotiated. This will depend on the favor of the SPLM—reconstituted as the Government of South Sudan (GSS) under the terms of the CPA—who have traditionally perceived China as having underwritten the rule of the rival NCP. In any renewal of north-south conflict, CNPC-controlled oil fields may feasibly be seized by rival groups and the security of Chinese workers threatened. Since 98 percent of the south's revenue comes from oil, Khartoum could choose to close the pipeline knowing that the north could function—at least in the medium-term—on alternative sources of income.

Although China has not embraced the prospect of the south's independence, it has recognized the importance of reaching out to the GSS to safeguard against any damaging implications that may ensue from secession. This has required taking a somewhat pragmatic approach to “non-interference” because the GSS are not yet a formally sovereign entity [6]. Relations have therefore largely been cultivated at the party-party level, between the CPC's International Liaison Department and the SPLM. The leader of the SPLM, Salva Kiir, has twice visited Beijing and a Chinese Consulate-General was established in the southern capital of Juba in September 2008. CNPC are in the process of setting up a branch office in the city. Rumors continue to link Chinese investors to the building of a new pipeline that would link South Sudan to the Kenyan port of Luma, potentially offering an alternative export route to the north-south pipeline (*Wall Street Journal*, October 22). □

These efforts to engage the south seem to have had the desired impact. The once antagonistic GSS now urge the importance of building a “very strong relationship” with Beijing (*Sudan Tribune*, October 16). Considering their dependence on oil, the GSS

recognizes the necessity of working with China and do not see western aid as sufficient substitute for the mixture of loans, infrastructure investment and low-cost construction services that China can offer. Despite its close ties with the United States, the huge developmental challenges likely to be faced by the GSS means it cannot afford to exclude potential external partners. Today Juba remains a “NGO town,” where a single Chinese-run hotel stands as the only testament to China's influence, in contrast to the very visible presence in Khartoum. But China is hoping that the ties it has built with the south will be enough to ensure the security of its assets after the referendum.

Yet this does not amount to a conflict prevention strategy that might be expected of the external power that stands to lose the most from renewed civil war. Beijing has offered a few “carrots” of varying sizes to both north and south to dissuade them from violence [7]. Some gestures in the direction of public diplomacy are discernible (*The Guardian*, September 7). Yet, the overall impression is underwhelming; China appears content to leave itself hostage to fortune, presuming that Khartoum and Juba will opt for cooperation because of their mutual interest in continued oil profits [8]. Most analysts of Sudan, however—including those, one suspects, at CNPC—are less optimistic about the signs in the run-up to the referendum. Both sides continue to disagree over the terms of the referendum and the south has been vigorously rearming, with the closet support of neighboring East African states, in apparent anticipation of trouble (BBC News, December 9).

The recent history of China's role in Sudan suggests the long-standing policy of non-interference is in a state of flux. Pressuring Khartoum into accepting a peacekeeping force in Darfur and building relations with the quasi-sovereign GSS suggests Beijing can be pragmatic in its understanding of the principle. This corresponds with the discussions and debates about the nature of sovereignty, overseas interests and international intervention that can be heard within the academic and policy community in China. Yet the limited gestures China has made in the direction of preventing post-referendum conflict in Sudan point to the limits of this evolution. Even in a country where it stands as the dominant external actor, China remains reluctant to involve itself too deeply in local politics.

TOWARD INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

China may come to rue its hesitancy if the referendum leads to a new crisis in North-South relations. Beijing will come under pressure to act if

the situation in Sudan deteriorates, not only from the international community, but also from its own corporate groups. The relationship between the Chinese political leadership and management of state-owned enterprises is complex. Some claim that state-owned enterprises do not warrant extensive support from the government because they are driven only by profit and, in instances such as Sudan, actually damage the “national interest” [9]. Most of the oil CNPC produces in Sudan, for example, is not exported to China but sold on the world market. Yet an organization as large as CNPC clearly wields considerable influence in Beijing; its CEO holds ministerial rank within the government and will have been appointed at the highest levels. Any damage to CNPC assets in Sudan will likely increase the pressure on the government to revisit its non-interference policy.

Should Beijing decide to become more engaged in Sudan, western governments presumably want China to coordinate its efforts with their own. Barring a few sessions at the UN Security Council, however, international diplomacy toward Sudan appears dominated by the United States and United Kingdom. Both China and western governments share a fundamental interest in the maintenance of regional stability. If that point can be grasped, managing the Sudan referendum could become an area of cooperation between the United States and China at a time of otherwise growing tension in the bilateral relationship. As China continues to evaluate the value of non-interference in light of its growing global interests, events in Sudan could come to shape the form and content of a new foreign policy doctrine. Others will want to help ensure that if China comes to consider a greater degree of “interference” as legitimate, it conceives of it in multilateral rather than unilateral terms.

Tom Rafferty is Visiting Fellow at Peking University's School of International Studies.

NOTES:

1. Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, “New Foreign Policy Actors in China,” *SIPRI Policy Paper, No. 26* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, September 2010): 26.
2. Jonathan Holslag, “China’s Diplomatic Victory in Darfur,” *BICCS Background Paper* (Brussels: Brussels Institute for Contemporary Chinese Studies, August 1, 2007).
3. See Wang Yizhou, “Zhongguo weihe ying chuangzaoxing jieru,” *China Report* (2010:2), <http://www.qikan.com.cn/Article/zgbd/zgbd201002/zgbd20100235.html> and Pang Zhongying, “China’s

Non-Interference Question,” *Global Responsibility to Protect*(1: 2009): 237 – 252.

4. To see China’s desire to challenge suggestions that it will “seek hegemony,” see Dai Bingguo, “We Must Stick to the Path of Peaceful Development,” December 13, 2010, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t777704.htm>.

5. Interview conducted by the author with international relations scholar in Beijing, November 9, 2010.

6. Dan Large, “China’s Sudan Engagement: Changing Northern and Southern Political Trajectories in Peace and War,” *The China Quarterly*, 199 (September: 2009): 610 – 626.

7. “IDCPC Delegation Conclude Visit to Sudan,” October 18, 2010, <http://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/101018.htm>.

8. Conversations with academics and analysts suggest China is generally optimistic about the referendum. Interviews conducted in Beijing by the author, October – November 2010.

9. Zhu Feng is quoted as saying Chinese companies have “hijacked” China’s foreign policy in Sudan in “China’s Champions: Why State Ownership is No Longer Proving a Dead Hand,” *Financial Times*, March 16, 2008, available at <http://www.gmupolicy.net/china/readings/FT%20article%20on%20SOE's.pdf>.
