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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.



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In a Fortnight

HIGH-LEVEL PERSONNEL CHANGES CONTINUE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE CHINESE MILITARY

By L.C. Russell Hsiao

In the latest round of high-level personnel changes in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), more appointments of key posts appear to be going to younger and more professionally trained military officers. These changes, which involve top positions in the PLA's four general headquarters, major regional commands and military branches, were confirmed by the Ministry of National Defense on January 23 (*Chongqing Evening News*, January 24; *Wen Wei Po* [Hong Kong], January 24). This development reflects a broader trend toward Chinese military professionalization that may help improve expertise, systemize career patterns within the military leadership, and perhaps most importantly, reinforce the party's authority over the military.

Four high-ranking military officers were upgraded to top posts in the PLA General Departments. These officers came from high grades within the major military regions, different military branches and academies. Chinese media reports made note of the fact that many in this new class of military officers were born in the 1950s and 60s, and not only have substantial field experiences, but also come from strong scientific research and academic backgrounds (*Wen Wei Po*, January 24, *Global Times*, January 25).

Liu Guozhi, 50, was appointed the new deputy director of the PLA's General Armament Department (GAD). The *Chongqing Evening News* described Liu as a "rare young leader at a major military command region level." The Hong Kong-based *Wen Wei Po* newspaper referred to Liu as a leading expert in nuclear technologies who served as an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2009. Liu succeeds Han Yanlin, 62, who became the deputy director of the GAD's committee on science and technology (*Global Times*, January 25).

Wei Fenghe, 56, a lieutenant general and former chief-of-staff at the PLA's Second Artillery Corps (SAC), or the Strategic Missile Forces, is now the youngest deputy chief of the PLA's General Staff Headquarters (*Global Times*, January 25).

Liu Yuan, 60, son of former Chinese helmsmen Liu Shaoqi, became the political commissar of the PLA's General Logistics Department (GLD). Liu served as a village-level official in Henan province in the 1980s then in the Armed Police Force Headquarters, and most recently in the PLA Academy of Military Sciences before his recent promotion (*Global Times*, January 25). Liu succeeds Sun Dafa, 66. There have been reports that Liu Yuan has friendly relations with CMC Vice Chairman Xi Jinping, leading to some speculation that this appointment may pave the path for Liu's elevation into the Central Military Commission at the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (*United Daily News* [Taiwan], January 25).

Liu Xiaorong, 61, former deputy political commissar of the Lanzhou Military region succeed Sun Sijing, 60, as deputy political commissar of the GOLD and secretary of the Discipline Inspection Committee (*Chongqing Evening News*, January 24)

The latest round of personnel changes also involve the adjustment of more than 20 high-ranking military officers from the major military regions and branches. According to a tabulation of the new appointments by *Chongqing Evening News*, drawn from official military sources, this round of personnel changes that were reportedly made in December of last year, also added an additional deputy level grade post within the Nanjing Military Region, Guangzhou Military Region, as well as the Navy and Second Artillery Corps (*United Daily News*, January 25).

Moreover, the Navy, Second Artillery Corps and People's Armed Police (PAP) all had adjustments made to top posts within their leadership.

In the case of the Navy, the former Navy chief-of-staff, Su Shiliang, was promoted to deputy commander of the PLA Navy; the number of deputy commanders was increased from four to five; the commander of the East Sea Fleet, Du Jingchen, was promoted to Navy chief-of-staff; and the commanders of the East Sea and South Sea Fleets were simultaneously changed (*Chongqing Evening News*, January 24).

On balance, these personnel changes reflect a continuation in the professionalization of the senior Chinese officer corps, and the technocratic transition that has been occurring across the entire Chinese political and military system under the Hu Jintao administration. It also follows in line the well known Deng Xiaoping dictum that party personnel arrangements of senior officials should hail from "the five lakes and four seas," in other words, military officers must be drawn from all corners of the country. The latest round of personnel changes is also significant in the run-up to the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012. From a political-military perspective, it is interesting that President Hu is pushing personnel changes in the military establishment at this time. While it may be "routine to rearrange military leaders of important positions before every National Congress" to strengthen the party's control over the army (*Global Times*, January 25), against the backdrop of an uptick in Sino-U.S. tension in recent years, the latest shuffle may also be an attempt by Hu to reign in hawkish elements within the military.

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Table: Personnel Changes in the Military Regions and Branches

| Name | Military Rank | Current Grade | Former Grade |
|---------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Su Shiliang | Rear Admiral | Deputy Commander, Navy | Chief-of-Staff, Navy |
| Wu Guohua | Major General | Deputy Commander, SAC | Director, General Staff Headquarters |
| Lu Fuen | Major General | Chief-of-Staff, SAC | Base Commander, SAC |
| Wang Changhe | Major General | Deputy Political Commissar, PAP | Political Commissar, PAP Forestry Command |
| Zhu Yimin | Lieutenant General | Political Commissar, Shenyang Military Region | Director, Nanjing Military Region Political Department |
| Wang Xiaojun | Major General | Deputy Commander, Shenyang Military region | Director, Guangzhou Military Region GLD |
| Zhang Baoshu | Lieutenant General | Deputy Commander, Beijing Military Region | Chief-of-Staff, Beijing Military Region |
| Wang Ning | Major General | Chief-of-Staff, Beijing Military Region | Commander of Group Army, Nanjing Military Region |
| Cui Changjun | Major General | Director, Beijing Military Region Political Bureau | Political Commissar, Chengdu Military Region Group Army |
| Zhang Guodong | Lieutenant General | Deputy Political Commissar, Lanzhou Military Region | Director, Lanzhou Military Region Political Bureau |
| Miao Hua | Major General | Director, Lanzhou Military Region Political Bureau | Political Commissar, Nanjing Military Region Group Army |
| Qin Weijiang | Major General | Deputy Commander, Nanjing Military Region | Commander, Beijing Military Region Group Army |
| Wu Gang | Major General | Deputy Political Commissar, Nanjing Military Region | Political Commissar, Beijing Military Region Group Army |
| Wu Changhai | Major General | Director, Nanjing Military Region Political Bureau | Political Commissar, Shenyang Military region GLD |
| Xing Shucheng | Major General | Commander, Guangzhou Military Region | Commander, Jilin Province Military Region |

Source: *Chongqing Evening News*, January 24 (Central Television “Military Reports,” *Jiefangjun Bao*, and Official newspaper from military branches)

Hu’s State Visit Exposes Rift in Chinese Foreign Policy

By Willy Lam

While President Hu Jintao’s state visit to the United States fell short on deliverables such as a speedier pace of appreciation of the renminbi, both leaderships have bolstered high-level exchange mechanisms that could minimize mishaps due to misperceptions and miscalculations. The Joint Statement issued after the Hu-Obama summit characterized bilateral relations as a “cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and

mutual benefit.” Although less grandiose than the “all-weather strategic partnership” that Beijing has formed with some nations, the new term is according to Chinese diplomats a notch up from the “positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship” that had hitherto described Sino-American ties (Xinhua News Agency, January 20; *Wall Street Journal*, January 20). Yet both Beijing and Washington need to do more to put bilateral exchanges on an even keel. Not least of the problems is that supremo Hu seems to have trouble reining in the hawkish proclivities of Chinese generals who are having a bigger say in diplomatic and security issues.

A modicum of “mutual respect and mutual benefit” seemed to have been evidenced by pledges made by the

leaders of the two most powerful countries in the world. The 68-year-old Hu did not say much on perhaps the single issue that most interested Americans: the valuation of the Chinese currency, the renminbi. The Chinese delegation only indicated that Beijing would “continue to promote renminbi exchange rate reform [and] enhance renminbi exchange rate flexibility.” In the joint press conference with his host, Hu ducked the issue altogether after President Obama complained that “the renminbi remains undervalued, that there needs to be further adjustment in the exchange rate” (Reuters, January 19; Xinhua News Agency, January 19). Yet Commerce Minister Chen Deming, who traveled with Hu, pointed out that the renminbi had risen by 3.7 percent since the middle of last year, when Beijing ended the currency’s 21-month virtual peg to the greenback. The Hu delegation bought goods and services to the tune of \$4.5 billion. This was despite the fact that bits and pieces of this purchase package—including \$1.9 billion worth of Boeing jets—had been in the works for some time. Moreover, Hu promised to improve the treatment of American companies working in China. For example, Beijing agreed to take out indigenous innovation, a reference to giving preference to technologically motivated Chinese firms, as a criterion when it considers bids for government procurement contracts (*Washington Post*, January 19; AFP, January 21).

In return, the Obama administration made unspecified promises that it would allow more high-tech products and know-how to be shipped to China. “We want to sell you all kinds of stuff,” the U.S. President told the Chinese delegation. Similar to previous economic dialogues, the White House indicated it would consider granting China “full market economy status.” Yet no specific deadline was set. The Joint Statement referred to Washington giving its first-ever support to “China’s efforts over time to promote inclusion of the renminbi in the Special Drawing Rights basket.” The SDR, a currency used among members of the International Monetary Fund, has been considered as a potential alternative to the greenback as the world currency. It is most unlikely, however, that this would happen in the foreseeable future (*Christian Science Monitor*, January 19; Bloomberg, January 20).

Apparently owing to both sides’ desire to show that Sino-U.S. relations are, in Hu’s words, “not a Cold-War [style] zero-sum game,” the Chinese and American Presidents

tried to give each other face while shying away from actual commitments. On the issue of human rights, Hu acknowledged for the first time that “China recognizes and also respects the universality of human rights.” He went on to admit that “a lot still needs to be done in China in terms of human rights.” Yet Hu made clear that the universality of rights needed to be “reconciled” with China’s domestic conditions. Moreover, his remarks on the sensitive subject were not broadcast in China. The Joint Statement also reiterated Beijing’s long-standing stance that “there should be no interference in any country’s internal affairs” (CNN.com, January 22; *Wall Street Journal*, January 23). The Chinese delegation kept mum when the White House as well as members of Congress raised the case of imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo. Liu’s wife Liu Xia remains under house arrest while dozens of dissidents who worked with Liu on the Charter 08 political liberalization campaign are subject to daily police surveillance or harassment (*Los Angeles Times*, January 20; *Washington Post*, January 19).

On the nettlesome issue of geopolitical contention, both leaderships also displayed goodwill in the absence of a true meeting of the minds. This is most evident in the still-looming differences over how to resolve flashpoints in the Asia-Pacific Region. According to the Joint Statement, Washington “welcomes a strong, prosperous and successful China that plays a greater role in world affairs,” while “China welcomes the United States as an Asia-Pacific nation that contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.” However, there is no indication that the Hu leadership has shown more tolerance toward Washington’s bid to be “back in Asia.” Nor has Beijing changed its perception that Washington’s recent enhancement of defense ties with Asian nations including Japan, South Korea and Australia amounts to an exacerbation of America’s anti-China containment policy. For example, the official *Global Times* pointed out that “U.S. political elites ...believe the American government should take concrete action to contain China, preventing it from growing into another power capable of challenging U.S. hegemony.” Well-known Fudan University international affairs expert Wu Xinbo seemed to reflect official opinion when he indicated that defense arrangements concluded last year by the United States with countries including India, Vietnam and Indonesia amounted to “new efforts to check and contain China” (Cas.fudan.edu, January 8; *Global Times*, November 11,

2010).

Emblematic of major residual problems in bilateral ties are mutual suspicions between the two defense establishments. This is despite the fact that the Hu-Obama Joint Statement vowed to “foster greater understanding and expand mutual interest [in the military arena] and to promote the healthy, stable, and reliable development of the military-to-military relationship.” Just prior to the Hu tour, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates managed to restore high level military exchanges with China by making a much-delayed visit to Beijing. Gates and his hosts pledged to resume regular contacts between senior officers. For example, PLA Chief of the General Staff General Chen Bingde is due to call on the United States in the middle of the year. Yet, the PLA refused to set a time-frame for confidence-building talks on issues ranging from nuclear policy to cyber-warfare. In the run up to Secretary Gates’ meeting with President Hu, the PLA Air Force unveiled a prototype of the Jian-20 stealth aircraft, which is billed as China’s answer to America’s F-22. As much-decorated combat pilot Xu Yongling pointed out, showcasing the Jian-20 during Gates’ visit “demonstrated the freedom of action [inherent in] the strategy of a great power” (*Ming Pao* [Hong Kong], January 11; *Washington Post*, January 11; *Global Times*, January 14).

In the run-up to and during Hu’s American tour, military officers and commentators have gone on a binge of America bashing. For example, Major-General Yao Yunzhu wrote in the *China Daily* that America was to blame for lack of progress in military-to-military ties. “The U.S. is wary of the economic and political influence of China and its growing military might, and the PLA, still enduring continuous U.S. embargoes, sanctions, and calls for transparency, finds it hard to perceive its U.S. counterpart as a trustworthy friend,” said the senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences. National Defense University expert Yang Yi pointed out that “while China and the U.S. are mutually dependent economically, it’s still a zero-sum game in the military sphere.” “I don’t think we should let go of our strategic goals and let America’s misgivings affect our [military] progress,” noted the major-general. “What needs to be done should be done.” According to popular military commentator Peng Guangqian, “the U.S. has not changed its hegemonic logic.” “Recent reports coming out of the U.S. have shown that Washington has positioned

China as a major strategic opponent that will challenge American [national] interest in the future,” said Major-General Peng. These and other PLA spokespeople have also urged the speedy development of weapons including cruise missiles and aircraft carriers (*China Daily*, January 19; *Global Times Net*, December 29, 2010; *Ta Kung Pao* [Hong Kong] December 17, 2010).

It is probably no coincidence that the PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff in charge of foreign intelligence Ma Xiaotian published last week an article in the party journal *Study Times* on the imperative of China “seizing the initiative in ferocious global competition.” While General Ma made reference to the late patriarch Deng Xiaoping’s famous foreign-policy dictum—“Bide one’s time, never take the lead, but make achievements [when circumstances allow]”—he said little about taking a low profile. Instead, the senior officer put exclusive emphasis on seeking attainments during China’s “period of strategic opportunity.” “Seeking achievements means creating auspicious conditions for prolonging and safeguarding our period of strategic opportunity,” he said (*Xinhua News Agency*, January 17; *China.com.cn*, January 18). Particularly given increasingly frequent consultations between Beijing and Washington, it is probably easier for both countries to attain “mutual respect and mutual benefit” on the economic and trade fronts. Yet exacerbated contention between China and America on the military and geopolitical fronts, which could worsen in light of the generals’ aggressive tendencies, could throw Sino-American ties into disarray.

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Turning a New Leaf in Relations: Russia's Renewed Arms Sale to China

By Stephen Blank

Tensions in the arms sales relationship between Russia and China have been visibly on the rise in recent years. Yet, in November 2010, Moscow and Beijing announced a large new package of arms sales that appear to have turned a new leaf in this relationship. Much of the tension stemmed from the Chinese defense industry's practice of reverse engineering Russian weapons technology, indigenizing it and then reselling it in third party markets in competition with Moscow. In negotiations, China has long demanded that Russia sell it advanced technologies in its defense platforms or advanced weapons, something that Moscow has been loath to do regarding both the weapons and their components [1]. Russia has also always been concerned that China might ultimately employ these advanced technologies and systems against it or its friends in Asia. For example, in 2006 it refused to sell certain sensitive space technologies to China (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newline, December 27, 2006). Nevertheless the restoration of arms sales appears to be connected with a new turn in Sino-Russian relations in China's favor. The fifth round of Sino-Russian strategic talks took place from January 23-25 and Russia's arms sales organization, Rosoboronekспорт, has announced that it sees China as Russia's chief partner in Asia (Interfax, January 19). This turn in Sino-Russian ties, probably dictated from the highest levels of both governments, appears to have overridden Russia's mounting concerns about Chinese military developments.

Russian concerns about Chinese competition in Asian, African, and Latin American arms markets and the fact that China's J-11B and J-15 fighter planes were essentially "clones" of Russia's SU-27 and Su-33 fighter planes, respectively, are public and cited. Coupled with China's own growing domestic capability, these factors contributed to a sharp decline in Chinese military purchases, mainly of air and sea weapons (*Oruzhiye Rossii*, September 29, 2010; *Wall Street Journal*, December 6, 2010). Yet, whether or not China's domestic capability had increased, there is little doubt of Russia's anger over Chinese practices of

copying its weapon systems, and the fact that there was no sign of Beijing stopping this practice. Consequently both sides had reason to slow down arms purchases and sales. Indeed, in 2009-10 China has reportedly not placed a major order with Russia and, according to foreign observers, at the Zhuhai Air show in November China displayed its biggest exhibition of aircraft for sale abroad, mainly built with Russian technology and a supposedly Chinese engine (*Oruzhiye Rossii*, September 29, 2010; *Wall Street Journal*, December 6, 2010).

China's ambassador to Russia, Li Huei—at least publicly—attributes the decline in purchases to its own growing capabilities and claims that bilateral cooperation is actually moving to a higher phase while Russia is still implementing past contracts and transferring air, air defense, and naval weapons to China (Interfax, November 17, 2010). In other words, Li refused to discuss the charges of intellectual piracy in public. In fact, earlier this year Russia did send S-300 air defenses to China (Global Security Newswire, April 2, 2010; Reuters, April 2, 2010). So before the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation there was no public yielding by either side. Russian producers like Sukhoi openly proclaimed their desire to ask probing question to China about its cloning of their systems [2]. Likewise, Russian and French experts were equally frank in stating their concerns that Chinese ship-to-ship missiles might undercut them on price in third party markets [3]. Finally both Russia and China are competing to bring out as soon as possible their fifth-generation fighter planes (Jane's Defence Weekly, December 9).

Yet from subsequent developments it seems clear that there were other concerns on Russian minds that led them to resume arms and technology transfers to China—albeit at a reduced rate. First it is clear from the press record that China's needs are changing. Although it still needs and is buying aerial platforms, China now manifests a growing interest in obtaining engines and technologies to maintain the air fleet that it has acquired by sale or by piracy from Russia. Russia clearly wants to sell China those engines and monopolize this situation, apparently believing that by doing so it will be able to keep selling it Russian aerial platforms and maintain its advantage in the Chinese weapon market (Interfax-AVN Online, November 17, 2010). Second, Russian arms sellers have found that the only way they can discuss their concerns

about unlicensed copying is to actually have a relationship with China through formal sessions like that of the Intergovernmental Commission so they cannot simply cease and desist from selling weapons to China if they wish to influence its behavior (Interfax-AVN Online, November 17, 2010).

Third, the Russian government and defense ministry have announced ambitious plans to boost arms sales throughout the world in the next decade to finance concurrent Russian defense reforms. In 2010 alone, Moscow reportedly sold a record figure of \$10 billion worth of arms (RIA Novosti, December 14, 2010). Yet at the same time Russian analysts fear that arms sales may actually drop because the markets that Russia found to compensate for reduced arms sales to China in the short run—Algeria, Vietnam, Syria, and Venezuela—cannot offset the size of the Chinese market over the long run (Trud, October 29, 2010). So while China may occupy a lower place or ranking among the customers for Russian defense systems, Beijing is eager to take advantage of those opportunities that are available to Russia, largely in aerial systems and engines [4]. Fourth, even as Russian military policy is shifting (e.g. to make the Pacific Fleet the main Russian fleet) because of the Chinese threat, Moscow needs to keep an eye on Chinese military policy, and the best way to do so is to preserve arms sales contracts [5].

For its part, China has entered into open rivalry if not confrontation with the United States over Southeast Asia, arms sales to Taiwan, the value of its currency, and the six-party talks with Korea. Beijing sees the progress of the United States' reset policy with Russia, and appears eager to improve its ties with Moscow and resolve outstanding issues, among which include the issues of piracy and the lack of arms sales. China also clearly feels the need to continue acquiring foreign systems for those sectors where it has yet to create an adequate domestic base for its own production (OSC Analysis, FBIS SOV, December 3, 2010). As a result, at the most recent meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission in November 2010 the two sides signed a protocol for resumption of sales of spare parts, engines for aircrafts, naval and aerial weapons systems and the design of defensive products in the interests of the Chinese side. The two sides also established a working group to monitor developments growing out of the 2008 bilateral agreement on

intellectual piracy (which has not stopped China from its ongoing "cloning" of Russian systems) [6]. According to Mikhail Dmitriev, director of Russia's Federal Service for Military and Technical Cooperation, the agreement "provides "the full picture of the contracts realization process and protects from unsanctioned capturing of our intellectual property," although China, he claimed has never transferred that property to a third country [7].

China is reportedly interested in buying at least 100 117-S aircraft engines (the upgraded version of the Al-31F engine intended for the SU-35 Fighter, the S-400 air defense missile, at least a 100 RD-93 engines, the existing Al-31F and Al-31FN engine for its existing Fighter component, consisting of SU-27s, SU-30s and its own J-10 (a knockoff of the Israeli Lavi Fighter). Russia has offered it New Ilyushin-476 military cargo planes, MI-171E Helicopters, and the SU-35 Fighter and the Irbis-e radar station. Meanwhile Rosoboronekспорт, Russia's designated arms seller, hopes to reach agreement with China on a formula for licensed arms production by Chinese firms of Russian arms that protects Russian intellectual property (Vedomosti Online, November 23, 2010; Interfax-AVN Online, November 16, 2010; Interfax-AVN Online, in English, November 18, 2010; ITAR-TASS, November 16, 2010; Interfax, November 15, 2010; RIA Novosti, November 16, 2010). In other words, Moscow has agreed again to offer China some of its most advanced systems despite prior misgivings about doing so. Yet, it is doubtful that the establishment of these mechanisms to oversee the proper enforcement of Russian intellectual property will be notably successful in preventing China from its long-standing and pervasive practices of copying Russian systems and selling them abroad after indigenizing them. Too many vested interest groups and long-standing practices are involved in this process for it to stop just to please Russia, although it is likely that some cosmetic efforts will be made for a while. In any case, Beijing has alternatives to Russia. For example, China is already exporting tanks made with Ukrainian engines and Ukraine will participate in the modernization of China's Y-5 aircraft, probably not the last such occurrence either (ITAR-TASS, November 23, 2010).

These trends suggest that China remains, to some degree, dependent on Russia for the provision of advanced weapons and defense technologies, notably aircraft

engines. This would also suggest a reason why Russian analysts profess not to be unduly alarmed at the unveiling of China's fifth-generation J-20 stealth fighter. They apparently believe that despite the hoopla attached to this unveiling, that China will remain behind Russia and the US in aircraft technology for a long time even if it will try to compete with Russia once it starts selling the plane (RIA Novosti, December 29, 2010). It should be noted here as well that the Pentagon too has its doubts as to just how advanced the J-20's technology is (Bloomberg, January 26). Meanwhile China also needs to ensure that Russia does not lean closer to Washington than it does to Beijing. On the other hand, Moscow wants to ensure that a Sino-American rapprochement does not occur at its expense and, more importantly, it still has no means of controlling what China does with its systems. Despite Moscow's successes in selling arms to smaller countries like Algeria and Vietnam in the global arms market, Moscow still needs to be able to sell in large quantities to China. Furthermore, it needs a friendly China on its border even as there are growing signs of alarm in Russia about China's economic and military prowess.

The strain in the bilateral arms sales and geopolitical tension between a rising China and declining Russia still remain. Yet for the time being the two sides appear to have reached a mutual accommodation. A close examination of the accords reached here, however, suggests that Russia really cannot control China and furthermore that it needs Chinese cooperation more than China does Russian cooperation. The overall turn in the relationship indicates China's growing ability to induce Russian cooperation even as it infringes on Russian interests. This could lead to more tension if Russia strives to break free of Chinese power. While there may be an agreement for now, one should not be unduly complacent about it lasting for a long and, more importantly, untroubled time.

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2011 PLA Military Training: Toward Greater Interoperability

By David D. Chen [1]

The 2011 directive on military training was just released by the General Staff Department (GSD) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) on January 14. The new guidance represents a roadmap for the Chinese military's training year, and could offer important indicators about PLA military planning priorities and evolving threat perceptions (Xinhua News Agency, January 14). In general, PLA training in the coming year appears poised to continue experimentation and modification of force structures to accomplish the long-term objectives of preparing the Chinese armed

forces (PLA, People's Armed Police, and militia), supported by civilian capabilities, to execute longer-distance joint operations for deterrence, warfighting, and non-traditional security missions under complex electromagnetic conditions. While the GSD guidance contains no major new points of emphasis or deviations from previous guidance, the work of consolidating and standardizing the training reforms of the previous decade may be a focus of the coming year.

2011 also marks the close of the 11th Five Year Plan and the beginning of the 12th Five Year Plan. Each Five Year Plan is an opportunity for PRC leadership to rearticulate a set of guiding principles for military training development in the new five-year period. Furthermore, a new Defense White Paper is anticipated soon, which will be pored over for further clues as to what the future holds for the PLA.

2010 YEAR-END SUMMATIONS

At the close of 2010, military press lauded the achievements in both actual training performance and training structure reform. In many ways, the PLA had a banner year in 2010 in terms of training, and particularly in terms of trans-regional joint training exercises. 2010 also revealed a corresponding emphasis on the construction and refinement of certain training and operational systems, both in terms of technical systems (*xitong*) and overarching operational architecture (*tixi*). Supporting these developments was a sharp rise in emphasis of certain operational concepts, such as “systems confrontation” (*tixi duikang*), leading some in the PLA to describe “systems confrontation operations” as the leading form of warfare in the modern era, somewhat displacing the previous watchword, “integrated joint operations” as the slogan *du jour*. A strong emphasis on electronic warfare persisted throughout the training year, with hints that previous “complex electromagnetic environments” were not as rigorous as previously implied.

TRANS-REGIONAL EXERCISES

From October through early November 2010, a trio of exercises dubbed MISSION ACTION-2010A, B, and C (SHIMING XINGDONG-2010) was held in Shenyang, Lanzhou, and Chengdu Military Regions (MR). The three exercises demonstrated the forward progress of trans-regional training exercises since the first of these types

of exercises was observed in 2006, when a Shenyang MR mechanized infantry brigade traveled to Beijing MR to train at the Zhurihe Combined Arms Tactical Training (CATT) base (*betong zhanshu xunlian jidi*) in Inner Mongolia.

In MISSION ACTION-2010A, a Beijing MR group army traveled to the Taonan CATT base in Shenyang MR to train. Accompanying the ground forces throughout the exercise was a Beijing MR Air Force air regiment, conducting almost 70 sorties during the exercise (Xinhua News Agency, January 18). Compared with the 2006 exercise that followed a similar route, but in reverse, it is clear that the scale of training has increased both quantitatively and qualitatively, expanding from a mechanized infantry brigade to select elements of a group army. Some 30,000 personnel were involved in the three MISSION ACTION exercises, according to official tallies (Xinhua News Agency, October 9, 2010). MISSION ACTION-2010B and MISSION ACTION-2010C similarly involved ground forces traveling by road, rail, and air to CATT bases located in other MRs. MISSION ACTION clearly draws from the same operational background as the STRIDE-2009 (KUAYUE-2009) exercise, in which multiple division-sized units from Lanzhou, Jinan, Guangzhou, and Shenyang MRs traveled to CATT bases in other MRs to conduct combined arms examination exercises.

2010 also saw several international joint exercises, including anti-terror exercise PEACE MISSION-2010 (HEPING SHIMING-2010) held in Kazakhstan, which featured the participation of the J-10 fighter. Other joint anti-terror exercises, FRIENDSHIP-2010 (YOUYI-2010), held in Ningxia with Pakistani forces, and COOPERATION-2010 (HEZUO-2010), with Singaporean forces, also were held in 2010. Two Sino-Thai joint anti-terror exercises involved marines and special forces units from both militaries. Beyond Asia, the PLA also engaged with the Romanian military in mountain operations, Peruvian forces in a joint humanitarian rescue operation, PEACE ANGEL-2010 (HEPING TIANSHI-2010), and with Turkish forces in two major exercises, which included the long-distance deployment of SU-27s (See “Sino-Turkish Strategic Partnership: Implications of Anatolian Eagle 2010,” *China Brief*, January 14). International missions, such as the PLA Navy's ongoing merchant marine escort mission in the Gulf of Aden and the touring of its new

hospital ship in HARMONY MISSION-2010 (HEXIE SHIMING-2010), will likely continue to support China's expanding use of military assets for soft power initiatives.

Domestically, in 2011 we can expect to see more trans-regional training exercises, and with the trend of increasingly large and complex training scenarios, it would be within reason to anticipate more diversification of participants. The past two years have seen an emphasis on air-ground coordination. In 2011, we may see more involvement from the Navy or Naval Aviation forces, People's Armed Police, militia, or civilian organs. As the PLA formalizes a new "joint logistics system" that relies partly on civilian sourcing, we can expect to see more local governments involved in supporting exercises. Guidance for 2011 suggests that the PLA will do more of the same and, "continue organizing trans-MR base training, strengthen organizing command and support, and raise trans-MR base training quality and effectiveness" (*Jiefangjun Bao*, January 14). A more ambitious goal would be for two units from different MRs to conduct an exercise in concert against a third blue force, rather than as has been practice so far, having the visiting unit train against a unit of the host MR. This would constitute a graduation from "trans-regional" exercises to actual, coordinated "inter-regional" exercises and represent a key milestone of achieving unit interoperability within the PLA.

TRAINING SYSTEMS

In many ways the precursor 2006 trans-regional exercise involving the Shenyang mechanized infantry brigade was at the time as much a test of the emerging CATT base training infrastructure as it was of the participating units. While CATT bases had been established in all MRs beginning in the 1980s, in 2006 many new combined arms training systems were being developed and deployed, including battlefield simulation systems, laser simulation systems, exercise regulation and monitoring systems, and two systems that academics helped to develop: the "Unit Exercise Evaluation System" (*budui yanxi pinggu xitong*) and the "Integrated Data Collection System" (*zonghe shuju caiji xitong*) (*Zhanyou Bao*, August 3, 2006). These systems were conceived as necessary components for transforming the exercise evaluation architecture from lax and particularistic evaluation toward systematic and data-driven evaluation. By hosting evaluation exercises,

CATT bases have proven to be important institutional venues for introducing reforms in exercise direction and training evaluation, particularly with the formalization of training institutions, such as exercise directorates and their supporting structures [2]. The drive to develop the necessary tools to train and evaluate effectively has been churning unabated for the past several years.

2010 offered some new systems in the military training toolbox. The participating units in MISSION ACTION-2010 were aided throughout the various exercises by an "Integrated Command Platform" (*yitihua zhibui pingtai*), a potential evolution from precursor battlefield management systems (Xinhua News Agency, January 18). This new and improved command platform was also tied into an evaluation system, dubbed the "Battlefield Real-time Monitoring and Evaluation System" (*zhanchang shishi jiance pinggu xitong*), which allowed the exercise directorate to assess various attack methods of Air Force aviation units (Xinhua News Agency, October 23, 2010). The director of the Beijing MR Military Training and Service Arms Department, Wang Shun, lauded the construction of a new system at the Zhurihe base, "the first complex electromagnetic environment application system...pushing the base to realize an historic leap from organizing training under everyday conditions to under complex electromagnetic environments" (Zhongguo Xinwen She, December 31, 2010). While indeed laudatory, the "historic" nature of the installation of such a system leads to questions about how complex previous electromagnetic environments have been at the training base. Regardless, the PLA is clearly still focused on training under increasingly rigorous electromagnetic conditions, as the phrase continues to be held high in PLA press reporting as a banner of modern warfare.

2011 will most likely bring further evolution in the various training tools and systems the PLA employs in its training exercises. The electronic warfare upgrade at Zhurihe base, the PLA's premier CATT base, likely presages similar types of upgrades at other CATT bases across the country. The director of the GSD Military Training and Service Arms Department indicates as much, saying that in 2011 the PLA will, "begin building large-scale training base systems (*tixi*), expand large-scale training base capabilities, and construct complex battlefield environments by focusing on complex

electromagnetic environments” (*Jiefangjun Bao*, January 14). As the PLA enters into a period of consolidating gains in training methods in the last several years, we can anticipate publication of more training regulations and training outlines from the General Staff Department, as well as additional guidance from each of the services and Military Region headquarters. One such task for improving unit interoperability, central leadership and military academics will seek to reconcile and standardize training base systems across MRs, ensuring consistent, high-quality assessment standards and evaluation capabilities throughout the PLA.

SYSTEMS CONFRONTATION

A clear emphasis emerging from 2010 training, and certainly emphasized in ongoing training reforms, is the idea of “systems confrontation” (*tixi duikang*) as a guiding principle for modern warfare. In no uncertain terms, this concept will figure prominently in future training. The director of the Military Training and Service Arms Department estimates that:

The essence of this revolution [in military affairs] is that military training must form the military’s systems operations (*tixi zuozhan*) capabilities based on information systems, achieving the integration (*ronghe*) of various operational forces, operational units, and operational elements in accordance with the operational requirements of information dominance (*xinxi zhubudao*), systems confrontation (*tixi duikang*), and joint victory (*lianhe zhibeng*) (*Jiefangjun Bao*, November 2, 2010).

The prominence of “systems confrontation” and “systems operations” in PLA press reporting in the past year or so points to an important evolution in the conceptualization of the PLA’s ongoing training transformation. Often translated as “system-of-systems”, the phrase *tixi* suggests the systemic architecture of operations, which while may indeed incorporate specific technical “systems” (*xitong*), like weapons systems and such, also refers to organizational structures, command models, and other less tangible transformations in the past several years. In 2010, the further development of the overarching training model yielded important results. Throughout one phase of MISSION ACTION-2010, the “Integrated Command Platform managed the Army-

Air Force Joint Campaign Formation (*lukong lianbe zhanyi juntuan*), signifying that full systems confrontation (*tixi duikang*) training is becoming the norm of the military’s joint training” (*Jiefangjun Bao*, November 2, 2010). The concept of specialized joint echelons, such as the Joint Campaign Formation (*lianbe zhanyi juntuan*) and Joint Tactical Corps (*lianbe zhanshu bingtuan*) evolved from several Jinan MR exercises beginning in 2004. The Joint Campaign Formation encompasses group army- and equivalent campaign-level forces while the Joint Tactical Corps groups together tactical-level forces, such as ground divisions and brigades, air divisions, and naval flotillas. At the same time, work will continue in improving the operations conducted at the combined arms level, with modular forces in the evolving Integrated Battalion (*hecheng ying*) structure. The promulgation and popularization in other MR of such institutional innovations is part of the ongoing transformation of the overarching force structure of the PLA. As GSD makes efforts to consolidate the reforms of the past several years, 2011 may bring greater clarity in what the PLA “system” will look like when military commentators refer to “systems confrontation.”

CONCLUSION

In 2011, in addition to continuing its emphasis on training personnel to operate and maintain the new equipment entering the force, the PLA will continue to push the evolution of joint and combined arms training and command models. Early guidance by the Military Training and Service Arms Department calls for the PLA to continue, “innovating training models under informatized conditions, and building training systems (*tixi*) under informatized conditions” (*Jiefangjun Bao*, January 14). This implies that further developments in the coherent usage of multi-service units in training exercises will occur in 2011. These reforms may even entail revision and reform of the Outline for Military Training and Evaluation (OMTE), promulgated in 2009. The GSD is planning on holding a major “All-Army Deepening Military Training Reform Conference” in 2011, suggesting that a two-year period may be normative for the ongoing “cyclic development of the OMTE” (*Jiefangjun Bao*, January 14). With a new Five Year Plan, a new Defense White Paper imminent, revisions to the OMTE in the air, and continuing trends of experimentation in many important combat and non-

traditional security mission capabilities, 2011 is looking like a promising year for the PLA and the community of interested students who watch it.

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NOTES:

1. The author's views are his own. With thanks to Dennis Blasko for advice and guidance, any errors or omissions are the author's alone.
2. Li Lin and Zhang Fu, eds., *Command Organs Work Guide*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press) 2001: 173.

The Snow Dragon Moves into the Arctic Ocean Basin

By K. Joseph Spears

In a warming and changing Arctic, China is stepping up its activities in the Arctic Ocean Basin. While China's interests and policy objectives in the Arctic Ocean Basin remain unclear, Beijing is increasingly active and vocal on the international stage on issues that concern the region. To that end, China is actively seeking to develop relationships with Arctic states and participate in Arctic multilateral organizations such as the Arctic Council. The region includes a rich basket of natural resources: The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that 25 percent of the world's undiscovered hydrocarbon resources are found in the Arctic region along with 9 percent of the world's coal along with other economically critical minerals. There is presently scarce open source information on China's Arctic policy and very few public pronouncements on the Arctic by Chinese officials. This article is an attempt to describe China's actions in the region.

With the world's largest non-nuclear research icebreaker,

Xue Long (Snow Dragon) China has embarked on four Arctic research expeditions in recent years into Arctic waters. This is part of China's larger polar scientific research effort which has seen 26 expeditions in the Arctic and Antarctic since 1984. This past summer the vessel made it on a research voyage to 88 degrees North latitude which is only 120 nautical miles from the North Pole. Chinese research scientists from the fourth research expedition travelled to the North Pole via the vessel's helicopter to conduct research, arriving at the North Pole on 15:38 p.m. (0738 GMT) Friday August 20, 2010 (*China Daily*, August 21, 2010). It was another first for China and clearly highlights a changing Arctic, which is seeing decreasing and thinning sea-ice year after year. A few years ago this would have been impossible with this ice-breaking research vessel because of the difficult sea-ice conditions and the thick multi-year ice, which has traditionally served as a barrier to all but the world's largest nuclear icebreakers that fly the Russian flag.

The range of estimates predict that the summer season could be ice-free as early as 2013 to 2060. At an Arctic conference held in Tromsø, Norway back in January, U.S. Rear Admiral Dave Titley stated, "We believe that sometime between 2035 and 2040, there is a pretty good chance that the Arctic Ocean will be essentially ice-free for about a month" (*Financial Times*, January 25). Ice free does not mean no ice, as there would be increased frequency of broken ice and icebergs in certain waters. A few years ago, the thick multiyear ice in the Arctic Ocean, which can be over 30 feet thick with pressure ridges, would have been an impermeable barrier for a light ice breaker such as the *Xue Long* to travel this far North into the Arctic Ocean. With a warming arctic, the multi-year ice is thinning and breaking up. What researchers are finding is that the multi-year is embedded in a light skim of first year ice which covers the Arctic ocean in the winter. This thinner ice has allowed more wave action and wind fetch in the region which has also arguably contributed to the loss of multi-year sea-ice. Water temperatures at depth in the Arctic Ocean also seem to be increasing. Scientists are uncertain of the causes of a warming Arctic but the open water is absorbing more of the sun's energy and appears to be creating a positive feedback loop. A recent study has stated that increased ship emissions from Arctic shipping which contribute black carbon to the atmosphere could increase increasing loss of sea-ice through the carbon black absorbing more of the sun's energy by as much as

17 percent.

On March 5, 2010 the official China News Service relayed comments made by Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo, with respect to the Arctic at the Third Session of the Eleventh Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) when he advised Chinese leaders not to fall behind on Arctic Ocean exploration. Admiral Zhin stated "The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the North Pole and surrounding area are the common wealth of the world's people and do not belong to any one country." He went on to say "China must play an indispensable role in Arctic exploration as we have one-fifth of the world's population." He went on to criticize some countries for contesting sovereignty over the region, which impacts other nations (China News Service, March 5, 2010). Is this a new Arctic specific statement or part of a larger strategy with respect to China approach to its foreign policy with respect to the Arctic Ocean Basin and international law and the law of the sea? Or was this simply a restatement of existing Chinese policy on the Arctic or ocean issues generally?

Many commentators took Admiral Zhin's statement as a new direction with China taking a more aggressive stature and a potentially increasing militarization and singular approach to the Arctic. In recent years, the expansion of China military and especially its navy has been increasing. China's new approach seeks to enhance the perceived legitimacy of Chinese operations at sea. This has led to recent incidents involving U.S. vessels with in China's EEZ. The Law the Sea Convention allows foreign vessels including naval vessels the right of innocent passage in the EEZ. International law Professor Cmdr. James Kraska in a number of articles has coined this concept or notion of "lawfare" whereby China seeks to use international law to advance its strategic interests.

A leading European think Tank released March 2010, a report *China Prepares for an Ice-Free Arctic* authored by Linda Jakobson. Ms. Jacobson, a China based scholar of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) held many interviews with Chinese officials and academics and the 16 page report summarizes the Chinese position which provides some insights into China's Arctic policy as it presently stands. It is a very helpful and must read document for those interested in China's Arctic and foreign policy in this warming region. The SIPRI report states:

"Chinese officials have also started to think about what kind of policies would help China benefit from an ice-free Arctic environmentDespite its seemingly weak position, China can be expected to seek a role in determining the political framework and legal foundation for future Arctic Activities" [1].

The report held that China was in a weak position because it was not a littoral state having no arctic coastline or any sovereign rights to the continental shelf in the Arctic ocean. The report held:

"To date China has adopted a wait-and-see approach to Arctic developments, wary that active overtures would cause alarm in other countries due to China size and status as a rising global power.... However, in recent years Chinese officials and researchers have started to assess the commercial, political and security implications for China of a seasonally ice-free Arctic region..... Chinese decision makers, on the other hand, advocate cautious Arctic policies for fear of causing alarm and provoking countermeasures among Arctic states" [2].

It is interesting that Admiral Zhin's comments followed just a few days after the release of the SIPRI report. Is this a signal that China wishes to make its position clear on the waters outside the jurisdiction of the Arctic coastal states? There is some concern of Russia's claim to the Lomonosov and Mendeleev undersea ridges , which transect the Arctic Ocean, because China and the rest of the world would be at a disadvantage over the seabed that is found in the Arctic Ocean's doughnut hole noted below.

In an earlier speech in Norway 2009, China's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Hu Zhengyue said "China does not have an arctic strategy," however, the SIPRI report held the country does have a clear agenda on the Arctic. Hu went on to state, "When determining the delineation of outer continental shelves, the Arctic states need to not only properly handle relationships amongst themselves but must also consider the relationship between the outer continental shelf and the international submarine area that is common human heritage, to ensure a balance of coastal countries interest in the common interests of the international community" [3].

In the China Papers No.11 released in June 2010 by the Canadian International Council (CIC) dealt with *China and the Arctic: Threat or Cooperation for a Potential for Canada*. In it, Professor Frederic Lasserre examines China's recent arctic history and provides a good overview of China's present state of affairs in the Arctic. Professor Lasserre looked at China's interests in the Arctic, which can be rooted in science, in economic interests or shipping potential, or in global political objectives pursued by Beijing. The analysis comes from a Canadian perspective but places China's action in a broader context and is a very useful document.

What does this mean and how does this affect the doughnut hole in the Arctic Ocean? The doughnut hole is the area outside the arctic littoral states sovereign rights jurisdiction. It is the area of High Seas that is totally enclosed. In the Arctic Ocean, the five coastal nations exert sovereign rights in the EEZ to 200 nautical miles. Under the Law the Sea Convention, the five Arctic coastal states can exert a claim over the nonliving resources (hydrocarbons) of the continental shelf under article 76 of the Law of the Sea Convention out beyond 200 nautical miles and out to an outer limit of 350 nautical miles. The outer extent is based on the slope of the continental shelf and the depth of continental sediments which is a scientific determination. This has seen the Arctic coastal nations collecting evidence on the geomorphology of this region. The Arctic coastal nations are submitting their claims to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). In the Arctic Ocean. It is thought that 88 percent of the seabed is subject to coastal state control if all the claims are accepted as presented.

Outside the EEZ (200 nautical miles) the waters in the Arctic Ocean are considered to be the High Seas under Part XI of the Law of the Sea Convention. The living and nonliving resources are held to be the common heritage of mankind. These are settled rules of international law. Admiral Zin's comments read in conjunction with Minister Hu statement appears that there is something more must be considered in the particular circumstances of the Arctic Ocean when it comes to the Doughnut hole. What that is has not been clearly stated by China at this time.

Under the Law the Sea convention article 234 commonly called the ice covered waters provision allows coastal states

to take certain steps to protect the marine environment. Yet, there is no specific reference to any special factors or considerations to the High Seas in the Arctic Ocean under article 234. This appears to be a new and novel concept that China is advancing for future negotiations. There is some concern of Russia's claim to the Lomonosov and Mendeleev undersea ridges which transect the Arctic Ocean because China and the rest of the world would be at a disadvantage over the seabed, which is found in the Arctic Ocean's doughnut hole noted above.

The Arctic Council, is a high-level intergovernmental forum which addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people. The Arctic Council states include Canada, Iceland, Russia, Denmark, the United States and Norway Finland and Sweden. The Arctic Council allows the number of observers to attend the Arctic Council and almost became an observer in 2008. Since that time China, Korea Japan and Italy acting *ad hoc* observers. Full membership is reserved for Arctic countries and indigenous groups. The Arctic Council does not deal with security issues and has no binding effect on the parties however it seeks cooperation on variety of issues and is the leading source of cooperation on Arctic issues. The Arctic Council promotes "cooperation, coordination interaction amongst Arctic states". China is the first Asian country to seek observer status. The EU is also been seeking observer status. The EU wants to create an Arctic Treaty similar to the Antarctic Treaty for the region and released an Arctic policy in 2008.

The CIC paper in conjunction with the SIPRI report provides the best snapshot of what China's intentions are in the Arctic. It is clear that China has an agenda and is looking to use existing regimes to advance its interests at the multilateral and bilateral level. China has recently entered into bilateral discussions with both Norway and Canada. China has a research station in Ny-Alesund, in the Svalbard islands north of Norway.

Does that mean that China is taking a more proactive approach in the Arctic Ocean. At this point it is too early to tell. It is clear that the two papers released in 2010 provide a good summary of China's position in the Arctic based upon open sources. It does appear that the Law of the Sea Convention must be interpreted in the broader perspective of humankind. This will become clearer in further analysis in the coming years. Yet, there

is some internal inconsistencies in China's position. As Linda Jacobson notes:

There is some irony in the statements by Chinese officials: in the Arctic states to consider the interests of mankind so that all states can share in the Arctic. These statements appear to be contrary to China's long-standing principles of respect for sovereignty in the internal affairs of other states. Based on official statements by the Chinese government and the other open-source literature written by Chinese Arctic scholars, China can be expected to continue to persistently, yet quietly and unobtrusively, push for the Arctic and spirit being accessible to all.

In conclusion, with a warming arctic, and no clear strategy as to China's intention in the Arctic Ocean Basin, it is difficult to predict with certainty China's long term goals in the Arctic region. As set out above and from increased activity and interest it appears clear that China is moving forward to develop linkages and position itself for the opportunities that present itself in the Arctic in this century. The opportunity for China is simply too great. China is going to be a presence in the Arctic Ocean Basin. The Snow Dragon is comfortable and learning to swim very well in the warming Arctic waters. Other nations will need to engage China in the coming years.

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NOTES:

1. 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.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
