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China's Maritime Surveillance Forces

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In a Fortnight

CHINA INTENSIFIES MARITIME SURVEILLANCE MISSIONS

By L.C. Russell Hsiao

China is increasing its maritime surveillance missions and strengthening its capabilities to monitor vessels in areas that it considers Chinese waters. According to the *2010 China Marine Law Enforcement Bulletin* recently published by the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), in 2010, the China Marine Surveillance (CMS) executed 188 marine missions covering 211,428 nautical miles, as well as 523 air flights covering 538,480 kilometers (km). The missions reportedly monitored 1,303 foreign vessels, 214 flights and 43 other targets (*People's Daily*, May 23). The CMS, which acts as the paramilitary maritime law enforcement agency of the SOA, is one of at least five major agencies tasked to execute China's maritime enforcement policy. The CMS's primary mission is to patrol China's exclusive economic zones (EEZs), which extend 200 nautical miles from the state's coast. The surge in the number of the CMS's missions, which is being enhanced by the agency's development of greater enforcement capabilities, reflects the growing profile of the CMS in maritime governance as China becomes increasingly assertive over regional territorial disputes.

According to CMS Deputy Director Sun Shuxian's estimation, more than 1,000 people will join the CMS staff by the end of 2011, increasing the total number to around 10,000. Furthermore, 12 inspection ships were added and six marine surveillance branches built, including the No. 10 branch of the CMS in Haikou, Hainan province, and a law enforcement branch for Xisha, Nansha and Zhongsha islands in 2010 (*China Post*, May 3). While China's maritime surveillance capability is generally inferior to that of Japan's, "this will change," according to Li Mingjiang. An assistant professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Li argues that, "Its [China's] latest move to add personnel and ships means that it is

certain we will see China take a more active role and presence in the China seas and South China sea.” “Starting from April last year, it has been covering every area that it has an interest in. Now it will be able to increase surveillance from, say, one or two trips every few months to surveillance on a daily basis,” Li notes (Straits Time [Indonesia], May 3).

In October 2008, Sun declared that, “The [CMS] force will be upgraded to a reserve unit under the navy, a move, which will make it better armed during patrols ... the current defensive strength of CMS is inadequate” (*China Daily*, October 20, 2008). The CMS currently has about 300 marine surveillance ships, including 30 ships rated over 1,000 tons, and 10 aircraft, including four helicopters. In the coming five years, another 36 inspection ships will reportedly join the surveillance fleet (China Military News, October 29, 2010; *China Post*, May 3). According to Wang Hanling, a maritime law specialist at the pseudo-government think tank Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, “The new ships (joining the fleet) can be interpreted as China’s response to recent sea disputes” (*China Daily*, October 28, 2010). Indeed, in recent years the CMS has significantly stepped up patrols in both the East China Sea and also the South China Sea.

Ostensibly to increase the CMS’s C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capacity, the agency is making a concerted effort to acquire more high-tech platforms, mechanism and skills. For example, the new 3000-ton level surveillance ship, *Haijin 83*, is equipped with on-board helicopters, the latest satellite devices, and state-of-the-art engines. The *People’s Daily* reported that the agency has been building new platforms with real time integration of space, air, sea, and coastal communications. These new “systems” would bolster the capabilities and assure interoperability of China’s burgeoning maritime surveillance fleet. Indeed, the latest and most technologically advanced 1500-ton ocean surveillance ship, *Haijin 84*, was recently deployed to the CMS’s South China Sea branch (Chinanews.com, May 8; *People’s Daily*, May 23).

The CMS’s increased missions and upgrades to its surveillance fleet indicate the agency’s growing profile in maritime governance. Indeed, the CMS has increased its patrols in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, and has shown an increased willingness to confront regional nations. According to the *Asahi Shimbun*, the most recent SOA report suggests that China should “steer territorial disputes with other countries in its favor by showing its abundant military might” (*Asahi Shimbun*, June 1). The recent confrontation involving Chinese surveillance vessels and Vietnamese fishermen in the South China Sea highlights the increasing strength of China’s maritime enforcement capacities, and fits the pattern of a more robust posture with respect to

maritime sovereignty and resources disputes.

PLA NAVY EXPANDS RECRUITMENT DRIVE TO ENHANCE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY

China’s expanding maritime interests require a navy capable of executing a diverse range of missions at greater distances from Chinese territorial waters. While the PLA Navy (PLAN) has made significant progress in modernizing its forces in terms of developing new platforms and weapon systems, these assets require a highly educated and capable corps of personnel to operate and turn into an effective force. This is a shortcoming that even senior Chinese military officers have acknowledged. The point was not lost in the PLA Navy’s reforms, which appears to be stepping up its efforts to recruit new talents and educate personnel to operate its impressive array of new vessels and weapon systems. At a recent military conference, a senior Chinese naval officer highlighted the progress that the PLAN has made in recruiting and educating its personnel over the past five years under the 11th Five-Year Plan (2005-2010), and outlined a set of ambitious benchmarks for the five years ahead. The strategic development in education and recruitment of navy personnel appears to be a major thrust of PLA Navy modernization, which will enhance the PLAN’s long-term operational capabilities (*Wen Wei Po* [Hong Kong], May 10; *Global Times*; May 11).

At the conference on talent development, Xia Ping, head of the Navy Personnel Department, stated that the PLA Navy is seeking to recruit more than 2,000 Ph.D. degree holders in the next five years. Without identifying specific types of vessels or responsibilities, Xia revealed that between 2005 and 2010 the PLA Navy had cultivated “more than 1,000 commanders and technical personnel to develop and operate new batches of marine weaponry,” which reportedly include “large surface combat ships, nuclear submarines and new warplanes.” A researcher at the Chinese Naval Research Institute, Li Jie, cited by *Global Times*, explained that a large-scale naval surface force could refer to heavy-tonnage vessels including cruisers, amphibious assault ships, destroyers and aircraft carriers. Xia lamented that back in 2001, the Chinese navy had only one commander with a Ph.D. degree, but during the 11th Five-Year Plan, the Navy cultivated [about 100] commanders with Ph.D.s and Masters degrees, who have enhanced the Navy’s military training, live fire exercises, joint training, warship visits and far sea missions (*Wen Wei Po*, May 10; *Global Times*, May 11).

According to Xia, in the 11th Five-Year Plan, the Chinese navy admitted more than 20,000 officers from military and civilian academic institutions, and sent them to the Navy’s surface warship, subsurface, naval aviation, marine and coastal defense

units. In the 12th Five-Year Plan, the Chinese navy plans to train over 2,000 Ph.D.s, which means that around 20 percent of officers will hold graduate degrees. Furthermore, corps-, division-, and regiment-level level officers will have to receive 2-3 levels of professional military education (PME) as they rise up the ladder. Ostensibly, this education regimen is considered necessary for officers to develop a command of informationization, system warfare and to raise the Navy's capabilities to conduct informationized warfare (*Wen Wei Po*, May 10; *Global Times*, May 11).

In the past five years, the Chinese navy directly recruited over 7,000 enlisted personnel from around 400 some technical institutes across the country's 20 provinces (*Wen Wei Po*, May 10). Moreover, the Navy relied on academies (*yuan xiao*) to train more than 11,000 noncommissioned officers. Consequently, the noncommissioned officers' education level and professionalism have significantly improved. Currently, noncommissioned officers make up about 70 percent of all enlisted personnel in the Navy, and 83 percent of all enlisted personnel deployed on surface vessels (*Wen Wei Po*, May 10).

Xia stated that between 2005 to 2010, the PLA Navy recruited nearly 1,000 enlisted personnel from civilian colleges at the undergraduate level and above. Every year the Navy will select from these enlisted personnel a proportioned amount to rise through the ranks and go through military academy training. After qualifying through tests, these enlisted soldiers will become part of the officer corps. Starting this year, the Navy will select enlisted soldiers who already have a degree from a civilian academy to become pilots; after they attend flight school, they will be deployed to aviation units as pilots (*Wen Wei Po*, May 10).

The PLA Navy's codification and standardization of its recruitment and training process appear aimed at enhancing its operational capability. Indeed, the PLAN's future operational effectiveness depends just as much on expanding and cultivating its human resources as developing new platforms, which require experienced pilots and commanders to operate. The standardization of recruitment practices and PME in the PLA Navy are also indicative of new levels of professionalism, but one needs to be careful in applying Western standard of PME on the PLA, which differ both in terms of length and programs. Nevertheless, the apparent increase of noncommissioned officers in the PLAN seem to signal the growing role of the Navy in the Chinese armed forces. These initiatives, in the long-run, could greatly enhance the operational capabilities of the PLAN.

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Chinese Citizens Challenge the Party's Authoritarian Tilt

By Willy Lam

In what pundits have billed as a battle between David and Goliath, Chinese citizens appear to be pushing back on the all-powerful party-and-state apparatus that increasingly seems out of touch with popular aspirations. Efforts to challenge the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) supremacy are mounting even as the police, state-security agents, and the quasi-military People's Armed Police (PAP) are stepping up enforcement of draconian methods to muzzle destabilizing or "disharmonious" voices. Moreover, the leadership under President Hu Jintao is apparently spearheading a nation-wide campaign to resuscitate authoritarian norms (See "The Death of Factions within the Chinese Communist Party?" *China Brief*, May 20).

The past few weeks have witnessed horrendous incidents of ordinary Chinese resorting to drastic steps to vent their frustrations against the authorities. Most eye-catching has been the worst outbreak of disorder in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR)—home to six million ethnic Mongolians—since the end of the Cultural Revolution. Since early May, when two Mongolian herders were killed after being run over by Han-Chinese truck drivers, protests involving several thousand residents have rocked the city of Xilinhot and the nearby counties of Zhenglan and Xiwu. The demonstrators, who included livestock farmers as well as college students, were protesting over the alleged exploitation of herders—most of whom being ethnic Mongolians—by Han-Chinese controlled mining companies (AFP, May 29; The Associated Press, May 29).

Unlike Tibet or Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia had largely been free from ethnic violence for the past 30 years. Given the existence of an underground nationalistic movement in Inner Mongolia, which seeks union with Mongolia just to the north of the IMAR, regional officials including Party Secretary Hu Chunhua have sought to defuse tension caused by the incident by vowing to "firmly uphold the dignity of the law and the rights of the victims." Hu also vowed to help affected herders seek compensation from mining companies, which were responsible for polluting the grasslands. (*South China Morning Post*, May 30; *People's Daily*, May 30; *Apple Daily* [Hong Kong], May 31).

Equally disturbing to the CCP leadership has been a series of at least five bombings the past fortnight in the provinces of Jiangxi, Shandong, Sichuan, Heilongjiang and Shaanxi. Most of these incidents, which led to the death of ten people in total, appeared to be perpetrated by individuals with anti-government grievances. The most talked-about mishap took place in the city of Fuzhou, Jiangxi. On May 26, suicide-bomber Qian Mingqi set off three bombs in two government buildings in this medium-sized city. At least one other person apart from Qian was killed and six were injured. In Chinese Cyberspace, however, Qian received massive support and sympathy due to the fact that he was a victim of “land grab,” a reference to the confiscation of citizens’ properties by officials acting in collusion with developers. Qian said shortly before his quasi-terrorist act that he had petitioned Jiangxi and Beijing officials for ten years, but to no avail (Cable TV [Hong Kong], May 29; *New York Times*, May 27; *Ming Pao* [Hong Kong], May 29).

“Mass incidents” featuring confrontations between protesters and police have also been reported over the past month or so in provinces and cities including Jiangsu, Guizhou, Hunan, Hebei, Gansu, Henan, Guangdong, Tibet, Liaoning, Beijing and Shanghai (*The Guardian*, May 19; *South China Morning Post*, May 29; *Kansas Star*, May 29; *Apple Daily* [Hong Kong], May 13).

While it is too early to tell whether this spate of unrest will prod the authorities toward either liberalization or enhanced repression, it is noteworthy that a number of respected “public intellectuals” have chosen to push forward political reform by using established institutions and channels. Several editors, lawyers, professors and NGO activists have in the past month declared their intention to register as candidates for elections to grassroots-level legislatures. They include five opinion-leaders who are running for seats in district-level People’s Congresses (PCs) in Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing. The three Beijing-based candidates are think-tank researcher Xiong Wei, China University of Politics and Law professor Wu Danhong, and veteran editor Yao Bo. Li Chengpeng, a popular journalist and political commentator, plans to run in Chongqing, while human-rights writer Xia Shang is hoping to become a deputy in a Shanghai district-level PC (*Ming Pao*, May 28; Radio Free Asia, May 27; Central News Agency [Taipei], May 28).

In an apparent attempt not to provoke the authorities, these intellectuals have stuck to relatively neutral themes such as “promoting social equality and justice,” which is Premier Wen Jiabao’s favorite motto (See “Beijing’s Blueprint for Tackling Mass Incidents and Social Management,” *China Brief*, March 25). Most stated their “electoral platforms” in personal blogs and other social-media vehicles. For example, Chongqing’s Li said he hoped to help the city’s residents “realize their legitimate wishes

and aspirations, supervise the government and implement social [reforms].” Beijing’s Xiong vowed to improve the social-security benefits and civil rights of “migrants” who lack permanent residence status in the capital (Chinareviewnews.com, May 29; Sina.com, May 26).

According to veteran human rights lawyer Xu Zhiyong, who is providing legal assistance to these would-be candidates, “more citizens devoted to the public interest are considering taking part in the polls.” Xu, a former district-level legislator, added: “the mere act of running for office” would give a boost to reforms. People’s University political scientist Zhang Ming pointed out that the government should encourage more citizens to realize their democratic rights. “However, it is true that the [political] atmosphere is tight,” he said. “The authorities are accustomed to controlled elections and they may not want [public intellectuals] to take part” (Taiwannews.com, May 28; *Ming Pao*, May 28).

Indeed, it is too early to say whether Li, Xiong and others can really become official candidates. This is despite the fact that Beijing has, since the early 1980s, allowed—at least on paper—all Chinese to contest polls for becoming PC deputies at the level of counties, medium-sized cities and districts within big cities such as Beijing or Shanghai. For instance, in early May, unemployed worker Liu Ping, 47, was stripped of her rights to run for a seat in the legislature of the city of Xinyu, Jiangxi Province. A former employee of the Xinyu Steel Works, she has a track record of fighting for the rights of workers. Last year, Liu repeatedly went to Beijing to hand in petitions to central-level departments after having been dismissed by her work unit. Xinyu authorities claimed that she could not run for elections on the grounds that she had been detained for ten days by local police for “illegally petitioning Beijing” (Caing.com, May 29; Southern Metropolitan News, May 9). Political observers in Beijing have pointed out that the authorities are nervous about liberal intellectuals and human rights lawyers running for elections partly because of memories of the 1989 democracy movement. Two years earlier, a number of activists, including Peking University student leader Wang Dan and Li Shuxian, wife of physicist and democracy theorist Fang Lizhi, had contested—albeit unsuccessfully—in polls for seats in Beijing’s Haidian District PC (RFA, June 11, 2005; Boxum.com, May 30, 2005).

Beijing’s reactions to the growing number of independent-minded intellectuals taking part in PC polls could depend on which way the political wind is blowing. Despite the party-state apparatus’ apparent lurch toward conservative ideas, quite a few official media outlets have published articles appealing for an open mind toward political pluralism. Writing in the Guangzhou-based *Southern Weekend*, Zhang Lihua said “criticizing [the authorities] is also a kind of patriotism.” Zhang, who is a member of the CCP Committee of Deqing County in Fujian Province,

argued that “criticizing [the party and government] doesn’t mean opposing [them]; and opposing [certain policies] is not the same as being an enemy [of the administration].” Zhang added that “the entire society should treat yizhi [nonconformist] thinking with an inclusive attitude.” Zhang was repeating the viewpoint of a much-discussed article in a late April edition of *People’s Daily*. Apparently reflecting the viewpoint of the minority of CCP liberals, the piece pleads with the authorities to “adopt a tolerant attitude toward yizhi thinking.” Citing Voltaire’s famous dictum about safeguarding the freedom of speech of one’s opponents, the article said that the “mentality that ‘you are my enemy if you think differently’ is a reflection of narrowness and weakness – and of no use for the construction of a harmonious society” (*Southern Weekend*, May 19; *People’s Daily*, April 28; *Financial Times*, May 10).

That the party may be undertaking a sizeable leap backward—at least in terms of ideology and tolerance toward dissent—however, is evidenced by a commentary that the CCP Central Commission on Disciplinary Inspection (CCDI) published in the *People’s Daily* on May 25. The CCDI, which is in charge of discipline and fighting corruption, said “upholding the CCP’s political discipline is a serious political struggle.” The commentary scolded unnamed party officials for “speaking out of turn—and pursuing their own agendas—regarding the basic theories, paths and principles of the party.” It even accused certain party members and cadres of “fabricating and spreading political rumors,” which had resulted in “the distortion of the image of the party and country” (*People’s Daily*, May 25; *Ming Pao*, May 26). There was speculation in Beijing’s political circles that the CCDI might be targeting Premier Wen, who recently asked the public to be wary of “the vestiges of feudal society” as well as the “pernicious influence of the Cultural Revolution” (*The Economist*, May 26; *South China Morning Post*, May 26).

In an editorial on the Qian bombing incident in Jiangxi, the official *Global Times* editorialized that “opposition to retributive killings” should be recognized as a “universal value.” “Murderers are penalized everywhere, which shows that prohibiting killing is a universal value among all mankind, which towers above everything.” The party mouthpiece noted that sympathy for the perpetrator of the “terrorist act,” as expressed by postings on the Internet, was symptomatic of “the confusion of values in Chinese society.” The paper also claimed that since “China is on the way to becoming a society ruled by law,” all disputes should be settled by legal means (*Global Times*, May 28; *Ming Pao*, May 29).

It seems beyond dispute, however, that the bulk of mass incidents in China have erupted because members of disadvantaged sectors are unable to redress wrongs such as “land grab” through proper legal channels. Moreover, party-and-state departments are seen as themselves breaking the law when they carry out

the systematic intimidation and detention of globally respected human rights activists such as artist Ai Weiwei. If relevant authorities continue to use trumped-up pretexts to bar moderate intellectuals from taking part in grassroots elections, the CCP leadership risks being accused of desecrating “universal values” that are enshrined in both the United Nations Charter and China’s own Constitution.

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China’s Adaptive Approach to the Information Counter-Revolution

By Peter Mattis

The Chinese Ministry of Public Security (MPS) on May 12th announced a series of new measures that would enable the government to better track the migrant population, including stepping up efforts to collect personal information, synthesize, and share information across the ministry and its provincial units (Ministry of Public Security, May 13). These efforts closely follow the central government’s draconian response to stamp out jasmine-related events in 13 different cities after the Arab spring. Writing in *Qiu Shi Journal*, which is the magazine of the party’s Central Committee, Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang also called for the establishment of a “social management system” to monitor the level of happiness, encourage cooperation with authorities, and shape the citizenry’s decisions relating to stability (*Qiu Shi*, May 1). Zhou’s article elaborated that police efforts to control large-scale incidents in recent years demonstrated the utility of a nation-wide prevention and control system. These euphemisms hide Beijing’s thinly-veiled effort to extend surveillance across Chinese society as the MPS moves toward intelligence-led policing. Indeed, Chinese retrenchment since the Tibetan riots and Beijing Olympics in 2008 has surprised observers, yet the systemic crackdown may have its roots in the application of steadily developing police capabilities rather than a direct political decision to suppress growing dissent among the ethnic Chinese citizenry. This trend suggests a more permanent phenomenon in Chinese control tactics than a reactionary and more reversible policy shift.

Since the early 2000s, the MPS has made continuous efforts to harness the advances of the Information Age for security operations—a process called “public security informatization” (*gong’an xinxihua*). Mirroring the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) modernization in war fighting beginning in the 1990s, the MPS invested in information management and strengthening the domestic intelligence apparatus. With incidents of unrest rising steadily, the leadership provided the MPS with more resources to make informatization possible. According to official sources, the internal security budget—roughly 625 billion renminbi (\$96 billion)—this year once again outstripped the official military budget (*Financial Times*, May 10). Reportedly, this investment and the use of informatized investigation have improved law enforcement’s successful investigation and prosecution of crimes—whether criminal or political (*Renmin Gong’an Bao*, May 9; February 10; November 18, 2009). The aim of this article to examine what the MPS has accomplished in its informatization process and the internal security challenge it is designed to confront.

CREATING THE INFORMATION COUNTER-REVOLUTION

China’s adaptive approach to the challenges and opportunities of the Information Revolution has started to change minds about the state’s ability to maintain censorship, set propaganda lines and keep up with technologically-savvy political activists. The conventional view holds that the Chinese citizenry’s increasing access to information and information technology will challenge the state’s ability to maintain control, ultimately leading to systemic and possibly democratic reforms. If email, smart phones, Twitter-like microblogging and social media are the means of revolutionary change, MPS informatization may be seen as part of the counter-revolution outlined more fully in the 12th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (See “Beijing’s Blueprint for Tackling Mass Incidents and Social Management,” *China Brief*, March 25).

The informatization of public security broadly covers the modernization of Chinese law enforcement, not just for suppressing dissent (and stamping out “separatist” activities) but also countering increasingly sophisticated organized criminal activity such as narcotics trafficking. At its core, public security informatization relates to shifting the police posture from reactive to preemptive through the use of intelligence collection and synthesis. MPS leaders firmly established the primary importance of public security informatization at the Nanjing Conference in 2008, naming it one of three main objectives in developing public security and calling it “revolutionary” for police work (MPS, September 25, 2008; *Dongtai Gong’an Xinxi Wang*, September 28, 2008) [1].

A core part of MPS informatization is the reinstatement of the

ministry’s intelligence capabilities, which Beijing transferred to the Ministry of State Security in 1983 (Central News Agency [Taiwan], June 10, 1983). Roughly a decade ago, the MPS created a new department focusing on domestic intelligence to identify and neutralize threats to stability. Ostensibly leaked documents from local MPS units outline the parameters of the intelligence collection in terms strikingly similar to Chinese (and Western) writings on national-level intelligence [2]. The domestic intelligence department (*guonei anquan baohu zhidui*) directs its officers to collect “early warning, insider, and actionable” information. Other directives contain references to “early subduing” (*yufu*), “manage by striking early” (*zao daji chuli*), and “persist in putting detection and warning first; defend and control early” (China Digital Times, April 11, 2010; April 20–21, 2010).

The nascent “Great Intelligence System” (*da qingbao xitong*), as it is called by MPS Vice Minister Zhang Xinfeng, focuses on two elements: building a domestic informant network and creating a comprehensive information-sharing network for MPS units to tap during investigations. On the former, the few windows available into the informant network suggests it is widespread, but its quality may be suspect. According to a now-unavailable interview with a county-level MPS chief, his bureau maintained a 12,000 person informant network out of a total local population of 400,000. These informants received small stipends depending on their role within the informant network, varying from general informants, to “eyes and ears,” to special intelligence collectors. The general informant level can even include pensioners assigned to watch for “unstable elements” (Xinhua News Agency, August 28, 2009; *Financial Times*, May 10). Other reports suggest domestic intelligence units also operate within universities, promising assistance in finding work after graduation, joining the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and other such low-cost perquisites (at least for the MPS) to induce the cooperation of informants (China Digital Times, April 11, 2010).

The informant networks supplement the wider integration of MPS databases on individuals’ movement and personal history, including entry and exit information, bank records, cell phone activity, and more. Zhou’s recently announced goals of unifying many forms of identification and registration into a single national card is just one such initiative (*Qiushi*, May 1).

The most well-known example of public security informatization is the Golden Shield project, now going into its third phase. The Golden Shield network is often confused with internet monitoring and other aspects of the Great Firewall, but instead relates to MPS management. Beginning in August 2003 as one of the national e-government projects, the Golden Shield network serves as the connective tissue between the MPS and sub-national elements, which allows those units to tap into

the MPS Information Center (*Renmin Gong'an Bao*, July 19, 2007). Although the implementation of Golden Shield has been uneven, the MPS has made substantial progress in the last four years, reportedly raising the network coverage from roughly 40 to 90 percent of local public security units (*Renmin Gong'an Bao*, February 17).

THE CHALLENGE FOR PRESERVING STABILITY

Much of the MPS's informatization process relates to the acquisition and use of intelligence for preserving stability, even if not always called "intelligence." Intelligence, according to Chinese writers, arises out of competition and the corresponding need for information to provide a decision-making advantage over an adversary [3]. In this case, MPS intelligence reflects a competition over information and the capability to organize beyond the government's control or observation. Viewing the political aspects (rather than the criminal aspects) of preserving stability as a competition suggests a shift in how analysts should evaluate the prospects for instability in China.

The question is not the number of mass incidents each year, but rather the density of linkages between demonstrations across China. According to official statistics, the number of public order disturbances has steadily grown over the last ten years from 58,000 in 2003 to an estimated 90–100,000 incidents in recent years (*Nanfang Zhoumo*, February 3, 2010). The vagueness surrounding what constitutes a "mass incident" (*quntixing shijian*) or "public disturbance" (*saoluan*) makes these statistics misleading as a sign for anything other than the existence of unrest. The increasing number of reported incidents could also signify more effective public security coverage that prevented other outlets for dissent from being used, such as the official channel for citizens' complaints that police sometimes try to intercept. Preventing the other outlets from being used may be pushing the aggrieved to more drastic actions. So long as these incidents remain local and confined to local grievances, local security, as the numbers suggest, can handle them.

The danger of Ai Weiwei, Liu Xiaobo, and the other lawyers and activists now confined is their ability to draw attention to the universal character of citizens' problems relating to the government across China. Ai Weiwei was not so much of a danger when he simply blogged or tweeted his opinions, but once he started pulling people together to draw attention to the victims of the Sichuan Earthquake and the corrupt practices that led to so many dead, Ai became a real danger to the Chinese government. The danger of Liu has the same character. The famed Charter '08 involved signatories from every province of China and from all walks of life. Both challenged the central government's effort to keep dissent and disgruntlement localized ("Thinking National, Blame Local," *China Leadership Monitor*,

January 30, 2006). Despite the rising unrest, it is striking that the biggest nation-wide demonstrations involved Japan rather than the government.

Communications technology aids both sides of the competition. For activists, technology lowers the cost of linking people together and facilitates organization building across longer distances. For the security services, the increasing use of the Internet for all sorts of communication—especially phones and letters—makes monitoring a large population easier than having to physically tap phones or read correspondence. Newer social media is the perfect example of technology's double-edged sword. While social networks make it easier for users to identify important targets to follow, security services also find it easier to identify the key nodes of transmission for undesirable ideas and exhortations. This was something Iranian demonstrators discovered after the election protests in 2009 and Chinese observers saw in the police crackdown amid overseas calls for a "Jasmine Revolution" in China (*Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2009; *Apple Daily* [Hong Kong] February 21).

CONCLUSION

The MPS discussion and newspaper coverage of public security informatization suggest increasing proficiency using information technologies to collect, communicate and use information across its police and domestic intelligence elements. Speaking to local-level officials, MPS Vice-Minister Zhang Xinfeng stated that public security informatization has reached a critical time and that the next steps are to create a cadre of intelligence specialists and enhance the informatization performance across the ministry (*Shangrao Xinwen*, April 29).

The public security informatization process is far from complete and, as the articles cited above show, the process includes at least some of the national-local bargaining that has long bedeviled Chinese politics and implementation of central directives. The vertical-horizontal relationships problem (*tiao-kuai guanxi*) raises many issues, but one of the most important questions to consider relates to the compatibility of information technology across jurisdictional boundaries. Local control over at least some informatization spending suggests the MPS may have problems with software compatibility and vendor support across local elements. One potential solution to this problem hinted at in Chinese press coverage, and that the MPS could be using it to maintain the databases within the Ministry headquarters. Even if local MPS elements could not easily transmit data among each other, at the very least, they could relay information via the MPS at the national level. (For example, *Renmin Gong'an Bao*, November 18, 2009; *Jilin Ribao*, November 14, 2006)

While reaching a judgment about how effectively internal

security officials can keep dissident activities isolated is premature, the MPS informatization efforts clearly indicate the competition between activists and security officials is not already over and the MPS may be capable of adapting to new challenges to state authority. At the Nanjing Conference in 2008, MPS chief Meng Jianzhu explicitly noted this competition, stating the rapid informatization of society requires the MPS to keep pace and “firmly establish intelligence [-led] and information-led policing” (Ministry of Public Security, December 20, 2008). Evaluating this competition probably will be one of the central questions for understanding the political future of China. The dynamism inherent in this competition—technological change and competing efforts to exploit those developments—challenge the static assumptions usually held about the capabilities of the Chinese security services. If political change driven from below comes to China, one of the important factors will be the success or failure of public security informatization to keep Beijing aware of the movements and communications of its citizenry.

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NOTES:

1. The other two main objectives of MPS modernization are, first, standardization of law enforcement and, second, promotion of harmonious relations between the MPS and society.
2. For example, Li Naiguo, *Junshi qingbao yanjiu* [military intelligence research] (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 2001), esp 8–59.
3. For a typical Chinese example of the relationship between competition and intelligence, see *Qingbao yu guojia anquan: jinru 21 shiji de geguo qingbao jigou* (Beijing: shishi chubanshe, 2002), 6.

The Leadership of the PLAAF after 2012

By Xiaoming Zhang

The major change in leadership at the 18th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress in 2012 will be Vice-President Xi Jinping replacing President Hu Jintao as the Party secretary-general, and eventually as chairman of the all powerful Central Military Commission (CMC) [1]. This transition period will also be highlighted by a significant turnover in the composition of the CMC leadership. The majority of the ten-

member CMC panel will retire—except for General Chang Wanquan, director of the General Armament Department (GAD), Admiral Wu Shengli, commander of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAAN), and General Xu Qiliang, commander of the People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF). From this group, two members will be promoted to the positions of CMC vice-chair [2]. If General Xu is selected, his ascendance will represent the first time in the PLA’s history that an air force general serves as a CMC vice-chair. This will also lead to changes in the PLAAF’s leadership. When and if this happens, it will be a milestone in the PLAAF’s evolving influence within the PLA and in national policymaking.

A “FIFTH GENERATION” MILITARY LEADER

Since its creation in 1949, the PLAAF has had ten commanders. Major General Ma Ning (1973-1977) was the first pilot commander with more than 1,000 flying hours in the Tu-2 bomber before 1985 [3]. Since then, all PLAAF commanders have been pilots, Xu is the first aviator who was born and grew up under the flag of the PRC (born after October 1949). As a “fifth generation” cadre, Xu is Xi Jinping’s contemporary. Born in 1950, Xu is the youngest member of the CMC, and also the first air force leader with a pilot background to serve as a deputy chief of the PLA General Staff Headquarters (2004-2007) with joint experience. After three years at the General Staff, Xu became one of four deputy chiefs at the General Staff in charge of military training and education of the entire PLA [4]. His joint experience culminated in the command of the PLA joint force in “Peace Mission 2007” (Chelyabinsk, Russia) exercise with various member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Xu became the PLAAF commander shortly after he returned from Russia, and could continue to serve as commander until at least the 19th Party Congress in 2017.

GENERAL XU AS A NEW CMC VICE-CHAIR?

The age of senior members has been an observable and nonnegotiable criterion for whether members will continue to stay in or retire from the CMC and the commander positions of each service. The mandatory retirement age for a CMC member is 70 [5]. Those who are able to retain their membership at the new Party Congress will be subject to the age-based principle whether they are at the age of 67 or younger. During the change of the CMC leadership in 2002, General Xu Caihou was first selected as a member of the CMC in charge of the GPD and rose to vice-chair of the CMC in 2004 when General Cao Gangchuan reached the retirement age [6]. Even though there is a possibility that General Xu will not become vice-chair of the CMC in 2012, he could gain that position in 2015 when Admiral Wu reaches the age of 70.

NEW PLAAF LEADERSHIP

In addition to General Xu's possible promotion, the current political commissar of the PLAAF, General Deng Changyou, will have to retire at age 65 in 2012. The question then becomes: who will make up the new leadership of the PLAAF? Since 2004, all service chiefs (including the second artillery) have gained a seat in the powerful CMC, concurrently with an air force general and a navy admiral appointed as a deputy chief of the General Staff. This arrangement reflects increasing joint-ness in the make-up of the PLA's leadership at the national level than what it was in the past. Also, generals with blue (PLAAF) and white (PLAN) uniforms serving as a deputy chief of the General Staff would possibly be designated as the future chief of the air force and navy.

Currently, Air Force General Ma Xiaotian serves as the deputy chief of the General Staff. He joined the PLAAF in 1965 at age 16 as a pilot cadet, and then moved up his officer career from a flight leader in 1972 to vice commander of the PLAAF in 2003. In 2006, he became the first air force officer appointed as commandant of the PLA National Defense University (NDU), and a year later replaced General Xu as the deputy chief of the General Staff in charge of the PLA's intelligence and foreign affairs [7]. If he becomes the commander of the PLAAF and a member of the CMC in 2012, Ma could continue to serve in that position until 2017 and possible beyond.

General Deng Changyou's replacement as political commissar will most likely be Lt General Liu Yazhou, who is currently political commissar of the PLA NDU [8]. He was one of the PLAAF deputy political commissars from 2003 until he was appointed to the current position in 2009. As one of the few PLA generals who have had Western experience, Liu spent one and half years at Stanford University as a visiting scholar in 1986 and 1987. He has written extensively about PLAAF strategy, having been recognized by many Chinese analysts as the "Douhet of China" because of "his reputation as a daring forward thinker of air power theory" against the PLAAF's traditional mindset [9].

The prospect of General Ma and Lt General Liu becoming the new air force leadership, concurrently with General Xu as a CMC vice-chair, will have a significant influence on the PLAAF's role in the PLA, especially its bargaining position in negotiating budgetary allocations, force restructuring, senior personnel appointment, and weapon acquisition.

The PLA has traditionally been dominated by the "land army" and, to a large extent, it still is. The four general departments—the GSD, GPD, GLD, and GAD—serve concurrently as the PLA's joint staff and as the headquarters for all services: ground force, navy, air force and second artillery force, which are still

staffed primarily by army officers. Since there are no general headquarters for ground forces, the GSD is essentially assigned to perform the functions of ground force headquarters. The structural bias in favor of the army has been inevitable in all military aspects from force size, structure, and command and control to logistics, equipment, R&D and procurement [10].

REMAINING AN ARMY-CENTRIC MILITARY

Since 2000, an increasing number of personnel from other services have steadily been assigned to "joint" positions at headquarters department levels as well as at military region headquarters levels [11]. This change enables the expertise and knowledge of other services to be brought to high operational apparatuses. While wearing the uniform of their own services, they are no longer in the personnel system of their own services. This separation keeps their representation of parochial interests in these headquarters departments at a minimal level.

Beginning in 2002, researchers from the PLAAF Command College in Beijing published several articles in the February issue of the *Air Force Military Journal*, arguing that the army dominance in the PLA has been the obstacle for its joint-ness [12]. Currently, the PLAAF enjoys the benefits of a favorable military spending policy. Yet, Air Force officers often complain that as long as the GLD continues to control military finance, an unsatisfactory funding for the air force is expected [13].

STRIVING FOR AN INDEPENDENT AIR FORCE

As early as 2000, Lt General Liu Yazhou proposed that Chinese military authorities consider reorganizing the PLAAF into functional air commands by separating the air force from the PLA military region (MR) system to become a true independent service. Ostensibly to make the PLAAF a more offensively oriented air force, he further recommended the use of the U.S. Air Force's "expeditionary force" model to organize air force units into air strike groups with a mix of fighters, bombers, and early warning aircraft [14]. His advocacy for eliminating the ground force dominated military system, however, has received little support from the PLA military establishment.

This situation could change under a new PLAAF leadership in the CMC. During his ten years (1987-1997) as vice-chair of the CMC, Navy Admiral Liu Huaqing never stopped pushing forward what he had advocated for the PLA Navy to be a force capable of operating in near seas when he served as its commander (1982-1987) [15]. The PLAAF did not adopt a service-specific aerospace strategy known as "integrated air and space operations, being prepared for simultaneous offensive and defensive operations" until 2004. It remains in a disadvantageous position to achieve this strategic objective. Unlike the U.S. Air Force, the

PLAAF does not control space assets, which are controlled by the GSD and GAD. The PLAAF has been contending that it should be in control of space operations, based on the assertion that air and space are a single integrated medium [16]. It has not been successful in winning the argument. The outcome of this bureaucratic infighting is difficult to predict, but the promotion of an air force general to vice-chair of the CMC and the adding of another PLAAF's memberships in the CMC will create a favorable environment for the air force.

CONCLUSION

The PRC adopted a three-step strategy for the PLA's modernization in China's 2008 defense white paper, laying the foundation for the development of the PLA into a more high-tech, network-centric, balanced and joint force by 2010, allowing it to accomplish mechanization and make major progress in informatization by 2020 [17]. The current and forthcoming leadership of the PLAAF has played and will continue to play a key role in guaranteeing the success of this three-step strategy to make the PLAAF a strategic air force with long-range capabilities and the active involvement of "integrated air and space operations" (*kongtian yiti*) with "fire and information systems" (*xinxi huoli yiti*). The increasing of PLAAF's membership in the CMC would ensure its influence over policymaking, funding priorities, and procurement of weapon systems and equipment in the years ahead.

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NOTES:

1. It is not for certain yet if Hu will give up his seat as chairman of the CMC at 2012.
2. In 2002, the 16th CCP Congress retired all members over the age of 70 with retention of three officers—General Cao Gangchuan (67), Guo Boxiong (59), and Xu Caihou (59), of whom Cao and Guo rose to CMC Vice-Chair. James C. Mulvenon, "Party-Army Relations since the 16th Party Congress the Battle of the 'Two Centers'?" in *Civil-Military change in china: Elites, Institutes, and Ideas after the 16th Party Congress*, edited by Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 17
3. Western literature generally claims that Wang Hai was the first pilot to serve as the commander of the PLAAF in 1985. See Kenneth W. Allen, "The PLA Air Force: 1949-2002 Overview and Lessons Learned," in *The Lessons of History: The Chinese People's Liberation Army at 75*, edited by Laurie Burkitt, Andrew Scobell, and Larry M. Wortzel, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 92. For Ma Ning's biography, see <http://club.xilu.com/zgjsyj/msgview-819697-7608.html>.
4. Since 2004, the Deputy Chiefs of the General Staff have been divided in charge of operations, administration, training, and intelligence.
5. While whether mandatory retirement ages for CMC members and heads of four general departments remain debatable, since the 16th Party Congress in 2002 CMC members appear required to retire at age 70. At the time, if the member has not reached 70, the rule will be that he will continue to be the member at age 67, but must retire at age 68 and older. See "Predicting PLA Leader Promotions," in *Civil-Military change in china: Elites, Institutes, and Ideas after the 16th Party Congress*, edited by Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, 261.
6. C. Mulvenon, "Party-Army Relations since the 16th Party Congress," 17.
7. "Brief Biography of Ma Xiaotian," <http://tieba.baidu.com/f?kz=344917588>.
8. Another speculation is that Liu will become one of deputy directors of the General Political Department. Fang Jianguo, political commissar of the Langzhou Military Region Air Force, will rise to commissar of the PLAAF.
9. Guocheng Jiang, "Building an Offensive and Decisive PLAAF A Critical Review of Lt Gen Liu Yazhou's *The Centenary of the Air Force*," *Air & Space Power Journal*, Vol. 24, No.2 (Summer 2010), 85.
10. For example, the air force and navy have long experienced the technological generation gap, but it is not the case for the army, which has been close to the top level of the world except for army aviation.
11. Kevin M. Lanzit and Kenneth Allen, "Right-Sizing the PLA Air Force: New Operational Concepts Define a Smaller, More Capable Force," in *Right Sizing the People's Liberation Army: Exploring the Contours of China's Military*, edited by Roy Kamphausen and Andrew Scobell, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 461.
12. Dong Wenxian, *Xiandai kongjun lun (xupian)* [On the Modern Air Force (continuation)] (Beijing: Lantian Press, 2005), 260-83.
13. Ren Lijun, Wang Deshun, and Wang Yehong, "Identify the Major Strategic Direction, Strengthen Air Force Finance Development," *Junshi jinji yanjiu* [Military Economic Study], No. 7 (2008): 52-53.

14. Liu Yazhou, "Essences for an Offensive and Defensive Chinese Air Force," in *Liu Yazhou zhanlue wenji* [A Collection of Liu Yzhou's Papers on Strategy] (n. p.: n. p., n. d.), 394-97.
15. See Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing Memoirs*, (Beijing: PLA Press, 2004).
16. Dong Wenxian, *Xiandai kongjun lun*, 327-28, 373, 389.
17. "China's National Defense Paper in 2008," http://www.gov.cn/english/official/200901/20/content_1210227.htm.

PLA Developing Joint Operations Capability (Part Two): Military Training Coordination Zones

By Kevin McCauley

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is transitioning from a coordinated joint operations doctrine to ostensibly a more advanced form of joint operations capability: integrated joint operations (*yituhualianhezuo*). Part one of this series explored PLA experimentation with joint task forces at the campaign and tactical levels that will provide tailored joint force groupings designed to execute specific combat missions in different theatres (See "PLA Developing Joint Operations Capability (Part One): Joint Task Force Experimentation," *China Brief*, May 20). This second part examines joint training and, specifically, Military Training Coordination Zones (*junshi xunlian xiezuo qu*) that have been established to support and promote integrated joint training and experimentation. These training zones play an important role in supporting the joint exercises in each Military Region (MR) and further the development of the military's integrated joint operations capability.

Training is a critical element to the success of the PLA's transformation and modernization efforts. The PLA is attempting to standardize training across each MR, while recognizing each MR and strategic direction will have operational and training requirements peculiar to its mission focus. In order to implement the new basic form of combat under informationized conditions - integrated joint operations - within the PLA, the focus of training and exercises has turned to integrated joint training at the strategic, campaign (operational), and tactical levels since the 2004-2005 period (*Jiefangjun Bao*, December 19, 2006).

PLA officers have stated that joint training remains relatively weak. The Academy of Military Science and other organizations

have been charged with providing the theoretical guidance for the integrated training of units. The general headquarters departments have established a plan for joint training experimentation and designated experimental units, and the expansion of the MTCZs throughout all of the MRs as an important element of its effort to improve joint training (*Jiefangjun Bao*, January 17, 2005; June 27, 2006).

The PLA currently conducts primarily two forms of joint training. The first is organized directly by the General Staff Department (GSD). Presumably, the large multi-regional exercises such as Stride-2009 and Mission Action-2010 fall into this category. Yet, the PLA apparently believes that these exercises lack a joint training management mechanism that is in complete control, the training organizational structure and force groupings are temporary, and the quality of personnel is uneven. The second form of joint training is organized by Military Training Coordination Zones (MTCZ). In contrast to the first category of joint training, the PLA believes the MTCZs have more effective and permanent training management mechanisms, force groupings that have established habitual training relationships, and are better suited for developing joint operations theory and joint operations capabilities (*Jiefangjun Bao Online*, 26 Feb 2009; Xinhua News Agency, March 31).

Military Training Coordination Zones

The first Military Training Coordination Zone (MTCZ) was established in the Dalian area of Shenyang MR in the 1990's (*Jiefangjun Bao Online*, February 2, 2009). The emergence of MTCZ for joint training occurred when the Central Military Commission (CMC) approved a plan in 2004 establishing nine MTCZs (*Jiefangjun Bao*, November 2, 2007), and there could currently be as many as 16 (*Jiefangjun Bao Online*, December 24, 2008; March 2, 2009; March 11, 2009; June 17, 2010) [1]. The focus of the MTCZs has been on integrated joint group training at the tactical level with joint tactical formations, although joint training in Jinan MR now appears to be emphasizing joint campaign large formation exercises based on the apparent transition from the *Lianhe* exercises experimenting with joint tactical formations to the campaign-level experimental joint training that began in 2009-2010, discussed in part one of the series. The PLA apparently believes in a building block approach that initially builds a foundation for joint operations at the tactical level that will then support joint developments at the campaign level (*Jiefangjun Bao*, November 2, 2007; *Jiefangjun Bao Online*, March 11, 2009; March 26, 2009; June 17, 2010).

The Guangzhou MTCZ's, established in 2002, reportedly had a difficult beginning. The PLA press stated that initially the joint training task was not implemented, with the services instead training on individual service requirements. The lack of understanding and communications systems that were not

compatible between the services created a barrier to joint training. Only after intervention by the theater command and construction of an integrated theater C4ISR system was joint training accomplished (Jiefangjun Bao Online, March 2, 2009). Based on press reporting, these issues were not unique to Guangzhou MR, and had to be overcome at other MTCZs.

The MTCZs are also improving the PLA's exercise assessment and evaluation system. The PLA is moving from a manual system of collecting data from exercises that was incomplete, to on-line monitoring and collection of data of unit movement and operations even during large-scale multi-service exercises. The automation of the data collection is allowing the PLA to move to a dynamic evaluation system. The collection includes battlefield video feeds and casualty data in order to conduct more thorough and precise evaluations of the training. The purpose is to develop an improved unit assessment system to more scientifically assess and standardize unit training. The new evaluation system provides feedback to units in order to identify and correct problems (Jiefangjun Bao, April 15, 2008; Jiefangjun Bao Online, September 28, 2010).

In 2004, the Shenyang MR created a specialized training coordination zone to improve joint operations command talent, break down service centric thinking, and also improve the combined-arms knowledge of its officers. The initiative coordinates with 18 units in the MR, including the three services, Second Artillery Force, and local and military colleges. Under the coordination cone is a "Talents Building Guidance Commission" and a "Talents Building Research Department" composed of experts and scholars. Cross-training, assignments to other service units and attendance in other service academies are employed to develop talent (Jiefangjun Bao Online, February 2, 2009).

WEIFANG MILITARY TRAINING COORDINATION ZONE

The Weifang Military Training Coordination Zone in the Jinan MR is the most written about in the Chinese press of all the MTCZs, and considered a leading coordination zone according to the PLA press. The Weifang MTCZ was established in 2001 [2], and reportedly includes 12 training areas and facilities. The Weifang MTCZ has been able to consolidate training facilities of the various participating services to foster jointness. The coordination zone has also brought in officers of various non-participating units to observe joint exercises to cultivate joint operational command talent throughout the MR (Jiefangjun Bao, November 2, 2007; Zhongguo Xinwen She, September 20, 2008).

The Weifang MTCZ experiments and perfects new joint operational methods to promote the transition to integrated

joint training under informationized conditions. The *Lianhe* (Joint) series of exercises are conducted by the Weifang MTCZ to study command and coordination procedures within the joint formations (Jiefangjun Bao, November 2, 2007; Zhongguo Xinwen She, September 20, 2008). Weifang MTCZ is run by the 26th Group Army (GA) as the lead work unit. The 26th GA is headquartered at Weifang, Jinan MR, and the MTCZ includes from 10 to 20 units from the ground forces, PLAAF and PLAN. The GA chief of staff has served as supervisor, while the GA political officer has served as exercise general director for the MTCZ. The GA sometimes serves as a joint campaign large formation, with a subordinate unit, often one of its motorized infantry brigades forming a joint tactical formation with air force and navy units during exercises (Jiefangjun Bao, November 2, 2007; Zhongguo Xinwen She, September 20, 2008; Jiefangjun Bao Online, November 11, 2008).

The MTCZ has also established a Blue Force for confrontation exercises to improve training realism. The joint training directing department selected officers and troops to build up a "blue army" equipped with advanced weapons and technology, particularly reconnaissance equipment. Across the board, there is an increased emphasis on use of opposing forces in PLA training to increase realism, move away from static training scenarios, and force officers at lower echelons to display initiative on a fast paced battlefield (Jiefangjun Bao, November 2, 2007). A Chinese defense ministry spokesman recently announced the creation of a cyber defense blue team in Guangzhou MR to improve PLA network security. This team of thirty specialists could provide an information warfare opposing force during joint training in Guangzhou's MTCZs (Xinhua News Agency, May 26; *Global Times*, May 27).

CONCLUSIONS

The CMC pushed the expansion of MTCZs throughout China in 2004 to support integrated joint training, and coinciding with the PLA's focus on developing the theoretical basis for integrated joint operations following the second Gulf War. There have been growing pains with joint training, as barriers between the services are broken down, and communications and command and control problems surmounted. Yet, these training coordination zones appear to be supporting the development and experimentation for the advancement of an integrated joint operations capability within the PLA. For example, the first part of the article discussed joint command and control improvements developed through a series of *Lianhe* exercises in the Weifang MTCZ in Jinan MR.

The PLA is enhancing joint training through multiple paths, such as the GSD plan for joint training and the designation of experimental units to test different joint capabilities (such

as ground-air coordination, joint firepower strikes and joint logistics), and improve military talent to expand joint knowledge and experience as is occurring in Shenyang MR.

PLA officers have stated that the MTCZs have achieved good results by providing a more effective and permanent training management organization than is available in other training areas. The MTCZs are also playing an important role in establishing an effective automated exercise assessment and evaluation system to improve unit performance. The PLA believes the coordination zones have advanced joint operational capabilities and promoted the transformation of the joint training system (*Zhongguo Xinwen She*, September 20, 2008).

These joint training areas should remain a key focal point for the PLA's joint experimentation and development of joint operational methods into the future. The exercises at the MTCZs should provide important insights into the degree of progress the PLA is making toward operationalizing integrated joint operations within the force.

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NOTES:

1. There could be some double counting relying on PLA press reports, but there is at least one coordination zone per MR, with Guangzhou MR having four, Jinan MR possibly having two, Lanzhou MR possibly having three, and several specialized coordination zones for naval-air, joint command, and military-civilian training coordination.
2. Other reporting indicates Weifang MTCZ was established in 2004.
