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**In a Fortnight**

By Peter Mattis

RE-POPULARIZING MARXISM: LI CHANGCHUN'S CONTRIBUTION TO REFORM

On the eve of the 91st anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), propaganda czar Li Changchun gave a speech to a political theories seminar emphasizing the need to re-popularize Chinese-style Marxism. Li, a Politburo Standing Committee member, argued the task is necessary to “enhance public faith in the country’s political theory amid social conflict” and “to answer the public’s doubts, reach a consensus and generate strength” (Xinhua, June 29). Li’s speech is part of a continuing series of exhortations to revamp Marxist thinking and repackage it for popular consumption. Even though it is difficult to believe an increasingly pluralistic and information-saturated Chinese society will renew its faith in CCP ideology, the effort is nonetheless important for the CCP to maintain power on its own terms.

Li’s speech is an implicit admission that the latest campaign starring Lei Feng, a Mao Zedong-era propaganda icon known for his selflessness, has failed to rekindle the proper spirit among the populace since it began in February—or at least that the campaign is insufficient. The difficulty lies in finding another way, because two of China’s most important indigenous political frameworks, Confucianism and Maoism, are potentially dangerous to the CCP (“Another Lei Feng Revival: Making Maoism Safe for China,” *China Brief*, March 2). Clearly, the problems with

popularizing socialism with Chinese characteristics are not new to Li or other members of the leadership. For example, speaking to the CCP Central Compilation and Translation Bureau in February, Li hailed the theorists' efforts at "sinicization and popularization" of communist ideology. Li's justification for strengthening ideological research—"to provide advice to the country's decision makers"—suggests observers should not so readily dismiss the importance of this subject (Xinhua, February 13).

Many observers believe the party has substituted nationalism for ideology as the foundation for the party's continuing leadership; however, the CCP remains central to so much that some underlying justification is still required. If socialism without Chinese characteristics or Chinese-style Marxism are insufficient, disregarded or up for challenge, then the current government could find itself facing more serious problems. For example, the party cannot use nationalism as a substitute for its ideological reasoning that places the People's Liberation Army (PLA) under the CCP's control. Nationalization, de-politicization and taking the party out of the army are the three dangerous ideas that the PLA has been beating the propaganda drum against over the last six months (*People's Daily*, June 25; *PLA Daily*, June 17, May 15, March 19; *China Daily*, March 13). While there could be a number of reasons for the propaganda, it also could be the natural reflection in the military of a society disenchanted with communist ideology. The PLA, however, is still the ultimate guarantor of government power.

Perhaps just as critical for the Chinese government, the CCP has positioned itself as the inheritor of Sun Yat-Sen's democratic legacy—even if it has emphasized nationalism and people's livelihood (*minsheng zhuyi*) over democracy (*minquan zhuyi*) (*Red Flag*, June 27; *Outlook Weekly*, October 9, 2011). This is why Zheng Ruolin, a correspondent for Wenhui Bao, could state boldly "Democracy has been broadly accepted as an idea" (*Global Times*, June 20). This point has been echoed in many places, including the 17th Party Congress political work report and a Central Party School book *China and Democracy* published in 2011. The continuing recurrence of democracy in important places indicates democracy is far more important than a mere rhetorical device, but relates to a serious intellectual contest that Li's propagandists must confront. The government-approved, CCP-mediated democracy, however, rests on

the vitality of socialism with Chinese characteristics—as Hu Jintao wrote "Developing the democratic politics of socialism is our party's consistent objective of struggle" [1]. Democracy may be a CCP object, but it is delimited within a one-party system with the CCP at the center, on the party's timeline and with structural political reform taking a backseat to economic development and stability (*Red Flag*, June 12, March 26; *People's Daily*, April 9; *PLA Daily*, April 1) [2].

Although it is easy to dismiss the importance of Li Changchun's call to popularize CCP ideology, the underpinnings of the CCP-led Chinese state depend on acceptance of Chinese-style Marxism—or unwavering popular faith in the CCP's ability to govern. Regardless whether Li's efforts and those of whoever succeeds him at the 18th Party Congress this fall are successful, the point is that the CCP is not satisfied with relying on coercion and competence to maintain its power. Beijing seeks to restore popular confidence in the system itself and Li is leading the intellectual charge while others focus on improving cadre performance.

*Peter Mattis is Editor of China Brief at The Jamestown Foundation.*

Notes:

1. Cited in Liu Jianfei, *Democracy and China: Removing the "Undemocratic" Label Attached to China*, Beijing: New World Press, 2011, p. 27.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

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## Developing a Framework for PLA Precision Operations

By Kevin N. McCauley

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has examined U.S. military precision operations (*jingque zuozhan*) in local wars with limited objectives since the 1990's, believing that precision operations have become the basic pattern of joint operations and will become a key capability for integrated joint operations. Both

remain largely aspirational, but the PLA currently is developing a doctrinal foundation for precision command and operations [1]. The recent “Joint Teaching 2012 Queshan” (*Lian Jiao-2012 Queshan*) exercise supported the development of qualified joint operations officers with training in a joint command post and linking command colleges and other military educational institutes with exercises, while testing operational concepts such as joint firepower strikes.

Information technology is a focal point and key requirement for both integrated joint operations and precision operations, and developing a system of systems operational capability (*tixi zuozhan nengli*) and operational system (*zuozhan tixi*)—i.e. a robust Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) system—that integrates military forces will form the foundation for both types of operations [2]. The integrated system must exhibit rapid flow and efficient use of information to support precision command and precision operations, representing a revolution in systems and methods (*PLA Daily*, October 7, 2011) [3].

According to one of the basic PLA works on the subject, *Precision Operations*, the benefits of a precision operations capability include the following: reduced combatant and civilian casualties; minimized destructiveness of combat, including collateral damage; improved operational effectiveness and efficient force employment; control of the scale of conflict; and affecting the enemy psychologically.

The PLA is fielding modern communications, reconnaissance, and precision strike equipment and weapons to support the evolving theory; however, significant problems impede operationalization of the doctrine. The goal is to develop fully integrated joint operations with precision operations capabilities, which will provide the PLA greater flexibility to concentrate and release combat power with high efficiency, potentially employing smaller, modular force groupings during contingencies along China’s periphery or to support new missions. These developments also will support and promote the execution of non-contact and non-linear operations. Both of these terms have come into usage by the PLA and other armed forces primarily in response to precision strike capabilities. Non-contact war has been

used to describe the NATO Allied Force Operation using precision strikes against the Serbian military without ground force commitment. Non-linear operations, relying on high command and intelligence capabilities, seek to intermingle forces rapidly on the battlefield in part to mitigate the effects of the enemy’s precision strikes. This article will discuss key elements of the PLA’s aspirational precision operations theory: command and communications, intelligence, modular force groupings, precision strikes as well as key impediments.

### Command and Communications

A networked command information system integrating joint and combined-arms forces into an organic entity and supporting decision-making in integrated joint operations and precision operations capabilities (*PLA Daily*, November 18, 2010; “The PLA’s Three-Pronged Approach to Achieve Jointness in Command and Control,” *China Brief*, March 15) [4].

The integrated information system represents a transition from the traditional communications architecture—the PLA often describes this as a tree command system—to a mesh or matrix network that is integrated horizontally and vertically linking all command entities, units, personnel and weapons with the following capabilities: a common operating picture, real-time command and control, dynamic mission planning, precision strike, full-dimensional defense and focused logistics support. The system of systems operational capability is intended to support both complex combined arms operations by a single service and joint operations by multiple services and branches [5].

The command organization also will transition from the traditional centralized configuration to a geographically dispersed deployment based on the integrated information command environment. Command staffs will conduct virtual meetings to develop, adjust, or synchronize operational plans. The dispersion of the command components also will provide greater survivability. The PLA still prefers centralized command and advanced planning with branch and follow-on plans. They do intend to balance this with the ability for subordinate commanders to take the initiative during combat to deviate from operational plans as new situations arise and to take advantage of fleeting opportunities on the

battlefield. The overall operational goals and superior commander's intent, however, must be fully understood and followed. Higher-level headquarters will closely monitor the course of operations and be prepared to skip command echelons to intervene directly if required [6].

A matrix command system will feature a highly-integrated command organization based on modular functions with centers for command and control, intelligence information, and firepower coordination as well as departments for information systems, political works and logistics and equipment support. A recent press article describes a group army headquarters transitioning to a joint duty room composed mainly of four centers: mapping center, meteorology center, operational data center and information network center (*PLA Daily*, February 28). These two descriptions of command organization do not necessarily conflict, but also could represent either an evolution or experimentation with command organization.

### Intelligence and Reconnaissance

Integrated intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities are required to assess changes rapidly on the dynamic battlefield in a timely and accurate manner. Intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination will be critical to executing precision command and combat missions, providing intelligence support to precision strikes and other operations. The PLA plans to develop a real-time awareness with a common operating picture for operational forces. It is working on the theoretical basis for intelligence procedures in order to provide actionable intelligence to headquarters at various echelons. However, not all units will receive the same information. Higher-level units will have access to all available reporting [7]. Information will be filtered as it passes to lower echelons based on information requirements to successfully complete assigned mission objectives [8]. A primary consideration appears to be the desire not to overburden units with irrelevant information.

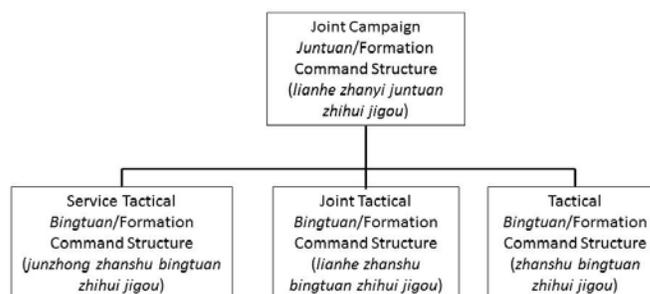
### Modular Force Groupings

The integrated information system represents a dynamic network linking operational forces and weapons platforms with precision command, which will allow for flexibly organizing and restructuring of modular

joint or combined arms task forces based on changing requirements according to the operational phase or battlefield situation. This theoretically will allow the PLA to field the correct force mix with precise capabilities for a given battlefield mission [9].

The matrix communications architecture capable of lateral information flow between services and branches will support joint task force command and control which has been an area of experimentation in PLA exercises ("PLA Developing Joint Operations Capability (Part One): Joint Task Force Experimentation, *China Brief*, May 20, 2011). A joint campaign *juntuan*/formation is a task force that can comprise service-level units and joint tactical *bingtuan*/formations that are tactical-level task forces (see Figure 1) [10].

**Figure 1: Modular Force Groupings**



### Precision Strike

The PLA believes precision firepower strikes will be an important aspect of precision operations. Improved command and control supported by the networked information system and rapid collection, fusion, analysis and dissemination of intelligence will facilitate precision strikes on key enemy targets. As such, precision strikes will support non-contact and non-linear operations [11].

Precision strikes in the context of precision operations with limited objectives are not intended to cause widespread destruction, but to control and paralyze the opponent. The goal of precision strikes is to deliver a

direct blow to the enemy's center of gravity in order to gain a quick victory. In *Precision Operations* published by the National Defense University, the PLA has identified the following key enemy targets to strike in order to cause paralysis: command network and automation system; main and elite forces vital to the enemy's operations; firepower system; and logistics bases and supply lines. Battle damage assessments are an important task during precision operations, facilitated by modern reconnaissance architecture to assess the damage effect by firepower strikes on the targets to determine whether pre-planning and operational requirements are achieved and support decision-making to determine future courses of action.

### Impediments

Key impediments to operationalizing PLA theory are fielding a force-wide integrated C4ISR architecture (the operational system plus a system of systems operational capability) and training joint command personnel with the required skills and education [12]. The PLA has been experimenting with joint command, communications and task force organization in exercises, although problems, particularly in C4ISR integration are apparent. The PLA press continues to provide examples of problems integrating the services and branches, particularly their lateral communications (*PLA Daily*, January 19).

Likewise, commanders and staff officers with information technology and joint operations skill sets are required. The PLA's focus on developing quality personnel and reforming the military education institutes is directed at providing future joint commanders and staff officers. A recent article on reform of military education stated the quality of personnel still cannot meet the requirements of winning informationized wars (*PLA Daily*, June 5). The "Joint Teaching 2012 Queshan" (*Lian Jiao-2012 Queshan*) exercise, held in Jinan Military Region in early June 2012, focused on the issue of developing military talents. Nineteen military academies and colleges participated in the joint exercise, which included the establishment of a joint command post employing a command information system that appeared to test some of the theoretical concepts for integrated joint operations and precision operations (*PLA Daily*, June 7) [13].

PLA plans for developing military talent extend to 2020, coinciding with the second phase of its long range modernization plan scheduled for completion in 2020. It is likely that the PLA planning to establish a cadre of qualified personnel and operationalize some form of integrated joint operations and precision operations capability within key units by that time.

### Conclusions

The PLA describes itself as in an early stage of informationization, but recognizes this should not deter it from doctrinal development for future operations as it continues to advance modernization and transformation efforts. The PLA clearly is developing a detailed theoretical basis for a precision operations capability.

There is some capability in this area now with the fielding of precision weapons and supporting systems that will help develop a strong precision operations capability and provide greater control of forces and efficiency during operations. This should allow the PLA to strike the enemy's center of gravity to gain a quick victory with less material consumption, destruction and casualties.

If successful in developing a precision operations capability, the PLA will gain greater flexibility and control to conduct operations with modular force groupings designed to meet specific operational requirements during conflicts along China's periphery. Once the current hurdles are overcome and these capabilities are achieved fully throughout the force, the promise of quick victory with minimal losses—combined with a belief in the ability to control the scale of a conflict—could make the use of military force in a potential crisis with limited objectives appear manageable with limited risk.

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Notes:

1. *Precision Operations*. Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2011.
2. Information system-based system of systems operational capability (*jìyú xīnxi xìtóng tìxì zuozhān nénglì*), translated in *Military Terms*, Academy of Military Sciences. Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2011, p. 79, as system warfighting capabilities based on information systems, is described as a link between the command information system, units and operational systems providing real-time situational awareness, efficient command, precision strike, rapid maneuver, full dimensional protection, and comprehensive support integrated into an organic whole and having a multiplier effect on operational capabilities. This integration and enhancement of capabilities will support combined arms or joint operations. *Military Terms* (2011, p. 63) also contains a definition of operational system (*zuozhān tìxì*) as a network information system that integrates forces into an organic whole. The PLA, in discussing system of systems operational capabilities, includes the requirement for quality personnel to employ the C4ISR system, as well as unit training in order to achieve the optimal capabilities of the integrated C4ISR system. *Tìxì zuozhān* and *zuozhān tìxì* are requirements for integrated joint operations. *Precision Operations Command*, Shijiazhuang Army Command College. Beijing: PLA Publishing House, 2009 pp. 1–17, 25–50.
3. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 1 Operations*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 1–24.
4. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 1 Operations*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 1–24; *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 2 Operational Command*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 13–24.
5. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 2 Operational Command*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 41–78.
6. Presumably the General Staff Department and possibly theater (Military Region [MR], PLAN, PLAAF, Second Artillery Force) headquarters would receive all available reporting, although it could be argued, for example, that the Nanjing theater might not need information relevant to Chengdu or Lanzhou MRs. As intelligence flows down echelon, according to PLA theory, it will become more restricted and specifically focused on supporting the unit's assigned mission objectives.
7. *Precision Operations Command*, Shijiazhuang Army Command College. Beijing: PLA Publishing House, 2009, pp.41–115, 124–180 .
8. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 1 Operations*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010; *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 2 Operational Command*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 15–24.
9. *Juntuan* and *bingtuan* refer to a range of units at a particular echelon. *Juntuan*, translated as large formation or formation, refers to campaign level units such as Group Army, Military Region Air Force (MRAF), or fleet, with a joint campaign formation/*juntuan* representing a PLA version of a task force. *Bingtuan*, translated as formation, refers to tactical level units such as division or brigade, and can form a joint tactical formation/*bingtuan* which would represent a PLA tactical level task force. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 2 Operational Command*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 15–24.
10. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 1 Operations*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010 pp. 23–25 and 41–51; *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 2 Operational Command*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 52–61.
11. *Study on Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability, Vol. 2 Operational Command*, Nanjing Army Command College. Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 1–40.

12. These PLA academies and colleges included command colleges (but not National Defense University or Academy of Military Sciences), with the Shijiazhuang Army Command College, which writes on future doctrinal trends, providing the executive director for the training.

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## Toward A Second Generation of Ethnic Policies?

By James Leibold

The recent self-immolations in Lhasa remind us that China has its fair share of ethnic problems. Chinese government officials continue to blame “outside forces” for inciting ethnic divisions, insisting that “sixty years of experiences have proved that China’s ethnic policies are correct and effective” [1]. Yet for most in China these incidents reflect a fundamental failure of policy. Intellectuals, netizens, generals, dissidents and even property tycoons now call for a major rethink of ethnic policies. Individuals across ethnic and ideological divides are openly debating this once sensitive and secretive topic. Few in the West however seem to be listening. The ping-pong propaganda on ethnic policy between the CCP and its overseas critics obscure those that seek to change the rules of the game, ushering in a new sort of ethnic politics with far-ranging implications for Chinese society.

For nearly a decade, Professor Ma Rong of Peking University has championed the cause of ethnic policy reform, warning that systemic divisions among China’s 56 “nationalities” (*minzu*) and its system of territorial-based autonomous units (*minzu quyu zizhi zhidu*) could see China follow the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia into national disintegration [2]. Only a fiery melting pot of national integration, Ma Rong contends, can stem this tide of division.

Over the last decade, a series of bloody ethnic riots have rocked the nation and with each incident Ma Rong’s influence seems to grow. In addition to countless smaller, less publicized incidents in Guangdong, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan and elsewhere, China has seen Han-

Hui communal violence which left nearly 150 people dead in Zhongmou county, central Henan province in 2004; violent clashes in downtown Lhasa spread to other Tibetan areas in 2008 and resulted in scores of deaths and hundreds more injured; a brutal anti-Han riot saw nearly 200 (some claim 1,000) slaughtered in the streets of the Xinjiang capital of Ürümqi in 2009 and unleashed vigilante attacks on Uyghurs and a string of hypodermic syringe attacks on Han.

### Policy U-turn?

In 2011, Standing Committee member and United Front coordinator Jia Qinglin cryptically called for a “new chapter” in the CCP’s long-standing efforts to solve the “nationalities question” (*minzu wenti*), one better suited to this “new historical stage” (*Qiushi*, January 1). Earlier this year, one of the party’s leading spokesmen on ethnic affairs, the United Front Department’s outgoing executive director Zhu Weiqun, made a rare admission of serious problems in the Party’s ethnic and religion work, and suggested a range of concrete reforms (*Study Times*, February 13). Yet, the most explicit call for change, and potentially the most influential, has come from futurologist and policy guru Hu Angang, who late last year appealed for a “second generation of ethnic policies”: one that would attenuate “*minzu* identity” (*minzu rentong*) and strengthen a single, shared “national identity” (*guozu rentong*) [3].

Hu Angang is the founding director of Tsinghua University’s Center for China Studies, one of China’s most influential think tanks. Cheng Li of Brookings has described Hu as one of the most visionary and high profile thinkers on China’s rise and its associated problems. The party-state already has adopted no fewer than seven major policy reforms proposed by Hu, suggesting his ideas on ethnic policy reform will receive a serious hearing [4].

In an article originally published in Xinjiang Normal University’s academic journal—but since republished in Party magazines and across the Sinophone Internet—Hu Angang and his colleague at Tsinghua University, Hu Lianhe, speak of a major, new “policy orientation” (*fangzhen*). The Tibet and Xinjiang Work Forums convened by the Party’s Central Committee in 2010, they contend, signaled a new focus on “ethnic contact, exchange and blending.”

The two Hus warn of the twin dangers of “regional ethnic elites” and “regional ethnic interest,” arguing that the failure to reign in narrow ethnic consciousness in frontier regions like Tibet and Xinjiang has increased the threat of ethnic separatism. Meanwhile, with its double standards, the West criticizes China for violating minority human rights while pursuing its own policies of ethnic fusion at home.

For the two Tsinghua professors, the choice confronting China is stark: continue to abide by the former Soviet Union’s “hors d’oeuvres style” (*da pingpan moshi*) ethnic policies and share its fate, or join the global norm by shifting to a “melting pot formula,” which has proven successful in the United States, India, Brazil and other large countries. Inside the melting pot, cultural pluralism is tolerated and groups are permitted to maintain their cultural traditions, yet the absence of group-differentiated institutions, laws or privileges encourages natural ethnic mingling and a shared sense of civic belonging. In order to forge China’s own melting pot, the two Hus outline a raft of bold policy initiatives, covering the political, economic, cultural and social arenas.

*Politically – Eliminate group-differentiated rights and obligations to ensure the equality of all citizens.* This should include nation-wide reform to territorial administrative divisions in order to increase market efficiencies, remove barriers and create a better balance in terms of size, population and ethnic mix. Preferential state-aid should be doled out based on relative impoverishment rather than ethnic status, and ethnic markers should be removed from ID cards, school and job applications, and other official documents.

*Economically – Increase economic interaction and ties between ethnic minority regions and the rest of the country.* The frontier regions have been the “greatest beneficiaries” of China’s economic reforms in terms of GDP growth and improved social welfare, but more is now required to remove institutional barriers to the free flow of goods, capital, labor and information—resulting in increased competition, entrepreneurial initiatives and creative forces, and reduced inefficiencies and regional gaps.

*Culturally – Sharpen the focus on integrating different ethnic traditions into a collective civic culture and identity.* This requires increased use of the national written and spoken language;

guarding against religious extremism; greater attention on civic ceremonies that foster identification with the nation; among other propaganda and media work in this direction.

*Socially – Enhance the flow of peoples across administrative boundaries in keeping with the current wave of globalization, informatization (xinxihua) and modernization.* The mechanical nature of China’s ethnic classification system leaves little room for talented foreigners who wish to naturalize and become Chinese citizens. Facilitating foreign immigration will not only benefit China’s modernization but also break the presumed link between Han and Chinese culture, rendering China a more inclusive, dynamic and robust society. Finally, new methods are required to increase ethnic mobility, co-residence and inter-marriage while promoting Mandarin, bilingual and mix-ethnic schooling.

### **Hold the Party (Line)**

This call for reform has clear support in certain segments of the party state and the broader society. Yet, change is unlikely ahead of the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress later this year, especially given the current focus on party unity in the wake of the Bo Xilai incident. Vested interest runs deep in the current system with massive state and party bureaucracies in charge of minority education, culture, political representation and, perhaps most importantly, security. “These officials,” Tibetan blogger Woesser notes, “are all eating *minzu* rice. If ethnic policies are adjusted or changed, this will have a big impact on their interests, and thus they will attempt to block any adjustment to ethnic policies” (VOA [Chinese], July 31, 2009).

In the first half of 2012, ethnic institutions, like the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing, convened forums to criticize the call for a second generation of policy. These gatherings endorsed current policies as correct, labelling the reform agenda as “rash and imprudent.” While a bit of “perfecting” is required from time to time (namely, in the form of increased state subsidies for autonomous regions), participants generally thought past experiences have proven the current approach is best suited to China’s unique national conditions.

At one such forum, Hui Scholar Ma Ping of the Ningxia Social Science Academy reportedly stated “Now is not the time in China to ‘eliminate cultural differences, weaken

ethnic consciousness, and promote ethnic fusion.’ This kind of ‘ethnic blending theory’ could quite possibly lead to ideological confusion and social unrest, and actually work against or even harm efforts to strengthen the cohesive force of the Chinese nation. State and ethnic consciousness are not innately antagonistic and can be harmonized” (*Zhongguo minzu bao*, April 13). Huang Zhu, the former personal secretary of key policy architect Li Weihan, cited Marx and Lenin in arguing that ethnic differences are a long-term condition and will only disappear after class divisions wither away. Regional ethnic autonomy and minority preferential policies, he argued, are the best way to assist the ethnic minorities with their step-by-step development while protecting their equal rights (*Zhongguo minzu bao*, January 13).

Most of the heavy academic lifting has fallen to the highly respected and well-placed Mongolian scholar Hao Shiyuan. As Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and former Director of its Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Hao speaks with the full weight of the *minzu* system behind him. Over the course of two months, Hao wrote a series of four critiques that exceeded 50,000 characters [5]. Citing everyone from Lenin and Stalin to Deng Xiaoping and Hu Jintao, Hao stressed the importance of substantive rather than formal equality, arguing that these reforms would violate the constitutional provision for “genuine equality.” Much of his critique was spent picking apart the two Hus’ rather selective reading of international experiences and their lessons for China. Hao quite effectively demonstrates some of the persistent ethnic problems that plague the United States, India and Brazil, while presenting extensive evidence discounting the ethnic factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

As it stands, the debate is far from over. In fact, there are reasons to expect that it will intensify among the next generation of CCP leaders with seven new members slated to join the Standing Committee, and at least one of these, Wang Yang, on the public record calling for a re-adjustment to ethnic policy (VOA [Chinese], July 31, 2009). Some sort of policy shift cannot be ruled out over the long term.

### Lifting the Lid

What would this mean for China and its ethnic

minorities? What impact would any policy reversal have? As Barry Sautman has convincingly argued, the scaling back of minority rights would create substantial unease and resistance among minority constituencies [6]. The implications for Tibet and Xinjiang are particularly worrying, as even a small-scale adjustment to policy here would likely increase, rather than decrease, inter-ethnic conflict over the short term.

Yet there is little evidence that most Chinese would welcome the range of initiatives Sautman and others in the West suggest for strengthening and enhancing *minzu*-based rights and autonomy. Some have even suggested Western-style multiculturalism is inherently alien to Chinese culture, helping to explain the tenuous position of minority rights at present [7].

The sequestering of ethnic cultures and peoples under the planned economy kept a reasonable lid on inter-ethnic enmity. The box however is now wide open. Each round of market reforms has unleashed new social cleavages and ethnic contradictions that the current system seems incapable of containing.

Most Chinese liberals argue that a more decentralized, democratic polity would promote ethnic tolerance, social cohesion and national stability. There is enthusiasm here for a return to the Republican period, and some sort of ethnic-blind local autonomy or deliberative politic (*BBC Chinese Service*, July 20, 2009; *Lianhe Zaobao*, July 21, 2009). Others like leading public intellectual Qin Hui go even further, advocating federalism or another form of ethnic-based devolution [8]. Federalism, however, has long been dismissed as unviable (the memories of warlordism and imperialism run deep) and democracy has failed to eliminate ethnic tensions in the West. Without careful top-down, state-led intervention and management, ethnic contradictions could easily spin out of control in China—or so the argument goes.

There is no magic wand. Balancing national cohesion and cultural pluralism is a near universal problem for modern nation-states. The fundamental ethnic arithmetic further complicates this process in China as 100 million ethnic minorities stand little chance of “autonomy” inside a freewheeling marketplace dominated by 1.2 billion Han. The equation looks even darker for the 10 million or so Uyghur and Tibetan residents of the once remote

borderlands.

Critics of the current system agree that a new sort of calculus is required. One that frees ethnic identity from its current *minzu* straightjacket, and breaks the assumed link between “Chinese” and “Han.” There is arguably more diversity *within* the Han (linguistic, ethno-cultural, spatial, etc.) than *between* the Han and most minorities. Are not the Cantonese and the Shanghainese also ethnic parts of the same Chinese whole? Might the Uyghurs and Tibetans find more room to maneuver in a society where identity is hybrid, dynamic and self-ascribed, and everyone is simply labeled a Chinese citizen?

At present, with federalism and a “high degree of autonomy” unrealistic, the options are limited. Those calling for a rethink of the *minzu* system in China might offer viable alternatives for many of China’s ethnic minorities. While their proposals remain contentious and probably misunderstood outside China, they merit careful study, especially if China hopes to foster the sort of inclusive and tolerant “cosmopolitan nationalism” (*da minzu zhubuyi*) that Liang Qichao envisioned over one hundred years ago.

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Notes:

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## Confucius Institutes and the Question of China’s Soft Power Diplomacy

By Alan H. Yang and H.H. Michael Hsiao

After a period of relative calm, Beijing’s promotion of the ever expanding number of overseas Confucius Institutes (CIs) since 2004 came to the attention of the international community once again. As stated in the *2011 Annual Report* issued by the Confucian Institute headquarters, there are 112 CIs and 324 Confucius Classrooms in North and South America, including 81 institutes and 299 classrooms in the United States [1]. On May 17, the U.S. State Department issued a statement that the Chinese teachers with a J-1 visa were in violation of the U.S. exchange access provisions, because they

were operating outside the institutions ostensibly hosting them. The State Department said it will no longer issue visas to 51 Chinese teachers. The announcement irritated China. Although the U.S. State Department clarified after a week and apologized publicly for the controversy arising from this incident and stressed that the CIs' activities are consistent with federal law 22 CFR 62.20 (c) (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 22). Nevertheless, this dispute highlights the development of Sino-U.S. relations is not as calm and stable as the surface suggests. Such controversies, such as the issue of CIs, still need scrutinizing thoroughly.

### Confucius Institutes Do Not Equal the Study of Confucianism

The number of CIs worldwide reached more than 858 by May 2012, including 358 Confucius Institutes and 500 Confucius Classrooms. In addition to those in United States, there are, for example, 83 CIs located in 30 Asian countries, 122 CIs in European countries and 25 CIs in Africa. The annual budget for CIs, based on the official statistics, has increased to \$164 million—a figure bolstered by local funding [2]. The number is still increasing, but the mounting figure does not guarantee CIs' global popularity. Not many people are acquainted with the function and operation of CIs. Some people even mistakenly regard CIs as religious institutions or a unit devoted to the study of Confucianism [3].

According to the interviews and fieldworks conducted by the authors at more than ten institutes in eight countries, CIs are not relevant to the study and dissemination of Confucianism. Nonetheless, the authors regard them as an indispensable instrument for Beijing's careful promotion of soft power diplomacy—a largess to the host countries attached with strings of propaganda. The objectives of these institutes are quite forthright, even admirable—that is, providing Chinese language teaching projects combined with comprehensive cultural, social, and even diplomatic outreach. These incidental activities and events are important, because they transcend the language teaching program with transnational cultural transmission with or without specific political intention.

As contended by noted (and controversial) China expert Steven Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute (PRI), CIs could be “Trojan horses” that may

“indoctrinate young Americans into thinking that the Chinese Party-State will not be a threat to its own people or to the world at large” [4]. Another similar argument comes from Glenn Anthony May who has observed the issue of Confucius Institutes since its establishment. May argues there are three “T” words as “anathema” to the Chinese government and *Hanban*: Taiwan, Tibet and Tiananmen (Yale Global Online, March 4, 2011). These “T” issues are political sensitive and controversial in China and, of course, will probably not be introduced, discussed or debated in teaching materials, classrooms or the outreach activities. In this regard, the mission and goal of CIs is therefore straightforward: to improve and reshape the image of China. The new image of China, clearly, is recalibrated and discoursed by Beijing government.

In recent years, the CIs' controlling office (*Hanban*) began to accelerate the expansion of CIs and to reinforce the strategic importance of CI-centric programs. By re-emphasizing their publicity through various channels and focusing on China Studies—for example, traditional Chinese medicine, business, and even dance, etc.—Chinese elites seem to convey their political idea of “Harmony without Sameness” (*he er bu tong*) to an international audience [5].

In addition to the increasing numbers of CIs, Beijing gradually has taken into consideration the quality of each potential institute to better serve the strategic interests involved in China's “Going Global Cultural Diplomacy” (*wenhua zou chuqu waijiao*) and the statement of “Popularize Chinese Culture around the World” (*tuidong zhonghua wenhua zouxiang shijie*) [6]. For example, the Chinese Cultural Centers and CIs were cited as important mechanisms in implementing the Going Out Cultural Program in the text of “Twelfth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development” (*guojia shierwu shiqi wenhua gaige fazhan guihua gangyao*) announced on February 16.

### Equipping Soft Power Diplomacy with Chinese Culture?

CIs are overseas languages institutes, purely working on Chinese language education and cultural promotion. The aim of CIs, however, is more than promoting Chinese-language education. It is aimed at promoting the

internationalization of Chinese culture. The diffusion of CIs is embraced by domestic pursuit of purposeful soft power diplomacy. The networking undertaking of Confucius is correspondent to Beijing's going out diplomacy, and the strategy to publicize China is rising with a "civilized, democratic, open, and progressive image" (*wenming, minzhu, kaifang yu jinbu de xingxiang*) around the world [7].

Among the academics, think tanks and policy community in China, arguments have been stressed repeatedly that the global output of CIs is aimed at two-way cultural exchange, rather than one-way cultural transmission [8]. With adequate resources, CIs currently are tasked by Chinese government to diffuse soft power and to redefine the image of China internationally. They fulfill two important tasks in pursuit of this objective. First, CIs now are conducting programs for those professionals who teach Chinese locally, such as in Cambodia and Thailand. The current orientation of CIs is to continue cultivating Chinese language education through drafting teaching materials and training teachers. In doing so, a legitimate understanding of China and a government-approved understanding of Chinese culture and society can be facilitated [9]. Second, CIs are working with specific institutes for advanced China studies mostly in the United States and in Europe. It is entirely possible that this offers a way to reinforce a favorable impression of China among local epistemic communities.

The implicit propaganda become more explicit and multi-pronged as CI global outreach has expanded. Some international critiques even pointed out that China has been unable to hide this political agenda and strategic intent behind the development of CIs and the related activities on Chinese culture exchanges (*Deutsche Welle*, January 25; *University World News*, December 2, 2007; *The Guardian*, November 6, 2007).

Traditional culture is the most important soft power resource of China. It seems that in recent year Confucianism has been promoted in China and abroad by Chinese government as a moral code for modern China (Yale Global Online, January 25, 2010). Nevertheless, the emerging configuration of Chinese culture with both traditional and contemporary traits is the least aggressive but most influential instrument. When Confucius Institutes are irrelevant to understanding Confucianism,

one has to admit that people in CIs are educated and cultivated by a selective version of Chinese culture with propaganda contoured and framed by the Chinese government. The cultural activities and events activated by and exhibited in CIs are facilitated in a politically harmonious manner—only intending to contribute to the ideational part of China's development environment.

Interestingly, the setting reminds the authors of the propaganda in the 1940s when the CCP used political posters to "propagate correct behavior and thought." Such materials were believed to educate the people in what was considered right and wrong. As argued by Stefan R. Landsberger, propaganda exists "as long as the State provided examples of correct behaviors, this automatically would make the people believe what was considered proper to believe" [10]. We strongly doubt, however, that the CI-related activities are combining cultural transmission with purposeful, explicit propaganda.

Promoting Chinese culture to serve China's national interests seems to be an effective instrument that recalibrates China's understanding and implementation of soft power diplomacy. In recent years, Chinese academia strengthened this development by formulating a Chinese version of soft power while the policy community in Beijing committed to equip soft power diplomacy and united front work with traditional—if government-approved—cultural ideas. The diffusion of CIs may not make the image of unsupported human rights and in the suppression of democratic politics in China disappear. Such kinds of contradictions and differences, however, probably weaken the effectiveness of China's soft power diplomacy (Yale Global Online, May 4).

### **Politicization of Cultural Nationalism**

Understanding CIs through domestic Chinese and international channels can be very different. International sources reflect deliberation, doubts, and debates over the CI phenomenon, while domestic sources concerning CIs are always filled with praises and compliments. Domestic critiques of the CI infrastructure are seldom observed. If and when those criticisms appear, they will most likely be critiqued as a refusal of cultural nationalism. In recent years, Chinese intellectuals have incubated cultural and political self-criticisms on cultural nationalism, such

reflection, however, cannot justify the political correctness in defense of China's national interests.

The rise of CIs cannot be comprehended solely by China's attempted political framing of its history, language and culture. As the famous historian Professor Yu Yingshi has recently said in an interview, although China actively establishes CIs, it does not mean Beijing intends to reinforce and strengthen the Confucian-centric culture. Some Chinese leadership even persists in anti-Confucian motives, which is more critical. Indeed, CCP is very difficult to put aside the burden of the past, such as "Do Away with the Four Olds and Cultivate the Four News" (*poshū lixixin*), "Criticize Lin (Biao), Criticize Confucius" (*pilin pikong*) and "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (*wenhua da geming*). Although China vigorously promotes the layout of overseas CIs, its ideology does not change, which also weakens the linkage between CI itself and the core value of Confucianism, even the traditional Chinese culture.

Despite their role in promoting Chinese culture internationally, one may not argue arbitrarily that CIs must be involved in intelligence collection or operating with specific political intent as indicated by some criticisms (*People's Daily*, June 12, 2010). Nevertheless, we contend CIs do not really contribute to the correct understanding of the real face of China. Chinese political elites have long deliberately (or, less likely, inadvertently) politicized the historical and cultural significance of Confucius in the name of public diplomacy. Such ignorance has been converted into the agenda of CI that only values the "cultural brand" of Confucius with cultural modernity and linguistic pragmatism.

The rise of CIs has facilitated Beijing's soft power output towards the world, but such crafting of purposeful propaganda attached with politicized mission already inevitably stirred up more concerns and doubts against China's going global cultural nationalism not only from the host countries of CIs but also from the rest of the world.

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## China and NATO: Grappling with Beijing's Hopes and Fears

By Richard Weitz

On July 4, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said he hoped to expand the alliance's dialogue with China, because "NATO needs to better understand China and define areas where [the two] can work together to guarantee peace and stability" as part of the transformation of NATO into "an alliance that is globally aware, globally connected and globally capable" (Xinhua, July 5). The speech followed a reassuring interview with Xinhua where Rasmussen told the Chinese press NATO had no intentions of establishing a military presence in the Asia-Pacific and that he appreciated China's willingness to expand military-to-military and political contacts (Xinhua, June 30). Although the absence of Chinese representatives from the NATO Summit in Chicago show the relationship is under-developed, Beijing has evinced a growing comfort in meeting with NATO as long as ties proceed deliberately.

Chinese analysts have viewed NATO's expanding global role with a mixture of hopes and fears. Their immediate desire is that NATO will help manage a peaceful transition in Afghanistan that ensures the safety of China's investments in that country as well as prevents Afghan territory from again becoming a safe haven for anti-Beijing Islamic militants. China's longer-term aspirations are for NATO's other members to limit the use of U.S. military power in East Asia and elsewhere. Conversely, Chinese fears reside in concerns that Washington will use NATO as yet another partner to contain Beijing's growing global influence.

Yet, NATO interest in engaging China derives precisely from Beijing's rising potential to shape the international security environment in both benign as well as adverse ways from Brussels' perspective. NATO officials see opportunities to cooperate with China in promoting security in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, countering maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and curtailing nuclear weapons proliferation in Iran and North Korea. But they also complain about cyber espionage and cyber attacks on NATO countries believed to come from China as well as Beijing's limited support for NATO logistical efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan

(*The Guardian*, March 10).

### History

China and NATO had little interaction during the six decades following the Alliance's creation. The first direct contact between NATO and China occurred in 1999, when U.S. bombers struck the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during Operation Allied Force, NATO's air campaign over Kosovo and Serbia. NATO said the incident, which killed three Chinese citizens, was an accident due to an outdated map, but Chinese officials suspected that it was deliberate. The incident kept Sino-NATO relations frozen and still grates on Beijing, as evident by the cutting remark of Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of China's general staff, to U.S. officials after NATO killed 25 Pakistani frontier soldiers in an incident last November: "Were you using the wrong maps again?" (German Marshall Fund, May 23).

This act triggered sharp Chinese denunciations about NATO's perceived illegitimate interference in the domestic affairs of non-member countries without the approval of the UN Security Council [1]. Chinese commentators since have expressed the opinion that NATO was an unnecessary Cold War relic that is used to pursue "egoistic interests under dignified disguises" (Xinhua, May 20).

Informal political discussions between Beijing and Brussels began in 2002, after NATO developed a military presence in Afghanistan, which borders China and has served as a source of anti-Beijing Islamist terrorism in the past. The Chinese Ambassador to Belgium initiated consultations with the NATO Secretary General at NATO's political headquarters about the alliance's operations in Afghanistan as well as the alliance's general organization and activities (NATO.int, November 10, 2009). The Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs later visited NATO Headquarters in 2007, launching a sustained political dialogue between senior staff members of both institutions [2].

It was not until recently, however, that the political dialogue has become more institutionalized. In 2009, NATO Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero visited Beijing for the highest level talks in Beijing to date (NATO.int, November 10, 2009). Senior PRC

and NATO representatives—including the Chinese ambassador to Belgium, the NATO Secretary General and the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy—now meet regularly twice a year to exchange views and information. Chinese representatives also participate in several NATO seminars and conferences, such as NATO's annual conferences on WMD Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation [3].

Military-to-military interactions, though still unstructured, are also increasing. In June 2010, a group of senior PLA officers visited NATO headquarters. Since then, Chinese and NATO commanders have conducted reciprocal visits of each other's flagships on anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden. In February, a NATO delegation led by Lieutenant General Jürgen Bornemann, the NATO International Military Staff Director, conducted the first official visit by a NATO military delegation to China. The parties discussed military cooperation, defense reforms, NATO operations in general and the Asia-Pacific security environment. The Chinese and NATO delegations agreed to deepen counter-piracy training and education as well as to hold annual staff talks between NATO and the PLA (NATO.int, February 15, February 12, January 19).

### Global Partners

Secretary General Rasmussen has tried to establish the alliance as a leading global actor, contributing to peace and security beyond its traditional North Atlantic area of operations through a network of “partners across the globe” (NATO.int, March 19). In a speech at the February 2010 Munich Security Conference, Rasmussen said NATO should become “a forum for consultation on worldwide security issues.” In April 2011, NATO foreign ministers in Berlin adopted a new partnership policy to help the alliance make better use of partnerships while offering greater incentives for countries to cooperate with NATO.

Rasmussen has cited China's global power and influence as reasons why NATO needs to engage more directly with that country. He and other NATO representatives have argued that China and NATO have common security concerns regarding transnational terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cyber threats, regional stability, energy security and maritime piracy (Xinhua, September 17,

2011; November 23, 2010). Facing major budgetary and economic problems, NATO governments are eager to share international security burdens in the face of major budgetary problems, but China's ability to harm NATO countries through its cyber activities, support for rogue states, or other actions also drives Brussels to engage with Beijing.

Chinese officials have reciprocated cautiously NATO's interest in dialogue and possible collaboration on international terrorism and maritime security. PRC representatives have expressed a desire to work with NATO on the basis of “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination” (*China Daily*, May 21).

Chinese and NATO representatives both see Afghanistan as an obvious area where NATO and China share security interests and can work jointly. Most obviously, NATO can provide the benign security environment needed to attract Chinese investment into Afghanistan, helping develop the country's natural resources. A stronger Afghan economy can in turn help generate the revenue the Afghan government needs to support the large security forces NATO is training. It also can provide alternative employment for Afghans who might otherwise turn to the drug trade or the insurCountering Somali-based piracy in the Gulf of Aden has become another important area of cooperation. Chinese and NATO warships have both been operating in the area in independent but proximate operations. NATO's anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa began in December 2008, disrupting pirate attacks through direct actions and building the capacity of local countries to fight piracy independently (NATO.int, January 19). The Chinese decision in late 2008 to send a naval task force to join the multinational mission in the Gulf of Aden meant that Chinese naval vessels would be operating regularly in the same area as NATO warships. Chinese and NATO coordinate their operations in this mission under the Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE) forum for maritime security.

In September 2011, China joined some other NATO partners—Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Japan—at a meeting in Brussels to discuss countering piracy in the Indian Ocean. Chinese and NATO representatives have been discussing expanding this cooperation because they share a large stake in maintaining freedom of global sea lanes (Xinhua, September 17, 2011).

## Global Rivals

China is the only UN Security Council permanent member without institutional contacts with NATO. In fact, one major Chinese concern is how NATO has relied on self-legitimization, citing humanitarian justifications such as the responsibility to protect threatened civilians, for its military actions when the Security Council fails to authorize them—such as in Kosovo and Libya (Xinhua, May 20).

Chinese officials profess to have learned from the Libyan experience that they cannot offer the Western powers anything that could justify armed intervention, because of their “preoccupation with armed might” (Xinhua, May 20). In their view, NATO exploited a Chinese and Russian decision to abstain on a Security Council resolution authorizing the modest use of force to protect civilians in Libya to expand its air campaign and eventually help organize a rebel ground force. “Libya offers a negative case study,” cautions an authoritative commentary, adding “NATO abused the Security Council resolution about establishing a no-fly zone, and directly provided firepower assistance to one side in the Libyan war” (*People’s Daily*, February 6).

Chinese officials now often block NATO-supported resolutions in the UN Security Council, joining with Russian officials who share Chinese concerns about giving NATO a free license. Another official commentary after the June 2012 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit censored NATO for its proclivity to engage in military interventions over the years (*China Daily*, June 8; Xinhua, June 8). The SCO summit, held in Beijing, also published a declaration critical of NATO’s ballistic missile defense plans.

A major consideration driving Chinese interest in engaging with NATO is the negative concern to prevent the alliance from harming China’s security interests through its military and other actions. For instance, Chinese analysts worry that NATO efforts to negotiate the relocation away from Europe of Russia’s large stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons could result in Moscow simply relocating these weapons closer to China [4].

There is also an argument that NATO offers the PRC another avenue to influence foreign policies of the European Union. Correspondingly, the PRC has made a point to increase communication, cooperation engagement with the EU and its individual countries. Some PRC experts hope that collaboration between the PRC and EU will push the United States to act less unilaterally and adopt a less confrontational policy towards the PRC in correspondence with Europe’s desire not to harm the PRC economy and lower interest in East Asian military affairs [5].

## Unsettled Reservations

Chinese representatives are uneasy about the alliance’s increased emphasis on global partnerships that extend into Asia. A particular concern is that Washington may be using NATO to help construct a global alliance network to contain China. Chinese writers have noted growing cooperation between NATO and India, Japan, Australia and other Asian states that may want to balance the growth of Chinese military power.

These concerns contribute to Chinese ambivalence about the U.S. and NATO military presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Chinese analysts perceive NATO’s Afghan mission as struggling but worry that it might establish an enduring NATO military presence on China’s border (*China Daily*, May 21). The *People’s Daily* stated NATO “should make efforts to strike a balance among security, governance, and development in Afghanistan, prevent its counter-terrorism efforts from producing the opposite results, and avoid leaving Afghanistan in a mess like the Soviet Union did” (*People’s Daily*, February 27).

For their part, NATO officials are eager to secure additional financial support to help pay for the alliance’s costly plans to build large Afghan security forces to preserve security even after NATO removes its combat troops from the country in 2014 (Reuters, April 19). Beijing however has been seeking to avoid tying its fate too closely to the Afghan government in Kabul. Helping build the Afghan security forces could antagonize the Taliban insurgents, who might turn their guns on China directly or, more likely, be less eager to suppress Uighur separatists and other Chinese Muslim groups opposed to Beijing’s religious policies.

The U.S. pivot to Asia also has heightened Beijing's concerns about NATO. Qu Xing, Director of the Foreign Ministry-related China Institute of International Studies, termed the debut appearance of Australia, Japan, South Africa and North Korea at the Chicago summit as reflecting "the U.S. desire to expand NATO into Asia or to establish closer ties with allies in the region to handle the challenges that the US mentioned in Asia, especially East Asia." Another senior government-affiliated scholar suggested NATO planned "to set up some strategic strongholds in the Asia-Pacific region" (*China Daily*, May 21). NATO's engagement with Mongolia has further exacerbated these concerns, which probably prompted Rasmussen's recent downplaying of NATO's support to the pivot (*Xinhua*, June 30; *China Daily*, May 17; NATO.int, March 19).

Other constraints on stronger Chinese-NATO ties include Beijing's official position of nonalignment and aversion to military alliances, the different values between China and NATO and the traditional lack of interest in many European governments about China's growing military potential in Asia. Beijing also wonders why NATO still exists as shown by a *People's Daily* commentary that warned the alliance "should not maintain its unsustainable life by exaggerating others' military threats, pulling new members into it and establishing expansive missile defense systems" (*People's Daily*, May 23).

### Future Steps

NATO's efforts to expand its global role, combined with China's growing security engagement in regions to its west—Afghanistan, Central Asia, Gulf of Aden and the Mediterranean—seem destined to require further political dialogue with NATO. Next steps could include joint anti-piracy exercises between their parallel missions in the Gulf of Aden. Similarly, China could participate in NATO-led natural emergency relief exercises, such as those held in many of the former Soviet republics [6]. A longer term goal might include institutionalizing their relationship by creating a NATO-China council or commission similar to the ones NATO has established with Russia and other select partners.

Afghanistan is likely to be the main driver for the next few years. Both China and NATO want to see a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan, but NATO's ongoing military

pullout could worsen hitherto largely latent tensions over burden sharing and buck passing. Rasmussen told the Chinese press that Afghanistan's neighbors would need to provide more support for that country as NATO curtails its mission there (*Xinhua*, September 17, 2011).

Beijing remains uncomfortable with NATO's growing ties with other Asian countries, so joint projects in East Asia will be difficult to achieve. NATO members need to discuss more with one another their perspectives on China's security priorities and policies. The United States—as NATO's sole member with major military assets in the Pacific—will need to lead efforts to inform its Asian allies about NATO's evolving approach toward China. In most cases, "shared awareness and de-confliction" seems an appropriately modest but still achievable and useful goal for issues of mutual concern between NATO and China.

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