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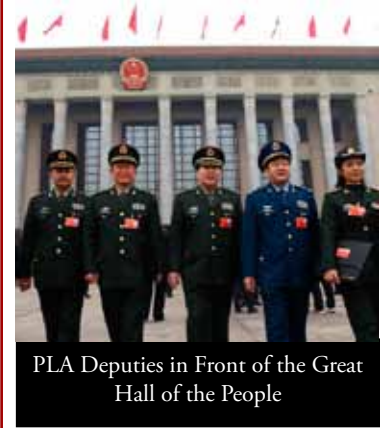
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PLA Deputies in Front of the Great Hall of the People

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In a Fortnight

By Peter Mattis

PLA DEPUTIES OFFER CLARIFICATIONS ON MILITARY INTENTIONS

The annual National People’s Congress (NPC) meeting often can sound like a tedious recitation of familiar phraseology on Chinese priorities and, certainly, the words on modernizing the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) seem tired. On March 5, now-former-Premier Wen Jiabao delivered his final government work report to the NPC, reiterating the boilerplate language from the 2002 defense white paper on military modernization: “We should accelerate modernization of national defense and the armed forces so as to strengthen China’s defense and military capabilities...We should resolutely uphold China’s sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, and ensure its peaceful development” (Xinhua, March 5). Similarly, party General Secretary and Central Military Commission Chairman Xi Jinping restated the familiar set of priorities for the military, which is “building a people’s army that follows the Party’s command, has the ability to win battles and has a fine work style” (Xinhua, March 11). The military’s 268 NPC deputies, however, offered some welcome, if still modest, clarifications on key Western concerns about Chinese military modernization and recent press statements that have raised alarm in foreign media. The most important message, however, is that Xi has done nothing to suggest a departure from his predecessors’ military modernization policies.

Parsing the statements of the PLA deputies in Beijing suggests there were three key messages about the military. First, the military representatives addressed concern over another double-digit percentage increase to the PLA's budget by stating the defense budget was commensurate with Beijing's stated needs and, in one case, provided a little additional information on where that money would be spent. Second, PLA deputies placed the calls for "combat readiness"—which had alarmed foreign observers amid Sino-Japanese tensions in the East China Sea—within the PLA's focus on improving the quality of its soldiers. Finally, other statements indicated the PLA is going global and faces a new set of challenges as it adjusts to the protection of Chinese interests overseas. None of these are wholly new, but the little variations upon official themes still warrant some attention.

Once again, Chinese officials deflected criticism of the PLA's budget increases and the military's lack of transparency with arguments about China's developmental status and international position. Deputy Director of the General Logistics Department Sun Huangtian noted "China's defense expenditure has increased, but the defense budget share of GDP is only 1.3 percent, well below the international average of 2.5 percent" (*PLA Daily*, March 5). Sun also emphasized that China's defense expenditure was compatible with the country's "developmental interests" and "international position." Separately, Chen Zhou, a senior researcher at the Academy of Military Science, described China's defense budget increases over the last few years as normal given the international situation. As China's economic strength and comprehensive national power grew, Beijing's investment in defense has become more focused on its real needs. Previously, at least since the beginning of Reform and Opening, defense expenditures basically were at maintenance levels. Chen suggested the increases of recent years were compensation for this earlier neglect of national defense (*PLA Daily*, March 5). A PLA delegate to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and director of the PLA Navy's Informatization Experts Committee, Yin Zhuo, added that China's defense spending is properly transparent since it publicizes the information every year during the "Two Sessions." Different countries count military spending in different ways with varying degrees of transparency, but none can be said to have achieved absolute transparency (China Military Online, March 12).

In spite of this downplaying of international concerns, Beijing did publish some information about what the PLA's spending priorities would be for the additional \$12.5 billion. The additional defense budget reportedly will be spent in four ways. The first is purchase and invest in high-tech equipment and support facilities. The second is to improve the logistics infrastructure with an emphasis on improving living conditions. The third is to reduce the pressure of rising prices on wages, although no further information was provided. The final is to build capacity in "diversified military tasks"—an outgrowth of Hu Jintao's four "New Historic Missions"—especially counter-terrorism, disaster relief and stability maintenance (Xinhua, March 12). Depending on the nature of the high-tech equipment, this selection does seem to support NPC spokeswoman Fu Ying's statement emphasizing "that China's move to strengthen its national defense is only for protecting itself and safeguarding peace and security, rather than threatening other countries" (China Military Online, March 12). These clarifications, however, still leave gaps in how the PLA allocates funds among the different services or among the budget categories of personnel, operations/training and equipment.

The second message from the PLA's NPC deputies was that the "combat readiness" phrasing that drew Western attention is not about recent tensions, but rather the continuing effort of the PLA to develop military talent. As one PLA deputy stated, "A military is either being in the fighting or being prepared for fighting. There is no third state" (China Military Online, March 8). Separately, a group army commander from the Nanjing Military Region, Han Weiguo, said soldiers "needed to remove 'peacetime' (*heping shiqi*) from their dictionary," so they could better prepare themselves for the kinds of realistic training the PLA needed to be performing (*PLA Daily*, March 12). Li Danni, a deputy from the PLA Navy's Submarine Academy, highlighted this need for a higher state of readiness to handle the rigors of PLA training and pointed toward future requirements. China's national defense needs, Li said, required "not only the soldiers skilled in the operation of weaponry and equipment...but also the military strategists possessing a deep understanding of modern warfare and the talents in commanding joint operation to win the information-based war in the future are indispensable." Second Artillery brigade commander Tan Weihong added that, in order for China to achieve Xi's dream of national

rejuvenation, “we have to depend on military talents who are capable of fighting and winning battles” (China Military Online, March 1). Feeding the PLA’s need for military talent, according to another PLA deputy, required cultivating a habit of studying. The President of the Naval Armaments Academy, Wang Yu, noted the commissioning of the aircraft carrier *Liaoning* and the successful carrier landing were realized because of such study, and he said “we should develop a habit of studying as naturally as breathing air, which is indispensable to life” (China Military Online, March 5).

The third theme of the PLA deputies’ remarks was that the PLA must orient itself toward meeting the challenges created by China’s growing interests abroad. This derives directly from another of Hu’s four “New Historic Missions” for the PLA to “provide a solid security guarantee for sustaining the important period of strategic opportunity for national development.” As a political commissar in the navy put it quite directly, “China has currently formed a pattern of being fully open to the world with highlighted issues regarding energy resources, oversea assets, strategic maritime channels and safety of overseas personnel together with new requirements proposed on safeguarding national security and interests. The Chinese armed forces and the Chinese soldiers must adapt to these new requirements and make their due contributions.” AMS’s Chen Zhou weighed in, suggesting a need to coordinate China’s national defense construction with economic development, “because of China’s increasingly complicated security context where international interests are more easily threatened” (China Military Online, March 11).

The need to be more engaged outside China’s borders also was related to developing the PLA’s quality to international standards, because the PLA has learned that exchanges and exercises with foreign militaries has improved officer quality. Another PLA deputy captured these interlocking reasons for going abroad perfectly when he noted the following: “It is imperative for us to go abroad in order to safeguard China’s national interests. Our military development also requires us to go abroad. ‘Going abroad does make a difference,’ that is what many officers and men strongly felt” (China Military Online, March 11). Comments by Major General Dai Shao’an, a senior military intelligence officer who was deputy director the Ministry of National Defense’s

Peacekeeping Operations Office and the former military attaché in Egypt, believed modern PLA soldiers needed to have strong communication skills to take advantage of these international opportunities to learn from and study other advanced foreign militaries (China Military Online, March 11). This raises the question, however, of how the PLA intends to prepare its soldiers for these experiences and what educational reforms may be in order.

The hawkish comments of PLA pundits that draw most attention appear quite at odds with the more nuanced tones displayed by these more authoritative PLA representatives. While outsiders focus on the PLA’s improvements in warfighting capabilities, they often overlook the fact that increased PLA readiness also serves the purpose of deterrence and China’s preference for achieving its strategic goals without the use of deadly force. Echoing the ideas developed in *The Science of Military Strategy*, the missile brigade commander Tan Weihong also said “Only by keeping in the state of combat readiness like an arrow fitted to the string and ready to shoot, being able to fight and win battles, can we keep war at bay” (China Military Online, March 8). Even if China’s commitment to military modernization was not exactly surprising, the NPC has provided some themes in PLA development that observers should watch in coming years as well as some additional markers on Chinese intentions.

Peter Mattis is Editor of China Brief at The Jamestown Foundation. A special thanks goes to Dennis Blasko for his thoughtful comments.

National People's Congress Marks Sharp Turn Toward Conservatism

By Willy Lam

Chinese intellectuals who harbor expectations that the Xi Jinping-Li Keqiang administration may kick start a new cycle of reforms were sorely disappointed on the first day of the First Session of the 12th National People's Congress, when outgoing Premier Wen Jiabao delivered his last *Government Work Report*. Wen, who is the only senior cadre to have called for political reform consistently in the past several years, did not even mention these two words in his 100-minute address at the Great Hall of the People. Moreover, even less controversial reforms, such as streamlining the government and economic structures, have turned out to be much more circumscribed than had been anticipated by the official media.

In his swansong speech to the Chinese parliament, the 70-year-old Wen pointed out that Beijing would “deeply push forward reform and the open-door policy with even more political courage and wisdom.” Unlike past occasions, however, Wen was this time referring, not to political liberalization, but to “the construction of socialist democracy and rule by law.” There were no more references to the “electoral rights” of the people or the right of the masses to take part in politics. Also absent was his familiar dictum that “without commensurate political reform, economic reform cannot succeed” (Xinhua, March 5; China News Service, March 5).

The conservative tone of Wen's report reflects the priority that Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) members endorsed by the 18th Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress last November have given to preserving the party's monopoly on power (“The Unrepentant China Model,” *China Brief*, November 30, 2012). In an internal speech delivered while he toured Guangdong Province last December, CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping warned party members against a disease called “calcium deficiency of the spirit,” which, he said, was responsible for the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Xi stated “We must put emphasis on self-confidence in the path [of socialism]” and “We must have self-confidence in [Marxist] theory and institutions” (*Ta Kung Pao* [Hong Kong] February 16; *Apple Daily* [Hong Kong], February 5).

The party chief's instructions were repeated by PBSC member Liu Yunshan, who is in charge of ideology and propaganda. While talking to parliamentarians from Inner Mongolia, the former director of the CCP Propaganda Department pointed out “we must be more insistent on and resolute about the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.” “We must have true belief in the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics,” he added (People's Daily Online, March 6; *Wen Wei Po* [Hong Kong] March 6). Moreover, in his last *Legislative Work Report* to the NPC, outgoing parliamentary chairman and former PBSC member Wu Bangguo urged the deputies to “take a firm grip on [the party's] political orientation” and to “be resolute in countering different types of erroneous thoughts and theories.” Wu echoed CCP General Secretary Xi's point about the imperative of “having self-confidence in the [CCP's] path, theory and system.” Wu told the deputies “We will absolutely not copy the political systems and models of the West” (CCTV news, March 8; Xinhua, March 8).

Most astonishing was the conservative statement made by former Guangdong Party Secretary Wang Yang, who has a reputation for promoting village elections and expanding the scope of NGOs in the southern province. Wang, who has just been appointed one of four vice premiers of the State Council, told NPC delegates from his native Anhui Province that the Western world was afraid of the challenge of the China model. Wang said that China's achievements in recent years were “a further manifestation of the superiority of the [country's] institutions and path.” Referring to the global financial crisis, Wang pointed out that “things that the Western world was proud of, such as the free-market system and democracy have failed to work.” “The experience of socialist China shows that there are many models of democracy,” he added, “[Chinese-style] consultative democracy is also practicable” (*Southern Daily* [Guangzhou] March 9; *Ming Pao* [Hong Kong], March 9).

Given the CCP leadership's determination to uphold orthodoxy, it is perhaps not surprising that even less controversial agendas such as streamlining the bloated government structure have met with only limited success. Despite earlier reports in the Chinese media that the central government's 27 commissions and ministries will be cut to below 20, only two such units have been slashed. Moreover, the State Council will continue to

have 16 ministerial-level “general administrations” and bureaus. Perhaps the most eye-catching change is that the much-maligned Ministry of Railways—which has been dubbed a “state within a state” that has run up debts of 2.66 trillion yuan (\$427.7 billion)—will be folded into the Ministry of Transport. The merger of the two ministries, which was first proposed in 2003, did not take place due to the vehement opposition of then Minister of Railways Liu Zhijun. Liu is now facing a possible suspended death sentence due to allegations of massive corruption (*Ming Pao*, March 11; *Wen Wei Po*, March 11).

Other moves include the amalgamation of the Ministry of Health and the National Commission on Family Planning to form the National Health and Family Planning Commission. The General Administration of Food and Drugs has been established after the merger of existing units dealing with food and drug safety as well as the quality supervision and inspection of commercial products. The General Administration on Press and Publications and the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television have been combined to form a new General Administration of Press and Publication, Radio, Film and Television. Moreover, the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic Administration will be beefed up. It will now oversee the coast guard, the fisheries enforcement command and the maritime anti-smuggling unit—all of which had been under different administrations. Earlier suggestions about setting up “super-ministries” to handle monetary policy, energy and environmental issues, however, have not materialized. This is despite the fact that the record high level of air pollution in Beijing and nearby cities since January has demonstrated the central government’s failure to police polluting-generating companies, including oil and coal enterprises (China Review News [Hong Kong] March 11; *Ta Kung Pao*, March 11).

Commenting on the structural changes in the State Council, noted public intellectual and Beijing University Professor Xia Yeliang pointed out that structural changes had met with obstacles due to the stubborn resistance of vested interests. He also warned “There must be enough oversight over ministries that have become bigger and more powerful.” “Ministries must give the public a more transparent explanation as to how China’s resources are being distributed,” he said, “There must be better safeguard against abuse of power” (Cable News Hong

Kong, March 9; Sina.com, March 9).

Equally significant is the Xi-Li administration’s apparent failure to push reform for the 120-odd centrally-held state owned enterprise (SOE) groupings (*yangqi*)—many of which have ministerial status. Having cartelized lucrative sectors ranging from oil and gas to finance and telecommunications, the *yangqi* are seen as arrogant and non-transparent behemoths that militate against free-market precepts. Even the official media has complained that conglomerates such as the three oil majors—China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Sinopec and China National Overseas Oil Cooperation (CNOOC)—have made so much money that “they should to return wealth to the people” (“Chinese SOEs a Target of Hu-Wen’s ‘Inclusive Growth?’” *China Brief*, January 14, 2011). In the latest round of structural reform, the National Energy Administration—which will continue to be subsumed under the National Development and Reform Commission—has been given extra regulatory authority over the electricity sector. There are no indications, however, that the NEA can effectively rein in the excesses of the three oil-and-gas giants (*Apple Daily*, March 11; *Ta Kung Pao*, March 11).

In his *Government Work Report*, ex-Premier Wen pledged to “deepen the reform of state-owned enterprises.” He reiterated his pledge that private-owned enterprises should operate on the same level playing field as giant SOE groupings: “We must unwaveringly provide encouragement, support and guidance to the development of non-state-sector [enterprises].” The goal, he said, was that firms of different ownership systems would be in a position to “make use of production factors fairly and that they can participate in market-oriented competition on a fair basis” (*People’s Daily*, March 5; China News Service, March 5). Although an estimated 90 NPC members are non-state-sector businesspeople with assets of more than 1.8 billion yuan (\$289.4 million), it seems unlikely that the government’s treatment of private firms will improve significantly in the near future (*Financial Times*, March 7; Bloomberg, March 6).

Even more than past sessions of the NPC, the authorities have put *weiwen* or safeguarding socio-political stability, above reform. Dissidents such as veteran human rights activist Hu Jia and “Tiananmen mother” Ding Zhili have either been forced to leave Beijing during this

period or put under tight 24-hour surveillance. Police and state security agents beat a couple of Hong Kong reporters when they tried to approach the apartment building where Liu Xia, the wife of incarcerated Nobel Prizewinner Liu Xiaobo, is kept under virtual house arrest (*Ming Pao*, March 9; Cable TV News, March 8). Statistics revealed last week at the NPC showed that for the third year in a row, public expenditure on *weiwen* has exceeded that of the publicized budget for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The central government will this year make available 769.1 billion yuan (\$123.7 billion)—a jump of 8.7 percent over 2012—for the police, the Internet police, spies and other elements of China's labyrinthine internal security apparatus. By contrast, the official PLA budget for 2013 is 720.6 billion yuan (\$115.9 billion), which is 10.7 percent higher than that of last year (*South China Morning Post* [Hong Kong] March 6; China Review News, March 6).

Not long after his ascendancy at the 18th Party Congress, General Secretary Xi pledged to introduce “constitutional socialism with Chinese characteristics,” that is, a socio-political system where the Constitution and the laws will be fully respected (“What Direction for Legal Reform under Xi Jinping,” *China Brief*, January 4). There are clear-cut indications that Xi, who has direct control over the country's political-legal establishment—which oversees the police, state security, the prosecutor's offices as well as the courts—is adamant about using this formidable control apparatus to crush dissent. It is notable that in his report to the NPC, the outgoing President of the Supreme People's Court Wang Shengjun affirmed the party's unquestioned leadership over the judiciary. Wang urged judges and other “judicial workers” to profess “total loyalty to the party, the country, the people, and the Constitution and the law.” In other words, obeisance to the party has pride of place over respect for the Constitution and the law. This is despite the fact that Wang also vowed to promote “public confidence in the judiciary” as well as “judicial fairness and integrity” (Xinhua, March 10; CCTV News, March 10).

On the eve of the NPC, more than 100 Chinese scholars, writers and public intellectuals published an Internet petition asking the legislative authorities to ratify the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They pointed out that, while the Chinese government had signed on to the covenant as early as

1998, the document cannot be applied in China unless it is ratified by the NPC. The petitioners—who included well-known professors such as Qin Hui and He Weifang—pointed out that a key to China's modernization was “dovetailing with global norms on basic human rights.” The petition, however, was quickly removed from China's Cyberstance, and a number of signatories received verbal warnings from their work units (*Yazhou Zhongkan* [Hong Kong] March 10; *Apple Daily*, March 1). It seems apparent that the Xi-Li administration has to do a lot more to convince Chinese and foreign observers that its obsession with stability—and the party's monopoly on power—will not deal a frontal blow to most aspects of reform.

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Is Enough Finally Enough for China and North Korea?

By A. Greer Meisels

Bound up in nearly every discussion about North Korea's nuclear weapons program is the question of what role China could, should, and would play. It has been widely written that Beijing's priority is to maintain a stable Korean Peninsula (albeit one that remains divided) and therefore will continue to serve as Pyongyang's principal friend, backer, and banker no matter how difficult or frustrating that arrangement might be for Beijing. After all, China's long-standing policy vis-à-vis North Korea could be explained as “no war, no mess, no nukes (*buzhan, buluan, buhe*)” (sina.com, February 14). This could be why, given the nearly universal condemnation of Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, China's bilateral trade volume with North Korea in the first half of 2012 was \$3.14 billion,

Table 1: Overview of the DPRK Nuclear Tests

<i>First Nuclear Test - October 9, 2006</i>	
Seismic Wave in Scale	3.9
Nuclear Material	Plutonium
Explosive Power	1 kiloton
Relationship to Rocket Launch	<p><u>July 5</u> North Korea conducts two rounds of missile tests including one long-range Taepodong-2 missile and short-range Scud derived missiles including the enlarged Nodong.</p> <p><u>July 15</u> U.N. passes UNSCR 1695 condemning DPRK's missile launch.</p> <p><u>October 3</u> North Korea announces plans to test a nuclear weapon in the future, blaming "hostile U.S. policy."</p> <p><u>October 14</u> U.N. Security Council condemned the nuclear test of DPRK and passes UNSC 1718. Calls for it to return immediately to multilateral talks on the issue.</p>
<i>Second Nuclear Test - May 25, 2009</i>	
Seismic Wave in Scale	4.5
Nuclear Materials	Plutonium
Explosive Power	2~6 kilotons
Relationship to Rocket Launch	<p><u>April 5</u> North Korea launches its Kwangmyŏngsŏng-2 satellite, intended to broadcast "immortal revolutionary songs." Launch ends in failure</p> <p><u>April 12</u> U.N. agreed to tougher sanctions for DPRK. Passes UNSCR 1874.</p> <p><u>April 14</u> Following a UN resolution denouncing its missile launch, North Korea says that it "will never again take part in such [six party] talks and will not be bound by any agreement reached at the talks." North Korea expelled nuclear inspectors from the country and also informed the IAEA that they would resume their nuclear weapons program.</p>
<i>Third Nuclear Test - February 12, 2013</i>	
Seismic Wave in Scale	4.9
Nuclear Materials	Uranium or Uranium + Plutonium
Explosive Power	6~7 kilotons
Relationship to Rocket Launch	<p><u>December 12, 2012</u> DPRK succeeded in launching a Kwangmyŏngsŏng-3 satellite</p> <p><u>January 22</u> U.N. Security Council condemns use of ballistic missile technology in launch by DPRK. Passes UNSCR 2087.</p> <p><u>January 22 and 23</u> DPRK suggested it will have another nuclear test_</p> <p><u>March 5</u> North Korea has said it will cancel the 1953 ceasefire that ended the Korean War.</p> <p><u>March 7</u> U.N. Security Council strengthens sanctions against the DPRK and unanimously passes UNSCR 2094.</p>

up 24.7 percent from the same period the year before (*Economic Observer*, September 7, 2012). This policy, however, seems to be one that, over time, has chipped away at China's credibility on the international stage and has brought it little added benefit.

Less clear though is whether North Korea's three nuclear tests have had a demonstrable impact on Beijing's strategic calculus. Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while not China's *top* priority, is still a professed goal. Statements coming out of China since North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006 seem to imply that while actual policy has not significantly shifted or changed tack, debate within China's policy circles about the future of that bilateral relationship has been heating up for some time.

How Do You Solve a Problem Like...North Korea?

With three nuclear tests under North Korea's belt—in 2006, in 2009, and in February of this year—one of best ways to observe whether there has been a hardening or softening in language used by Beijing is to look at the official statements by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Granted, the two principal decision-making bodies when it comes to China's North Korea policy are the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) and the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) (Sino-NK, August 5, 2012). MFA, however, is one of the primary stakeholders—or at least the agency that deals with the foreign implications of China's relationship with North Korea—so its pronouncements are important to analyze when looking for potential policy adjustments.

First, it is important to note that all three statements—at least on the surface—appear rather similar. For example, each one uses the wording, “The Chinese government is resolutely opposed to the nuclear test by the DPRK.” The most recent statement from February 12, 2013, however, says “we strongly *urge* the DPRK to abide by its commitments on denuclearization.” The October 9, 2006, and May 25, 2009, versions said “we strongly *demand* that the DPRK abide by its commitments on denuclearization.” The difference between “strongly urge” (*qianglie duncu*) and “strongly demand” (*qianglie yaoqiu*) may not be insignificant. Compared to “yaoqiu,” “duncu” might imply that China recognizes that it does not possess the ability to push or directly ask the other party, in this case North Korea, to do (or not do)

something (news.sohu.com, February 13).

Second, after both the 2006 and 2009 tests, the statements read that the Chinese government “*opposes* the proliferation of nuclear weapons” (*fandui bekuosan*) whereas the 2013 statement used the wording “*prevents* proliferation of nuclear weapons” (*fangzhi bekuosan*). This change is a bit more difficult to parse. The use of “prevent” in 2013 seems to connote a more proactive stance against nonproliferation whereas earlier use of “oppose” could be read as a more generalized position that Beijing took on this matter.

Third, both the 2006 and 2009 statements urged North Korea to return to the Six Party Talks (6PTs) while the 2013 statement did not mention this, but instead asked “all parties” to settle the issue via the Six-Party-Talk mechanism. This might indicate that China does not want to purposely antagonize North Korea by calling it out, directly; instead the emphasis is on “all parties.” Moreover, this change could simply be a reflection of the realities of the day. With the death of the 6PTs it may be time to think about dialogue and consultation within a looser framework without explicit calls to restart the 6PTs.

Additionally, after the first nuclear test Beijing admitted that the test had a “negative impact” (*fumiande yinxiang*) on the bilateral relationship (*People's Daily*, October 9, 2006). It was also after this test that Foreign Ministry officials began to use the word *hanran* which is often translated in English as “flagrant,” but could be translated even more harshly as “stubbornly defiant” (People's Net, October 10, 2006). To date, this is some of the most severe language Beijing has used to describe North Korean actions. Perhaps this is why some analysts have concluded that China's 2006 response was indeed the most critical, and the February 2013 statement could be considered less forceful than its previous incarnations.

What Say the Influencers?

Setting aside the official language, the Chinese public and policy community have had considerably more latitude to debate and argue over how China's future North Korea policy might evolve. This, however, should be kept in perspective; these discussions have been occurring for years and are not a recent phenomenon. For example,

immediately following the May 2009 test, the *Global Times* published a survey of 20 of the country's top foreign policy experts who were divided evenly between those who supported tougher sanctions against North Korea and those who did not (*Global Times*, May 26, 2009). This survey became fodder for many Western journalists and analysts who used it as a crucible by which to gauge China's evolving thinking on Peninsular matters. Yet here we are today, nearly four years later, still intrigued by these same sorts of events. Furthermore, some of the more outspoken Chinese scholars and analysts who follow the North Korea nuclear issue sound rather consistent throughout the years in their antipathy towards their erstwhile neighbor. This could imply that there is a real disconnect between Chinese public discussions (from supposedly "influential" thinkers) and what the Chinese policymaking elite and the party's International Liaison Department think.

Shi Yin hong, a professor at Renmin University, makes the pragmatic argument that while the present phase of Sino-North Korean relations could be the coldest period in a decade, the tenor of the relationship often experiences highs and lows. Shi writes, "Beijing seems to be returning to the old circle of swings between 'hard' and 'soft'... without any major success to influence Pyongyang" [1]. He also has been consistent in claiming that North Korea makes its decisions based solely on its own interests and does not follow China's guidance, although the reasons behind the North Korean decision to conduct the tests may shift over time (<http://news.qq.com>, May 5, 2009; China Military Online, October 10, 2006).

Zhang Liangui, a North Korea expert at the Central Party School, has long-held the belief that although acquisition of nuclear weapons has been a consistent goal of North Korea's, this pursuit is simultaneously harmful to China and destabilizes the region. Further, he has made statements that China is "diplomatically cornered" since a nuclear North Korea is not in China's interests, but "unequivocal opposition from China toward the DPRK is bound to cause vicious reprisal..." (*China Security*, Autumn 2006). Zhu Feng, a professor of international relations at Peking University, has gone so far as to declare that China is the biggest victim of the North's nuclear tests writing (similar to Zhang) that the tests harm Chinese interests and that China should warn North Korea that it is becoming increasingly angry (<http://star.news.sohu.com>,

February 16).

Nevertheless, anger and disappointment on the part of Chinese analysts does not necessarily translate into Beijing's development of a new North Korea "playbook." Moreover, it may be a mistake to "over-interpret" China's latest Security Council vote on North Korea. On the one hand, it could demonstrate that Beijing's thinking on the usefulness of sanctions as a possible denuclearization tool is changing. On the other hand, it could be more akin to what people like Joel Wuthnow think, that this is simply a continuation of Beijing's "dual-track approach" to North Korea (*The Diplomat*, March 13). Furthermore, though certain analysts write about how the "domestic atmosphere has become unfavorable towards North Korea's war rhetoric and capricious behavior," and that "more and more people are inclined to regard North Korea as a liability rather than a strategic asset," senior officials, such as Cui Tiankai, have been quick to rebut claims of U.S.-China "cooperation" on this issue (*China-U.S. Focus*, March 12). At the recent Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Cui matter-of-factly stated, "This [decision] is not between China and the United States...it's very inaccurate to say China and the United States have reached a deal on imposing sanctions on North Korea" (*South China Morning Post*, March 7).

A Silver Linings Playbook?

China's policymakers and pundits have long opposed North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons and testing of long-range ballistic missiles largely because of what this may portend for China's neighborhood. It is a long held fear in Beijing that North Korean provocation may encourage other regional actors—Japan, South Korea and Taiwan—to develop nuclear capabilities of their own or cause a further strengthening of missile defense systems, which would have an adverse affect on China's own security. Su Hao of China Foreign Affairs University, for one, pointed out that North Korea's nuclear tests may cause a "domino effect" by possibly spurring on Japan's nuclear aspirations (*Phoenix Online*, February 1). For every Sheng Dingli who writes, "Let's Face it: China has reached a point where it needs to cut its losses and cut North Korea loose," there are those on the opposite side of the coin. For example, an article in the *PLA Daily* disagreed with the opinion that the 2013 test was "a failure of Chinese policy towards North Korea,"

and labeled this opinion as being made based on “ulterior motives (*bieyou yongxin*)” (*PLA Daily*, February 18; *Foreign Policy*, February 13).

Many in the United States are eager to see this latest North Korea nuclear test as a sort of “watershed” moment—one that will show us that China is finally ready to get tough when it comes to North Korea. By extension, this could mean, however, that one of the proverbial thorns in the U.S.-China relationship’s side might be excised. It seems a bit premature to say whether the latest round of UN sanctions against North Korea “represent a bold new step forward by Party General Secretary Xi Jinping and China’s new leadership in signaling to the U.S. that China is now interested in finding new areas of convergence” (ChinaFile, March 6). And while some recent reports assert that during a meeting of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference participants, including senior Communist Party official Qiu Yuanping, openly debated the question: whether to “keep or dump” North Korea, this does not necessarily mean that the “teeth” are truly ready to bite the “lips” (*New York Times*, March 9).

Perhaps this leads us to one of the most important mysteries yet to be solved. Yes, it is important that increasing numbers of pundits and scholars are articulating their frustration vis-à-vis North Korea. That may be a silver lining of sorts. Yet the question still remains, why is it that the arguments made by Chinese international affairs experts against North Korea are not proving wholly persuasive to policymakers?

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Notes:

1. This is taken from the abstract of a presentation made by Shi Yinhong on February 19, 2013 at the ASAN Nuclear Forum in Seoul, South Korea.

Sino-Indian Defense Dialogue: A Panacea for the Sino-Indian Security Dilemma?

By Bhartendu Kumar Singh

Defense diplomacy may not be an important tool in international relations but the Sino-Indian relations stand exception to it. Beginning with the landmark treaty on maintenance of peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 1993, defense diplomacy became the “central dynamics of the complex relationship between China and India” where both the countries have institutionalized a series of confidence building measures (CBMs) along the LAC in the last two decades [1]. The fifth round of bilateral defense dialogue, held in Beijing recently, was part of this process (*Xinhua*, January 15; *Times of India*, January 15). Given the tone and tenor of the dialogue process, it has an optimistic future. Is it a panacea to India’s security dilemma against China? Can it bring an end to enduring rivalry between the two Asian giants and induce a strategic partnership between them for seeking Asian security? The Beijing round could not provide an immediate answer.

Gains from the Beijing Round

Given the unresolved border between the two countries and very little progress on other aspects of bilateral relations, there are not many expectations from such dialogues. The LAC, however, is also known for relative peace and despite Chinese forces’ frequent incursions into the Indian side, the two militaries deserve credit for mature behavior towards each other. Further, 2012, the “Year of India-China Friendship and Cooperation” was an eventful year for bilateral defense cooperation. Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie visited India and a “Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India China Border Affairs” was established. In addition to the high level and academic defense exchanges, four Indian Navy ships made a port call at Shanghai and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy training ship *Zhenghe* stopped in the Indian port of Kochi (“India China bilateral defense cooperation in 2012.” www.indianembassy.org.cn). Beijing round in January, therefore, had excellent atmospherics to consolidate the gains. During the talks, the two countries

decided to resume joint military exercises. This may not be a big outcome, but, as the leader of India's opposition party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sushma Swaraj put it, "if the armies of our two great countries forge an understanding, the future generations are assured of peace and stability. Much bad blood has flowed, its time to begin anew for the sake of future" (Khabar South Asia, January 25). Beyond these tangible gains, the dialogue provided the Indian delegation an opportunity to PLA perspectives—an important opportunity given that it wields considerable influence in Chinese foreign policy making, more so, when not much is known about the new members of the Central Military Commission.

The Inadequacies in Sino-Indian Defense Diplomacy

In reaching out to China, Indian defense diplomacy faces a number of handicaps, both generally and in some cases specific to engaging China. First, despite a rich history of peacekeeping, India does not have comprehensive experience in defense diplomacy. New Delhi has yet to develop another partnership akin to the previous relationship with the former Soviet Union. The existing strategic partnerships with South Asian countries like Nepal and Bhutan are crumbling apart and countries like Sri Lanka and Maldives are opting for strategic defiance. On a comparative note, India is no match to China that is a lead player in defense diplomacy and has practically engaged most countries in Asia and Africa ("PLA Steps Up Military Diplomacy in Asia," *China Brief*, May 6, 2011).

Second, as Professor C Raja Mohan points out, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) do not appear to be on the same page when it comes to defining the objectives of India's defense diplomacy. While the leadership of the MEA has come to value the possibilities of defense diplomacy, the MoD remains deeply conservative [2].

Third, the existing civil-military equilibrium does not have a pivotal role for military in defense diplomacy or for that matter foreign policy decision making. With the exception of providing training to foreign delegates and visit by service chiefs to other countries, India's military does not get enough exposure in reaching out to other militaries of the world. Logically therefore, knowledge deficiencies hinder taking advantage of military-to-military engagement—a problem Beijing, conversely, has

demonstrated that it is trying to correct (China Military Online, March 11).

Fourth, India still does not have a primary database on the Chinese PLA and its combat capabilities. The intelligence inputs are many a time derived from Western sources that may not cater to India's national interests, especially in terms of their geographic coverage. Far more foreign studies are done on PLA activity related to cross-Strait and maritime periphery issues than on Chinese military activities near the LAC. [Editor's Note: The distribution of *China Brief* analyses of Chinese military modernization is a good example of this imbalance.]

Fifth, resource constraints also hinder effective penetration of defense diplomacy. India does not have any strategic bases outside its territory. It offers training facilities to only select South Asian countries. Indian military hardware supplies to other countries are minimal. This lack of resources reduces the opportunities the Indian military and MoD can leverage to engage with and learn about the PLA at the strategic and operational levels. These factors may combine to bring down the efficacy of diplomatic initiatives with Chinese PLA.

Factors that Undermine Bilateral Defense Diplomacy

India's initiatives to engage China in a cobweb of engagement matrix including defense diplomacy have not yielded effective results because of the peculiar trend of Chinese military modernization and strategic behavior. First, while the rest of the world is busy interpreting China's military modernization having long-term balance of power consequences in Taiwan Straits or South China Sea, Indians are concerned about Chinese force mobilization and capacity building in their own backyard. The ultimate victim of Chinese PLA could once again be India, rather than Taiwan or one of the Southeast Asian countries. Second, the power relations between Chinese and Indian militaries are getting increasingly asymmetrical in all matrices. China spends much more on defense, has made rapid strides in military modernization, and above all, its power projection is visible as far as the Gulf of Aden. Third, China's military has fraternized all other South Asian countries against India with variable degree of success (For example, "Sri Lanka: Beijing's Growing Foothold in the Indian Ocean," *China Brief*, June 12, 2009). While Chinese presence in

many of these countries may not be specifically targeted toward India, it does undermine India's security interests. Fourth, in recent times, the Chinese leadership also has resorted to certain petty tit-for-tat activities against India. These include visa refusals to senior military leaders from India, map distortions and military confrontations with Indian merchant vessels in South China Sea (*Indian Express*, February 18; *Hindustan Times*, November 23, 2012; *Daily Times*, August 28, 2010). Fifth, China is still perceived an aggressor in Indian psyche and has done little in the last five decades to overcome this perception. On the contrary, it has been boxing India both within and outside South Asia. Moreover, in futuristic terms, China still is considered an important long-term threat.

Defense Diplomacy and the Sino-Indian Security Challenge

In the face of a rising China, the most fundamental concern of Asia-Pacific governments (including India) is how a stronger China affects their own security. While China could achieve a reasonable amount of security and prosperity playing within international rules, there is reason to expect Beijing to use its expanding economic, military and diplomatic influence to press neighboring governments to account for Chinese interests on political issues [3]. India, thus, faces a two-fold security dilemma with China. First, there has been no dilution in China's needling of India all along the LAC with its troops continuing to transgress regularly into Indian territory. As reported in the Indian media, there were more than 550 cases of Chinese incursions across the LAC from January 2010 to August 2012 (*The Times of India*, September 19, 2012). Further, as Mohan Malik points out, China has put in place a sophisticated military infrastructure in the Tibet Autonomous Region adjoining India: five fully operational air bases, several helipads, an extensive rail network and thirty thousand miles of roads—giving them the ability to rapidly deploy thirty divisions (fifteen thousand soldiers each) along the border, a three-to-one advantage over India. China has not only increased its military presence in Tibet but also is ramping up its nuclear arsenal [4]. India's recent initiatives (including creation of a new corps near China border) notwithstanding, it remains concerned about the Chinese posture on the border and fears a limited conflict with the PLA in future (*Times of India*, February 1, 2012). Second, India's

security challenge also extends to the immediate South Asian neighborhood where China seems to be extending its hold. In fact, from New Delhi's point of view, China appears to be able to play almost at will within India's backyard and is involved with most of India's neighbors. While China has "strategic ties" with Pakistan, it has engaged other South Asian countries through a network of projects like funding of transport corridors, gas pipelines and deep water ports. India is deeply frustrated by these Chinese initiatives, feeling surrounded but is powerless to do anything about it [5].

Defense Diplomacy and the Issue of Strategic Partnership

One of the thematic propositions from the Beijing round of defense dialogue was "creating a new type of military relations" between the two countries. This was simply a reiteration of the past commitments to build strategic partnership between the two Asian giants. As things stand, both the countries are strategic rivals having not only an unresolved border, but also competitors for power and influence in South Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. It is debatable, for various reasons, if the bilateral investments in defense diplomacy can replace this rivalry with partnership. First, the unresolved border issue means that the two countries must resolve this contentious issue, thereby, eliminating the biggest hurdle in normalization of bilateral relations and opening the possibility for other partnerships. The border talks have been a painful process with little indication of moving toward a logical outcome. Second, the bitter memories of 1962 war supplemented by Chinese strategic consolidation in Tibet still create doubts about Chinese intentions amongst Indian strategic thinkers. China has done little to ameliorate these feelings and encourage a perceptual shift about China's image in India. In fact, there is near unanimous opinion in India about China being the number one threat. Third, there has been little evidence of cooperation between the two countries on contemporary strategic issues. Be it nuclear issue, terrorism or any issue of Asian security, the strategic perceptions of the two countries have been at quite variance with each other. From India's perspective, China has been trying to contain India within South Asian subcontinent and, elsewhere, thereby seeking an advantage in the competition for power and influence in Asia-Pacific region. The question of any strategic

partnership between the two countries, therefore, is likely to remain a utopian proposition.

Conclusion

While the current process of defense diplomacy may not resolve the major issues between the two countries, it does have the potential to improve the relations between the two militaries. Both countries are likely to benefit through better border management on LAC where the CBMs are likely to proliferate and sustain the relative peace between them. Since the Sino-Indian bilateral relations will continue to be plagued by strategic uncertainties, defense diplomacy offers a cost-effective way of managing relations with China. Perhaps for this singular reason, India should continue to invest in defense diplomacy; engage China in a robust military-to-military engagement plan; and expand the number and size of these diplomatic initiatives.

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Notes:

1. John W Garver, "The Security Dilemma in Sino-Indian Relations," *India Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October 2002, pp. 1–38.
2. C. Raja Mohan, "From Isolation to Partnership: The Evolution of India's Military Diplomacy," ISAS Working Paper, No. 144, February 20, 2012.
3. Denny Roy, "More Security for Rising China, Less for Others?" East-West Center, *Asia-Pacific Issues*, No. 106, January 2013.
4. Mohan Malik, "China and India Today: Diplomats Jostle, Militaries Prepare," *World Affairs*, July/August 2012.
5. Sandy Gordon, "Nation, Neighborhood and Region: India's Emergence as an Asian Power," *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2010, pp. 199–217.

System of Systems Operational Capability: Operational Units and Elements

By Kevin N. McCauley

Editor's Note: This article as well as a subsequent article on the impact of System of Systems of Operations on Chinese military modernization are based upon Mr. McCauley's presentation at Jamestown's Third Annual China Defense and Security Conference held on February 28, 2013 in Washington, DC.

The successful development and implementation of Integrated Joint Operations (IJO) and the supporting "System of Systems Operations" probably will have a significant impact on future People's Liberation Army (PLA) warfighting capabilities. Ongoing education and training reforms, organizational restructuring and equipment modernization efforts are interrelated and will have an important role in the success or failure of PLA transformational efforts.

The PLA has developed a series of terms that are essential to following discussions and understanding the complex theoretical foundation for system of systems operational capability (*tixi zuozhan nengli*). This article examines two of the terms in greater depth: "operational unit" (*zuozhan danyuan*) and "operational elements" (*zuozhan yaosu*), to gain a deeper understanding of system of systems operations ("System of Systems Operational Capability: Key Supporting Concepts for Future Joint Operations," *China Brief* October 5, 2012). Operational unit is important for understanding the concept of modular force groupings, while operational elements are the warfighting capabilities that are fused by system of systems operations in order to generate a greater combat effectiveness.

Until recently, some PLA academics and operational analysts disagreed on the definitions associated with system of systems operational capability. Last year, however, the Academy of Military Science (AMS) and National Defense University (NDU) appear to have settled on official definitions for the various terms through NDU's publication of *Information-Based System of Systems Operations Study* and AMS's *Military Terms* [1].

It must be emphasized that both system of systems operations and IJO still are mostly theoretical and being experimented with and tested in exercises. They represent the operational capabilities the PLA hopes to achieve at some point in the future. A broad and deep transformational effort is required, including continued theoretical development, cultivating quality personnel, restructuring organizations, changing institutional culture as well as equipment modernization.

Operational Units

Operational units are the basis for understanding the PLA concept of modular units. Operational units are organized by task for a specific mission primarily at the tactical level. They can independently accomplish certain combat missions and represent basic “plug and play,” building-block modular units. These modular forces can be rapidly formed or reformed in larger groupings to meet changing operational requirements. Within the ground forces, combined arms battalions are considered the basic operational unit to be used as a modular force for building larger task organized groups or tactical formations (*bingtuan*), which in turn form joint campaign formations (*juntuan*) and operational system of systems (*zhuozhan tixi*) [2].

The PLA defines four general categories of operational units that usually include multiple operational elements or capabilities. These four categories are as follows:

- *Assault Unit*: Units within an operational system of systems with a comprehensive assault capability, and usually include the capabilities of reconnaissance and intelligence; command and control; strike/attack; firepower and support;
- *Command Unit*: A command post (basic, rear, alternate or forward) to ensure control and coordination by means of the integrated information system through information sharing, distributed decision-making, parallel planning, real-time control as well as effective evaluation and assessment capabilities;
- *Firepower Unit*: Comprehensive firepower strike capability, including air defense forces, with the capabilities of reconnaissance and intelligence, command and control, firepower and firepower effects assessments;

- *Support Unit*: Combat, logistics and equipment support, usually including the capabilities of reconnaissance and intelligence as well as command and control [3].

The modular force formation or restructuring during the course of a combat operation using the building block operational units with the capabilities of multiple operational elements will support the formation of operational system of systems—the highly integrated force groupings to conduct IJO. The modular force concept provides for flexibility in tailoring the correct force composition to meet changing operational requirements on the future battlefield.

Operational Elements [4]

Operational elements are key capabilities that are fused by the integrated information system to generate greater combat effectiveness. They represent the capabilities the PLA is developing in integrated joint training and supported by modernization efforts. Operational elements are as follows: reconnaissance and intelligence, command and control, precision strike, three-dimensional maneuver, information confrontation, full-dimensional protection, comprehensive support and the “Three Warfares” [5].

Reconnaissance and Intelligence

Reconnaissance and intelligence are required to support commanders at all levels to maintain initiative and successfully conduct combat operations on the dynamic battlefield [6]. System of systems operations require the timely fusion of accurate multi-source intelligence and reconnaissance information to provide a common operating picture to commanders and staffs, meet the requirements of operational units, and shorten the sensor-to-shooter time to optimize joint fire strikes. The PLA currently considers its intelligence structure fragmented (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 41–45).

Command and Control

Operational forces dispersed over a vast battlespace conducting complex operations will stress the ability to conduct efficient and smooth Command and Control

(C2). Effective C2 is the core of joint operations directly determining success or failure. As important as equipment modernization is to construct an integrated information system, the PLA realizes that training qualified personnel, particularly joint commanders, is critical to developing this operational element (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 46–50; “PLA Deputies Offer Clarifications on Military Intentions,” *China Brief*, March 15).

Within the military information system, the command information system plays a fundamental role for combat operations. The command information system is composed of the following sub-systems: command and control system, reconnaissance and early warning system, and the comprehensive support system. The command and control system provides the core function supporting the planning and execution of combat operations for the ground forces, PLA Navy (PLAN), PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and Second Artillery from the strategic to the tactical levels. The reconnaissance and early warning system provides situational awareness, targeting data and assists decision making by commanders. The comprehensive support system provides the basis for achieving precision support. This information system includes the following sub-systems: meteorological and hydrological support, mapping and navigation support, logistics support, equipment support as well as engineering and chemical defense support information systems. Other main components of the military information system include the information operations system (electronic warfare system, network warfare system and psychological warfare system) and the day-to-day administrative system.

The main command and control processes are operational decision making, planning, coordination and control capabilities. According to PLA sources, an important aspect of C2 will be distributed joint decision making, which represents a significant break from the past. This entails various commanders and their staffs dispersed at different locations—but connected by the integrated command information system—supporting the planning and execution of operational missions. Subordinate commanders, thus, would provide greater input to planning processes. While centralized C2 remains the preferred method, the PLA realizes that more decentralized command, which provides for greater

initiative by subordinate commanders within prescribed limits, will be required on a fast-paced, future battlefield (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 47–50).

Precision Strike

The PLA believes that precision strikes or information firepower strikes will represent a basic operation and effective means of achieving IJO-related operational objectives and even strategic aims (“Developing a Framework for PLA Precision Operations,” *China Brief*, July 6, 2012). Precision strikes are intended to attack and destroy the enemy’s operational system of systems as well as their will to resist by disrupting the enemy’s decision cycle. The precision strike process includes precision reconnaissance, C2, joint strikes and damage assessment. Precision strikes also are not limited to conventional munitions. “Information fire strikes” (*xinxi huoli daji*) combine “soft” and “hard” destruction means to paralyze and destroy key enemy information-processing nodes. In addition to military targets, the PLA also stresses political, economic, transportation, energy and infrastructure targets that can damage, if not destroy, the enemy’s ability to continue operations and/or will to fight (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 50–54).

Three-Dimensional Maneuver

Three-dimensional maneuver includes deployment by land, air and sea to an operational area, or maneuver during combat by land, air (including air assault, paratroops, or air-landing operations) or sea (including amphibious landings) in order to seize and maintain operational initiative. It can include operational maneuver from dispersed locations to concentrate superior forces at the decisive time and place. The PLA believes that the modern battlefield has non-linear characteristics that create opportunities for rapid maneuvers to attack enemy weaknesses, avoid enemy detection and precision strikes, and defeat the enemy’s decision cycle forcing a reactive enemy position (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 54–57).

Information Confrontation

Information offensive and defensive operations precede and are the prerequisite for the smooth conduct of combat operations, continuing throughout the course

of combat. Information offense represent proactive action to disrupt enemy operations as well as to seize and maintain information superiority. Information offense and defense integrate a variety of means to interfere, suppress or destroy the enemy's information and information systems, while protecting one's own information and information systems (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 57–60).

Information operations include both traditional electronic warfare methods as well as emerging cyber- or network-based techniques to supplement kinetic operations. Such operations, however, go beyond efforts to destroy or disrupt an enemy's information-processing systems and include efforts to manipulate the information reaching enemy decision makers. Because system of systems operations and IJO requires greater Chinese reliance on information systems—and awareness of the resulting vulnerabilities—PLA sources make information and network protection a high priority, recommending, for example, the establishment of network emergency response forces to ensure network resilience (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 57–60).

Full-Dimensional Protection

As firepower strikes increase in accuracy and lethality, force protection measures also increase in importance to ensure the security and stability of one's own operational system of systems. Full-dimensional protection includes defense against enemy reconnaissance and surveillance, electronic and network attacks, psychological operations, precision strikes, and chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons. Active protection includes all kinds of offensive actions to disrupt an enemy's ability to strike and explicitly includes preemption. Passive measures include maneuver, withdrawal, concealment and camouflage, air and missile defense, and information protection. Information protection covers technical and psychological measures to preserve the integrity of the PLA's information processing system—collection, processing and dissemination—including the people operating the equipment (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 60–63).

Comprehensive Support

Comprehensive support will be difficult in future wars

featuring a multi-dimensional and extensive battlespace, complex and fast-paced operations as well as high consumption rates and support requirements. The PLA views precision support as the basic mode of support, including combat, logistics and equipment support. Precision support can improve overall efficiency, while reducing duplication and resource waste. “Precision logistics support” (*houqin jingque baozhang*) uses the minimum resources to meet support needs at the precise time and place—a military version of the business concept “just-in-time” logistics. It focuses on integration of joint military assets at the strategic, campaign and tactical levels as well as military-civilian support functions—such as civil air and maritime transport or special integrated logistics support bases. An integrated support network is required to link all support organizations and forces, provide unified C2, requirements analysis, and resource allocation for timely and accurate distribution of materials, including in adjacent combat zones (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 63–67).

Logistics support for informationized warfare requires the following: civil-military integration of strategic projection forces, including civil air transport and large transport ships; an integrated combat zone with a base system focused on fixed support forces including general purpose and special integrated logistics support bases to service the combat zone and adjacent combat zones; groupings of flexible strategic logistics contingency support forces, mobile maritime support forces including large supply ships; and PLAAF emergency mobile support groups and air refueling forces. The PLA's concept also calls for small, mobile and modular tactical logistics groups. Requirements for future combat include a combination of echelon-by-echelon and skip echelon support, with strengthening of the skip echelon method for flexible and rapid support to major combat equipment, high-tech systems, and movement of spare parts, ammunition and other material; and a combination of fixed and maneuver support (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 63–67).

“Three Warfares”

The “Three Warfares” are psychological, public opinion and legal warfares, and their integrated employment is designed to seize political advantage, foment the psychological disintegration of the enemy, influence other countries and support one's own morale. These

actions begin before other combat actions and continue through all operational phases. The ideal goal is to achieve one's objectives without fighting or subdue the enemy with minimal destruction. Public opinion warfare uses mass media to promote one's own political positions, and block the enemy's media offensive in order to influence domestic and foreign public opinion. Psychological warfare uses principals of modern psychology to select strategies against specific audiences, to consolidate one's own psychological line of defense and to influence enemy military and civilians to achieve military and political objectives. Legal warfare substitutes the law for conventional military methods to gain the initiative and achieve political-military objectives (*ISBSOSOS*, pp. 67–69).

Conclusion

The PLA has developed terminology to support its evolving theory for system of systems operations. Understanding the definitions is necessary to decipher the complex concept, with operational unit and operational element being two particularly important terms. Operational units are the basic task organized force modules providing a “plug and play” capability to form larger combined arms and joint formations at the tactical and campaign levels. These modular operational units support the formation of operational system of systems, the integrated force groupings important to system of systems and integrated joint operations. This modular approach provides greater flexibility to structure the correct force composition for a specific combat mission and enable rapid restructuring to tailor the force as the operational phase and requirements change.

Operational elements are key capabilities that are integrated by the information systems and system of system operations, acting as a multiplier to generate greater combat effectiveness beyond the sum of the individual parts. The integration of forces and key capabilities is a key objective of systems of systems operations, and this integration forms IJO's foundation. The successful implementation of these efforts is intended to increase PLA combat capabilities and flexibility significantly during future operations.

System of systems operations and IJO, however, are mostly aspirational at present. Creating an IJO

capability will require extensive reforms, organizational restructuring and equipment modernization, representing a long complex, and difficult process.

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Notes:

1. *Information System-Based System of Systems Operations Study*, Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2012, pp. 2–8.
2. *Information System-Based System of Systems Operational Capability Study: Vol. 1 Operations*, Beijing: Military Yiwen Press, 2010, pp. 5–6.
3. Ibid., pp. 5–7; *Information System-based System of Systems Operational Capability Building in 100 Questions*, Beijing: National Defense University Press, June 2011, pp. 27–28; *Information System-Based System of Systems Operations Study*, pp. 37–41.
4. Unless otherwise noted, the information below comes from the *Information System-Based System of Systems Operations Study* and will appear in-text as (*ISBSOSOS*, page number).
5. Academy of Military Science, *Military Terms*, Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2011, p. 63. *Military Terms* does not include “Three Warfares” or political work as an operational element; however, it is included in *Information System-Based System of Systems Operations Study*, pp. 41–68.
6. “Reconnaissance and Intelligence” also is referred to as “Reconnaissance and Early Warning.”
