



**In This Issue:**

**IN A FORTNIGHT**

By Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga .....1

**A MODERN CULT OF PERSONALITY? XI JINPING ASPIRES TO BE THE EQUAL OF MAO AND DENG**

By Willy Lam .....3

**CRACKING DOWN ON FOREIGN ESPIONAGE CHANNELS**

By Peter Mattis .....7

**CHINA GEARS UP HELICOPTERS TO PLAY CRUCIAL ROLE IN EAST CHINA SEA DISPUTE**

By Peter Wood .....10

**INCOMPLETE TRANSFORMATION: PLA JOINT TRAINING AND WARFIGHTING CAPABILITIES**

By Kevin N. McCauley .....13



Chinese President Xi Jinping.

(Credit: Xinhua)

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

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

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



For comments and questions about China Brief, please contact us at  
 < [beauchamp@jamestown.org](mailto:beauchamp@jamestown.org) >

1111 16th St. NW, Suite 320  
 Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 202.483.8888  
 Fax: 202.483.8337

**In a Fortnight**

**THE NEW SILK ROAD AND LATIN AMERICA: WILL THEY EVER MEET?**

By Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s New Silk Road stretches over 8,000 miles from China to Europe, traversing the Eurasian land mass and even touching Africa, but notably excludes one continent on the other side of the world—Latin America. President Xi’s landmark initiative, also known as “one belt, one road” that consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, has become the centerpiece of Beijing’s foreign and trade policy toward countries along the route. For Latin America, however, the New Silk Road appears to be merely a catchphrase used by the Chinese media, not officials, to include the region within Beijing’s overarching strategy.

Latin America is largely absent from official Chinese discussions of the New Silk Road. When President Xi visited the region in July 2014, he made no mention of the New Silk Road during any public event, even though he spoke repeatedly about the initiative during his visits to Europe and South Asia at other times last

year ([Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), July 11, 2014). During the first ministerial meeting of the Forum of China and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) this January, there was similarly no mention of “one belt, one road” ([Xinhua](#), January 8). According to a map released by state-run Xinhua News Agency in May 2014, the New Silk Road does not extend to Latin America ([Xinhua](#), May 8, 2014).

Yet this has not stopped Chinese commentators from using the New Silk Road to describe China’s Latin America policy. One *Global Times* article tied the two together by mentioning the “ ‘silk road’ across the Pacific Ocean” from Mexico to Guangdong and Fujian provinces in the 16th century ([Global Times](#), January 4). The article explains that today, “the gradually expanding and enhancing new Silk Road [sic] is bringing the two regions closer and closer” and later continues that “one belt, one road” is intended to “expand trade and investment instead of adding to trade routes. Latin America will be bound to benefit a lot from the proposal.” Writing before the Silk Road Fund was established in November 2014, the *Global Times* carried an article claiming that a “New Silk Road Development Fund or Development Bank could integrate China’s Asia, Africa and even Latin America policies” ([Global Times](#), June 24, 2014). Discussing the signing of an agreement with Ecuador to establish China’s first free trade zone on the continent, *China Daily* described it as a “prelude to a Latin America Silk Road post station” ([China Daily](#), January 10).

One specific Chinese investment that is named as evidence of the New Silk Road in Latin America more than any other is the Nicaragua Canal. Although the New Silk Road is a Chinese government initiative and the Canal is ostensibly private investment by Chinese billionaire Wang Jing, several commentators in the Chinese media treated them as one and the same. A Tencent Finance article called the Canal a “new bridgehead for the country’s ‘one belt, one road’ strategy,” even as it noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said that there is no government involvement ([Tencent](#), December 24, 2014; [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), December 22, 2014). Xiang Jun, a Taiwanese professor, called the Canal the “Latin America version of ‘one belt, one road’ ” ([Takungpao](#), November 28, 2014).

The most serious treatment of Latin America’s role in the New Silk Road is by Xue Li, a director at the Institute of World Politics and Economics under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences ([Financial Times](#) [Chinese], January 21). Tracing the New Silk Road’s origins to China’s transition from “hide and bide” to the “new normal” of a more active foreign policy and the New Type of Great Power Relations under President Xi, Xue asks “what place does Latin America hold in China’s international strategy? Can it become another terminal on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and not have its importance surpassed by Africa?” Xue answers that the New Silk Road’s “main objective is to establish cooperative networks in Europe and Asia,” so “Latin America and Africa are not as important for China’s ‘one belt, one road’ strategy as Eurasia.” The region is “far away, with lots of U.S. influence, weak economic connections, obvious cultural differences and no way to connect it [to China] via roads, making China–Latin America relations overall a weaker grade than China–Africa relations.” Xue details the region’s shortcomings to explain why China should not overestimate Latin America’s strategic importance. First of all, its economic structure and industrial policies are not aligned. Moreover, it suffers from the middle income trap. Finally, the region is defined by rapid inflation, high debt and low competitiveness, as well as drug problems and widespread Christianity.

Xue goes on to add that the image of the United States looms large over Latin America. “European influence over Africa is far less than U.S. influence in Latin America,” meaning that “if China wanted, it could even become security and military allies with some Africa countries.” Military alliances, however, is something the United States would not tolerate in its backyard. As evidence, Xue points to China establishing “partnerships” with Latin American countries, which “signify that China cannot establish military alliances,” since “partnerships are weaker than military alliances.”

Xue does offer China some advice for bringing the New Silk Road to Latin America. China should determine the important countries and fields for cooperation, and work to control its risks. Since China cannot have good relations with every country, it should be selective based on economic interests and avoid “financial blackhole” countries that are reliant on one product. Xue suggests Uruguay and Trinidad and Tobago for investment; Brazil

and Argentina for their overall strength; and Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile for their political stability, economic potential and resources. Xue recommends China pursue energy, mining, new industries and trade hubs, including a free trade zone in Mexico. But Xue concludes that Latin America is less important than Africa for China, and that the “‘one belt, one road’ strategy in Latin America is: China now has the money, but should be careful how it spends it.”

Xue’s skeptical conclusion rests on the assumption that China’s foreign policy should be based on China’s economic interests, and those interests will not be found in Latin America. Moreover, the United States’ continued influence in Latin America precludes closer political relations, suggesting that the region as a whole is the least important to China and does not need to be included in the New Silk Road. Indeed, it appears that the Chinese government is content to pursue the current trajectory of China-Latin America relations and not seek to include the region in its larger strategy.

*Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga is the editor of China Brief.*

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## A Modern Cult of Personality? Xi Jinping Aspires To Be The Equal of Mao and Deng

By Willy Lam

Having been in office for just over two years, President Xi Jinping has already laid claim to being the third most powerful politician of post-liberation China, just after Chairman Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China’s economic reforms. Having gained control over what Chinese commentators call “the gun and the knife”—a reference to the army, police, spies and the all-powerful graft-busters—the Fifth-Generation titan is quickly growing his body of dictums and instructions on ideology, governance and related issues. The zealotry with which the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) propaganda machinery is eulogizing Xi’s words of wisdom smacks of the cult of personality that was associated with the Great Helmsman himself, Mao.

## “The Spirit of Xi Jinping” Haunts CCP Ideology

What Xi’s publicists call “the spirit of the series of important speeches by General Secretary Xi Jinping” (*xijinping zongshuji xilie zhongyao jianghua jingshen*) is being accorded the same status as Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory. It was at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee held last October that “the Spirit of Xi Jinping” was elevated to the same level as the teachings of Mao and Deng. The *Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Advancing Rule of Law*, which was endorsed at the Fourth Plenum, was the first top-tier official document that put “the spirit of the series of important speeches by General Secretary Xi Jinping” on par with “Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thoughts of ‘Three Represents’ and the ‘Scientific Outlook on Development,’” which were deemed guiding principles of the Party and state (see [China Brief](#), November 20, 2014; [People’s Daily](#), October 29, 2014 [Xinhua](#), October 23, 2014). The “Three Represents” and “Scientific Outlook on Development” are considered major theoretical contributions of former presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao respectively. Partly owing to Deng’s advocacy of the virtues of a collective leadership, however, Jiang and Hu are not identified in Party documents as the authors of their well-known mantras. Indeed, Politburo member Wang Huning, who served as a political aide to Jiang, was considered to have played a big role in the formulation of the “Three Represents” doctrine. And Wen Jiabao, who was premier during the Hu era, was among a handful of senior cadres who served to substantiate the “Scientific Outlook on Development” ([Southern Metropolitan Weekly](#), November 26, 2013; [People’s Daily](#), October 20, 2008). Xi’s apparent ability to persuade senior cadres to salute “the Spirit of Xi Jinping” (*xijinping jingshen*) testifies to a return of the tradition of strongman-style politics in CCP cosmology. Through releasing at least four anthologies of his speeches and writings over the last two years, Xi has also broken the long-established tradition that Party leaders publish books only after their retirement ([Ming Pao](#) [Hong Kong], February 5; [Zhejiang Online](#) [Hangzhou], April 8, 2014).

The glorification of the Spirit of Xi Jinping began barely one year after Xi became Party boss and commander-in-chief at the 18th Party Congress in late 2012. In December 2013, the *People’s Daily* published nine

commentaries summarizing Xi's instructions on areas including "socialism with Chinese characteristics," the Chinese dream, economic and political reforms, culture, foreign policy and Party construction. Xi's brilliant talks and instructions, said *People's Daily*, represented "new ways of thinking, new perspectives, new conclusions and new demands [on the Party and nation]." The Party mouthpiece added that Xi had "grasped the new demands of the era as well as the new expectations of the masses" ([Thepaper.cn](#) [Shanghai], October 24, 2014; [People's Daily](#), December 31, 2013).

### Building a Cult of Personality

The superlatives have become progressively more grandiloquent. The *Guangming Daily* noted, in late 2014, that the Spirit of Xi Jinping consisted of a body of "scientific theory and practice ... that would open up new vistas for the Party and country." Xi's instructions, the official paper noted, amounted to "new chapters in the Sinicization of Marxism." According to *Report on Current Affairs*, a journal run by the Propaganda Department, the Spirit of Xi Jinping "has provided a profound answer to major questions of theory and practice regarding the development of the Party and state in the new historical era." "It has enriched and developed the scientific theory of the Communist Party," *Report* added ([Report on Current Affairs](#) [Beijing], January 13; [Guangming Daily](#), December 6, 2014). Moreover, relevant heads of departments and regional leaders have—in a throwback to ideological campaigns of the Maoist era—competed with one another in a ritualistic display of fealty to the patriarch. This *biaotai* ("public airing of support") was led by Director of the CCP Propaganda Department Liu Qibao, who noted that all Party members should absorb and make use of the "rich content, profound thinking and superb arguments" contained in the Spirit of Xi Jinping. The President's instructions, Liu added, had "enabled the Party and state to attain new achievements, established a new style, and opened up new possibilities." Zhejiang Party Secretary Xia Baolong, deemed a Xi protégé, was among provincial officials who sang the praises of the Spirit of Xi Jinping. In a talk last year, Xia urged his Zhejiang colleagues to use Xi's words of wisdom "to arm their brains." "The more we know about [the Xi spirit], the more we are convinced and the more resolute we will be when implementing it," he noted ([People's Daily](#), May 16, 2014; [Zhejiang Daily](#), April 2, 2014).

### The Tenets of Xi's "Spirit"

Just what does the Spirit of Xi Jinping consist of? It is true that in the past two years, the President and Commander-in-Chief has come up with eye-catching initiatives on the foreign policy and military fronts. For example, he has unveiled the New Silk Road Economic Belt to boost links with Central Asian states as well as the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road to woo Southeast Asian and South-Asian countries, ranging from Indonesia and Malaysia to Sri Lanka and Pakistan (see [China Brief](#), February 20; [Xinhua](#), February 5; [New Beijing Post](#), December 10, 2014).

On the domestic front, however, Xi has yet to formulate mantras or policies comparable, for example, to the "Three Represents" or "Scientific Outlook on Development." Late last month, the *People's Daily* and other state media began extolling the virtues of the so-called "Four Comprehensives," namely, "comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society, comprehensively deepening reform, comprehensively governing the nation according to law, and comprehensively administering the Party with strictness." The *People's Daily* commentary pointed out that the "Four Comprehensives" were "a unique system of ideas that is built on past [party dogma] and that demonstrates boldness in innovation." "It is an innovative strategy in governing the party and country that [shows the party's ability to] make progress with the times," the paper added. "It is a synthesis between Marxism and the practice [of governance] in China" ([People's Daily](#), February 24; [Xinhua](#), February 26).

While the "Four Comprehensives" has been described as a "new political theory," it seems a mere amalgamation of slogans and dictums that have been used by top cadres since the end of the Cultural Revolution. "Building a moderately prosperous society" was the rallying cry of Deng Xiaoping when he kick-started economic reform in the early 1980s. And both ex-presidents Jiang and Hu had waxed eloquent about deepening reform and running the country according to law ([Ming Pao](#), February 27). By and large, Xi is still better known as a conservative ideologue who urges his 1.3 billion countrymen to cleave to socialist orthodoxy rather than breaking new ground. Hence, his famous insistence that Party members and citizens alike should renew their "self-confidence in the theory, path and institutions" of socialism with Chinese characteristics. According to an article in a journal under the CCP

Central Party School, the “Xi Jinping Spirit” consists of one prime goal—“attaining the Chinese dream”; and two fundamental points—“comprehensively implementing reforms and upholding the line of the masses” ([Central Party School Net](#), August 8, 2014). This seems a restatement of late patriarch Deng’s famous mantra about the Party sticking to the central task of building up the economy while pursuing the two objectives of promoting reform and the open-door policy on the one hand, and upholding the Four Cardinal Principles of orthodox socialism on the other.

It is perhaps due to the rather mundane contents of the Spirit of Xi Jinping that the Party’s ideological and propaganda machinery has gone into overdrive in order to give it as much publicity as possible. The Party-state apparatus is imposing a uniformity of thought among Chinese intellectuals and college students. Early this year, the General Office of the CCP Central Committee and the State Council General Office issued a document entitled “Opinions Regarding Further Strengthening and Improving Propaganda and Ideological Work in Universities Under New Conditions.” The nationally circulated document urged college administrators and teachers to “earnestly insert the theoretical system of Chinese-style socialism into teaching materials, the classrooms and the brains [of students].” It added that “the ideological and political qualities of teaching teams must be raised” and that “the Party’s leadership over propaganda and ideological work in colleges must be enhanced” ([People’s Daily](#), January 20; [Xinhua](#), January 19).

In an address on the new thought-control campaign in colleges, Minister of Education Yuan Guiren noted that “there is no way that universities can allow teaching materials containing Western values and precepts into our classrooms.” He warned that teachers and students “should absolutely be forbidden to attack or speak ill of Party leaders or to smear and disparage socialism.” The connection between this draconian ideological crusade and the no-holds-barred adulation of President Xi was made clear when Yuan played up the imperative that “we must let the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s series of important speeches get into teaching materials, classrooms and [students’] brains” ([People’s Daily](#), January 29; [Xinhua](#), January 29).

## Xi’s Cult of Personality Infiltrates the PLA

A parallel quasi-personality cult around Commander-in-Chief Xi is being constructed in the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). For the first time in the history of the military forces, Xi’s loyalists are pushing “the CMC Chairman Responsibility System.” This means that the CMC chairman alone can make policies and issue instructions on defense-related issues. As the official *Liberation Army Daily* explained, the responsibility system also means that PLA officers and soldiers pledge to “resolutely follow Chairman Xi’s orders, resolutely execute Chairman Xi’s demands, and resolutely fulfil the tasks laid down by Chairman Xi” ([Liberation Army Daily](#), January 28; [China.com.cn](#), January 19). It is understood that Xi is pushing this “responsibility system” to rectify perceived lapses in the leadership of his two predecessors as CMC chairman: former presidents Jiang and Hu. Not being professional soldiers, Jiang and Hu by and large allowed senior generals sitting on the CMC to make decisions on areas including strategy, personnel, and research and development of weapons. The “CMC Chairman responsibility system” could reflect Xi’s distrust of generals who owed their promotion to ex-CMC chairmen Jiang and Hu ([Ming Pao](#), January 19; [Radio Free Asia](#), December 30, 2014). Since late 2014, Xi has promoted a rash of generals from the Nanjing Military Region in coastal China, whose top brass are cronies of the President when the latter served in regional posts in Fujian and Zhejiang (see [China Brief](#), January 9).

Xi’s ambition to become the equal of Mao and Deng will be dramatically illustrated during the military parade scheduled to take place at Tiananmen Square on September 3. The ostensible reason for this year’s demonstration of China’s hard power was to mark the 70th anniversary of the “triumph in the global struggle against fascism,” which is the CCP’s phrase to describe the surrender of the Japanese Imperial Army in 1945. The military parade, which will feature Xi inspecting the PLA’s latest hardware such new generations of stealth aircraft and ballistic missiles, will above all buttress the Fifth-Generation leader’s status as what liberal Chinese intellectuals call “the Mao Zedong of the 21st Century.” The extravaganza is yet another example of Xi breaking with tradition in order to project his own authority. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, such extravaganzas have only been held three times—in 1984, 1999 and

2009—to mark important anniversaries of the founding of the People’s Republic (*Ta Kung Pao* [Hong Kong], February 15; *New Evening Post* [Beijing], January 28). Moreover, Jiang presided over the Tiananmen military parade in 1999—and Hu masterminded the grand spectacle in 2009—three years before his retirement as general secretary. When Xi reviews the troops this September, it will be two months shy of the third-year anniversary of his coming to power.

### Liberal Criticism of Xi’s Cult

The return of a Mao-style cult of personality has drawn criticisms from the nation’s dwindling number of outspoken liberal intellectuals. Well-known public intellectual Zhang Lifan, a former historian at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, deplored the near-deification of Xi by the media. “We are not sure whether Xi is happy about the political packaging,” Zhang said. “But this packaging has gone overboard... to the extent that Xi has become an omnipotent person.” Li Datong, a liberal news commentator, said he was “disturbed by the evil trend of a personality cult being built around Xi.” “The systems and institutions of the CCP are bad, and traditional ways of thinking could prompt Xi to repeat old mistakes [of the Maoist era]” (*VOA News*, January 18; *Deutsche Welle Chinese*, October 25, 2014). Ding Wang, a veteran Hong Kong-based Sinologist, sees the contours of the resurrection of a Mao-style “one-voice chamber.” “Xi the new emperor is wielding the knife to stifle Western ideas and to impose orthodoxy,” Ding wrote. “The clock is being turned back and we seem to be in the midst of a quasi-Cultural Revolution” (*Hong Kong Economic Journal*, February 5; *Apple Daily* [Hong Kong], February 3).

Perhaps more important is the fact that in spite of the apparent popularity of the theory of neo-authoritarianism—that reforms can be expedited if they are being pushed by a really authoritative patriarch—there is no evidence to show that the party-state apparatus is “comprehensively deepening reform” in an efficient manner (*Phoenix TV*, January 8; *Radio Free Asia*, December 19, 2013). Take, for example, the establishment of Free Trade Zones (FTZ), which is one of the most radical proposals endorsed by the Third Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee in November 2013. Despite pledges that close to 20 FTZs will be set up around the

country, so far only four have been announced. And the Shanghai FTZ, a prototype experimental patch set up as two months before the Third Plenum, has been viewed with skepticism if not frustration by Western corporations easy to break into areas that are monopolized by well-connected Chinese firms (see *China Brief*, February 20; *21st Century Net* [Guangzhou] September 27, 2014; *Phoenix TV*, September 24, 2014). The same foot-dragging seems to be the case with the reform of the 100-odd *yangqi*, or centrally-controlled state-owned-enterprise conglomerates. The only Xi dictum which seems to be working with these mammoth state monopolies is that the salaries of senior managers would be drastically cut in line with the strongman’s clean-governance crusade (*Changsha Evening News*, [Hunan], September 3, 2014; *South China Morning Post*, August 31, 2014). The lack of obvious achievements for economic reform has reinforced the belief that Xi is consolidating power out of a Maoist-style self-aggrandizement rather than a genuine commitment to Deng-style liberalization.

*Dr. Willy Wo-Lap Lam is a Senior Fellow at The Jamestown Foundation. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Center for China Studies, the History Department and the Program of Master’s in Global Political Economy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is the author of five books on China, including “Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges.”*

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## Cracking Down on Foreign Espionage Channels

By Peter Mattis

On February 4, the Central Military Commission (CMC) issued a new revision of the Military Grassroots Construction Guidelines (*jundui jiceng jianshe gangyao*) for People's Liberation Army (PLA) personnel. The guidelines and the accompanying press articles highlighted leadership and PLA concerns on managing foreign espionage threats as well as leaks through personal electronics, despite the far-reaching changes across PLA personnel policies suggested by the outline ([Xinhua](#), February 4; [PLA Daily](#), February 4). The guidelines contain little related to counterintelligence concerns that Chinese authorities had not already said or governed by existing rules. The repeated revision and reiteration of such regulations, like the updated Counterespionage Law (previously the State Security Law) passed last fall, suggests China's counterintelligence authorities are seeing a lot of disconcerting behavior by Chinese civilian and military officials or hostile activity that they cannot explain or trace back to leaks. Ultimately, these guidelines reflect the continuing insecurity of a China that, prior to Reform and Opening, once shut down foreign espionage, but, after opening up, has faced foreign intelligence services increasingly capable of accessing China's secrets. Foreign espionage is just one facet of the leadership's warning that "China is facing unprecedented security risks" and a broader security crackdown ordered by President Xi Jinping ([Xinhua](#), January 23; [South China Morning Post](#), December 23, 2014).

The new PLA guidelines combat China's espionage problem from several directions. First, the CMC demanded greater controls over—if not outright bans of—cellular phones and Internet access as well as most outside contact via electronic means while acting in an official capacity. Second, the guidelines banned PLA officers from mistreating their soldiers through corporal punishment, "encroaching upon their interests," and ordering them on personal tasks as well as the already-proscribed acceptance of bribes—three things that undermine morale. Third, the guidelines expanded the scope of background checks to include psychological evaluations. Although Xinhua drew attention to mental

health, psychological screening is a commonly used tool in security vetting internationally ([Beijing Youth Daily](#), February 5; [Xinhua](#), February 4).

### Repeated Admonitions, Unfulfilled Campaign

The new guidelines, with the supporting propaganda campaign focused on counterespionage, do not raise anything novel. Observers could be forgiven for thinking that some of these rules already were on the books, as Chinese leaders consistently have emphasized the need to better protect secrets. Last September, ahead of the release of an opinion on strengthening military information security, Chinese President and Commander-in-Chief Xi Jinping emphasized that without network security there is no national security; without informatization, there is no modernization ([PLA Daily](#), October 7, 2014; [China National Defense Report](#), September 29, 2014). Former president Hu Jintao similarly supported information security improvements, and, nearly five years ago, his CMC also issued an opinion on improving the PLA's information security ([PLA Daily](#), April 6, 2010).

The use of personal electronics and mobile communications has long troubled the PLA, and China has been aware that so-called "open channels" (*gonggong qudao*), such as online forums, could provide for most foreign intelligence needs, including on China ([PLA Daily](#), May 8, 2008). In 2009, secrecy protection (*baomi gongzuo*) personnel highlighted the threat of 3G cell phones and what their new functions meant for the difficulty of keeping secrets in military facilities ([PLA Daily](#), April 7, 2009). Part of the PLA's reluctance to take such drastic measures, perhaps, relates to the interest of the General Political Department in exploiting soldiers' access to technology for political education ([PLA Daily](#), November 3, 2014; [China Brief](#), February 3, 2012).

Last year's problems with espionage over the Internet may have persuaded the military leadership that the security and counterintelligence authorities' troubles with countering online espionage had gone on too long, in addition to military exercises demonstrating the potential consequences ([Global Times](#), November 14, 2014). Last spring, the CMC issued an opinion under Xi Jinping's signature to strengthen security awareness for protecting sensitive computers and communications. Perhaps not so coincidentally, Chinese media outlets highlighted the

efforts of the Ministry of State Security's Guangdong department to break an online espionage ring, which involved more than 40 people across 20 provinces ([China Brief](#), May 7, 2014). One Chinese media outlet around the same time reported that more than 70 percent of China's leaked or stolen secrets occurred online, which, based on the recently-issued guideline, could include commercial headhunters, chatroom participants and social media contacts ([Beijing Youth Daily](#), February 5; [China Daily](#), May 9, 2014). This suggests an online role in many, if not most, of the 200-plus spies, according to unnamed expert at the Chinese National Defense University, that Chinese authorities have arrested since 2000 ([Beijing Youth Daily](#), August 18, 2014).

### Stricter Rules, More Leeway for Investigators

The guidelines also should be read within the context of the Counterespionage Law (*fan jian die fa*) passed last November. As the rules for government and military personnel get ever stricter and more clearly defined, counterintelligence authorities also have gained a broader remit and no longer need to prove a connection to foreign or overseas organizations. In some ways, the Counterespionage Law suggests the authorities are walking back from the policy at the outset of Reform and Opening, when espionage was defined as a "concrete act" that involved a foreign party ([Xinhua](#), June 30, 1979; [People's Daily](#), April 5, 1979). Merely possessing information considered state secrets or the communication of such information in an open forum now will be sufficient ([Xinhua](#), November 1, 2014).

Although Chinese commentators have noted the law strengthens rule of law, observers should be careful about over-reading the legal niceties contained within the law ([People's Daily](#), February 12). Official media described the Counterespionage Law as taking the State Security Law of 1993 as its base with the inclusion of "new rules that have proven effective in practice" ([China Daily](#), November 1, 2014). The latter part of this statement means that, in recent years, state security elements and other relevant departments have been operating beyond their authorities to investigate and deter espionage. Among these new rules is the authority to confiscate any financial or material benefits gained from espionage, and this author is aware of a number of cases where state security officials demanded compensation from Chinese

citizens for payments made by foreign governments—even from a time long since passed ([Xinhua](#), November 1, 2014).

One of the new measures of the Counterespionage Law is the addition of "indicating targets for enemies" as an activity that will qualify as espionage. Although it could be related to the networks of Taiwanese spotters, whom state security expose from time to time, the addition may relate more to online military discussion forums. China's military enthusiasts (*junmi*) regularly identify interesting Chinese military developments and exchange pictures of military hardware and facilities ([Beijing Youth Daily](#), August 18, 2014). This data has become useful for Western analysis, including the work that helped identify China's military hackers in the 61398 Unit (*budui*). The Chinese authorities seemingly cannot scrub the websites fast enough to prevent sensitive information from leaking out. [1]

### Inseparable from Broader Security Crackdown

In many ways, Beijing's concern with espionage cannot be separated from the larger context of the Party's concern with ideological subversion under President Xi going back to Document No. 9, which described threats to the regime such as Western-style constitutionalism, universal values, and neo-liberal economics as threats to the regime that required the Party to reassert ideological dominance ([ChinaFile](#), November 8, 2013). In one of the latest examples of the Party's efforts to meet this challenge, President Xi told a national meeting in December that "Enhancing [Chinese Communist Party] leadership and Party building in the higher learning institutions is a fundamental guarantee for running socialist universities with Chinese features well" ([Xinhua](#), December 29, 2014). The meeting foreshadowed the Central Committee's release last month of "Opinion Concerning Further Strengthening and Improving Propaganda and Ideology Work in Higher Education Under New Circumstances." The opinion explicitly deals with the challenge of the "ideological battlefield" internationally and the need for China's success in this arena to achieve the "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese People" ([Xinhua](#), January 19). Education Minister Yang Guiren followed up on this point stating that hostile foreign forces' principle targets for infiltrating and subverting China are young teachers and students at universities ([Seeking Truth](#), January 31).

Counterespionage may not be the primary driver of the ideological and national security crackdown; however, the CCP leadership, with its legacy of underground operations and subverting Kuomintang (KMT) officials, is fully aware of the interaction between ideology and espionage. Counterintelligence professionals have long held four principal factors—money, ideology, compromise/coercion and ego (known by the mnemonic M.I.C.E.)—often in combination, motivate most people to commit espionage. Ideology is a great defense mechanism where belief is strong and is a great vulnerability where belief is weak. The CMC guidelines repeated the need to prevent “sabotage by hostile forces or erosion by corrupt ideas or culture” ([Xinhua](#), February 4). In 2011, a leaked video presentation of General Jin Yi’nan commenting on China’s vulnerability to espionage and suggesting the growing number of cases represented “moral degeneracy,” a problem certainly related to Xi’s goal of promoting a “good work style” (*zuofeng youliang*) for PLA personnel (see [China Brief](#), September 2, 2011).

In addition, the Ministry of Public Security pushed forward a draft law relating to regulating non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which Beijing considers a “double-edged sword” that, in some cases, “[constitute] a threat to national security” because they incited separatists and subverted governments ([South China Morning Post](#), December 23, 2014). The last year already has seen greater scrutiny leveled at NGOs, especially those with direct foreign funding and those that rely on foreign connections ([The Diplomat](#), February 23; [Global Times](#), July 23, 2014).

This month, the National People’s Congress also will consider a draft counterterrorism law that will grant the state expansive powers and access to encrypted data under the heading of Internet security management. Between this draft and banking regulations passed late last year, Beijing can demand access or retain the encryption keys to access secure corporate and financial data, leading at least one industry insider to suggest nothing will be allowed to be secret from the state ([Reuters](#), February 27). The draft law maintains China’s broad terrorism definition. While the definition of terrorism no longer applies to “thought” for reasons of “accuracy and applicability,” it still includes broadly applicable powers: “any speech or activity that, by means of violence, sabotage or threat, generates social panic, undermines public security, and menaces

government organs and international organizations.” Insecurity, more specifically problems with intelligence collection and coordination in addressing terrorism, is the primary reason given for readdressing counterterrorism ([Xinhua](#), February 25).

## Conclusion

Taken in context, the CMC regulations and their measures for curbing security leaks are part of a broader campaign that reflects China’s insecurity. A recent piece in a Central Party School journal by Sun Jianguo, the PLA’s senior intelligence official and president of the China Institute for International and Strategic Studies, confirms this, drawing connections between the domestic and international security environments. Listing President Xi’s national security accomplishments, Lieutenant General Sun identified the State Security Committee (also known as the National Security Council) as well as the promulgation of a new set of national security laws and regulations—which certainly would include the new CMC regulations ([Seeking Truth](#), February 28).

These developments also signal an evolution in China’s approach to counterespionage. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping initiated the Reform and Opening Policy with talk of “opening the windows.” In 1983, Deng created the Ministry of State Security—combining the intelligence elements of the Party with the counterintelligence departments of the Ministry of Public Security—reportedly to “put up screens to keep the pests out.” Allowing the Internet into China, even with its restrictions, opened an even bigger window and one through which Chinese state secrets can depart more rapidly and untraceably. The revised PLA guidelines and the Counterespionage Law address the untraceable component and focus on the China side of any potential intelligence relationship.

*Peter Mattis is a Fellow in The Jamestown Foundation’s China Program and a visiting scholar at National Cheng-Chi University’s Institute of International Relations in Taipei. He edited China Brief from 2011 to 2013.*

## Notes:

1. Mark Stokes, Jenny Lin, and L.C. Russell Hsiao, *The Chinese People’s Liberation Army Signals Intelligence and Cyber Reconnaissance Infrastructure*, Project 2049 Institute, November 11, 2011. For another good

example of Western academics using public online postings by PLA personnel for open source analysis that rivals U.S. government analysis, see Dr. Jeffrey Lewis' new book on China's nuclear posture (Jeffrey Lewis, [Paper Tigers: China's Nuclear Posture \[IISS\]](#), December 4, 2014).

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## China Gears Up Helicopters to Play Crucial Role in East China Sea Dispute

By Peter Wood

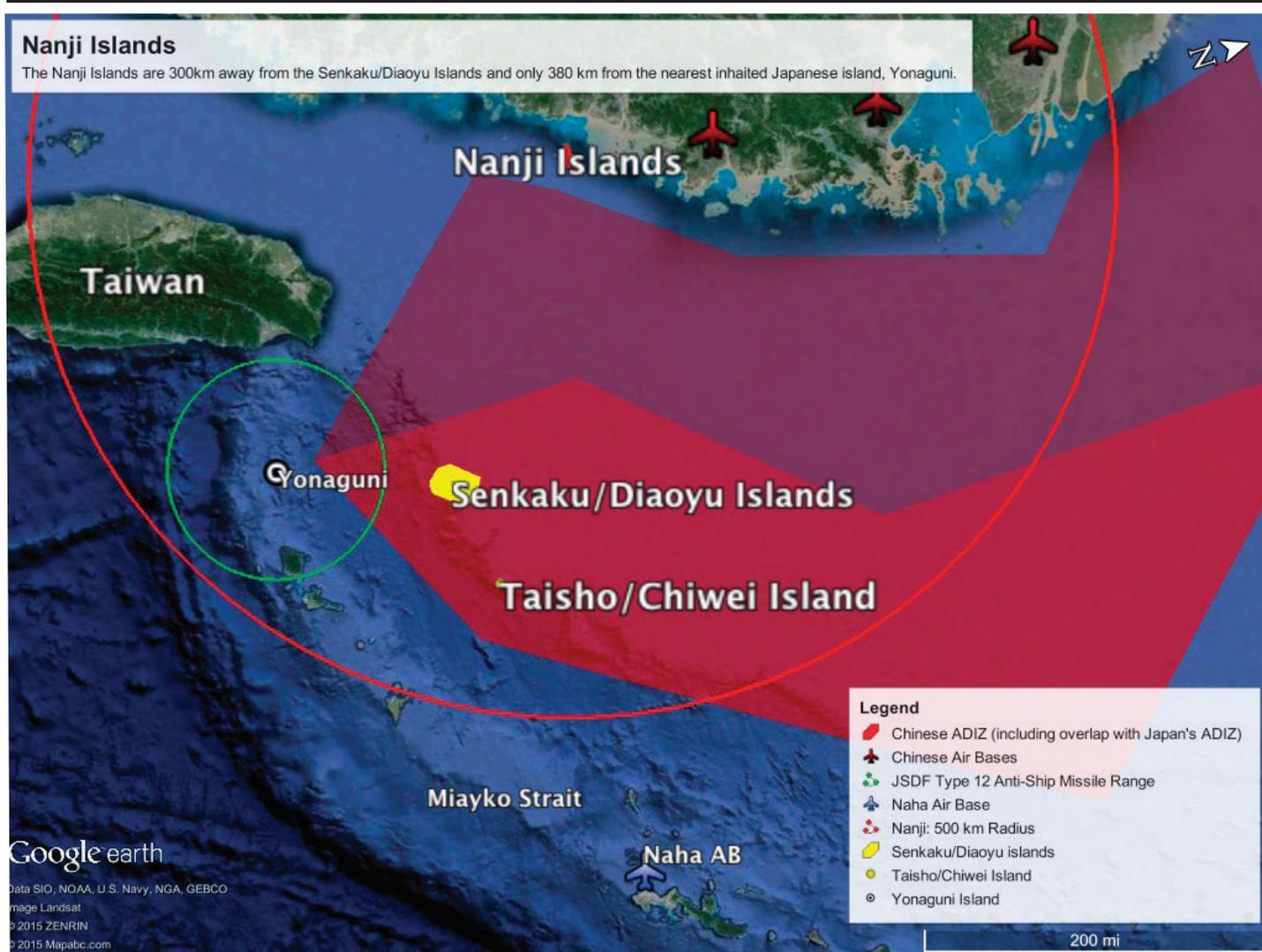
Despite a slight improvement in Sino-Japanese relations since Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Beijing in November 2014 for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, both countries have diligently enhanced their military and support capabilities in the vicinity of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands during the past year. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) appears to be developing a future strategy for maintaining a patrol and surveillance presence around the Islands that would rely heavily on helicopters currently in development, namely the Z-18 and Z-20. This article will first explain the new facilities China is building around the Islands and then discuss the new helicopters that will likely be deployed to the East China Sea once they successfully complete testing over the next several years, and how this may affect the military balance in the East China Sea.

### Maritime Trench Warfare? China and Japan Line Up in the East China Sea

China has significantly upgraded its military facilities on Nanji Island, one of its numerous coastal islands. Nanji's position is significant. As illustrated by the map below, it is close to both the northern end of China's patrol line with Taiwan, the commercial hub at the mouth of the Yangtze River, and a bare stone's throw from the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands ([Global Times](#), December 22, 2014). At the same time, Japan is also fortifying islands in the area, in what looks to be a gradual reinforcement of surveillance and power projection capabilities in their most hotly disputed area.

Comparisons of images (page 12) from August 2013 and December 2014 show dramatic changes. A hill has been flattened to make room for ten helipads. An advanced radar was already positioned on Nanji island. The addition of the helipads creates a "forward presence" for Chinese helicopters to conduct surveillance and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) patrols. In terms of naval surveillance, Nanji occupies important "near-seas" real-estate. Upgraded Chinese helicopters, such as the ASW variant of the Z-18 tested last year, would be well positioned to monitor traffic through complex maritime environments like the Taiwan Strait ([Sina Mil](#), April 30, 2014). Most importantly however, is the potential for basing a quick reaction force on Nanji. The Z-8, currently the PLA's workhorse heavy lift helo, is capable of carrying twenty-seven fully equipped soldiers. Assuming at least two WZ-9s light attack helos or similar for air support, China could quickly deploy over 200 soldiers to the Senkaku/Diaoyus. This mirrors Japan's current plans for the creation of an amphibious response force ([Asahi Shimbun](#), May 23, 2014). Defense Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying has insisted that the installation is not directed at Taiwan, which taken at face value would suggest that they are instead directed at Japan ([Global Times](#), January 29). Other additions to the island include the addition of a string of wind turbines on its east side to help power the new installation. These improvements to Nanji are much more about enhancing China's monitoring of its littorals and power projection near the Senkaku/Diaoyus—not its green energy program.

Nanji is only the latest island to receive upgrades. Elsewhere, to cement control over disputed areas, China has followed a program that begins with increased aerial and maritime intrusions, followed by a period of reinforcement of monitoring capabilities (including the deployment of drones), which is then followed by the construction of infrastructure to reinforce those claims (see [China Brief](#), November 7, 2013). Improvements to other islands (or the expansion of islets) such as Woody Island in the South China Sea, follow this pattern (see [China Brief](#), October 23, 2014). China's goal is "strategic management of the sea" (*jinglue haiyang*): establishing administrative control and monitoring of its territorial claims through a variety of means, including better weapon systems and bases (see [China Brief](#), January 9). Showing up is often the best indicator of sovereignty, and increasing Chinese presence (and military power



*A map illustrating the strategic situation in the East China Sea. (Peter Wood)*

projection) in disputed or near disputed areas has proven an effective tool in solidifying Chinese claims. China's neighbors are responding in kind.

Opposite Nanji, the Japanese Self Defense Force (JSDF) has also been busy. Japan's acquisition of new maritime surveillance planes and several Global Hawk surveillance drones—with sufficient range to fly from their base in northern Japan and loiter in the Miyako–Senkaku/Diaoyu area—are only two of several efforts by Japan to increase its ability to monitor China's activities in the East China Sea and beyond (see *China Brief*, February 2). The Japanese deployment of a coastal observation unit to Yonaguni Island offers a significant boost to the JSDF's maritime monitoring capability (*Yomiuri*, February 23; *CCTV*, February 22). Yonaguni's proximity to the Senkakus, as illustrated above, provides more detailed monitoring

of oceanic traffic than periodic patrols from Naha Air Base on Okinawa would. China's declared Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) overlaps significantly with Japanese airspace (see the darker shaded area on the above map). It is therefore possible that improved monitoring of aircraft entering Japan's airspace is another possible benefit, particularly given the rising number of scrambles the Japanese Air SDF responds to. This number of intercepts of Chinese aircraft continues to rise, with 371 intercepts reported between April 1st and December 31st of 2014—an average of 1.3 per day (*JMOD*, February 12).

In case of conflict, Yonaguni is a useful position from which to threaten Chinese ships. The JSDF's Type 12 Surface to Ship missile has a range of 100 kilometers (*USNI*, June 18, 2014). If deployed to Yonaguni or the



*Two satellite photos show the dramatic changes to Nanji's topography over 18 months. (Google Earth)*

Miyako Islands, this would be sufficient to cover a large area around the Senkaku/Diaoyus. It would also allow power projection within the Miyako Strait, with batteries on the southwest and northeast sides of the strait able to cover approximately two-thirds of the Strait, China's primary exit to the Western Pacific ([Sina Military](#), August 13, 2014). If China follows a similar course as Nanji for its other outlying islands, Japan and China will be facing off over the walls of a line of "sea forts" bristling with advanced weapons. Improving Chinese transport helicopters, however, may have a disruptive influence.

### **"Riding Donkeys to Find Horses"? China's New Transport Helicopters Show Progress**

New photographs and CCTV video reveal two types of Chinese transport helicopter undergoing tests. Both aircraft have familiar profiles; they are improved variants of helicopters already in the PLA's inventory of weapons. Their introduction, however, will help close two significant gaps in PLA transport needs: high altitude and medium-weight helicopters.

The Z-18, which recently underwent high altitude testing in Tibet, is an upgraded Z-8, itself derived from the French Super Frelon helicopter ([ChinaMil](#), January 15). The Z-20 is derived from the UH-60 Black Hawk, a ubiquitous transport helo used by the United States and its allies that was sold in small quantities to China during the early 1980s. China's Black Hawks are the remainder of a largely forgotten period in the early 1980s when the United States sold weapons to China and even established joint electronic surveillance posts inside China—an unthinkable situation today. [1]

The Z-20 first flew in December 2013 and early estimates predicted deployment sometime in 2015 ([Sina Military](#), December 23, 2013). While, like the Black Hawk, it is intended to be a multi-role transporter, it likely does not face the same sorts of design constraints as its U.S. progenitor, such as the need to be air-transportable. Chinese media notes that the Z-20 will not be a straight copy of the 1980s-era UH-60s, having benefited from China's own progress in avionics and materials science ([Air Force World](#), November 23, 2014). Indigenous production also removes an element of uncertainty and hesitation that has slowed Sino-Russian arms transfers.

China's military needs the capabilities the Z-18 and Z-20 will provide. The Z-20 is guaranteed to see wide deployment throughout China and the various services. Though possessing sufficient numbers of Z-9 light multi-role helos, the Z-20 is needed to fill a hole in the PLA's inventory currently occupied by variants of the Russian Mi-8/Mi-171 and China's small number of remaining Black Hawks. The Z-20's flexibility and size means that it is light enough to serve aboard ships, and has powerful enough engines to be able to operate at high altitudes. This capability meant that China's original UH-60s were in high demand during the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake disaster response.

The Z-18's high altitude capability has an important role to play in China's remote areas, particularly Tibet. Other than China's few remaining Black Hawks, the Z-18 will be China's sole high altitude capable helicopter the Z-20 is deployed ([CCTV](#), February 2). Even then, its heavy lift capacity will allow China to move artillery and troops much faster. As mentioned earlier, the Z-20 and Z-18 will have important maritime surveillance and anti-submarine

Comparison Chart: China's Transport Helicopters

	UH-60	Z-9A	Z-8	Z-18	Z-20 (est)
<b>Weight</b>	4,819 kg	2,050 kg	6,980kg	~8,000kg	>5,000kg
<b>Length</b>	19.76 m	12.11m	23 m	23m	20m
<b>Capacity (internal)</b>	1,200kg	1,900 kg	3,000kg	>5,000kg	>5,000kg
<b>Combat Radius</b>	590km	>500km	500km	>500km	<450km

warfare roles to play on China's coast and on island bases throughout China's territorial claims. *military.*

China's current inventory of large ASW helicopters, including the new Z-18, are too heavy to operate off of small warships (*Jane's*, August 20, 2014). Lacking an effective middle-weight multi-role helicopter capable of carrying large loads and landing on ships has limited the range and capability of naval aviation assets (see *China Brief*, April 12, 2013). Less than ten tons, the Z-20 can be carried on all of China's "air-capable frigate destroyers, amphibious assault ship or aircraft carrier" (*China Daily*, January 3, 2014). If deployed from an amphibious assault ship, it would be able to more effectively move large number of troops and equipment to shore than the smaller Z-9. Larger capacity would also mean more effective sensors and weapons, giving Chinese ships a greater margin of safety against the threat of submarines. Limited to only the heaviest classes of ships, the Z-18 would likely benefit from semi-permanent basing on island bases such as Nanji or Yongxing islands, where its weight would not be an issue, but its longer "legs" and lifting power would allow it to carry more sophisticated sensors and bigger weapons payload (see *China Brief*, October 23, 2014; *Sina Military*, February 9).

After several decades using Soviet-era and civilian "donkeys" for its transport needs, China is finally acquiring the modernized "horses" it needs to effectively transport its military personnel and equipment. In the dynamic military balance across the Diaoyu/Senkaku, the PLA's Z-18 will play an important role in supporting Chinese efforts to press its territorial claims and prepare a response force for contingencies in the East China Sea.

*Peter Wood is an independent researcher focusing on the Chinese*

### Notes

1. The United States sold China 24 Blackhawks between 1984–85. According to IISS, 19 remain active (IISS, *The Military Balance 2014*, p. 233).

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## Incomplete Transformation: PLA Joint Training and Warfighting Capabilities

By Kevin N. McCauley

Western assessments of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) capabilities and ongoing transformation often fail to analyze two critical areas of concern to the PLA: development of new operational methods (operational art and tactics) and required improvements in joint training. While the PLA is transitioning from coordinated to integrated joint operations, it recognizes inadequacies in joint training inhibiting the process that require reforms, including improved joint tactical training, updated joint courses and better instructors at military educational institutes, rigorous training evaluation, integration of operational plan requirements into training, new standardized joint training regulations, among others.

PLA publications highlight the importance of developing new operational methods as the PLA modernizes and implements integrated joint operations. Operational methods are really where the rubber meets the road,

where all the elements of the transformation process are translated by the commander's use of stratagems to defeat the enemy. New operational methods are developed through military science and tested in Battle Labs, wargaming and simulations, as well as experimentation in exercises. Improved joint training is a critical component in generating warfighting capabilities, and supports experimentation, testing and implementation of new joint operational methods, joint command and control procedures, coordination, and formation of joint task force groupings. Realistic joint training, particularly at the tactical level, is a key factor in operationalizing integrated joint operations, which the PLA believes will lead to success in future conflicts. Without new operational methods and improved joint training, the PLA could end up mirroring Qing military reforms where they modernized with new equipment, but did not adopt new operational art and tactics, or install new training methods, which led to defeat. This article examines critical issues in joint training as the PLA moves forward on the long road of transformation and generating warfighting capabilities (see *China Brief* July 17, 2014).

### Joint Training

The PLA's joint training consists of individual and unit training, and is divided into the following areas: basic, tactical, campaign, strategic and specialized. Individual joint training is conducted primarily in military educational institutes for commanders and staff personnel, but also noncommissioned officers, specialized and technical personnel as well as high level reserve officers. Individual training can also occur at the unit. Unit training focuses on specific joint operations and support tasks, and includes the formation of temporary force groupings. China also conducts multinational joint training primarily focused on problem areas of joint command structure, coordinating and organizing coalition forces. [1]

Basic joint training is mastering basic knowledge and skills by individual officers and basic field training by units. Joint tactical training is carried out to provide tactical commanders and staffs with joint combat principles and methods. [2] An unnamed Military Region (MR), probably Jinan, began conducting research field exercises on the organization of joint tactical formations (*bingtuan*) in 2002. At the same time, the Nanjing Army Command

College began the study of joint tactical formation and unit tactical issues. [3]

Joint campaign training's primary purpose is to develop commander and staff knowledge of theory, organization and command abilities during joint campaign formation (*juntuan*) exercises. Strategic training is focused on high-level mastery of warfare principles and methods for strategic commanders and staff, and national security related institutions. Exercises, seminars and lectures focus on strategic planning, national security policy and military strategic decision making problems. Specialized joint training emphasizes basic capabilities including operational elements such as reconnaissance/intelligence, command and control, as well as joint training for search and rescue, security and protection, and information coordination and confrontation. In addition, joint training can involve non-war joint operations, the testing of new weapons and equipment, and experimental exercises testing new concepts. [4]

### Joint Tactical Training

Currently, the PLA assesses that most units could not conduct tactical-level joint operations due to technology and capability limitations, with integrated joint communications and professional military education issues reportedly still hindering joint training efforts. [5] While these assessments are likely generally true for the PLA, there are units conducting advanced experimentation in tactical joint operations in several MRs, for example the 38th Group Army in Beijing MR.

In addition to communications and joint tactical literacy, the PLA has identified additional issues inhibiting joint tactical training. These include the partitions that have existed between the services leading to a lack of knowledge of other services procedures, capabilities and tactics; the required high level of specialized branch training within the services, which limits the amount and quality of joint training; and coordination within and between services, which has proved difficult for commanders and staffs at the tactical level. [6]

The PLA is emphasizing joint tactical command training for commanders and staffs using wargaming/simulations and confrontation training. This is intended to overcome deficiencies in joint command and coordination

procedures, as well as the transfer and use of command posts in joint tactical formations. [7]

### Joint Training Locations

The PLA will continue to rely on and update military training cooperation zones and large training bases. Military training cooperation zones (*junshi xunlian xiezuo qu*, or MTCZ) have been important joint training locations for more than a decade, with at least one of these large joint training areas in each military region (MR). [8] Jinan MR's Weifang MTCZ was the location for a number of joint training experiments by the services under the *Lianhe* exercise series during the first decade of this century (see [China Brief](#), May 20, 2011; [China Brief](#), June 3, 2011).

Combined arms tactical training bases (*hetong zhanshu xunlian jidi*, or CATTB) are located in each MR. While initially established primarily for ground-force combined-arms training, these training bases are evolving into more sophisticated exercise venues featuring facilities to integrate wargaming and simulation training, monitoring equipment to support unit evaluations, umpires and multiple integrated laser engagement systems (MILES) to provide greater realism, specialized training facilities and increasingly support joint training with the PLA AF. The Zhurihe CATTB in Beijing MR is one of the most publicized, sophisticated and largest of these training bases. It has hosted complex combined arms training for a decade and a half, and increasingly has hosted units from other MRs. While the Chinese press touts a mechanized infantry brigade employed at Zhurihe as the "first professional" opposing force (OPFOR), the 34th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, 12th Group Army, Nanjing MR became an OPFOR in 2008 (the brigade was mechanized in 2011) for confrontation training at Sanjie CATTB. Other OPFORs are employed in the services to increase training realism. [9]

### Simulation/Wargaming and Dispersed Training

Joint training includes simulation and wargaming to train joint commanders and staffs, as well as dispersed field training with units at training areas spread over great distances but linked together in a joint exercise scenario by the command information system. The dispersed training supports long-range synchronization of operations by the dispersed staffs and units, which approximate the

PLA's vision of the future battlefield. Simulation and wargaming provide an efficient and cost-effective means for experimentation and testing of new operational concepts. [10] Simulations and dispersed joint training also hides the exercise scenario and full scope of the training, creating difficulties for analysts assessing joint training quality and new developments.

### Training Evaluation

The PLA intends to continue improving training assessments and eliminate fraud in falsifying training evaluations. The PLA assesses the quality of training based on various indicators. These include the overall amount of training time for units, confrontation and simulation training, as well as training content. Live fire, confrontation and simulation training quality are given more weight in evaluating training. [11]

Collection and analysis of training data is important for unit evaluations, as well as providing valuable data for research to support future training and doctrinal development. The PLA considers conducting exercises approximating actual combat conditions as vital for supporting research for future training and operational methods, as well as a means to overcome lack of combat experience. Data is collected on the following joint operations areas: unit maneuver efficiency; coordination between units; joint fire strike coordination, including detection and destruction effectiveness; joint operations assault coordination; information attack efficiency; and electromagnetic spectrum management. [12]

### The Way Forward

The PLA identifies a number of areas requiring improvement and standardization. Joint education at military educational institutes requires better joint teaching materials and instructors for officer training. The dearth of joint research and course materials, as well as qualified instructors, is viewed as a critical impediment to developing joint personnel and improving joint training. Command organizations, such as the General Staff Department (GSD), joint theater commands and service headquarters, need to develop uniform joint training requirements based on operational missions, publish uniform joint regulations and provide greater high-level direction and coordination in general. Joint training

experimentation, evaluation and assessment reforms, increased funding as well as improved joint training areas are required as well. [13]

#### *High-Level Guidance*

High-level organizations are beginning to provide greater leadership over the details of joint training. The Central Military Commission (CMC) and GSD are directing strategic-level exercises to ensure standardization and uniformity in the conduct of joint training. Military Regions are organizing campaign exercises at MTCZs and advanced combined arms tactical training bases. The PLA intends the regularization of joint training to develop more effective and sophisticated training methods and management throughout the entire force. [14]

#### *Joint Training Guidance*

It appears that the PLA has made some decisions on joint operations issues that have been areas of disagreement between PLA academics. In 2013, the PLA was in the process of updating joint operations basic guidance, to include a new “Joint Campaign Outline,” “Joint Operations Command Outline,” and “Joint Campaign Coordination Outline.” This guidance provides the conceptual foundation needed to reform the training program structure. This includes a “Strategic Training Compendium,” “Joint Campaign Training Compendium,” “Unit Joint Training and Evaluation Outline,” as well as specialized training documents for various operational elements such as reconnaissance/intelligence, command and control, joint fire strikes, and logistics. [15]

#### *Military Educational Institutes*

Military universities and colleges up to the intermediate level need to improve the quality of instructors and courses in order to advance joint knowledge and skills according to PLA publications. Advanced military universities and colleges need to provide general officers with specific mission oriented joint education, including competency and analysis on the international strategic situation. [16] Military educational institutes will also contribute to writing joint training scenarios, and are organizing training, participating in exercise assessments and evaluations, and providing a blue force of experts for confrontation exercises. [17] These changes are already

bringing PLA academics and operational commanders in close contact, which should improve the quality of both groups.

#### *Joint Training*

PLA publications also note the need to remove ground force and land battlefield concepts that have dominated training. The PLA is slowly resolving this issue, but problems remain. It does appear that joint training is being planned and lead by the service that has primary responsibility for the type of operation featured in the exercise. Service and branch integration into joint campaign and tactical formations, and employment of new joint operations concepts are emphasized in PLA publications. [18] MTCZs should feature larger scale joint training including multi-MR training and confrontation exercises under high-level direction. [19]

The PLA plans to move toward smaller task-organized force groupings through improvements in joint tactical training. The PLA also believes that improving combined-arms tactical training and training evaluation within the services and SAF will support the development of joint tactical training. Importantly, the PLA believes that improved and realistic joint training can support modifications and perfection of operational plans. [20]

#### *System of Systems and Integrated Joint Operations Training*

Joint training by the services and branches will begin advancing these two concepts through unit and operational element training building up to operational system of systems (an integrated force grouping) integrated joint training based on a flexible, real-time command information system providing situational awareness and combining dispersed units into a fist. [21]

The PLA has proposed a series of training building blocks required to develop an integrated joint operations capability. This includes unit integrated training leading to basic joint operations skills; operational element or specialized (basic warfighting capabilities such as command and control, reconnaissance, and fire support) integrated training leading to subsystem joint capabilities; and operational system of systems (integrated force grouping) training leading to joint forces synchronized actions (*see China Brief*, October 5, 2012 for system of

systems operations definitions). Within the context of these joint training building blocks, the PLA considers the following areas important in developing joint capabilities: integration of weapons platforms and information networks, real-time coordination, the intelligence process, long-range digital communication, and complex combined-arms training. [22]

## Conclusion

While Western assessments of PLA transformation efforts often neglect the evolutionary development of new operational methods and joint training, the PLA believes these are areas critical to its modernization efforts planned to mid-century. The PLA believes that enhanced joint training will lead to new operational methods, implementation of integrated joint operations, generation of warfighting capabilities, development of joint command-and-coordination procedures, and establishment of modular joint task-organized force groupings at the campaign and tactical levels. Joint tactical training is particularly important as the PLA pushes joint capabilities down to the tactical level and employs modular joint tactical formations. The PLA has identified problems and is moving to improve joint training and education as part of its reforms, which includes a range of training from individual personnel to national level institutions. Success in these training reform efforts is critical to the overall transformation effort, and will lead to an advanced joint operations capability encompassing greater flexibility, agility and lethality in the command and employment of forces in combat. A fully developed integrated joint operations capability would make the PLA a dangerous opponent in any regional conflict.

*Kevin McCauley has served as senior intelligence officer for the former-Soviet Union, Russia, and China during 31 years in the federal government. He has written numerous intelligence products for decision makers and combatant commands, as well as contributing to the annual Report to Congress on China's military power. Mr. McCauley currently writes on PLA and Taiwan military affairs.*

## Notes

1. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 50–51.
2. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military

Science Press, 2013) pp. 49–51.

3. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) p. 11.
4. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 50–54 and 167–177.
5. *Joint Operations Research*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2013) pp. 113–114.
6. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) pp. 23–26.
7. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) pp. 68–71.
8. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) p. 1.
9. *Military Terms*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2011) p. 319; [China Military Online](#), January 23, 2013; [Chinamil.com](#), February 28, 2014, “From Red and Blue Real Confrontation Historical Changes in Experiencing Combat Effectiveness Standards;” [Chinamil.com](#), June 25, 2014, “Naval Air Force ‘Wetstone;”” [China Military Online](#), August 19, 2014.
10. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) pp. 66–67.
11. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 26–28; contact author for additional sources.
12. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 239; *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) pp. 120–121.
13. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 32–38.
14. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 93–94.
15. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 93.

16. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 49.
17. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) p. 129; [Chinamil.com](http://Chinamil.com), August 24, 2012.
18. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) p. 127.
19. *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) pp. 130–131.
20. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 56 and 96–97; *Joint Tactical Training* (Beijing: Tide Publishing House: 2008) pp. 50–51.
21. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 97.
22. *Joint Training Science Course of Study* (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 29–32 and 35.