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In a Fortnight: Refugees Flee into Yunnan After Renewed Violence Along Myanmar Border

Violence along China's border with Myanmar is threatening yet again to spill across into Yunnan Province. According to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, more than 20,000 refugees have fled into Yunnan after renewed fighting between the Kachin Independence Army and Myanmar's Armed Forces (Tatmadaw). These refugees are the second wave after more than 3,000 fled into

China in late November 2016. In response, the prefectural government has begun setting up temporary shelters ([Guanchazhe](#), November 22, 2016). It is unclear how it will cope with the much larger, second wave.

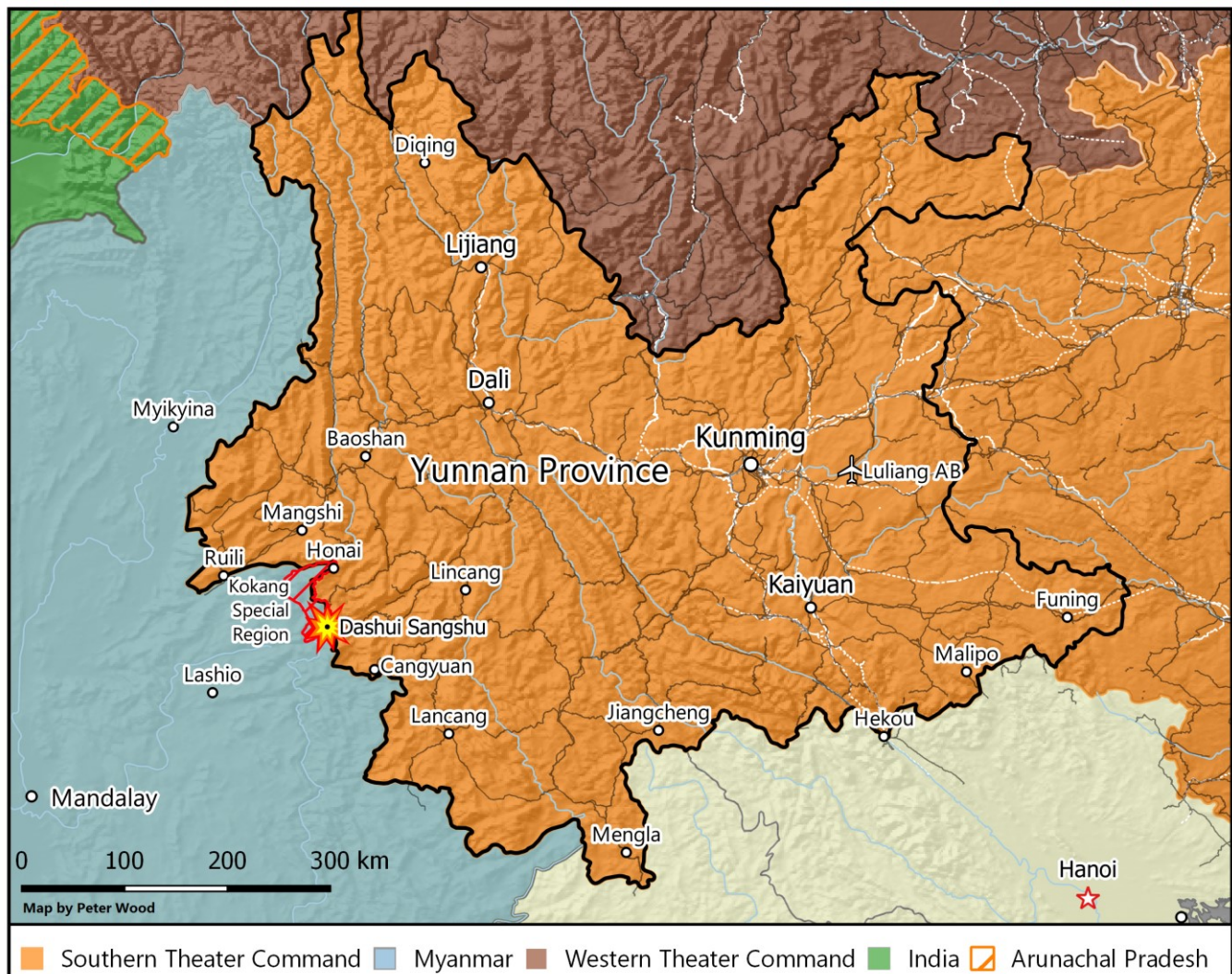
Three prefectures border the contentious area in Myanmar: Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Baoshan and Lincang. Together they have a population of almost six million people. A string of Border Guard Regiments sit at strategic points along Yunnan's long borders with Vietnam and Myanmar. Two guard the area nearest to the Kokang Special Region, one to the north at Mangshi (芒市 formerly Luxi), and an-

other to the south at Cangyuan (沧源). A PLA infantry brigade is also positioned nearby in Lincang to handle contingencies. Local police border guards (公安边防) have also been mobilized to help direct the stream of refugees.

The Kachin people are concentrated in northeast Myanmar. Further south, a separate group in the Kokang Special Region was the target of a 2015 Tatmadaw offensive that spilled over into Yunnan. Tensions have lasted for decades, but the most recent round dates to 2009 and has flared periodically since then. The continued violence has prompted PLA maneuvers and further complicated China's relationship with the new democratic government of Myanmar. Perhaps more

importantly, it also casts light on how China responds to crises on its borders.

The PLA conducted joint Ground-Air military exercises near the border to improve China's ability to respond to military threats along its frontier regions ([PLA Daily](#), March 28, [Xinhua](#), March 30). The large exercises involved J-10 fighters, Z-9 attack helicopters, Mil-8 transport helicopters, and mechanized infantry (accompanied by ZLS 92B armored personnel carriers), 122mm artillery and air defense units ([CCTV](#), March 28). The J-10 fighters, which bear markings indicating they belong to the 44th Fighter Division appear to be operating out of Luliang (陆良) Air Base, northwest of Kunming. **[1]** The units of the



Southern Theater Command are primarily geared to deal with military contingencies in the South China sea or along the border with Vietnam (*China Brief*, July 22, 2016).

While the PLA regularly holds joint training exercises, they are usually held near special training bases—not near the border. The previous set of exercises this large were held in 2015, after the Tatmadaw dropped ordinance in Dashui Sangshu (大水桑树), killing several Chinese farmers. In response, the PLA mobilized, and infantry, air defense, and fighter units were rotated close to the border in Lincang (*China Brief*, July 17, 2015). That set of exercises was the largest in the area in 30 years (*Global Times*, June 11, 2016).

In addition to mobilizing its armed forces and police units, Chinese diplomats have tried to place pressure on the Myanmar government to end the violence (*MFA*, March 9). China and Myanmar's bilateral trade is worth \$15 billion, making it Myanmar's most valuable trade relationship (*MFA*, December 2016). Even so, previous diplomatic efforts apparently have had little effect, and the democratically elected government (led by President Htin Kyaw, but with Aung San Suu Kyi *de facto* in charge) maintains a delicate balance with elements of the former powerful military junta it replaced. It is unlikely that additional pressure from Beijing will keep the Tatmadaw and separatist movements from violence near the border.

Refugees crises, are likely to continue to be an issue on China's border. But China lacks concrete policies to deal with the issue as a long-term problem. Syria's refugee crisis has already prompted a debate among Chinese netizens regarding China's refugee policies. Phoenix Media, responding to criticism that China has not taken

in significant numbers of refugees, highlighted large numbers of mostly ethnic-Chinese accepted in the 1970s (*Fenghuang*, September 6, 2016). Indeed, anti-Chinese policies in North Vietnam in the 1950s and again after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975 prompted many ethnic Chinese to flee to China. China's short border war with Vietnam in 1979 prompted an additional 260,000 to flee the Southeast Asian country (*UNHCR*, May 10, 2007).

China's densely populated northeast is also under threat from a separate refugee crisis. In the mid-1990s, catastrophic famine and a general breakdown in the economy of North Korea killed hundreds of thousands and prompted a large number to cross into China in search of food. Even today, poor living conditions prompt many North Koreans to defect via the border with China. North Korean soldiers are also known to rob and murder Chinese citizens just across the border (*China Brief*, January 9, 2015). With tensions rising on the Korean peninsula due to Pyongyang's active nuclear missile programs, the outbreak of war, or poor harvests could result in large numbers of Korean migrants fleeing to northeast China.

China, however, does not accept many people seeking to resettle. Between 2004–2013, China issued only 7,356 Foreigner's Permanent Residence Cards (in contrast the U.S. issued 10 million during the same period) (*Sixth Tone*, October 12, 2016). Refugees have even more uncertain status. Although China is a signatory to the 1951 and 1967 international statutes that govern the treatment of refugees, domestically its law is handled via its entry and exit law (出境入境管理法) and 2005 national foreign affairs emergency law (国家涉外突发事件应急预案) (*Fenghuang*, September 6, 2016). Neither law

has sufficient scope to adequately handle refugees under current conditions, much less the widespread emergency a crisis on the Korean peninsula would result in.

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Notes

1. Serial Marking - 50755. The three aircraft featured in CCTV footage are flying with three drop tanks and two air-to-ground rocket pods. The extra fuel is likely necessary because the border region is roughly 500km away, right at the edge of the J-10s 550km combat radius.

Xi's Korea Policies Stumble

By Willy Lam

On March 7, the United States began installation of a Terminal High-Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system in on a golf course outside Seou I, South Korea. Washington and Seoul did so over strong economic and diplomatic pressure from Beijing, which argued that THAAD posed a threat to China. Additionally, in February and early March, North Korea carried out ballistic missile tests that simulated an attack on a U.S. base in Japan. Xi Jinping's administration's inability to effectively curb the behavior of its erstwhile ally or influence policy in South Korea arguably represent the greatest foreign policy setbacks since Xi took power in 2012. Since coming to power in late 2012, Xi has eagerly stoked nationalism and sought to project Chinese power around the globe. What the Xi administration can least afford is to be seen as losing

face by failing to make good on its threats of retaliation against damages that "hostile anti-China forces" have supposedly inflicted upon China. Now that the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as well as the United States have defied Beijing's wishes, Xi could expose himself to criticism from opportunistic political rivals and nationalistic young people that see empty talk in response to THAAD.

Beijing began revving up anti-Seoul rhetoric in July 2016 when then-president Park Geun-hye decided to deploy THAAD hardware in response to the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons. The advanced anti-missile system has a radar a maximum range of 2,000 kilometers, which takes in the bulk of China's northeast. Despite American reassurance that THAAD would not be used to gather Chinese military intelligence, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has reiterated that "we are firmly opposed to the deployment of THAAD." Spokesperson Geng Shuang noted in March that the Chinese position was "very firm" and no compromise would be entertained. Official media have discussed retaliatory steps including "virtually suspending diplomatic relations" with the ROK ([Caixin.com](#), March 3; [Global Times](#), February 28). Since early this year, Chinese have systematically boycotted Korean products ranging from food and beverage to computers and smartphones. Popular Korean singers and movie stars are barred from China. Editorial writers reflecting hawkish views within the Chinese establishment even hinted at some form of military action. For example, commentator Zhan Hao said that Beijing should "begin new military deployment against South Korea." "We should push forward our military deployment, with more [weapons] targeting South Korea," he indicated ([Huanqiuzhijiyin.com \[Beijing\]](#), August 17, 2016).

Park's impeachment in March could, in theory, provide an opportunity for de-escalation of tensions. Moon Jae-in, who is favored to win in presidential polls slated for early May, had spoken out against using the THAAD system. However, during his recent visit to Seoul, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson apparently secured a promise from senior civilian and defense officials that THAAD would remain. Moreover, the bulk of THAAD hardware has already been deployed ([Yonhap News](#), March 22; [Korea Herald](#), March 21). Although there is a remote possibility that the new Korean president may reverse Park's decision, relations between China and the ROK have been dealt a devastating blow.

Driving a Wedge Between Partners

For the past decade, Beijing has enjoyed a relatively cozy relationship with South Korea. This is consistent with the CCP administration's long-standing policy of weakening Washington's "anti-China containment policy" by driving a wedge between the U.S. and its key allies such as South Korea. Until the THAAD crisis, Beijing enjoyed a close relationship with Park Geun-hye's administration. Seoul disregarded American advice by joining China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in early 2015 and again in July 2015, when Park participated in the Tiananmen Square military parade in July 2015 that marked the 70th anniversary of China's "defeat of fascism." Park was the only leader from the "democratic camp" of the world to have lent legitimacy to Xi Jinping's nationalistic extravaganza ([BBC Chinese](#), August 20, 2015; [Korea Herald](#), March 26, 2015).

The anti-ROK protests in different Chinese cities as well as the boycott of South Korean products, however, have fanned anti-Chinese feelings among ordinary South Koreans. According to

the respected Asan Institute of Policy Studies in Seoul, China has replaced Japan as the "least liked country" among South Koreans. China's rating in the Asan opinion poll fell from 4.31 in January to 3.21 in March on a scale of 0–10, with 10 representing the most favorable. (Japan's score was 3.33, slightly better than China's.) There are isolated incidents of Chinese students studying in South Korea being subjected to insults and even manhandling in Korean subway stations ([Apple Daily \[Hong Kong\]](#), March 21; [Deutsche Welle Chinese](#), March 21).

Given that the root purpose of the deployment of THAAD is to deter Pyongyang's clear and present threats against South Korea, Japan and the U.S.,—and that China is the only country that can influence the DPRK—Beijing does not have a moral high ground in the THAAD debate. While China has previously approved the United Nations Security Council sanctions against the DPRK, Beijing has left the impression that it is treating its nominal ally with kid gloves. Speaking about the Korean crisis after the just-ended National People's Congress, Premier Li Keqiang merely urged "[all] parties involved to de-escalate tensions and return to talks." Earlier, Foreign Minister Wang Yi advocated the restart of the Six-Party Talks on denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, irrespective of the fact that the talks, which involved diplomats from China, the two Koreas, Japan, the U.S., and Russia, were suspended in 2007 for lack of results. ([China Daily](#), March 15; [TVB, Hong Kong](#), March 8).

Given the Kim regime's dependence on Chinese supplies of food, fuel and other economic aid, Beijing seems to have enough leverage to influence Pyongyang's decision-making. As Peking University international relations expert Jia Qingguo noted last year, it was time that China turned up the pressure on the DPRK. "China's

position on the Korean issue should be steadfast, and its stance should be tougher," he said. "We don't want to run counter to North Korea's [interests], yet we cannot afford to be weak and lax when it is threatening China's major interests" (Phoenix TV, March 11, 2016). Yet as Deng Yuwen, a former researcher at the Central Party School and a frequent commentator on Korean issues said, Beijing had blundered largely because of the belief that the DPRK could act as a buffer between China on the one hand, and the U.S. and its Asian allies on the other. "The existence of North Korea itself, not to mention its 'provocations,' will force the U.S. and Japan to devote more resources to North Korea—and this will minimize pressure on China." [1]

Threat to China's Nuclear Deterrent?

There are, however, hawks who think that China must take drastic measures to counter what it perceives as a threat coming from the U.S., South Korea and Japan. The *Beijing Youth Daily* ran a commentary soon after the THAAD crisis broke that China would have no choice but to "use a new Cold War to counter the old Cold War." "We should realign our strategic relations with Russia and North Korea so as to realize the strategic equilibrium of 'three against three'" (Xinhua, August 13, 2016). The *Global Times* recently published an editorial arguing that China should vastly expand its nuclear arsenal to push back the American threat. "The U.S. has come to China's doorsteps to engage in anti-missile operations," the editorial said. "The original strategic balance [between China and the U.S.] has been disrupted. China should counter [the U.S. threat] by developing more nuclear warheads and more strategic nuclear missiles that could penetrate [American defense shields]." This followed articles published by Xinhua that predicted: "[an] exacerbated arms race among

different countries [in Asia] and the escalation of tensions." (Global Times, March 9; Xinhua, December 15, 2016).

While it is unlikely that Chinese reaction to THAAD will escalate in the near term, the nuclear clock is ticking fast in the DPRK. After launching four short-distance missiles in early March, Pyongyang said it would soon test-launch an intercontinental ballistic missile. Moreover, South Korean officials warned that the Kim regime could stage another nuclear test by the end of March. While visiting Seoul, Tillerson warned the DPRK—and China—that "the period of strategic patience is over." Tillerson further added "all options are on the table," which was interpreted as a threat that the U.S. and its allies in Asia might launch pre-emptive strikes to take out North Korean nuclear and missile facilities.

Conclusion

There are subtle signs that Beijing might take a tougher posture toward the DPRK, which is still, in theory, China's ally. After the alleged assassination of Kim Jong-un's half-brother Kim Jong-nam, Beijing announced in mid-February that it would stop importing coal from the DPRK (New York Times Chinese Edition, February 20; BBC Chinese, February 18). It is uncertain whether, in the run-up to his meeting with American President Donald Trump scheduled for later this month, supreme leader Xi might take more decisive measures to rein in Kim's rogue regime. As Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at Renmin University noted, China now faces strained ties with both Koreas for the first time in recent memory. "This is quite bad, in the long term, for the diplomatic security environment in Northeast Asia," he said (DWnews [Beijing], March 19; Los Angeles Times, March 1). Whether Xi has the foresight and courage to

drastically revamp China's policy toward the two Koreas could determine whether he deserves the hallowed title of "core leader" that his civilian and military colleagues conferred on him half a year ago. Particularly at a moment when the U.S. is viewed as weakened and indecisive, continued failure to achieve foreign policy objectives might in formidable pushback from Xi's colleagues in the Politburo, or from frustrated members of the PLA.

Notes

1. Author's interview with Deng Yuwen, March 2

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A "First" for the People's Liberation Army: A Navy Admiral Becomes a Joint, Regional, Commander

By Dennis J. Blasko

Among recent changes in the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) leadership, the appointment of Vice Admiral Yuan Yubai to Commander of the Southern Theater Command is particularly noteworthy ([PLA Daily](#), January 23). Yuan is the first and only non-Army officer ever to command a Military Region (MR) or Theater Command (TC),

one of the five newly formed joint headquarters that replaced the seven Military Regions that had existed since the mid-1980s. Consistent with Chinese practice, Yuan shares responsibility for the Theater with a political commissar, Army General Wei Liang. Nonetheless, Admiral Yuan's selection as TC commander is a major event in PLA history, and a step toward abandoning "the traditional mentality that land outweighs sea" ([China Brief](#), June 19, 2015). [1]

Unlike the old Military Regions, which were staffed primarily by Army personnel and in peacetime directly commanded Army units in their areas of operation, the five new Theater Commands are joint headquarters composed of personnel from all services. TCs are responsible for operations (战区主战), that is "responding to security threats in their strategic directions, maintaining peace, deterring wars and winning battles" ([PLA Daily](#), February 1, 2016).

The four service headquarters (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Rocket Force) in Beijing, on the other hand, are responsible for "construction" (军种主建) ([PLA Daily](#), December 1, 2016). "Construction" activities include functions such as organizing, manning, equipping, educating, and training the forces, and possibly may involve some service-specific operations, such as military operations other than war (MOOTW) or potentially single-service combat missions.

Theater Commands perform command and control functions of operational units through their subordinate Theater Service (component) headquarters (TC Army and TC Air Force headquarters and the TC Navy headquarters in the three coastal Theaters). [2] In addition to reporting to the TC, Theater Service headquarters have a dual chain of command back to their service headquarters in Beijing for day-to-day "construction"

activities. (Rocket Force bases report directly Rocket Force headquarters in Beijing.) The Navy's three fleets (North, East, and South Sea Fleets) concurrently serve as the TC Naval components for their respective Theaters. Fleet commanders are dual-hatted Theater deputy commanders as are the commanders of the Theater Army and Air Force headquarters.

Admiral Yuan's experience may provide indications of the kind of officers who will be assigned to TC commander positions in the future. While Army officers likely will continue to hold the majority of TC commander (and political commissar) billets, a senior Air Force officer probably will be tapped to command a Theater at some point in the relatively near future.

Admiral Yuan's Biography

At 60 years of age, Vice Admiral Yuan is the same age as his American contemporary, Admiral Harry Harris, Jr., commander of the U.S. Pacific Command. Yuan joined the PLA Navy in 1976 and trained at the Qingdao Submarine Academy, located in the North Sea Fleet (NSF) area of responsibility. Afterward, he was assigned as a submarine crew member in Qingdao. In 1982, he served as the base torpedo chief and then executive officer on a submarine, most likely a nuclear attack Han-class submarine. In 1990, he became a submarine captain and apparently stayed in that position until 2003 when he was promoted to chief of staff of the 1st Submarine Base at Qingdao. Four years later he became base commander, followed by assignments as NSF chief of staff in 2010 and NSF commander and concurrent Jinan MR deputy commander in 2014. He was promoted to rear admiral in 2008 and vice admiral in 2015 ([China News](#), January 12).

This pattern of alternating assignments among commander, deputy commander, and chief of staff is common in the PLA. According to their biographies, many officers in this command track do not spend much time, if any, as "regular" staff officers in personnel, intelligence, operations, or logistics billets (instead, specialized staff officers perform those duties and move up the ladder in their own functional specialty). Likewise, Yuan was assigned to one major unit, the North Sea Fleet, for his entire career up to his transfer to the Southern TC. This, too, is a common practice, as most officers are assigned to a single region for most of their careers, often in one corps/army leader grade level organization, before being transferred to another large organization. Once they reached corps/army leader grade, senior officers may be transferred from one region to another as Yuan was from the NSF to the Southern TC. Likewise, Yuan's replacement as commander NSF, Rear Admiral Zhang Wendan, former deputy chief of staff of the Southern TC, also crossed regions to get to his new post. Previously Zhang had spent his entire career in the SSF and also served as commander of a Gulf of Aden task force when he was deputy chief of staff of the SSF ([Xinhua](#), March 18, 2010). Some aspects of previous PLA assignment procedures may change in the future as the force develops a contingent of joint officers capable of serving in any joint headquarters.

Recent Operational and International Experience

While working as NSF chief of staff, Yuan was given the temporary responsibility of commanding the Navy's 14th iteration of its anti-piracy escort mission in the Gulf of Aden. Even though he had been a submarine officer, Yuan was in charge of the destroyer *Harbin*, the frigate *Mian-*

yang, supply ship *Weishanhu*, multiple helicopters, and a special operations unit, which deployed from mid-February to late-September 2013. En route to the Gulf, the task force participated in the "Peace-13" multinational maritime joint military exercise in Pakistan. While on station, Yuan visited the Portuguese guided-missile frigate *Alvares Cabral*, flagship of the EU Combined Task Force 465 (People's Daily, July 16, 2013). Later the *Harbin* and *Weishanhu* participated in anti-piracy drills at sea with the USS *Mason* (USNI News, August 26, 2013). The task force made port calls in Saipan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Djibouti and stopped in Singapore and Thailand on its way home to Qingdao (Xinhua, September 5, 2013; China Radio International September 13, 2013). Yuan's performance on this prominent mission probably was evaluated positively by the PLAN's senior leadership in Beijing as indicative of his potential for higher levels of responsibility.

Due to his past assignments, Vice Admiral Yuan is fairly well known to foreigners, and to senior U.S. Navy leaders in particular. While commander of the NSF, Yuan had additional opportunities to interact with foreigners, including U.S. Chiefs of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson and Admiral Jonathan Greenert; commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Thomas; the Iranian Navy commander; the Turkish Navy Commander; and Australian Defense Minister. He also attended several international conferences, including one in London in 2015 at which he is reported to have said: "The South China Sea, as the name indicates, is a sea area that belongs to China." In August 2016, the U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Scott Swift visited Qingdao and emphasized "the importance of transparency, parity, and reciprocity," noting "it is incumbent upon fleet commanders like himself and Yuan to ensure that actions at the

tactical level do not have unintended strategic implications." (USNI, August 9, 2016).

In 2011, while NSF chief of staff, Yuan acted as Red Force commander for a joint defense exercise in the Jinan MR involving NSF assets supported by Army and Air Force reconnaissance and radar units (Xinhua, November 19, 2011). This event was one of the earliest examples in which the Navy took the lead in a joint exercise. In 2012, Yuan commanded a seven-ship formation during a two-week, multi-task training mission in the western Pacific (PLA Navy, November 2, 2012). As NSF commander, he oversaw another joint exercise in 2015 involving nearly 100 ships and scores of aircraft from the NSF and ESF supported by multiple battalions from the Second Artillery and electronic countermeasures units from the Shenyang and Jinan Military Regions (PLA Daily, July 3, 2015).

As a result of Yuan's experience in the NSF, he should be intimately familiar with the status of the PLA Navy's carrier program. The *Liaoning* is stationed south of Qingdao and its aircraft train onshore in the NSF area of operation near Huludao. The PLA's second carrier is under construction nearby at Dalian (ChinaMil, February 21). When the second carrier enters active service, it could be home ported, or make regular visits, to the Sanya Naval Base on Hainan in the Southern TC. Yuan's experience as a submariner and with surface and air operations provide the sort of background necessary for potential naval operations in the South China Sea.

Of the three fleets, the NSF has the smallest contingent of roughly a dozen amphibious vessels; the NSF has not (yet) been assigned a Type-071 LPD (amphibious transport dock). **[3]** Though the PLA Navy marine force is expected to be expanded during the current batch of reforms, no

PLA Navy marines were stationed in the region when Yuan was NSF commander. [4] Nonetheless, the NSF's amphibious assets have trained with Army units, though their operations tempo likely is lower than the larger amphibious forces found in the other two larger fleets. As Southern TC commander, Yuan will have available to him two marine brigades (as of now, with perhaps more in the future) and a Navy amphibious force of over 20 ships and vessels, which includes three Type-071 LPDs.

Through his performance as a submarine captain and commander of surface formations, Admiral Yuan has demonstrated his tactical and operational proficiency in multiple Navy functional areas. Though he has no combat experience, he has deployed successfully on a seven-month, high-profile mission to the Gulf of Aden. Significantly, Yuan also has acted as senior leader in joint training in which the Navy was in command (compared with most joint training where the other services support the Army). Through his assignments as chief of staff and commander of multiple units, he has proven his reliability in the eyes of his superiors in the Navy and on the Central Military Commission (CMC). Moreover, he has had high-level contacts with foreign counterparts and senior military leaders from all over the world. For the PLA, Admiral Yuan is well-prepared to be the first non-Army Theater commander.

Into the Future

Vice Admiral Yuan's selection to become commander of the Southern Theater Command is truly a historic development for the PLA. During this round of reform, as the Army is reduced in size and the other services increased to better balance the distribution of forces, Yuan's assignment as TC commander is another major step in

breaking the "big Army's" influence ([ChinaMil](#), February 3, 2016). It is likely only a matter of time before an Air Force general or another Navy admiral is assigned to command another coastal Theater or perhaps even the Central Theater Command. [5]

To date, former Navy commander Wu Shengli remains on the CMC. Neither current Navy commander Vice Admiral Shen Jinlong or Vice Admiral Yuan Yubai have been assigned to that senior-most leadership and policy-making organization. The future composition of the CMC is expected to be made public around the time of the 19th Party Congress later in 2017. Currently, outsiders have no solid indicators of who will be on the new CMC, if it will keep its current number of senior officers or if there will be additions or deletions. For example, will service commanders, like Shen, have a place on the new CMC as they have for the past decade? Will TC commanders as warfighters, like Yuan, be added to the CMC in contrast to past practice when MR commanders were not included? Will service commanders and TC commanders be assigned the same grades and ranks (even if the PLA grade and rank structure are adjusted as reforms proceed)? Will TC commanders rotate among services over time or will commanders reflect the geography and potential combat domains applicable to their Theater? Will TC commanders bring to the headquarters additional officers from their own services with parochial biases?

Operationally, will the expanded CMC structure (an example of enhanced centralized control in an increasingly decentralized environment) become involved with Theater operations to "assist" TC commanders in their missions? Will services be authorized to conduct *single-service* missions, such as the Gulf of Aden task force, under the supervision of the service headquarters

without the intervention of the *joint* TC headquarters?

Despite the initial answers, more changes likely will be made as the PLA attempts to implement this tranche of reforms. In the absence of actual combat, PLA officers will prove their tactical competencies in training situations both inside and outside of China and by performing MOOTW tasks, such as the Gulf of Aden escort mission, disaster relief efforts, or UN Peacekeeping Operations. Political reliability, as always, will be a necessity for promotion and retention.

Whatever his future path, Vice Admiral Yuan Yubai has already entered the PLA history books. His performance in the next few years will determine whether he is given a full chapter or simply noted with an asterisk.

Notes

1. To be fair, Air Force General Zhu Fuxi was assigned as the first political commissar of the Western TC, the only non-Army general to be named as a TC leader at the time of creation. However, Zhu had been an Army political officer until 2009 when he was transferred to the Air Force. Earlier this year he was reported to have been removed from that position. See "Young star tipped to become political commissar for PLA's western command," South China Morning Post, January 24, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2065018/young-star-tipped-to-become-political-commissar-plas>. That same report alleges that Air Force Lieutenant General Fan Xiaojun has been assigned as political commissar of the Northern TC.
2. TC commanders and political commissars have the grade of Theater leader, equivalent to the former Military Region leader grade; TC Service headquarters commanders and political commissars are assigned TC deputy leader grades. The PLA's grade and rank system may change in the near future.
3. The PLA Navy: New Capabilities and Missions for the 21st Century, Office of Naval Intelligence, 2015, <https://fas.org/irp/agency/oni/pla-navy-2015.pdf>
4. One unconfirmed report indicates the 26th Group Army has transferred the 77th Motorized Infantry Brigade stationed near Yantai, Shandong in the Northern TC to the PLA Navy marines. See <https://china-defense.blogspot.com/2017/02/long-expected-third-plan-marine-brigade.html>. This report has not yet been confirmed by official sources.
5. The landlocked nature of the Western TC and potential ground-based terrorist threats suggest that an Army officer will likely be most suitable for that command.

Taiwan's Search for Security Partners: Looking Beyond Washington

By Lauren Dickey

In November 2016, Hong Kong authorities seized nine Singaporean Terrex infantry carrier vehicles en route home after training exercises in Taiwan ([Today News](#), November 29, 2016; [Phoenix News](#), November 30, 2016). The carriers

were taking the same route shipping containers have taken for decades as part of the Singaporean-Taiwan “Starlight Program” (星光部队 or 星光计划). **[1]** After two months of closed-door diplomacy, Hong Kong customs authorities announced that the shipment would be returned to Singapore in time for Chinese New Year. The message in seizing the Terrex vehicles was a resoundingly clear one: abide by Beijing’s “One China” principle (一中原则) or risk the consequences.

Beijing’s insistence that other countries recognize the People’s Republic of China as the sole Chinese government has led to Taiwan’s marginalization. Though Taiwan has been able to maintain unofficial ties around the world, economic cooperation with mainland China, and regional trade agreements with Singapore and New Zealand, it continues to face challenges in identifying willing and able security partners. Rather than utilizing unofficial, largely economic ties around the world to advance its defense interests, Taiwan continues to rely almost exclusively upon U.S. security assurances. Amid the uncertainties of President Donald Trump’s U.S.-Taiwan policy, Taiwan must avoid an overdependence on the United States by actively diversifying the island’s portfolio of defense partners. Such efforts are particularly important as the Taiwanese Ministry of National Defense operationalizes its new “multi-deterrence” strategy ([Focus Taiwan News](#), March 12).

Why Look Elsewhere?

The rationale for Taipei to look beyond Washington to the expertise and assistance of other partners and allies is simple. Taiwan’s needs cannot be met by reliance on Washington alone; additional relationships are necessary to ensure the island has political, economic, and security

ties to sustain its future. This argument may be misconstrued as a Taiwanese brand of hedging—and, indeed, Taiwan today maintains economic ties with mainland China and security links with the United States. But Taiwan will never be able to “hedge” between the U.S. and China the way other regional powers can, for there is little ambiguity in Taipei’s policy decisions. **[2]** Instead, Taiwan should seek to strategically diversify its portfolio of security and defense partners beyond the United States. With the obvious exclusion of China, this insurance policy will strengthen Taiwan’s self-defense regardless of the person or party in the White House.

To be certain, encouraging Taiwan to broaden its strategic vision for defense partnerships does not diminish the value of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship. Taiwan was the United States’ ninth largest trading partner and among its top-ten destinations of agricultural and food products in 2015 ([Office of the U.S. Trade Representative](#), 2016). Under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), the U.S. remains legally committed to supporting Taiwan’s defense, “[making] available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services...as may be necessary to enable [it] to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.” **[3]** Presidents Bush and Obama furthered this security commitment to Taiwan through arms deliveries valued at \$4.5 billion from 2007 to 2014 ([Congressional Research Service](#), December 21, 2015). Weapons packages included technology such as P-3C maritime patrol aircraft, Patriot missile systems, and F-16 A/B retrofitting aimed at supporting Taiwan’s self-defense needs ([Congressional Research Service](#), August 29, 2014). Beyond military hardware, the relationship has deepened to involve closer mil-mil exchanges

and a range of track-two security dialogues ([Taipei Times](#), December 2, 2016; [Up Media](#), December 8, 2016).

The depth of U.S.-Taiwan ties should not, however, preclude Taiwanese efforts to diversify security partners. Due to the unique challenges of Taiwan's strategic environment and the far-reaching responsibilities of the U.S. national security strategy, it behooves Taiwanese policymakers to explore additional partnerships.

Diversifying Taiwan's Strategic Portfolio

Taiwan's sole existential threat, China, is a mere 120 miles from its shores. Military planning has shifted from a porcupine "Hard ROC" to a "multi-dilemma" strategic approach ([Ministry of National Defense \(ROC\)](#), October 2013; [Focus Taiwan News](#), March 12). Despite divergent language, both concepts are focused on one and the same objective: denying the People's Liberation Army (PLA) the ability to invade or occupy the island. Such a defense posture must simultaneously operate within the limits imposed by a tight defense budget (\$9.7 billion, or 1.8 percent of GDP, for 2017) and a personnel pool of 215,000 active duty troops, of which 23,000 are one-year conscripts ([Ministry of National Defense \(ROC\)](#), September 2016; [IISS Military Balance](#), 2016; [Taipei Times](#), August 17, 2016).

Strengthening Taiwan's portfolio of security partnerships must first begin by looking to other countries in similar strategic environments; namely, those small- to medium-sized countries building a robust deterrence posture amid a lack of strategic depth, tight budgetary and personnel constraints, and an intimate proximity to existential threats. Taipei should partner with countries procuring and training with the sort of innovative and asymmetric platforms the Tai-

wanese defense forces require for multi-deterrence—including cyber, undersea, and anti-aircraft capabilities ([Focus Taiwan News](#), March 16). Like-minded defense partners may also serve as conduits for buying, co-developing, or indigenously procuring advanced military technologies. Such additional ties will decrease Taiwan's current reliance upon the lengthy timelines of Congressionally-approved weapons packages.

The call for rethinking Taiwan's security assistances beyond Washington is hardly new news to current Taiwanese officials. President Tsai has already begun a search for alternative economic partners, as can be best seen in the New Southbound Policy aimed at broadening business links between Taiwan and Southeast Asia as a counterbalance to China ([BBC Chinese](#), May 28, 2016). Her administration continues to deepen unofficial ties with Japan, promising a cooperative attitude in engaging with the Abe government and pro-Taiwan parliamentarians ([China Brief](#), October 26, 2016; [Radio Taiwan International](#), March 20). Tokyo could build on these ties by supporting the development of Taiwan's submarine capabilities, such as in sending retired Japanese naval officers, retired defense officials, or even engineers from Kawasaki and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries—builders of Japan's *Sōryū*-class submarines—to Taipei for dialogues with their counterparts.

Within the region, neighborhood partners offer the geostrategic proximity and foothold in intra-Asian networks which Taiwan needs. Singapore, with its long history of interactions with Taiwan and firm observance of "One China" coveted by Beijing, should be a starting point ([Apple Daily](#), March 23, 2015). With undoubtedly the most advanced defense forces in Southeast Asia, Singaporean capabilities punch far above their weight. The city-state's defense strategy has

transformed from purely retaliatory to swift pre-emptive strikes—a strategic shift captured in zoological metaphors of poisonous shrimp, porcupines and, now, dolphins. [4] Singapore also takes a holistic approach to security in adapting a total defense plan comprised of designated roles across its society in a future contingency ([MinDef](#), 2016). As the hub for Taiwan's economic Southbound agenda, the unofficial but substantive relationship with Singapore offers a worthy springboard for expanding into closer security cooperation despite the November Terrex incident.

Beyond Asia, Taiwan has previously looked to Germany, Italy, and Israel for security assistance and arms purchases ([The Guardian](#), February 5, 2010; [Security Assistance Monitor](#), November 5, 2014). [5] Under pressure from China, such ties have largely been abandoned—but should not be entirely forgotten. Israel, like Taiwan, emphasizes capabilities that enable it to maintain a credible deterrent posture and strategic defense. A hefty defense budget of \$18.2 billion (or approximately 6 percent of GDP) for 2017–18 and the benefits accruing from close defense ties with the United States, Russia, China, and Singapore have supported Israeli efforts to field advanced technology ([Times of Israel](#), December 21, 2016; [World Bank](#), 2016). The Israeli Navy's diesel-electric *Dolphin-1* and *Dolphin-2* submarines fall in approximately the same specifications bracket as Taipei envisions possessing, offering an alternative approach to the costly indigenous procurement currently underway ([Commonwealth](#), June 1, 2016). The challenge with Israel, however, will be whether and how Taiwan can navigate around the cooperation, logistical support, and arms sales between the Israeli defense sector and the Chinese military ([China Military](#), February 21; [DefenseTech](#), December 24, 2013).

Several European countries face strategic environments that bear striking resemblance to Taiwan. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Georgia share borders with their primary existential threat, Russia. Each lacks adequate strategic depth and must operate with limited budgets or personnel. While these countries arguably benefit from forward deployed NATO forces, they have pursued independent steps to bolster self-defense and deterrence. In response to the threat of Russian hybrid war, each country has developed its own military strategy to preserve and protect territorial integrity. Latvia and Poland have also implemented extensive cybersecurity strategies, an area in which Taiwan hopes to improve ([National Information & Communication Security Taskforce](#), February 2013; [Taipei Times](#), January 17).

In maritime Europe, one additional possibility for future cooperation lies in the Cypriot experience. An island divided by political recognition, Cyprus focuses on platforms and training that will decrease its vulnerability to asymmetric threats. Beginning with the 1995 Greece-Cyprus Joint Defense Doctrine, which committed Athens to consider *casus belli* any Turkish attempt to invade Cyprus, the Greeks have sought to expand their naval and air defense footprint in Cyprus and the southeast Mediterranean more broadly. U.S. and European governments also continue to support Cypriot defense capabilities to ensure access to the geostrategically important island. [6]

Diversification From Within Taiwan

Even as Taiwan looks abroad for additional security partners, policymakers must also undertake meaningful, credible efforts to bolster Taiwan's self-defense at home. Taiwanese policy-

makers face the daunting challenge of increasing the defense budget to 3 percent of GDP, a fiscal threshold impeded by the gradual transition from a conscription to an all-volunteer force ([Focus Taiwan News](#), June 7, 2016; [Taipei Times](#), December 17, 2016). Absent a larger budget, Taiwan will struggle to meet the demands of domestic procurement for necessary platforms such as *Hsiung Feng* missiles and minelayer vessels. An inability to show commitment to defense spending at home will further undermine Taiwan's ventures abroad.

Taiwan and its overseas representative offices should also take steps to make the island a more attractive defense partner. In cooperating with Asian or European neighbors, Taiwan could offer leased access to its facilities for training—as has long been the case with Singapore—or joint training in rapid runway repair, a forté of the Taiwanese military ([China Post](#), January 14, 2014). Taipei should also pursue humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) agreements with more countries, operations in which Taiwan has displayed extensive regional experience. Above all, Taiwan needs to demonstrate an increased resilience to Chinese espionage and psychological warfare ([China Brief](#), December 5, 2014). Defense partners—Washington included—are less willing to sell advanced platforms to a Taiwanese military weakened by leaks to the PLA. Taiwanese military and civilians need to develop greater confidence in their troops and their own abilities, a mental resilience to China's "Three Warfares" and efforts which seek to influence and control the strategic discourse on Taiwan ([China Brief](#), August 22, 2016).

Conclusion

The relationships Taiwan maintains with partner nations around the world have been—and will

undoubtedly continue to be—placed under strain by Beijing's insistence on recognition of the "One China" principle. However, such a reality does not mean Taiwan should accept sole reliance upon the United States for its security and defense needs as a *fait accompli*. At the domestic level, Taiwan must allocate the money and resources necessary to support a robust deterrence and a military capable of defending the island against a potential future contingency with the PLA. Beyond the island, Taiwanese officials must think just as creatively about defense and security partners as they already have in the economic realm. While Taiwan's defense will continue to benefit greatly from the relationship with Washington, such ties should not preclude Taiwanese efforts to look elsewhere for partners in similar strategic circumstances. Prudence demands Taiwan diversify its defense portfolio and broaden available security partners.

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Notes

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Singapore's Strategic Posture," in Amitav Acharya and Lee Lai To (eds.), *Asia in the New Millennium*, conference proceedings (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2004), pp. 352–375.

5. Meron Medzini, "Hands across Asia: Israel-Taiwan Relations," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2 (2015): pp. 237–251.
6. Michalis S. Michael, *Resolving the Cyprus Conflict: Negotiating History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 146.

PLA Theater Joint Intelligence: Organization and Operations

By Kevin McCauley

China's new theater command structure represents a major advancement in building a streamlined joint command structure. One key remaining bottleneck is intelligence sharing. Accurate and timely intelligence is always a key component of any successful military operation, and especially so for the advanced joint operations the PLA envisions. Skilled intelligence and technical personnel, and joint command and coordination regulations are required to support the intelligence process, as well as direct intelligence operations at subordinate echelons. As the PLA attempts to build an advanced joint operations capability, rapid collection, accurate analysis and dissemination of actionable intelligence is critical to support precision

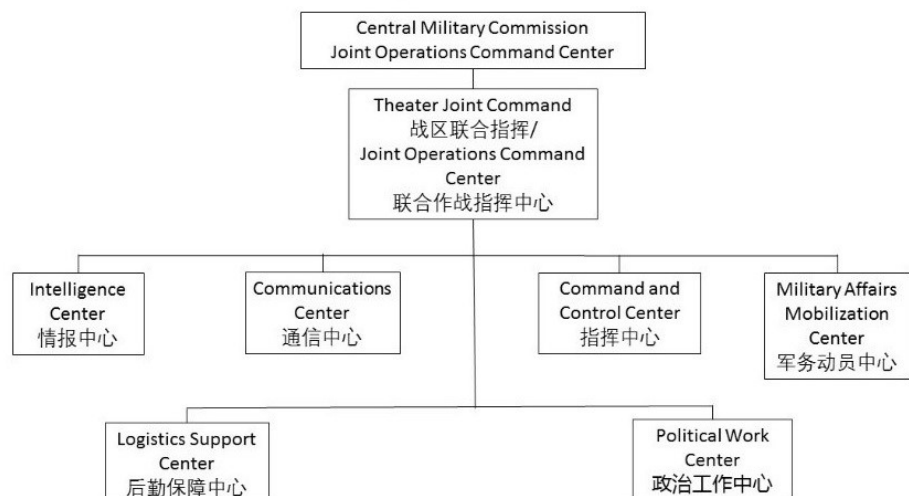
command, maneuver, and fire strikes with situational awareness, targeting and battle damage assessments. The PLA's current stove-piped intelligence system requires continued modernization including automated systems to assist analysis and dissemination, improved and expanded reconnaissance assets, and integrated communications for sharing intelligence.

Theater Joint Command

The new Theater Joint Commands' Joint Operations Command Centers (JOCC—联合作战指挥中心) contain intelligence centers, as do command posts (CP) formed at each echelon down to regiment level. [1]

The internal theater command structure, as well as the intelligence center organization are not uniform and vary as dictated by the special circumstances facing each command. Under the supervision of the theater joint command's chief of staff, the joint intelligence center consists of intelligence staff officers from the services, the Strategic Support Force and technical staff. [2] This center is responsible for preparing the joint reconnaissance plan (联合侦察计划) to support the theater's command and control center and

Theater Joint Operations Command Structure



Source: *Theater Joint Operations Command*, p. 82; command posts often contain additional specialized centers, such as a firepower coordination center (火力协调中心).

operational forces. The joint intelligence center plays a coordinating role to lower level intelligence centers and subordinate reconnaissance forces. The center is responsible for, coordinating theater reconnaissance operations, centralized intelligence fusion, as well as coordinating with the Central Military Commission's (CMC) JOCC, national intelligence agencies and the Strategic Support Force. [3] The theater command's intelligence center can establish subordinate intelligence centers, for example, ground, air and maritime. These subordinate centers would maintain service-specific situation maps feeding into the joint intelligence center's current battlefield situation map (战场通用态势图) providing a common operating picture to all forces. The theater command's intelligence center disseminates reports to intelligence centers at lower echelons supporting subordinate forces, as well as coordinate with other theaters' centers. [4]

The intelligence centers of various operational groups (作战集团) or campaign formations (军团) conducting the theater operations and other theater subordinate reconnaissance assets transmit intelligence to the theater joint intelligence center, as well as the theater command

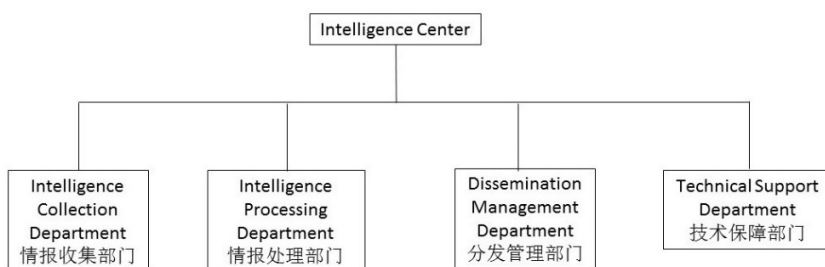
and control center. The theater intelligence center has directly subordinate technical reconnaissance, special reconnaissance and other units collecting intelligence. The theater joint intelligence center provides guidance to subordinate reconnaissance assets based on the joint reconnaissance plan. The theater intelligence center can request space, network, and electromagnetic battlefield reconnaissance support from the Strategic Support Force, and additional intelligence support from the CMC's JOCC, as well as support from national intelligence agencies. [6]

PLA assessments note that current intel transmission and dissemination is slow, especially in a joint environment. Improvements in the intelligence system include a transition to a flatter network structure that is intended to break barriers between services and branches. Collection, analysis, and dissemination of actionable battlefield intelligence, are being standardized and automated to speed up the processing and dissemination of intelligence. This is further enhanced through the creation of intelligence databases that can be queried. [10]

Planning

Planning and organization of intelligence is crucial to support operations. The theater chief of staff supervises and manages the development of the joint reconnaissance plan, and submits the plan for the joint commander's approval. The theater command and control center provides the joint intelligence center with the intelligence

Intelligence Center Structure



Source: Theater Joint Operations Command, p. 161

requirements supporting the operational plan. The requirements can vary from one operational phase to another. The joint reconnaissance plan assigns missions to reconnaissance assets, plans missions to support various operational phases, prioritizes collection against the most urgent requirements, establishes coordination and support methods, and assigns timelines for completing tasks. Reconnaissance assets are concentrated along the main operational direction, with assets and missions adjusted as operations progress or as the situation changes. Reconnaissance operations could be increased in other regions to deceive the opponent as to the actual main direction. [11]

Intelligence Collection

According to the PLA, joint operations require extensive intelligence collection on political, economic, and military issues that can impact operations. The PLA places importance on peacetime collection, including the use of “tourists” and open sources, as wartime collection becomes restricted. Comprehensive peacetime collection can support rapid intelligence production to support an unexpected crisis. Units at each echelon down to battalion level have subordinate forces to conduct reconnaissance in their area of operations. This intelligence is shared with neighboring and subordinate units, as well as reported up the command chain. Subordinate commands can request intelligence support from superior headquarters, and intelligence centers are required to coordinate closely with counterparts in neighboring units to share relevant intelligence. Intelligence centers coordinate with the People’s Armed Police, militia, and local authorities during a conflict on mainland China. In overseas conflicts, in addition to national and PLA reconnaissance assets, intelli-

gence will come from “underground party organizations,” agents, fellow travelers, prisoners of war, and captured enemy documents and equipment. The fishing fleet and civilian ships also provide valuable information. [12]

The eventual goal is to achieve a “full-dimensional” 24/7 all-weather intelligence collection capability. Theater intelligence includes satellite, aircraft, maritime, ground, electromagnetic and network reconnaissance assets. The PLA considers reconnaissance satellites an important theater intelligence means to provide long-range monitoring of ground and sea targets. Air, maritime, ground and other technical collection means are also important to present a comprehensive battlefield situation for commanders at all echelons. [13]

Intelligence Processing and Analysis

Fast-paced modern operations require rapid and accurate intelligence analysis. As the PLA adapts more complex ISR systems, the quantity of data produced is quickly outpacing analysts’ ability to process it. Computer-assisted processing is required for timely and accurate processing and dissemination of intelligence, however, automation levels within the PLA currently is considered low compared to advanced countries. Analysis supports updating of a digital battlefield situation map displaying a common operating picture to CPs down to the regiment level, and possibly to battalion level command vehicles. The digital display provides layered information—including operational plans; friendly and enemy force disposition; space, air, maritime and ground situation; geographic and obstacle information; meteorological and hydrographic situation; and electromagnetic environment. Combat statistical tables, text, audio,

and visual information can also be available for display. [14]

The intelligence centers sort, validate and analyze collected data, producing finished intelligence. Critical intelligence is reported immediately to the commander, and emergency information is immediately distributed to units. PLA publications state that only trained personnel should evaluate and interpret intelligence data, including validating the collected information. Specialized personnel analyze technical reconnaissance such as satellite or aerial imagery, electronic collection, and enemy weapons and equipment performance. The intelligence centers will initially sort and categorize intelligence in various ways, such as subject (information on enemy forces, friendly forces, or the operational environment), time (historical, current, or future intelligence), and priority (critical, general, reference intelligence information). Intelligence evaluation and feedback is used to strengthen the relevance and quality of reporting. The PLA believes that development of automated systems will speed up the collection, processing, dissemination, and database storage and retrieval of intelligence. [15]

Dissemination

The intelligence centers use various methods to disseminate relevant intelligence to units. It is important to note that higher level commands restrict dissemination to intelligence deemed relevant to a subordinate's combat missions to limit overloading with unneeded information. Classification levels would also limit access. Currently, these decisions are made primarily by intelligence center staff, with automated systems assisting to a greater degree in the future. Intelligence databases currently exist in the PLA,

although PLA publications indicate this will increase in the future including greater flexibility for users to query databases. PLA forces use a variety of wired and wireless communication methods, and increasingly rely on BeiDou for brief, secure messages. Ultimately an integrated approach is used depending on the situation. [16]

Information Security and Intelligence Confrontation

Information security is an important aspect of intelligence and reconnaissance. These measures include not only strict control of information and systems, but also active and passive counter-reconnaissance measures including deception, terrain masking, electronic warfare and cyber offense and defense. Close coordination between the military and local governments, and strict control over civilian communications and news media are considered important in maintaining information security. Control of electronic emanations, radio silence, and technological means such as frequency hopping, spread spectrum, and burst communications are advocated. [17]

The PLA also uses the concepts of intelligence struggle (情报斗争), intelligence deception (情报欺骗), and intelligence deterrence (情报威慑) which includes deception and interference to prevent, or destroy the enemy's intelligence collection capabilities. Intelligence deception includes spreading disinformation to confuse the enemy leading to inaccurate assessments and decisions. Intelligence deterrence is the control of intelligence or feeding false intelligence to the enemy to lead the enemy to avoid confrontation or reduce the intensity of his actions. The Strategic Support Force is likely responsible for

information security and intelligence confrontation actions at the strategic level. [18]

Modernization Requirements

The PLA recognizes shortcomings in communication construction—such as automated communication networks—to meet theater joint command requirements. The PLA assesses current intelligence sharing and dissemination means as poor, requiring improved communication system integration and personnel training. The theaters rely on satellite communications for long-range communications, supported by an integrated trunk communications network as the main communications systems. China is developing quantum information technology, including a satellite communications system for high capacity, rapid and secure communications. The PLA assesses that the communications systems, for example the theater field automated communication network, require continued modernization to eventually reach the level of developed countries. An integrated, networked intelligence system is required to ensure real-time sharing of intelligence information. The PLA admits that its military reconnaissance units are not as extensive as more advanced countries, requiring greater quantity and quality. Military reconnaissance and early warning long-range capabilities are considered weak, a severe limitation for Navy and Air Force operations at greater distances, and possible expeditionary operations or support for special operations abroad. The PLA does consider its computer talent a strength to support cyber reconnaissance or computer network exploitation. [19]

PLA assessments identify technologies to support improved reconnaissance and surveillance operations. Spread spectrum communications

technology provides greater security by lowering the probability of detection and interception. Detection and direction-finding technologies can, long-range battlefield reconnaissance and surveillance radars capable of detecting, locating and identifying moving ground, air and maritime targets, and passive detection systems are identified as important technologies by the PLA. Stratospheric and tropospheric balloons for early warning, reconnaissance, and communication relay are also discussed in PLA publications and advertised at arms shows. The airships can be linked with Navy vessels, AWACS aircraft, other aircraft and aerostats to create a networked reconnaissance architecture to provide greater redundancy, direction of reconnaissance operations, and comprehensive intelligence system. [20]

The current extent and quality of operational and tactical level intelligence reforms is not clear. Theater joint intelligence should eventually provide centralized intelligence fusion of service reconnaissance assets, and an entry point for strategic intelligence reporting to support theater operations. PLA press reports improvements breaking barriers allowing intelligence sharing between branches and units at the tactical level. However, tactical units are solving issues on their own, rather than high-level direction standardizing communications and the intelligence process (*PLA Daily*, March 3, 2015; *PLA Daily*, October 17, 2015). Tactical unit intelligence centers also report inundation with vast amounts of intelligence in a short time, with over 60 percent of the information worthless. Not only did the large amount of information stress the communications bandwidth, but also the ability to sort for critical intelligence. Again, units have sought their own solutions to filter intelligence. It remains unclear whether the current emphasis on high level direction for reforms is

providing standardization and uniform guidance to subordinates (*PLA Daily*, November 25, 2015). Tactical UAVs are allowing units to quickly conduct reconnaissance of their area of operations, overcoming difficult terrain and obstacles that would restrict reconnaissance patrol mobility (*PLA Daily*, May 3, 2016). The integrated command platform is allowing greater real-time intelligence sharing, and currently providing digital battlefield situation maps to tactical units (*PLA Daily*, May 11, 2016; *PLA Daily*, October 30, 2016).

Conclusions

Rapid and accurate intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination will require numerous improvements and modernizations to support future PLA requirements for high-tempo maneuver operations by dispersed joint forces and long-range precision strikes. The creation of a theater joint intelligence structure should lead to improved intelligence fusion. New joint command and coordination regulations are required for full implementation of the theater commands, and the PLA is working to correct the problems facing joint command and intelligence operations at all echelons. Current weaknesses include the quantity and quality of reconnaissance assets, particularly long-range capabilities, as well as integrated communications and automated systems. The PLA recognizes the dangers of information overload, and intends to increase automated systems to assist in disseminating actionable intelligence to subordinates. Future PLA intelligence operations require an integrated networked system breaking service barriers, increasing speed and efficiency transmitting time sensitive intelligence to support decision-making at all command levels. The PLA is making progress, but there is much to be accomplished.

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Notes

1. The theater's JOCC acts as the main CP (基本指挥所). In addition, there would normally be an alternate CP (预备指挥所), a rear CP (后方指挥所) and possibly a forward or direction CP (前进(方向)指挥所). The alternate and rear CPs for the theaters are likely fixed and underground. The rear CP might be collated with the theaters' Joint Logistics Support Center. Each CP would have to have an intelligence center and follow the course of operations closely in the event they need to take command operation if other CPs are destroyed or inoperative. At lower echelons, this transfer of command could occur during displacement of a CP.
2. The level of expertise and experience of the intelligence centers' staff, particularly the technical staff is not known, nor is the shift system employed to maintain 24/7 operations. It is likely that the skill levels between shifts varies in quality.
3. The PLA security classifications include Top Secret (绝密), Secret (机密) and Confidential (秘密), and dissemination of classified material is based on need to know. The classification levels available to various echelons is not known for the PLA, but would restrict dissemination of

intelligence. It is likely that the PLA also has code word and compartmented classifications.

4. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) pp. 82–83, 123 and 158–161
5. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) p. 161, pp. 156–158.
6. *Command Information System Course of Study*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 23
7. *Command Information System Course of Study*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) p. 27
8. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) pp. 116–118
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11. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) pp. 170–172; *Precision Operations*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2011) pp. 136–137
12. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) pp. 122–123
13. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) pp. 119, 123 and 166
14. *Precision Operations*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2011) pp. 145–146; *Joint Operations Command Organ*

Work Course of Study, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2008) pp. 72–75; Chinamil.com, November 17, 2014

15. *Precision Operations*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2011) pp. 144–145
16. *Precision Operations*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2011) pp. 140–141 and 147
17. *Military Terms*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2011) p. 225
18. *Theater Joint Operations Command*, (Beijing: National Defense University Press, 2016) pp. 125, 158–159 and 172–173
19. *Command Information System Course of Study*, (Beijing: Military Science Press, 2013) pp. 64–69 ; *PLA Daily*, February 24, 2017; *China Daily*, January 19, 2017

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