

# **China's Military Modernization: Global Interests, But Not Yet Expeditionary**

**A Monograph  
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## Abstract

CHINA'S MILITARY MODERNIZATION: GLOBAL INTERESTS, BUT NOT YET EXPEDITIONARY by MAJ Jon F. Parvin, U.S. Army, 57 pages.

The People's Republic of China has experienced massive economic growth over the last twenty years, which has provided greater resources to counter threats to its security, both internally and externally. China has used part of this newfound wealth to conduct a comprehensive modernization program for their armed forces, developing capabilities to counter these security threats. However, this economic growth has increasingly tied China to external sources of energy and resources. This external resource dependence has led to security concerns outside the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) traditional focus on territorial integrity and national unity. As some of the most pressing concerns are external to China, it is important to understand the expeditionary capabilities the PLA is gaining through their modernization program.

This study seeks to evaluate China's ability to address growing external security threats and concerns. First, the study develops a functional definition for expeditionary operations and identifies evaluation criteria that are both functional and specific for China. The study then ascertains Chinese security concerns that may require expeditionary capabilities to address. China's military modernization program is examined in light of these security concerns, focusing on those improvements or shortcomings that affect China's ability to project power successfully. The study uses four evaluation criteria from Marine Corps doctrine – Tailored Force, Rapid Deployment, Forcible Entry, and Sustainment. A fifth criterion of Prestige is added to construct a PLA specific model. This study evaluates China's ability to react to external threats to its security with an expeditionary force based on these five criteria.

Although China's military modernization has improved their military capabilities, the focus on internal security continues to hinder the PLA's ability to react to external threats. While marginally improving their ability to project power, most of China's military expenditures continue to focus on Taiwan. Persistent, steady growth will continue to increase China's ability to project power, but a significant lack of capabilities, coupled with slow modernization to counter external threats will provide China with a limited ability to respond to crises on their periphery within the next decade. To conduct a large, expeditionary operations to protect their overseas interests, China must maintain growth and modernization at the current level for at least twenty years.

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## Introduction

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) military modernization efforts over the last two decades have sparked intense interest in both American military and political spheres. China possesses the largest military in the world as well as nuclear weapons, both of which are cause for concern. For at least 20 years, authors, analysts, politicians, and military personnel have viewed China's military modernization program with concern, analyzing the potential impact on American security interests in the Pacific. Fueled by a booming economy, China's overall military expenditures have increased by 400% since 1998.<sup>1</sup> China is regularly criticized for the "lack of transparency" regarding its military spending, making their acknowledged level of spending the focus of intense debate.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of China's growing military prowess generally centers on two opposing viewpoints; China is either a threat to United States interests and security or a peaceful competitor. What analysts fail to fully comprehend are the capabilities China gains through its military modernization program.

The United States has global interests and maintains a military capable of ensuring the security of those interests. The increase in Chinese global interests has spurred an internal evaluation of their security situation and led to their delineation of perceived "long-term, complicated, and diverse security threats and challenges."<sup>3</sup> As the Chinese continue modernization programs to meet these perceived security threats, will these changes provide an expeditionary capability? This study seeks to answer that question.

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<sup>1</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *China's National Defense in 2008*, Appendix V [http://www.china.org.cn/government/central\\_government/200901/20/content\\_17155577.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/government/central_government/200901/20/content_17155577.htm) (accessed March 20, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2008* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2008) I, 20, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2008*, 6.

To determine China's expeditionary capabilities, it is important to accurately define an expeditionary capability and determine what characteristics make a force expeditionary. The United States *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations (JP 3-0)* defines an expeditionary force as "an armed force organized to achieve a specific objective in a foreign country."<sup>4</sup> However, this imprecise definition is not functional. Kazakhstan organized and deployed 290 soldiers to Iraq over a five year period with the specific purpose of improvised explosive device removal and water purification missions.<sup>5</sup> It is hard to argue that the Kazakhstan military is expeditionary given their limited ability to deploy personnel and complete lack of ability to deploy equipment.<sup>6</sup> Therefore this analysis requires a more precise definition of an expeditionary capability and determination of characteristics that make a force expeditionary.

With definitions and evaluation criteria in hand, analyzing Chinese expeditionary capabilities becomes a three-step process. The first two steps are mutually dependent – identification of security threats requiring a Chinese expeditionary capability and analysis of PLA modernization efforts that support expeditionary operations. The primary source identifying the perceived threats to Chinese security is the People's Republic of China's "White Paper" entitled *China's National Defense in 2008*, published in January of 2009. The "White Paper," along with other military and civilian analysis, provides a succinct review of these threats. Next, this study

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<sup>4</sup> United States Department of Defense. *United States Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008) GL-13.

<sup>5</sup> International Information Centre of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Kazakh military engineers withdraw from Iraq." <http://www.kazakhstanlive.com/2.aspx?ProdID=978f9784-dc9f-4e89-aa3d-5b6b4b666ce1&CatID=9f9f8034-6dd6-4f7e-adcf-0f6a7c0406d9&sr=100&page=1> (accessed 22 April 2009).

<sup>6</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2008* (London: Routledge, 2008) 346; Global Security.org. "Tu-134 Crusty Specifications." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/tu-134-specs.htm> (accessed 08 September 09); Global Security.org. "Tu-154 Careless Specifications." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/tu-154-specs.htm> (accessed 08 September 09). The Kazakhstan Air Force possesses only three transport aircraft. These are not military transport aircraft, but civilian airliners owned by the air force. Only one of these aircraft has the functional range to reach Iraq from Kazakhstan. The Kazakh forces also used US military equipment in Iraq as their organic equipment was not sufficient for the operating environment.

considers China's military advances within the context of these security threats. Additional primary, secondary, and governmental sources offer detailed insight into China's modernization. Equipment procurement, doctrinal changes, and military reorganization are all indicators of how China expects to confront the threats to its security. With a firm grasp of China's external security threats and military capabilities, this study then applies the evaluation criteria, developed along with the definition of expeditionary capability, to China's military capabilities through a pair of scenarios taken from realistic, stated Chinese security concerns. The scenarios used are a threat to China's foreign interests and a humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operation. The outcome of these scenarios provides insight into China's ability to project power.

This study purposefully avoids a Taiwan based scenario. Although much of China's military expenditures and force structure is oriented on Taiwan, the island is an internal security threat, not an external threat requiring possible use of expeditionary forces. Exclusively developed for cross strait invasion of Taiwan, these Taiwan-centric forces may provide additional capabilities to the Chinese. While Taiwan will not serve as a case study scenario, the Taiwan oriented forces and their equipment will be part of the analysis of Chinese expeditionary capabilities.

## **Expeditionary Operations**

In an age of globalization, growing economies, and competition for scarce resources, nations are looking beyond their own borders to fulfill their needs. Major powers, such as the United States, the European Union, Russia, India and China are all investing outside of, and often at great distance from, their own country. As economies become more intertwined, all members of Thomas Barnett's Functioning Core, those nations that effectively function within the globalized economy, are increasingly interested in the affairs of other nations.<sup>7</sup> Foreign

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004) 125.

investment continues to grow in semi-stable regions of the world, what Barnett calls the Non-Integrating Gap. These countries, which are not integrated into the global economy, are increasingly garnering more interest from the globalized world because of their resources. To paraphrase Barnett, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have meant that the Core's globalization into the Gap nations now includes "enforcement of a security rule set" as well as an economic rule set.<sup>8</sup> Nations in the Core have to be able to protect their investments. Expeditionary operations are one option with the use of force, peacekeeping, disaster relief, and humanitarian assistance. But to determine whether a nation possesses the capability to conduct expeditionary operations, it is critical to first define an expeditionary capability.

### **Expeditionary Capability – A Definition**

To possess expeditionary capabilities, a state must have a military capable of executing expeditionary operations.<sup>9</sup> But what exactly does expeditionary mean? As stated in *Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (JP 1-02)*, an expedition is "a military operation conducted by an armed force to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country."<sup>10</sup> *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations* states that an expeditionary force is "An armed force organized to achieve a specific objective in a foreign country."<sup>11</sup> Like most US joint doctrine, these definitions are generic, designed to fit across all

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<sup>8</sup> Barnett, 26-27.

<sup>9</sup> MAJ Christopher R. Liermann, "India's Approaching Expeditionary Armed Force," Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2008. MAJ Liermann's monograph conducts a study similar to this one, but analyzing the Indian military. In his study into the Indian military's expeditionary capabilities, MAJ Liermann uses as metrics three of the Joint functions: Command and Control, Movement and Maneuver, and Sustainment.

<sup>10</sup> United States Department of Defense, *United States Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009) 195.

<sup>11</sup> DoD, *US Joint Pub 3-0: Joint Operations*, GL-13.

four American military services. However, they do not accurately define an expeditionary force, nor do they describe an expeditionary force's capabilities.

In the United States, the Marine Corps is the service most closely linked with expeditionary capabilities and operations.<sup>12</sup> The US Marine Corps considers itself a “fundamentally expeditionary organization” and has devoted an entire doctrinal manual to expeditionary operations.<sup>13</sup> In 2005, former Marine Corps Commandant General James L. Jones described an expeditionary force as an “agile and flexible force organized to accomplish a broad range of military objectives in a foreign country or region. Such a force must be able to deploy rapidly, enter the objected area through forcible means if necessary, sustain itself for an extended period of time, withdraw quickly and reconstitute rapidly to execute follow-on missions.”<sup>14</sup> Although the US Marine Corps uses thirty-one pages to describe expeditionary operations in its cornerstone doctrinal manual for expeditionary operations, it still relies on the inadequate joint definition.<sup>15</sup> Marine Corps doctrine *describes* expeditionary operations, but does not *define* them.

Two other sources offer insight into a proper definition of an expeditionary capability. The first comes from British doctrine. As an island kingdom that maintained a global empire, the British military has a different approach to defining expeditionary capabilities. As Lieutenant General Sir Robert Fry, former Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff stated in 2005, the British definition of expeditionary operations “seems to catch the essence of the operation which

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<sup>12</sup> Thierry Gongora, “Expeditionary Operations: Definition and Requirements,” *Military Technology*, Vol. 28, Iss. 6 (June 2004) 107.

<sup>13</sup> United States Department of Defense, *United States Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 3: Expeditionary Operations* (Washington D.C: Department of the Navy, 1998) 43-44.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth G. Book, “Marine Corps Commandant Extols Benefits of ‘Expeditionary’ Force,” *National Defense*, Vol. 58, Iss. 569 (April 2001) 14. Although detailed, Jones’ description is merely a paraphrase of Chapter 2, “The Nature of Expeditionary Operations,” in *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 3: Expeditionary Operations* (MCDP 3).

<sup>15</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 27-59.

established and maintained the British Empire.”<sup>16</sup> British doctrine defines expeditionary operations as “the projection of military power over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area to accomplish a specific objective.”<sup>17</sup> This definition is much closer to what military professionals think of when discussing expeditions and warrants further examination.

The British definition must be broken down into its important segments to fully understand its meaning. The *projection of military power* refers to the organizing and equipping of a combat ready force. It is the projection of military power, not merely military forces. *Extended lines of communication* is an important aspect of this definition as the ability to either sustain that force over distance or ensure its self-sustaining ability is critical to expeditionary operations. The term *distant operational area* is very important to the British definition in both a literal and metaphoric manner. An expeditionary force must be able to operate at great distance from its home base. In addition, *distant operational area* invokes thoughts of an austere environment, such as Somalia, or an immature theater such as the Falkland Islands. Finally, the last portion of the definition refers to *accomplishment of a specific objective*. In this definition, an expeditionary force is not a general-purpose force deployed for an indefinite period. Rather, it is a force organized to accomplish a specific purpose. Examples of these objectives from British history are quelling Boer resistance in South Africa, recapturing the Falkland Islands from Argentine forces, and the Boxer Rebellion in China. The primary fault with the British definition of expeditionary operations is its historical basis formed through centuries of empire, which does not take into account the nature of modern military operations. The British definition of

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Fry, “Expeditionary Operations in the modern Era” *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 150, Iss. 6 (Dec 2005) 60.

<sup>17</sup> United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, *Joint Doctrinal Publication 1-01.1: United Kingdom Glossary of Joint and Multinational Terms and Definitions*, (Shrivenham, Swinton, United Kingdom: The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, June 2007) E-9.

expeditionary operations fails to account for the full spectrum of modern military operations, which include humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and civil security.<sup>18</sup>

Further insight into an effective definition of expeditionary operations comes from *Joint Vision 2020*, published by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2000. *Joint Vision 2020* states that “given the global nature of our interests and obligations, the United States must maintain...the ability to rapidly project power worldwide in order to achieve full spectrum dominance.”<sup>19</sup> The key aspect that needs to be incorporated from this statement is “full spectrum dominance.” *JP 1-02* defines full spectrum superiority as “the cumulative effect of dominance in the air, land, maritime, and space domains and information environment that permits the conduct of joint operations without effective opposition or prohibitive interference.”<sup>20</sup> Modern military operations must take into account all aspects of these full spectrum operations. Therefore, any definition of expeditionary capabilities must include full spectrum operations.

While none of these explanations of expeditionary themselves are adequate, a compilation of them gives a definition that closely mirrors what General Jones was trying to relate in 2005. The following definitions are a combination of US doctrine, UK doctrine, and US Joint Chiefs of Staff guidance. These definitions provide a much more accurate depiction of modern expeditionary operations and are utilized throughout this assessment as reference points. *Expeditionary Operations*: A military operation projecting an armed force over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area, achieving full spectrum dominance to accomplish a specific objective. *Expeditionary Force*: An armed force, capable of achieving full spectrum dominance, projected over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area, to

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<sup>18</sup> United States Department of Defense, *United States Army Field Manual 3-0: Operations* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 2008) 3-7.

<sup>19</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Joint Vision 2020* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000) 6.

<sup>20</sup> DoD, *US Joint Pub 1-02: DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 223.

accomplish a specific objective. *Expeditionary Capability*: The ability to project an armed force, capable of achieving full spectrum dominance, over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area, to accomplish a specific objective. Armed with this set of definitions that accurately describe expeditionary, the next logical step is to determine exactly what characteristics a military must have to effectively conduct expeditionary operations.

## Models for Expeditionary Operations

Surprisingly, there are few actual sources that specify requirements for expeditionary operations.<sup>21</sup> The US Army's *Field Manual 3-0: Operations* discusses US Army expeditionary forces, but only in the context that Army forces will deploy as part of a greater, joint operation.<sup>22</sup> Thus the US Army does not describe expeditionary. Although US joint doctrine repeatedly references expeditionary forces, it does not provide a definitive explanation giving the characteristics, criteria, or capabilities an expeditionary force must possess. With some research, models from two countries are available from which to develop criteria to evaluate the People's Liberation Army's expeditionary capabilities.

## The Baseline and Robust Models

Dr. Thierry Gongora, a defense scientist working at the Canadian National Defense Headquarters, presented a paper discussing expeditionary operations at the Dalhousie University Sea Power Conference in June 2002.<sup>23</sup> His paper identifies two models that provide insight for

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<sup>21</sup> The United States Army's newest version of *Field Manual 3-0: Operations* addresses the US Army as an expeditionary force, which is a significant change over the June 2001 publication of this manual. The earlier version that only mentioned the word "Expeditionary" three times, all of which were in reference to the US Marine Corps as an expeditionary force. These three references can be found on pages 2-8, 7-9, and 10-0 in the June 2001 version of *FM 3-0*.

<sup>22</sup> DoD, *United States Army Field Manual 3-0: Operations*, February 2008, 1-16, 8-1 – 8-7.

<sup>23</sup> Thierry Gongora. "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Perspective" (Paper presented at the Seapower Conference 2002, Dalhousie University, Halifax, 7-9 June 2002) <http://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/papers/other/gongora.pdf> (assessed 11 June 09).

expeditionary force requirements.<sup>24</sup> The Baseline Model contains seven tenets that Dr. Gongora feels necessary for expeditionary operations. The Robust Model includes all the tenets of the Baseline Model, but includes up to six additional tenets that that can be utilized depending on mission requirements.<sup>25</sup> The tenets described by Dr. Gongora are logical and closely resemble the list of requirements for successful expeditionary operations found in the *US Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, which are discussed later in this study.<sup>26</sup> In fact, all but one of Dr. Gongora's Baseline Model tenets and three from the Robust Model are directly reflected in the US Marine Corps publication.

While Dr. Gongora's models closely resemble US Marine Corps doctrine, the differences are intriguing. Four criteria from the Baseline and Robust Models not reflected in US Marine Corps doctrine clearly reflect Canadian national interests.<sup>27</sup> These four criteria are based on assumptions and conditions that are valid for Canada, but not necessarily valid for the United States, China or any other nation. The Baseline and Robust Models share a core of ideals with the United States Marine Corps, with minor changes made to accommodate Canadian nuances. It can be surmised that each nation has its own model for expeditionary operations that includes a standard set of criteria, with additions reflecting national character.

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<sup>24</sup> Gongora, "The Meaning of Expeditionary Operations from an Air Force Prospective," 6-7, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Baseline Model tenets: 1) high readiness; 2) sustainable expeditionary force generation; 3) strategic mobility; 4) deployable command and control element; 5) interoperable with main coalition partners; 6) lean in-theater support; 7) modular force package (task-tailored). Robust Model additional tenets: 1) capable of operating in any terrain and climate; 2) capable of forced entry; 3) full-spectrum force protection; 4) capable of reconstitution while forward deployed; 5) capable of sustaining itself in an austere environment without host nation support; 6) multi-mission capable (general-purpose task force).

<sup>26</sup> United States Department of Defense, *United States Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0: Marine Corps Operations* (Washington D.C: Department of the Navy, 1998) 2-4 – 2-5. These requirements will be discussed in detail later in this study. They are also listed in Appendix 1.

<sup>27</sup> Interoperable with main coalition partners, full spectrum force protection, capable of reconstitution while forward deployed, multi-mission capable (general-purpose task force) are the four tenets not reflected in US Marine Corps doctrine. Interoperability with coalition partners indicates that Canada does not plan on unilateral action, something that can not necessarily be said about the US or China. The three other tenets in Dr. Gongora's model that are not present in the Marine Corps requirements appear to stem from Canada's involvement in peacekeeping missions and Operation Enduring Freedom.

## US Marine Corps Requirements for Successful Expeditionary Operations

United States Marine Corps doctrine does not provide an accurate definition of expeditionary forces. However, it does provide detailed insight into the characteristics an expeditionary force must have. As the most expeditionary service in the most powerful military in the world, the US Marine Corps lists the following seven requirements for successful expeditionary operations: 1) Expeditionary Mindset; 2) Tailored Forces; 3) Forward Deployment; 4) Rapid Deployment; 5) Expeditionary Basing; 6) Forcible Entry; 7) Sustainment.<sup>28</sup> These requirements, however, are not universally applicable to every country until the American-influenced tenets are identified. As with the Canadian-influenced models, it is important to determine which of these seven are corps tenets and which are “Americanisms” influenced by US interests, history, and character.

Of the seven US Marine Corps characteristics of expeditionary operations, three appear to be “Americanisms.” The first requirement, “Expeditionary Mindset,” is impossible to empirically measure. Just as every Marine is a rifleman, the Marine Corps expects every Marine to maintain this expeditionary mindset.<sup>29</sup> This expeditionary mindset is explained in Marine Corps doctrine by the “phrase ‘bags packed’—that is, ready and willing to deploy on a moment’s notice, any time, to any place, to perform any mission...in a high state of deployability and general readiness. The expeditionary mindset implies a Spartan attitude.”<sup>30</sup> It is hard to argue against this perceived necessity, but it is even harder to measure it. Therefore, this requirement cannot truly be used as a metric to determine expeditionary capabilities.

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<sup>28</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, 2-4 – 2-5. Full explanations for each of these seven USMC requirements can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>29</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 43-44; DoD, *USMC DP 1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, 1-24.

<sup>30</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 42.

The third and fifth requirements, “Forward Deployment” and “Expeditionary Basing,” both reference physically positioning forces outside of a nation’s borders, but in two different manners. “Forward Deployment” is the permanent basing of forces outside of a nation’s homeland. The United States’ military power and global interests, coupled with alliances, have allowed the US to position forces around the world for over sixty years. Additionally, the US Marine Corps continuously operates three forward-deployed Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU).<sup>31</sup> It is unfair to use this metric to measure other nations, as only France and the United Kingdom with their colonial legacies can realistically position forces forward. However, forward deployed forces alone do not necessarily provide expeditionary capabilities. The remnants of empire allow the United Kingdom to base forces outside of the home islands, but the UK had to organize forces from the home isles to send to the Falklands in 1982, as they could not maintain enough forces forward deployed.<sup>32</sup>

The requirement of “Expeditionary Basing” is a capability possessed only by the United States. “Expeditionary Basing” entails the forward basing of equipment at various points around the world, either at storage facilities or on ships. This allows US forces to deploy quickly and link up with the equipment close to the crisis area, shortening the time required to commence operations. The US Marine Corps maintains three maritime prepositioning squadrons, each with enough equipment to outfit a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) of eighteen thousand Marines.<sup>33</sup> The US Army maintains plans for eight brigade sets of equipment, both land and ship based, around the world to allow for rapid deployment of forces.<sup>34</sup> Both “Forward Deployment”

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<sup>31</sup> DoD, *USMC DPI-0: Marine Corps Operations*, 3-18.

<sup>32</sup> Sandy Woodward, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997) 72-95.

<sup>33</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 78-79.

<sup>34</sup> United States Department of Defense, United States Army Transportation School, “Army Prepositioned Stocks,” <http://www.transchool.eustis.army.mil/lic/diss1/preposit.htm> (accessed 6 August 2009).

and “Expeditionary Basing” are driven by the United States’ national interests. As the only superpower, America has interests and allies worldwide, dictating the need for global reach. With the military and financial ability to station personnel and equipment globally, these “Americanisms” have made their way into US military doctrine. Nations like China and India may develop these abilities as their security concerns continue to grow into global requirements, but until then “Forward Deployment” and “Expeditionary Basing” cannot be used to judge their expeditionary capabilities.

By removing the American characteristics of “Expeditionary Mindset,” “Forward Deployment,” and “Expeditionary Basing,” the remaining four characteristics provide a solid core of evaluation criteria to analyze expeditionary capabilities. As both the Canadian and American models have individual national traits in addition to the core tenets, it is likely that an analysis of China’s expeditionary capabilities may require an additional tenet influenced by Chinese national interests. China’s 2008 “White Paper” is littered with references to organizations, equipment, doctrine, and ideologies *with Chinese characteristics*.<sup>35</sup> As China continues to rise in global prominence, it is beginning to realize that it is not only important to act, but act gracefully. China’s expeditionary operations, whether military or humanitarian, must bring honor and respect to the nation that wants to become a leader in a multi-polar world. A Chinese model of expeditionary capabilities must include the tenet of “Prestige.” The tenet of Prestige is defined in detail later in this study, along with the other evaluation criteria.

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<sup>35</sup> The 2008 White Paper has multiple references to Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics, socialism with Chinese Characteristics, and equipment with Chinese Characteristics. This appears to be a descendent of Mao Tse Tung’s *Problems of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War* in which he stated that revolutionary war must be understood in the context of China, not just war in general.

## Tailored Forces

The US Marine corps organizes expeditionary forces into Marine air-ground task forces, commonly referred to as a MAGTF, to accomplish a specific, assigned mission.<sup>36</sup> The US Marine Corps has three standard-sized MAGTFs; the MEU centered on a battalion, the MEB centered on a regiment, and the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) based on a division. The Marine Corps also maintains the ability to rapidly add additional units and combat multipliers in order to tailor a MAGTF to any assigned mission. A MAGTF “has four core elements: a command element, ground combat element, aviation combat element, and combat service support element.”<sup>37</sup> This core provides an excellent base upon which to build an expeditionary force.

A Tailored Force should have the same basic structure as the MAGTF, which gives it sufficient resources to be “capable of achieving full spectrum dominance, projected over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area.”<sup>38</sup> This core air-ground task force does not have to be a standing force like a MEU, but can be built for each different mission. An example of this can be found in a disaster relief scenario where the task force may have extensive aviation, transportation, and logistics assets to provide relief to disaster victims. The MEU and MEB stand as excellent examples of generic air-ground task forces a country with expeditionary capabilities should be able to field.<sup>39</sup> Organized around an infantry battalion and regiment respectively, they provide a robust force structure capable of full spectrum operations.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, F-13; DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 69.

<sup>37</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 70, 72-73.

<sup>38</sup> This is taken from the definitions constructed earlier in this monograph.

<sup>39</sup> For a detailed organization and structure of a MEU and a MEB, see Appendices 2 and 3.

<sup>40</sup> The US Marine Corps MEF, while an expeditionary force, is an unrealistic standard against which to measure other militaries. The division based Marine Corps MEF is the pinnacle of expeditionary organizations. An immense warfighting organization, not only is it expeditionary, but it contains more combat power than most militaries in the world. If the discussion is whether a nation can field a MEF-sized organization, then the argument is not whether they have expeditionary capabilities, but rather to what extent these capabilities exist.

## Rapid Deployment.

Marine Corps doctrine states “Expeditionary forces must be able to get to the crisis...quickly with all of their capabilities ready to be employed.”<sup>41</sup> For the US Marines, that usually implies sealift since it possesses “strategic mobility from its naval character.”<sup>42</sup> However, expeditionary forces need not be mounted exclusively on ships.<sup>43</sup> Airlift, sealift or a combination of the two are how expeditionary forces are transported to the area of operations. In a permissive environment, commercial air and shipping can be used to augment military transport aircraft or assault shipping. To accomplish Rapid Deployment, a military force must possess enough airlift, sealift, and amphibious support vessels to transport the force.

As stated earlier, this study is centered on the ability to effectively deploy a battalion and brigade centric force. To utilize this metric, it is simple math. The expeditionary force must have enough aircraft and shipping to transport both the personnel and the equipment for the force. Additionally, the transport must not only have the physical ability to transport the personnel and equipment, but it must have the range to reach from the point of embarkation to the crisis area. If they do not have the range to make the round trip, then the country must have the means to refuel, either aerial for transport aircraft or underway replenishment for ships.

## Forcible Entry

Expeditionary forces require access to the area of operations to allow them to execute their assigned mission. Although a permissive environment with host nation support is preferable, an expeditionary force may be required to conduct a mission in a non-permissive

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<sup>41</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, 2-4.

<sup>42</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 3: Expeditionary Operations*, 47.

<sup>43</sup> Global Security.org. Marine Amphibious Ready Group. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/navy/marg.htm> (accessed 11 September 09). A MEU is typically embarked on an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) when deployed. The typical organization of an ARG is an Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA/LHD), an Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD), and a Landing Ship Dock (LSD).

environment. In these situations, expeditionary forces must be able to forcibly gain access to the operational area through airborne, amphibious, and/or air assault operations.<sup>44</sup> Unlike Rapid Deployment, the criteria of Forcible Entry cannot rely upon civilian transport and specifically requires military aircraft and ships.

When calculating a military's ability to conduct airborne insertion or amphibious assault, the determination is much like that for Rapid Deployment. The only difference is Forcible Entry requires military assets. For an airborne insertion, military transport aircraft capable of inserting both personnel and equipment via parachute are necessary. For an amphibious assault, assault shipping, landing craft, and amphibious support ships capable of delivering the expeditionary force are necessary. An air assault may be part of a Forcible Entry, provided that the expeditionary force either has amphibious assault ships capable of launching helicopters or is able to establish an intermediate staging base within helicopter assault range.

## Sustainment

*US Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0: Marine Corps Operations* explains that "expeditionary operations are often conducted in austere theaters or undeveloped areas of the world."<sup>45</sup> In a permissive environment, an expeditionary force may garner some host nation support or acquire supplies and logistical support from the region since transportation would be permitted. If this austere environment is hostile to the expeditionary force, then it has to be prepared to sustain themselves with both supplies and services.

Sustainment, much like Rapid Deployment and Forcible Entry, is dependent on capabilities. An expeditionary force can be supported through multiple means. Supply shipping, aerial resupply utilizing transport aircraft, and even contract resupply are means for providing

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<sup>44</sup> DoD, *USMC DP 1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, 2-4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-5.

sustainment to an expeditionary force. Adequate shipping, transport aircraft, and financial means are necessary to provide the daily needs of the expeditionary force.

## Prestige

Prestige, for the purposes of this study, is a mixture of respect and honor. Honor comes from compassionate acts, such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and peacekeeping missions. Respect comes from military competency and can be garnered in several ways. The first is through benevolent acts of power, such as the United States use of military assets to assist in tsunami relief in 2004-2005. The second way is through combat action. Although the campaign was fraught with issues, Russia's war against Georgia in 2006 regained some of the respect it had lost in the Central Asian states and the Caucasus. China is using its status as a developing nation to diplomatically seek "international support and prestige," according to *Joint Forces Quarterly*.<sup>46</sup> It is logical that they would use their military to assist in this effort. China seeks Prestige in the world and needs the ability to act in ways that bring it the Prestige it desires.

Great powers not only do great things, but they also do them well. With sheer manpower and effort, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) could accomplish many things. It is not just the accomplishment of great acts, but the ease in which they are accomplished that makes the greatest impression. It is the difference between efficacy and efficiency.<sup>47</sup> An example of this from American history is found in the Guadalcanal campaign. Popular history touts this as one of the turning points of World War II. However, the campaign was far from efficient. It was derisively nicknamed OPERATION SHOESTRING by some officers involved because of its shortfalls in

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<sup>46</sup> Phillippe D. Rogers, "Dragon with a Heart of Darkness," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No 47, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007 (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2007) 23.

<sup>47</sup> Francois Jullien, *A Treatise on Efficacy*, translated by Janet Lloyd (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004) 120-136. Efficacy means having the capacity to produce a desired result or affect. Efficiency is the accomplishment of a job with a minimum amount of effort. One can be efficacious in executing a task, but not efficient.

resources and planning.<sup>48</sup> Lost in victory is the fact that the US lost an equal number of warships as the Japanese.<sup>49</sup> Also forgotten is the US military's inability to provide adequate logistical support for the forces involved in the campaign.<sup>50</sup> In the 1940s, these deficiencies were easy to conceal. With today's globalized instant media, a victory such as Guadalcanal might be labeled a failure. Regardless of the outcome, it would not bring respect or honor, the components of Prestige, to the victor.

China sees itself growing into a great power in a multi-polar world. This new status must be buttressed by great acts that not only bring them honor and respect, but do so in an efficient manner. The PLA may be victorious in a clumsily executed military operation, such as the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979. However, a victory such as this will bring little, if any, Prestige to the Chinese. In today's world, China must not only prove victorious in military operations, but must also do so in a manner that brings Prestige and re-enforces its great power status.

## **Chinese Security Concerns**

China's military is the world's largest and is clearly a regional power, but the question that often arises is what threat does the PRC pose to other nations? Conversely, as China continues to push toward great power status in a multi-polar world, what benefit might China's growing military prowess bring to the world? The United States response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami is an example of how an expeditionary military from a great power can assist in a

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<sup>48</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963) 166.

<sup>49</sup> Samuel Eliot Morrison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume V: The Struggle for Guadalcanal: August 1942 – February 1943* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1948) 372.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 178-181, 292, 334. During the Guadalcanal campaign, the US military had great difficulty in supplying the fighting forces. Not only were there drastic shortages in aviation fuel and ammunition, but for a significant portion of the campaign there were shortages in rations, requiring troops to subsist on two or fewer meals a day.

humanitarian effort.<sup>51</sup> China's military modernization may give them multiple abilities, but before analyzing the PRC's military modernization, it is important to understand the security context in which China is modernizing.

The Peoples' Republic of China biennially publishes a report called *China's National Defense*, which serves as an initial start point for analyzing these concerns.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, multiple sources provide analysis of this document and external observations on security issues facing China. The PRC acknowledges that it faces "long-term, complicated, and diverse security threats and challenges."<sup>53</sup> It is in vogue to organize these into traditional and non-traditional threats for the purposes of analysis.<sup>54</sup> However, China's military modernization is primarily driven by internal security concerns, which do not require expeditionary capabilities to counter. External threats, often at great distance from China, require the ability to mount an expedition. Therefore, for the purposes of analyzing China's expeditionary capabilities, these threats are organized into internal and external threats.

## **Internal Security Concerns**

China's military modernization is fundamentally shaped by internal security concerns. The PLA primarily exists to provide internal stability and defend China's borders. Even in the age of globalization, the modernizing PLA is still primarily focused on maintaining territorial integrity, domestic stability, and national unity. Long victimized by external powers, China is

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<sup>51</sup> United States Department of Defense, DefenseLink News, "U.S. Military Support to Tsunami Relief Efforts" (28 December 2004) <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=8090> (accessed 11 September 09). The United States was able to station a carrier strike group, an expeditionary strike group, multiple support vessels, and multiple transport aircraft to support relief efforts, greatly improving the image of the United States in the region.

<sup>52</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2008*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

determined to maintain its sovereignty against any foreign power.<sup>55</sup> While fighting against a foreign nation may seem like an external concern, it is China's resolve to maintain its territorial integrity, not occupy additional lands, that makes it an internal concern. The PRC also sees itself challenged by other, more obvious internal threats.

China's faces many internal security issues. Ranging from the effects of poverty to terrorism and separatist movements, the PLA is principally designed to combat these threats. Terrorist acts conducted by the Uighurs, a Muslim minority in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region fighting a separatist insurgency, have risen in the last few years.<sup>56</sup> While indigenous and poorly organized, these small attacks threaten China's energy security.<sup>57</sup> Although the Uighur issue has come to the forefront recently, China also faces the threat posed by two other separatist movements.<sup>58</sup> China's *National Defense in 2008* clearly states that "separatist forces working toward 'Taiwan independence,' ... and 'Tibetan Independence' pose threats to China's unity and security."<sup>59</sup> China's historical insecurity over its territorial integrity leads them to place great emphasis on maintaining its current boundaries and maintaining internal stability. China's hosting of Peace Mission 2007, a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) multi-national antiterrorism exercise, in Xinjiang province shows the concern they have over separatist/terrorist movements.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Susan L. Craig, *Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Threats*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007) 66.

<sup>56</sup> Global Security.org. "Uighur Insurgency." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uighur.htm> (accessed 21 September 09).

<sup>57</sup> Andrew Martin, "Beijing's Growing Security Dilemma in Xinjiang," *The China Brief*, (Vol. 5, Iss. 13, June 2005). [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=30498](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30498) (accessed 12 August 2009).

<sup>58</sup> Martin I. Wayne, *China's War on Terrorism: Counter-insurgency, Politics and Internal Security* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 11.

<sup>59</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2008*, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Roger N. McDermott, *The Rising Dragon: SCO Peace Mission 2007*, Occasional Paper, The Jamestown Foundation, October 2007. <http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Jamestown-McDermottRisingDragon.pdf> (accessed 17 August 2009).

China also faces a host of internal threats that fall in the non-traditional category. “Economic security, financial security, environmental security, information security, resource security” as well as “epidemics, transnational crime, narcotics smuggling, illegal immigration, piracy, (and) money laundering” are all seen as internal threats to Chinese security.<sup>61</sup> Unemployment, poverty, and social security also cause instability within China’s borders. Industrialization and growth in automobile ownership may push energy security to the forefront of internal concerns.<sup>62</sup> Energy security, a top priority for all highly industrialized nations, is a concern for the People’s Republic of China.<sup>63</sup> Energy fuels the Chinese economy, which in turn fuels Chinese stability. The internal energy demand is dependent on external sources. If this demand is unmet, it could cause critical damage to the Chinese economy, making energy security both an internal and external security concern. It is also the only internal security concern that may require expeditionary capabilities to secure.

## **External Security Concerns**

On January 29, 2009, the 2008 Chinese white paper on defense stated bluntly that “China’s security situation has improved steadily.”<sup>64</sup> This improvement, however, has not removed these concerns completely. While China has multiple external security concerns, only a few of them require an expeditionary capability for possible resolution. Normally a discussion of China’s external threats would begin with Japan, China’s traditional enemy. The dispute over the gas and oil fields of the East China Sea and the uninhabited Senkaku-shoto islands have strained

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<sup>61</sup> Susan L. Craig, *Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Threat* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007) 103.

<sup>62</sup> Martin E. Ebel, *China’s Energy Future: The Middle Kingdom Seeks its Place in the Sun* (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005) 84.

<sup>63</sup> Barnett, 201-202, 214-224.

<sup>64</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China’s National Defense in 2008*, 5.

relations between the two nations.<sup>65</sup> However, the resolution of these disputes does not require expeditionary capabilities. For a threat that requires force projection capabilities to counter, China must first look westward to India.

China and India agreed to resume trade in 2002 after forty years of dispute stemming from a border war in 1962. However, there is still much distrust between the two nations.<sup>66</sup> India's warming relations with the United States since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has reinforced the Chinese feeling of being encircled by the United States and its allies.<sup>67</sup> In addition to its close ties to the United States, India's surging economy and dramatic growth make it a competitor with China for resources. Just as China needs resources to continue its growth, India also requires external resources to continue its "rising."<sup>68</sup> India also has the potential to impede China's resource transit, as India's navy has the ability to control the shipping lanes over which 70% of China's oil imports currently transit.<sup>69</sup> A land campaign against India is possible, but China would prosecute this war on the interior lines model that it is most prepared to fight. To protect its shipping lanes against possible Indian intervention, China requires an expeditionary capability.

A theme runs throughout the list of traditional external threats that China faces. That theme is the United States of America. China believes that the United States is a threat for various reasons. First and foremost is US support for Taiwan.<sup>70</sup> To the PRC, Taiwan separatism

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<sup>65</sup> James Manicom, "Hu-Fukuda Summit: The East China Sea Dispute," *The China Brief* (Vol. 8, Iss. 12, June 2008). [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=4968&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4968&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no_cache=1) (accessed 16 August 2009).

<sup>66</sup> Craig, 89-91.

<sup>67</sup> Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security*, (Stanford, CA: University of California Press, 2005) 172.

<sup>68</sup> Craig, 88-89.

<sup>69</sup> Henrich Kreft, "China's Quest for Energy," *Policy Review*, (Iss. 139, Sep-Oct 2006) 63, 65.

<sup>70</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2008*, 6.

is an internal issue and US involvement is interference in their internal affairs. The perception of American tampering in Taiwan is a symptom of China's greater concern with the United States. Suspicious of America on multiple issues, China's belief that the United States is a threat is summed up in one word – Hegemon. China sees the United States as a hegemonic threat. Hegemonism is one of the first security threats mentioned in the Chinese 2008 Defense White Paper.<sup>71</sup> This is important because of the extremely negative connotation attached to the word hegemon in the Chinese language.<sup>72</sup> Chinese perception of US actions leaves them apprehensive at best.

China is making great strides towards achieving great power status, but requires economic and political stability to continue this growth. The People's Republic of China sees the US not as a benign hegemon, but one that threatens world stability. Despite North Korea's nuclear and missile testing, America is the only country listed by name "as negatively affecting the security of the Asian region."<sup>73</sup> The perceived US policy of encirclement and containment only increases Chinese concern.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, the PRC places blame on the United States for the global financial crisis.<sup>75</sup> Outside of Taiwan, China does not necessarily fear a direct confrontation with the United States, but is concerned with dealing with the effects of American foreign policy.

One of the areas where American actions can directly influence China's security is energy. An oil importer since 1995, estimates are that the PRC will have to import 50% of its oil

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<sup>71</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2008*, 4.

<sup>72</sup> Chinese definition of Hegemon: tyrant, lord, feudal chief, to rule by force, to usurp. Translation and definition from [www.xuezhongwen.net](http://www.xuezhongwen.net) (accessed 17 August 2009).

<sup>73</sup> National Defense University, CNA China Studies and the Institute of National Strategic Studies, "China's National Defense in 2008: Panel Discussion Report" (Washington DC, 6 February 2009) 1.

<sup>74</sup> Goldstein, 11, 90, 104, 218; David Shambaugh, "Containment or Engagement of China?" *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996) 207.

<sup>75</sup> National Defense University, 1.

by 2010.<sup>76</sup> Since the 1970s, China's communist leadership has based its legitimacy on economic growth and the increasing international standing this growth gives them. Unfortunately, this growth is tied to oil which must be imported from regions that are "unstable, unfriendly, or in the sphere of influence of its strategic competitor, the United States."<sup>77</sup> China has gone to great lengths to secure its energy needs. Investing in resources from as far away as the Sudan, Angola and South America have placed China at the mercy of the transit routes that deliver oil and other materials.<sup>78</sup> By 2015, 70% of China's oil will be imported from the Middle East and must travel through the Straits of Malacca, leaving the Chinese vulnerable to interruptions in their oil flow due to piracy and sea-lane blockages in these narrow straits.<sup>79</sup> Also, if American actions destabilize regions on which China is energy dependent, China's need for an expeditionary capability may increase.

In summary, China faces many internal and external concerns, the majority of which do not require expeditionary forces to counter. Threats to their territorial integrity, even from outside sources, are internal matters in the view of the Chinese, whose forces are currently poised to counter these dangers. The Chinese perceive the United States as their greatest threat externally, but not in a direct manner. Far more likely to require an expeditionary capability are threats to Chinese commerce from piracy, closure of shipping lanes or nationalization of their overseas investments. Risks to Chinese energy sources, with tenuous supply routes outside their

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<sup>76</sup> Philip Andrews-Speed, Xuanli Liao, and Roland Dannreuther, *The Strategic Implications of China's Energy Needs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 21, 31.

<sup>77</sup> James Kynge, *China Shakes the World: A Titan's Rise and Troubled Future--and the Challenge for America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006) 133-134, 139.

<sup>78</sup> Ebel, 41, 47-48. Phillip C. Saunders, *China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2006) 1, 2, 6, 9, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Henrich Kreft, "China's Quest for Energy," *Policy Review* (Iss. 139, Sep-Oct 2006), 63, 65; Andrews-Speed, Liao, and Dannreuther, 25; United States Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, "World Oil Transit Chokepoints, Malacca." [http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/World\\_Oil\\_Transit\\_Chokepoints/Malacca.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints/Malacca.html) (accessed 20 August 2009).

control and influence, may require the PRC to develop an expeditionary capability to secure.<sup>80</sup> Threats to Chinese citizens overseas may also prompt a need for an expedition in support of these citizens. As China strives to gain great power status, another external threat may arise – a threat to that status itself. With its rising power, China will be expected to increasingly participate in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. Failure to do so may serve as a threat to the status they seek to achieve. As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century matures, the situations that most require China to possess an expeditionary capability are those that threaten their energy supply, commerce, and burgeoning great power status.

### **Chinese Military Modernization Efforts**

The driving factor for the United States' concern with the Chinese military is their modernization efforts. A scan of library bookshelves shows a wide range of opinions on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) just by reading a few titles, from "*Harmonious World*" to *China's New Foreign Policy* and *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*.<sup>81</sup> Opinions on the subject range from China as a benevolent giant whose military changes are security driven, to a view of China striving for regional and global domination.<sup>82</sup> The People's Liberation Army is not the revolutionary army that defeated the Chinese Nationalists in 1949. Initially sparked by the PLA debacle against Vietnam in 1979 and further stimulated by observations from the 1991 Gulf War, the PRC has conducted an ongoing program of military modernization to develop a military capable of successfully responding to the security challenges it faces now and in the future.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Kreft, 64.

<sup>81</sup> Sujian Guo and Jean-Marc F. Blanchard, eds, "*Harmonious World*" and *China's New Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2008). Steven W. Mosher, *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000).

<sup>82</sup> Guo and Blanchard, 2-6, 88; Mosher, 106-116.

<sup>83</sup> David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002) 1-8.

Since 1998, China has published a biennial white paper on defense. The focus of much debate, the paper has offered varying degrees of insight into Chinese military strategy, security concerns, military spending and modernization, topics that have long garnered attention from the United States. Since 2000, the US Congress has required the Department of Defense to submit a report on the *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*.<sup>84</sup> The concern stems from China's huge investments in military spending over the last twenty years and a "lack of transparency" about this spending.<sup>85</sup> This massive increase has increased the capabilities of the People's Liberation Army in many areas.

The majority of the military modernization program undertaken by the PRC has focused on constructing a military that can protect against its fundamental concerns of national unity and security of its borders. As its external security concerns have grown, China has recognized the need to project power and influence outside its immediate waters. To this end, China has taken steps to procure equipment, implement reforms, and develop doctrine allowing it to increase its limited power projection capabilities.

## **Chinese Ground Forces – the People's Liberation Army Ground Forces**

The term People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a misnomer as it actually refers to the unified military forces of the PRC. The People's Liberation Army Ground Forces (PLAGF) are

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<sup>84</sup> Section 1202, "Annual Report on Military Power of the People's Republic of China," of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, Public Law 106-65, provides that the Secretary of Defense shall submit a report "on the current and future military strategy of the People's Republic of China. The report shall address the current and probable future course of military-technological development on the People's Liberation Army and the tenets and probable development of Chinese grand strategy, security strategy, and military strategy, and of the military organizations and operational concepts, through the next 20 years."

<sup>85</sup> United States Department of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2009). A derogatory phrase mentioning the lack of transparency into China's military spending is used eleven times in the 2009 version of this document. China's 2009 military budget was a 17.6% increase over 2008. PRC military budgets increased 1000% between 1989 and 2005. The PRC acknowledges a military budget of \$60 billion for 2009. DoD estimates place PRC spending between \$105 and \$150 billion.

the traditional ground army of the PRC. Evolved from the revolutionary army that defeated the Nationalists in 1949, in many ways the PLAGF is still a peasant army based on massive manpower. The ground forces are clearly the largest branch of the PLA, accounting for 70% of total military manpower, but have generally fallen behind the other services in terms of modernization priority.<sup>86</sup> Primarily focused on internal security concerns and border integrity, the PLAGF modernization has offered few advances in expeditionary capabilities.

Most PLAGF modernization has centered on reorganization of units and acquisition of new equipment, which theoretically could improve their capabilities to conduct expeditionary operations. In most instances, that has not been the case. Cuts of 700,000 men have significantly reduced the overall PLAGF size since 1997. In the process, many group armies and divisions have been deactivated, with some divisions reduced to smaller, better equipped brigade size units.<sup>87</sup> Focusing modernization on fewer, smaller units, the PLAGF continues to slowly upgrade their units with modern equipment.<sup>88</sup> The slow transformation of the ground forces outlines a problem that China has with its modernization efforts. Due to the sheer size of the PLA, issuing a single item of equipment can take years to distribute to the entire force.<sup>89</sup> While leaner and better

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<sup>86</sup> Stephen J. Flanagan and Michael E. Marti, eds., *The People's Liberation Army and China in Transition* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2003) 115; Roy Kamphausen, and Andrew Scobell, eds., *Right-Sizing the People's Liberation Army: Exploring the Contours of China's Military* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007) 237-238.

<sup>87</sup> Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006) 41, 75, 71-71. Each group army, division and independent brigade/regiment is assigned to one of seven different Military Regions. These regions are all organized differently geographically in accordance with their mission to defend the Chinese homeland. Each region also contains an appropriate mix of support and logistics units, as well as a regiment of Special Operations Forces. This distribution of forces to each military region is in support of the focus on maintaining territorial integrity and internal instability.

<sup>88</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 50, 60. The PLAGF has fielded several new pieces of equipment including two hundred Type 98 and Type 99 main battle tanks, a new generation amphibious assault vehicle, and new multiple launch rocket systems. However, the PRC maintains approximately seven thousand main battle tanks in its inventory, so an addition of two hundred is only enough to modernize two brigades out of an army of over forty divisions.

<sup>89</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 122. An example of the slow modernization process is that it took the PLA over five years to issue a new style

equipped for ground combat, the PLAGF are still positioned throughout Chinese territory to defend against internal threats and to protect territorial integrity.<sup>90</sup> Internally focused, the PLAGF offers no significant advances in expeditionary capability.

Another aspect of the PLAGF where slow modernization has failed to bring about additional capabilities is army aviation. Air assault operations are one of the Forcible Entry techniques, giving army aviation the potential to play an important role in expeditionary operations. However, the PLA currently maintains a force of less than 500 helicopters. While more than enough helicopters to support an expeditionary force, these assets are divided among the military regions, preventing any concentration of this force. Doctrinal modernization has also been slow, failing to develop airmobile/air assault doctrine until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, making China's ability to successfully use this scarce resource suspect.<sup>91</sup> The PLA's current equipment, training, and doctrine levels do not provide a true force insertion capability beyond small unit level, severely limiting their ability to support expeditionary operations.<sup>92</sup>

Modernization has improved the PLAGF's ability to provide internal security, but seemingly has not expanded its ability to be an expeditionary force. One area where PLAGF modernization may positively impact expeditionary capabilities is the development of amphibious divisions. The PLAGF maintains two fully mechanized divisions of Taiwan focused troops trained in amphibious operations.<sup>93</sup> More importantly, they represent the only PLAGF units

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helmet to its ground forces. When trying to field a technologically advanced piece of equipment to their entire force, the expense and difficulty increase dramatically.

<sup>90</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 75-86.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>92</sup> Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, 100.

<sup>93</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, *Chinese Military Modernization: Force Development and Strategic Capabilities* (Washington D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies Press, 2007), 133.

capable of expeditionary operations.<sup>94</sup> The major problem preventing these forces from conducting operations at distance from their shores is their current doctrine. Focused on territorial integrity, Chinese amphibious doctrine calls for a rapid loading, staging and short assault against Taiwan.<sup>95</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the amphibious divisions are unable to conduct an assault over long distances, but it does not appear to be part of their current doctrine or training.

### **Chinese Air Forces – the People’s Liberation Army Air Force**

While the PLAGF still dominates the PLA in terms of numbers, resources, and prestige, the other services are rapidly advancing.<sup>96</sup> This is especially true of the People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF). Initially formed 1949, the PLAAF has slowly evolved into a semi-modern air force. Although a large force, it has relatively few modern aircraft that could effectively support expeditionary operations.<sup>97</sup> Aviation is an integral part of expeditionary operations, but the PLAAF does not provide much in the way of expeditionary capabilities. Until a doctrinal change in 2006, the PLAAF focused on the defense of the country’s borders from external threats.<sup>98</sup> The 2006 Defense White Paper’s statement that “the Air Force aims at speeding up its transition from territorial air defense to both offensive and defensive operations, and increasing its capabilities in the areas of air strike, air and missile defense, early warning and

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<sup>94</sup> There are two primary forced entry techniques. One is through a amphibious assault. The other is through parachute or heliborne forces. PLA airborne forces, with their forced entry capability, can be considered expeditionary if they meet all the criteria. However, in the PLA, airborne forces are consolidated in the People’s Liberation Army Air Force and will be discussed as part of the PLAAF.

<sup>95</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 112.

<sup>96</sup> Flanagan and Marti, 109.

<sup>97</sup> Global Security.org., People's Liberation Army Air Force, PLAAF Equipment <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/plaaf-equip.htm> (accessed 28 August 09). DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2009*, 36. Modern aircraft are those considered fourth generation or newer.

<sup>98</sup> Kamphausen, and Scobell, 437-438.

reconnaissance, and strategic projection” changed this focus.<sup>99</sup> Regardless of this change, the PLAAF expeditionary capabilities remain extremely limited. China does maintain approximately seven hundred modern strike and fighter aircraft that could support expeditionary operations; however, other factors place limitations on the PLAAF.

Of the seven hundred modern aircraft in the PLAAF, all but one hundred of these are of Soviet/Russian design. This dependence on foreign-designed aircraft exposes a major weakness in the PLAAF – a significant lack of aerial refueling capability.<sup>100</sup> The PLAAF currently has fourteen aerial refueling tankers, based on an obsolete 1950s bomber design.<sup>101</sup> These Chinese-produced tankers can only refuel Chinese designed aircraft, which leaves their six hundred modern Soviet/Russian designed aircraft without any means of aerial refuel, extremely limiting their range.<sup>102</sup> In an effort to alleviate this problem, China negotiated with Russia to purchase four Il-78 aerial tankers that are compatible with these airframes, but Russia has yet to deliver these aircraft. Until these aircraft are delivered, China will remain unable to aerial refuel their primary ground attack aircraft and air superiority fighters.<sup>103</sup> Even the delivery of these aircraft will not immediately translate into an expeditionary capability for the PLAAF. These aircraft and tankers will be tied to mainland China unless the PRC can negotiate basing agreements, which may prove to be a difficult task as shown by the multinational SCO Peace Mission 2007 exercise

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<sup>99</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, *China’s National Defense in 2006* [http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file\\_archive/070102/afddd85e6782a64dafd3f49ea6bfb9f/2006%20White%20Paper%20on%20PRC%20National%20Defense.pdf](http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive/070102/afddd85e6782a64dafd3f49ea6bfb9f/2006%20White%20Paper%20on%20PRC%20National%20Defense.pdf) (accessed 29 August 2009).

<sup>100</sup> Global Security.org., People's Liberation Army Air Force, PLAAF Equipment. The Chinese air force currently maintains a fleet of approximately 238 SU-27/J-11 fighter aircraft, 100 J-10 fighter aircraft and approximately 350 Su-30 multi-role aircraft. The J-10 is the first indigenously produced fourth generation Chinese fighter aircraft. The Su-27 is a Russian made aircraft; the J-11 is the Chinese-made version of the Su-27.

<sup>101</sup> Cordesman and Kleiber, 147; Kamphausen, and Scobell, 445.

<sup>102</sup> Saunders and Quam, 29.

<sup>103</sup> SinoDefence.com, “Il-78 Tanker.” <http://www.sinodefence.com/airforce/airlift/il78.asp> (accessed 29 August 09).

held in Russia. Although China has stated that Kazakhstan is its main strategic partner in Central Asia and signed a strategic partnership in 2005, the Kazakhs would not allow Chinese military equipment to transit their country into Russia to participate in the exercise.<sup>104</sup> China had to rely on its military transport aircraft, another area in which it is significantly lacking.

Military transport aircraft are critical for expeditionary operations as they directly support Rapid Deployment, Forcible Entry, and Sustainment. The PLAAF currently maintains a fleet of approximately 550 transport aircraft. At first an impressive statistic, analysis quickly shows over half of these are single engine bi-planes.<sup>105</sup> Only eighty of the remaining aircraft are capable of intercontinental flight.<sup>106</sup> As part of their modernization, China is focusing on acquiring additional large, long range transports. In addition to the Il-78 tankers, China placed an order with Russia for thirty more Il-76 transports. As with the tankers, none of the transports have been delivered to date.<sup>107</sup> China's current inventory of large cargo aircraft is most likely sufficient to support small, expeditionary operations near the Chinese mainland. Unable to aerial refuel, however, these planes are limited by their range.

One of the main "customers" for these transport aircraft are the PLAAF airborne forces. The PLAAF 15<sup>th</sup> Airborne Army Group, comprised of three divisions, serves as a PLA "strategic

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<sup>104</sup> McDermott, 8-9, 12.

<sup>105</sup> Global Security.org, People's Liberation Army Air Force, PLAAF Equipment; Global Security.org, AN-2 Colt/An-3 Colt/Y-5 Colt. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/an-2.htm> (accessed 01 September 09). China maintains approximately 300 Soviet-made An-2 COLTS or their Chinese copy, the Y-5. These aircraft have a range of only a few hundred miles and can carry eight personnel.

<sup>106</sup> Global Security.org., People's Liberation Army Air Force, PLAAF Equipment; SinoDefence.com "Military Aircraft." <http://www.sinodefence.com/airforce/aircraft.asp> (accessed 01 September 09). China currently has approximately 14 Il-76 transport aircraft. The rest of their large transport aircraft are An-12/Y-8 aircraft, which are equivalent to the US Air Force C-130 transport. The remaining 125 cargo aircraft left are An-26/An-24/Y-7 intra-theater aircraft with limited payload and range.

<sup>107</sup> SinoDefence.com, "China to Renegotiate Il-76 Deal," 4 July 2008. <http://www.sinodefence.com/news/2008/news08-07-04-1.asp> (accessed 01 September 09).

reserve.”<sup>108</sup> As the airborne forces can conduct Forcible Entry and Rapid Deployment operations, the capabilities of these forces are important in an analysis of PLA expeditionary capabilities. As with other aspects of the Chinese military, the airborne forces have benefited from modernization. Since 2003, they have received a large amount of equipment specifically designed for parachute forces, including armored vehicles and parachute delivery systems for dropping heavy equipment.<sup>109</sup> However, two factors prevent these forces from being part of expeditionary operations. First, the doctrine and training for these forces is not sufficient to allow them to successfully execute sophisticated airborne operations.<sup>110</sup> As recently as 2007, China has demonstrated a limited ability to deploy its airborne forces, which they did as part of the SCO Peace Mission 2007.<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of intercontinental transport and tankers limit these forces to internal and peripheral action. Much like the rest of the PLAAF, the airborne forces have limited expeditionary capabilities.

The PLAAF has certainly benefitted from the ongoing modernization process. Due to shortcomings in their industrial base, they continue to have to rely on weapon systems imports to help grow the capabilities of their air force, slowing the modernization process. The majority of their aircraft in the PLA’s inventory are focused on China’s top two concerns of territorial integrity and border security. However, continued advances in their airborne insertion capabilities may allow these forces to participate in expeditionary operations on a limited scale.

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<sup>108</sup> Cordesman and Kleiber, 159.

<sup>109</sup> SinoDefence.com. “ZLC200 Airborne Fighting Vehicle.” <http://www.sinodefence.com/army/armour/zlc2000.asp> (accessed 02 September 09); Flanagan and Marti, 163-164. Since 2003, the PLAAF has taken delivery of the ZLC2000 airborne fighting vehicles. In 2004 the PLAAF fielded the K/STW-17 vehicle air dropping system allowing the ZLC2000 to be airdropped. PLAAF airborne forces and PLA SOF are fielding a lightweight fast-attack style vehicle, multiple light gun carriers, mobile mortar systems and a purpose built light truck capable of carrying anti-tank weapons.

<sup>110</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 160-161.

<sup>111</sup> McDermott, 14-15. During SCO Peace Mission 2007, China dropped 12 airborne combat vehicles and 120 paratroopers from a mixture of Russian and Chinese Il-76MDs.

## Chinese Naval Forces – the People’s Liberation Army Navy

China sees itself as a maritime nation. PRC President Hu Jintao himself proclaimed China as a “sea power.”<sup>112</sup> Since the mid-1980s, China has worked to develop a naval force that will allow them to transition from coastal defense to “offshore active defense.”<sup>113</sup> General Liu Huaqing, the chief of the PLAN from 1982-1987, originally developed the offshore active defense concept and designed a three stage naval development plan to allow China to fully execute this strategy.<sup>114</sup> This strategy is based on island chains of expanding distance from the mainland with the ultimate goal of possessing a navy with global reach.<sup>115</sup> Global reach with naval forces would increase Chinese expeditionary capabilities, but the PLAN lacked resources in the past to achieve this goal. This changed in 2004 with the 2004 Defense White Paper statement, “while continuing to attach importance to the building of the Army, the PLA gives priority to the building of the Navy, Air Force and Second Artillery Force.”<sup>116</sup> This increase in priority has led the PLAN to increase its capabilities, but the issue of Taiwan continues to consume resources. For the PLAN, Taiwan is both a blessing and a curse.

With the reunification of Taiwan as the foremost national security issue, a significant amount of PLAN resources have gone into developing equipment for a possible invasion of

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<sup>112</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2009*, 17.

<sup>113</sup> Flanagan and Marti, 129.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Cordesman and Kleiber, 117-118. The first phase involves the development of a navy that is capable of dominating the first of two island chains. This first chain is approximately two hundred nautical miles from the PRC coast and includes Taiwan and the Philippines. Naval developments that allow for the defense of this island chain, referred to as a *brown-water navy*, are the first stage in the naval modernization. The second island chain, which is approximately seven hundred nautical miles from the Chinese coast, requires an expanded force, a *green-water navy*, to allow for defense of the homeland. The third stage is reached once China has developed global reach with a true *blue-water* naval capacity.

<sup>116</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, *China’s National Defense in 2004*, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20041227/index.htm> (accessed 04 September 2009); Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The Second Artillery are the strategic missile forces of the PLA. They constitute a separate branch of service equal to the PLAGF, PLA AF, and PLAN.

Taiwan.<sup>117</sup> Much of the equipment and organizations developed to invade Taiwan are the types normally associate with expeditionary operations, specifically amphibious ships and marine forces. However, a closer examination reveals that these capabilities have little relevancy other than a Taiwan incursion. The PLAN currently maintains a myriad of amphibious warships capable of ferrying an estimated 12,000-15,000 ground troops and 620 armored vehicles across the straits at once.<sup>118</sup> While far short of the numbers required for an invasion of Taiwan, it is more than enough to support smaller, expeditionary operations. At first glance, the PLA Navy's amphibious ships appear to provide significant capabilities.<sup>119</sup> The fundamental flaw with the PLA's amphibious ships, however, is that they were designed specifically for an invasion of Taiwan and do not have the capabilities to effectively operate outside the South China Sea.<sup>120</sup>

In late 2007 the PLAN commissioned a new amphibious ship that may change the way the PLAN operates. The Type 071 Landing Platform Ship has been compared to the US Navy's Austin Class LPD.<sup>121</sup> The US Navy's official website describes this American class of ship as "warships that embark, transport, and land elements of a landing force for a variety of

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<sup>117</sup> Flanagan and Marti, 129.

<sup>118</sup> Cordesman and Kleiber, 124, 130-131; Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, 270. China's navy currently maintains a fleet of approximately seventy-three amphibious landing ships. This includes a varied collection of medium landing and tank landing ships as well as a more modern design landing platform ship.

<sup>119</sup> Kamphausen and Scobell, 498. The PLA Navy's newest amphibious ships have a range of up to three thousand nautical miles. As opposed to the older, flat-bow/ramp style ships, the newer generations have a destroyer-style bow. They also have helicopter flight decks and floodable sterns that can directly offload air-cushioned or amphibious vehicles. However, like the older, flat-bowed ships, these newer vessels are still specifically designed for an invasion of Taiwan.

<sup>120</sup> SinoDefense.com, "Type 072 (Yukan Class) Large Landing Ship," [http://www.sinodefence.com/navy/amphibious/type072\\_yukan.asp](http://www.sinodefence.com/navy/amphibious/type072_yukan.asp) (accessed 05 September 09). These new destroyer-style landing ships, have a much more sea-worthy, modern appearance than the traditional flat-bow ships. However, these ships were designed for speed in an effort to sprint across the Taiwan Straits under cover of darkness, gaining surprise in an invasion. They do not offer much in the way of global reach as they were not intended for power projection outside the confines of a conflict with Taiwan.

<sup>121</sup> SinoDefense.com, "Type 071 Landing Platform Ship," <http://www.sinodefence.com/navy/amphibious/type071.asp> (accessed 05 September 09).

expeditionary warfare missions.”<sup>122</sup> If the United States Navy uses these ships for expeditionary operations, the acquisition of this style ship may give the PLAN similar capabilities. With the ability to carry a battalion of troops, fifteen to twenty amphibious vehicles and supporting logistics, it is assessed that this new class of ship can operate at great distance from the Chinese mainland and project amphibious assets.<sup>123</sup> Although promising for expeditionary operations, the People’s Liberation Army Navy currently possesses only one of these vessels, clearly limiting their power projection capabilities.

In addition to transporting the PLAGF amphibious divisions during an invasion of Taiwan, these amphibious ships are also designated to transport the PLAN marines. The PLAN currently maintains approximately 10,000 marines in two combined arms brigades.<sup>124</sup> Although they have been modernizing along with the PLAGF amphibious divisions, little is known about the PLAN marine forces.<sup>125</sup> The tactical role of the PLAN marine forces remains unclear for two reasons. First, they are significantly smaller than the PLAGF’s two full amphibious divisions and are clearly the junior partner for amphibious operations.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, the PLAN marines do not possess any aviation assets and are dependent on the PLAN for all support, both logistically and tactically.<sup>127</sup> One possible use for the PLAN Marines, outside of a Taiwan invasion, is to form the base organization for expeditionary operations. If the amphibious divisions take the lead in Taiwan invasion planning, it may free the marine forces to serve in a more expeditionary role.

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<sup>122</sup> United States Department of Defense. United States Navy. Navy.mil. “US Navy Fact File: Amphibious Transport Dock – LPD.” [http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact\\_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=600&ct=4](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=600&ct=4) (accessed 05 September 09).

<sup>123</sup> SinoDefense.com, “Type 071 Landing Platform Ship.”

<sup>124</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2008*, 379.

<sup>125</sup> Kamphausen and Scobell, 311. The level of modernization of the PLAN Marines is unclear, but they have been fielded with the latest version of light amphibious tank, the Type 63A, along with the PLAGF amphibious divisions. Approximately 150 tanks are split between the two marine brigades and an additional 400 fielded to the two PLAGF amphibious divisions.

<sup>126</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 151.

<sup>127</sup> Cordesman and Kleiber, 133-134.

Unknowns surrounding current doctrine and training make this an unsubstantiated hypothesis.<sup>128</sup> However, as a part of the PLA Navy, they may possess significant capabilities in support of expeditionary operations and force projection.

The ultimate symbol of power projection is the aircraft carrier. China's ambition to build an aircraft carrier has been widely debated since the late 1980s when China began purchasing decommissioned carriers from various countries.<sup>129</sup> American interest into China's aircraft carrier ambitions is sufficient that it warrants an entire page in the 2009 *Report to Congress*.<sup>130</sup> Most of the speculation ended on December 23, 2008 when a Chinese Ministry of National Defense spokesman stated that China would "seriously consider" building aircraft carriers. Eight days later, a Japanese newspaper, *The Asahi Shimbun*, reported that China would begin construction of two aircraft carriers in 2009.<sup>131</sup> This statement, coupled with China's ongoing negotiations to purchase fifty Su-33 carrier-borne multi-role fighters from Russia, implies that China is actively pursuing the commissioning of a carrier.<sup>132</sup> The Japanese newspaper stated that China will have a carrier in service around 2015, which puts into question how the procurement

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<sup>128</sup> The formation of amphibious divisions by the PLA makes it clear they understand the large amount of forces necessary to invade Taiwan. Estimates range from 1 to 1.5 million men necessary for this action. Two brigades of marines are not likely to make a large difference in an invasion of this size. However, if doctrinal and training changes were to take place, these two brigades, along with the latest variant of amphibious warship, might give the PLA capabilities more closely associated with expeditionary operations. A detailed analysis of PLAN marine doctrine, organization, and capabilities is outside the scope of this monograph and warrants further research.

<sup>129</sup> Global Security.org., China's Aircraft Carrier Ambitions. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2004/art6-w04.htm> (accessed 30 September 2009). In 1985, the PRC purchased the *HMAS Melbourne* from Australia. It was scrapped after extensive study. In the late 1990s, the incomplete *Varyag* was purchased from Ukraine. Multiple rumors as to the purpose of this vessel exist. Some analysts feel it is to serve as a training vessel for future aircraft carrier crews. Other analysts have this vessel being refurbished for commissioning. Also in the late 1990s, China purchased the *Minsk* and *Kiev* from Russia. These have been turned into a museum and theme park respectively.

<sup>130</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 40.

<sup>131</sup> Minemura, Kenji, "China to start construction of 1<sup>st</sup> carriers next year," *The Asahi Shimbun*. December 31, 2008, <http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200812310046.html> (accessed March 22, 2009),

<sup>132</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 40.

of these carriers will affect the PLA's expeditionary capabilities. It is important to remember that an aircraft carrier is not an end, but rather a means. The end that China is working towards is possessing air power at sea or abroad.<sup>133</sup> An aircraft carrier would provide aviation support to expeditionary operations. The construction of a carrier may be what finally gives the PLA the ability to conduct expeditionary operations, provided it is properly integrated into joint operations.

### **Joint Operations – An Evolutionary Process**

The PLA is traveling a long, slow path toward fully joint operations. Historically, the services all fought independently without integrating their operations. The Chinese excursion into Vietnam in 1979, fought exclusively by ground forces, taught the PRC that it must integrate its military services to be successful.<sup>134</sup> PRC analysis of the Gulf War and the US campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq further reinforced this belief. The 2008 Defense White Paper clearly states that the “PLA gives priority to developing informationized weapons and equipment which can meet the requirements of integrated joint operations.”<sup>135</sup> The 2009 *Report to Congress* states that since 1985, “the evolution toward joint operations has been marked by three distinct conceptual phases: Collaborative Joint Operations, Coordinated Joint Operations, and Integrated Joint Operations.”<sup>136</sup> While this third phase has yet to be formally defined and has not been realized, the PLA is making advances in their conduct of joint operations.

In an effort to improve joint operations, the PLA has successively increased the size and scope of their joint training exercises. In 2001, they conducted an amphibious exercise that

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<sup>133</sup> Susan M. Puska, ed., *People's Liberation Army After Next* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000) 307.

<sup>134</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 146-147.

<sup>135</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, *China's National Defense in 2008*, 15.

<sup>136</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 15.

included 100,000 troops from three branches of service.<sup>137</sup> The overall success of this exercise is unknown, but its conduct alone is proof that the Chinese military is experimenting with ways to better integrate their joint force capabilities. The PLA continues to conduct joint exercises in an effort to improve.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, China is modernizing many of its command and control systems with heavy investments in Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems to better integrate their services. The PLA is also developing new joint doctrine with a focus on intelligence acquisition, joint command and control, and joint logistics. While the PLA is making improvements, its joint integration still lags behind western militaries.<sup>139</sup>

The PLA currently has no standing joint headquarters capable of rapidly integrating separate services into a coherent fighting force. More importantly, many PLA commanders have little experience in or training for joint operations.<sup>140</sup> The PLA was able to successfully establish two joint headquarters to coordinate disaster relief missions in 2008, but these headquarters were created from other units. The PLA undoubtedly learned from these two experiences, but without a joint headquarters that is organized and trains together on a regular basis, the PLA will continue to execute ad hoc joint operations.

## **Logistics – The General Logistics Division**

Logistics have long been a weakness in the People's Liberation Army.<sup>141</sup> Logistics failures caused a PLA defeat by Nationalist forces in 1949 and China was simply unable to

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<sup>137</sup> Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 152.

<sup>138</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 15.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 26, VIII.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>141</sup> Cordesman and Kleiber, 108.

sustain its forces in neighboring Vietnam in 1979.<sup>142</sup> The General Logistics Department (GLD) performs all aspects normally associated with sustainment of forces: food, fuel, uniforms, shelter, and general supply.<sup>143</sup> Like the rest of the PLA, the GLD is undergoing modernization.

Although responsible for sustainment of forces both internally and externally, the majority of the reforms since 1998 have focused on internal systems. These systems, based on interior lines, include unit farms and PLA-supervised factories.<sup>144</sup> Although the GLD has improved command and control, standardized warehouse systems and integrated automated systems, the PLA is still dependent on civilians, militia, and the People's Armed Police (PAP) to provide logistical support to PLA units.<sup>145</sup> Attempting to move to a mobile logistical system, it is still dependent on fixed site logistics depots.<sup>146</sup> Greatly improved since 1998, logistics are still fundamentally flawed.

The PLA has difficulty providing sustainment to its forces internally, which was evident in the response to the May 2008 earthquake in the Sichuan region, when the PLA struggled to provide support to the troops deployed to support disaster relief.<sup>147</sup> The PLA lacks the ability to maintain a large force when sea or air lift is required. The majority of GLD reforms, like much of

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<sup>142</sup> Wendell Minnick, "China Reforms to Support Distant Operations" *Defense News*, (May 26, 2008), <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3555295> (accessed March 20, 2009)

<sup>143</sup> Dennis J. Blasko, "Chinese Military Logistics: The GLD System," *The China Brief*, Vol. 4, Iss. 19, (September 2005) [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=3678](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=3678) (accessed March 20, 2009); SinoDefence.com, "PLA General Armament Department," <http://www.sinodefence.com/overview/organisation/gad.asp> (accessed 08 September 09). The PLA has two main logistics departments. The General Logistics Department (GLD) performs all aspects normally associated with logistics: food, fuel, uniforms, shelter, and general supply. The General Armaments Department (GAD) focuses on weapon system design, development, production, procurement, maintenance, and the life-cycle management for all PLA services. Decisions made by the GAD affect Chinese capabilities as they drive weapons procurement, but the GLD is responsible for force sustainment.

<sup>144</sup> Blasko, "Chinese Military Logistics: The GLD System."

<sup>145</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 38; Blasko, "Chinese Military Logistics: The GLD System."

<sup>146</sup> Puska, 58.

<sup>147</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 47. The PLA logistics system was unable to provide the necessary equipment and supplies to the 139,000 eventually deployed to the region.

the modernization program, are internally oriented and not focused on the force projection.

Unable to support troops deployed internally, the PRC faces even greater challenges if attempting force projection logistics.

The projection of logistics to support expeditionary operations is still lacking in the PLA. Expeditionary operations must be supported via air or sea. The small number of transport aircraft and lack of air refueling capabilities leaves China at the mercy of its sea resupply capabilities. In this area, China has made limited improvements, commissioning several new ships to support distant operations.<sup>148</sup> Even with these additions, the PLA's transport and sustainment capabilities over extended lines remain insufficient at best.<sup>149</sup> Peace Mission 2007 did provide a limited test for long-range deployments, but only on a small scale.<sup>150</sup> Held in Russia, this exercise fits the interior lines model in which the PLA is much more prepared to utilize. Without stressing the system, it provided a small test-bed from which to harvest lessons, but little else. Until the PLA improves its air and sea lift capabilities and integrates them together with a computerized control system, the PLA logistics system will be unable to support expeditionary operations.<sup>151</sup>

## **Expeditionary Operations Case Studies**

The best way to determine The People's Liberation Army's ability to conduct expeditionary operations is to analyze possible PRC reactions to security threats. These security threats must be ones that require an expeditionary military response. By applying the definition

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<sup>148</sup> Taylor M. Fravel, "China's Search for Military Power," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol 31, no. 3 (Summer 2008) 135; DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 49. China has recently commissioned two multiproduct replenishment ships capable of providing fuel, water, ammunition, and other supplies to PLAN naval vessels. In October 2008, China launched a 10,000 ton hospital ship capable of supporting expeditionary operations and humanitarian relief.

<sup>149</sup> Blasko, "Chinese Military Logistics: The GLD System."

<sup>150</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 55.

<sup>151</sup> Minnick, "China Reforms to Support Distant Operations."

and characteristics of expeditionary capabilities established in this study, it is possible to determine if China possesses expeditionary capabilities.

## **Case Study 1 – Threat to Foreign Interests**

The PRC has greatly increased its foreign investments over the last decade. Nowhere is this more evident than in Africa where China has heavily invested in oil infrastructure to secure its energy sources, a primary external security concern. China has invested over \$9 billion in oil infrastructure in Sudan, which provides 20% of China's African petroleum imports.<sup>152</sup> These investments, along with arms sales, are the only real influence China currently has over Sudan. If the Sudanese government nationalized the oil industry, the PLA's extremely limited force projection capabilities would prevent them from influencing Sudan militarily.<sup>153</sup> The PLA would not be able to achieve any of the four core criteria due to major equipment deficiencies.<sup>154</sup>

With continued modernization, Chinese capabilities to intervene will be greater in a decade than in the present. However, assuming modernization continues at its current pace, the PLA would still fall short of the necessary capabilities for expeditionary operations on the scale required. An operation of this scale requires an impressive Tailored Force. The PLA has more than enough ground forces for a ground combat element. Troops from the 15<sup>th</sup> Airborne Army, the PLAGF amphibious divisions, the PLAN marines, or a combination of these forces could

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<sup>152</sup> Gwen Thompkins, npr.org., "Chinese Influence in Sudan is Subtle, Complicated," 29 July 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92282540> (accessed 20 September 2009); Rogers, 25.

<sup>153</sup> Peter S. Goodman, "China invests Heavily in Sudan's Oil Industry," *The Washington Post* (December 23, 2004) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A21143-2004Dec22.html> (accessed 20 September 2009); Rogers, 25. The majority of Sudanese oil fields are approximately 1,000 miles from the Red Sea coast. 4,000 Chinese soldiers guard the oil fields and the 10,000 Chinese workers in the Sudan, but guarding the 1,000 miles of pipeline and the loading facilities on the Red Sea coast would easily consume a divisions worth of manpower.

<sup>154</sup> The PLA currently does not possess enough transport aircraft, aerial refueling tankers, and amphibious assault ships to physically transport a force large enough to conduct an operation to re-secure their oil assets.

provide the approximately division-sized ground force necessary. Assuming the PRC commissions an aircraft carrier in the next five years, this vessel could serve as the aviation element in the Tailored Force. While the PLA should be able to field a ground and aviation element, without improvements by 2019, it will still struggle to produce a command element and a service support element. Unless the PLA organizes a standing joint force headquarters, trained and prepared to deploy, the force lacks a competent command element. Likewise, the PLA must dramatically improve its logistics in order to supply a combat service support element robust enough to support an expeditionary force. As China struggles to field this Tailored Force, it has to determine how to deploy this force.

The PLA will struggle to get a force of this size to the African continent. Projected improvements by 2019 simply will not provide enough adequate transport and amphibious assault shipping to conduct a Rapid Transport of this expeditionary force. Anticipated improvements in air transport could provide assistance with Rapid Deployment, but aircraft range will continue to be a limiting factor.<sup>155</sup> Not only does this force need the ability to deploy rapidly, it will also need the ability to conduct a Forcible Entry. Without a viable intermediate staging base from which to project combat power and a non-permissive environment, the Rapid Deployment methods must also be capable of Forcible Entry. The same inadequate level of equipment that makes the PLA unable to conduct Rapid Deployment also makes it unable to conduct a Forcible Entry. China's insufficient advances in both Rapid Deployment and Forcible Entry abilities by 2019 make their ability to achieve these criteria suspect.

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<sup>155</sup> SinoDefense.com, "Type 071 Landing Platform Ship." Global Security.org., IL-76 Candid/IL-78 Midas Specifications, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/il-76-specs.htm> (accessed 20 September 09). The PLA currently has one Type 071 Landing Platform Ship, their only ship capable of expeditionary operations. It took more than three years to build this ship. At the current rate of construction they will only have four to five of these ships in 2019. This is not enough to transport a single PLAN marine brigade. If the purchase of IL-76 and IL-78 aircraft from Russia is completed, the PLA AF will have more than enough aircraft to transport an airborne brigade along with their equipment. However, the range of the aircraft will not be sufficient for a round trip without refueling. Basing agreements for forward stationing of tanker aircraft are necessary for an airborne insertion.

Even if the PLA were able to organize this force, rapidly project it to the African continent, and forcibly gain access to Sudan, it must prove its competency in Sustainment for expeditionary operations to be successful. Even with the estimated improvements the PLA will achieve by 2019, the PLA would have great difficulty in supporting an expeditionary force of this size. Even with the improvement to PLAN logistical capabilities, the PLA still falls short of current and anticipated future needs.<sup>156</sup>

If China were to attempt this operation in 2019, it would be greatly challenged to successfully accomplish any of the four core criteria for expeditionary operations. The PLA of 2019 might be able to tailor an appropriate force, but slow anticipated gains in strategic mobility assets will continue to prevent the force from both deploying rapidly and conducting forced entry into Sudan. Expected gains in logistics will be insufficient to support this operation. An attempt to conduct this operation, while failing to meet the four core criteria, will almost assuredly cause a failure in attaining Prestige. An attempt that results in failure will cast doubts on Chinese military competency and cause a loss of the respect that China has struggled to gain throughout the world. If the PLA's modernization can continue past 2019, improvements might give them the capability to execute a mission of this nature. There are many variables that will affect this. If China's economic growth, acquisition of military hardware, reorganization and training of military forces continue, it is plausible that by 2029 the People's Republic of China could gain an expeditionary capability great enough to execute a mission of this magnitude.

## **Case Study 2 – Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief**

While China may not have the ability to conduct large-scale, expeditionary operations in the near future, it may find it has enough capacity for other operations. In an effort to increase its

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<sup>156</sup> Fravel, 135; DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 49.

Prestige in the world and protect its growing status as a great power, the PRC will gradually look for opportunities to participate in humanitarian endeavors designed to increase its international standing. China's past reluctance to participate in these missions was due primarily from concern that their participation would expose weaknesses in their capabilities.<sup>157</sup> If a natural disaster on the scale of the 2004 tsunami occurred today, the inadequate PLA logistics system would limit their response. However, in 2019, China's ability to contribute will increase significantly as the PRC continues on its modernization path.

If the events of December 2004 were to occur in December 2019, China could take a very different role. As nations pledge financial and materiel support, the PRC could announce in the United Nations that it is prepared to take the lead in relief efforts. Within seventy-two hours China has repositioned a destroyer patrolling the Straits of Malacca off the Indonesian coast. Once the ship is in place, a pathfinder company from the 15<sup>th</sup> Airborne Army is inserted into the disaster area to conduct initial assessment.<sup>158</sup> The distance from this force's location in northern China exceeds the range of the recently acquired Il-76MD transport aircraft, necessitating aerial refueling utilizing Il-78 tankers shifted to operate out of Thailand in support of relief efforts. Utilizing the destroyer as a headquarters to relay information through joint communications, initial requirements are transmitted to mainland China.

As these initial assessments were being relayed to the PLA leadership, the new Chinese aircraft carrier, the *Mao Tse-tung*, prepares to sail after loading additional rotary wing aircraft to

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<sup>157</sup> Drew Thompson, "International Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance: A Future Role for the PLA?" *The China Brief*, Vol. 8, Iss. 11, 6 June 2008. [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=4941&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4941&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=168&no_cache=1) (accessed 14 September 2009).

<sup>158</sup> Wu Qi, "Soldiers come to quake victims' rescue," ChinaView.com (27 May 2008). [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/27/content\\_8263888.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-05/27/content_8263888.htm) (accessed 14 September 20). During the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, the PRC ordered over 100,000 troops, including the 15<sup>th</sup> Airborne Army to the province to assist in disaster relief. Initially planned as an air insertion, the PLAAF pathfinders conducted freefall into the epicenter to determine suitability for a mass drop, establish initial relief sites and prepare for the remainder of the force to arrive.

support relief efforts. Recently returned from a short deployment through the western Pacific, it is still combat loaded and prepared for deployment. Within ten days, the *Mao* weighs anchor and conducts link-up with two of China's four Type 071 landing platform ships (LPD) carrying a battalion of PLAN marine infantry and a battalion of PLAGF engineers. These ships, reconfigured to carry engineer construction equipment, are accompanied by a PLAN hospital ship. Also linking up with the flotilla are two PLAN resupply ships diverted from support of amphibious operations training in the South China Sea.

As this force approaches the western coast of Indonesia, command and control of the operation is transferred to the *Mao* as it finalizes plans to insert the marines onto the beaches utilizing air-cushioned vehicles and transport helicopters from the LPDs. These forces have two main missions once they establish a beachhead. The first is to conduct link-up with the pathfinder forces, which have been resupplied via airdrop from the mainland. The second task is to conduct repairs on existing runways to allow transport aircraft from the PRC to directly fly relief supplies into Indonesia. Utilizing four to six Il-76s, the PLAAF is able to steadily flow relief supplies into the most affected areas of Indonesia. Although the command and control capabilities of the force are stressed, the PLA is able to provide support at the same levels the United States was able to provide during the 2004 tsunami relief efforts.<sup>159</sup>

This future scenario, while currently fiction, is possible when the evaluation criteria are applied to the PLA given the modernization trends they have displayed. The PLAAF and PLAN of 2019 will be able to conduct Rapid Deployment operations on the scale in this scenario. The delivery of thirty additional Russian made cargo aircraft will provide sufficient lift capabilities for both a limited airborne insertion and flow of relief supplies. Due to the ranges involved, tanker

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<sup>159</sup> United States Department of Defense, United States Pacific Command, "DoD Relief Efforts Factsheet Summary," 14 February 2005. <http://www.pacom.mil/special/0412asia/factsheet.html> (accessed 12 September 2009). Utilizing a carrier strike group, an expeditionary strike group, multiple surface support ships, including a hospital ship, and 5 heavy and medium lift cargo aircraft, the US military was able to deliver 12,000 tons of relief supplies and treat over 2,000 patients in less than six weeks.

aircraft will be necessary to make these round trip flights. Temporary basing agreements in Thailand, Cambodia or Singapore should not be difficult to arrange given the nature of the mission. The continued fielding of modern amphibious ships will make Rapid Deployment of PLAN marines a reality.

In this scenario, a Forcible Entry was unnecessary. Yet, the infrastructure damage created a semi-permissive environment. This necessitated the use of airborne and amphibious insertions, both of which are forced entry techniques. The continued commissioning of modern LPDs will allow the PLAN to insert and support multiple battalions of marines through various means at distances of up to 3,000 miles. With the procurement of additional airframes, both cargo and refueling tanker, the PLAAF will be able to insert airborne forces into this region. The units used as part of the forced entry are just part of the Tailored Force that the PLA assembled for this mission, a mixture of PLAAF, PLAN, and PLAGF forces. Not just a standard force package, it is specifically designed for support of humanitarian relief efforts. Additional engineer and aviation assets were vital to enable Sustainment of both the expeditionary force and the relief efforts. The increase in strategic lift air assets allow sufficient airframes to be committed to this mission, facilitating a steady flow of supplies. China's current fleet of naval support vessels is sufficient to support this mission. Continuing to add to this capability will not only support a future mission of this magnitude, but allow for multiple, simultaneous missions.

As an emerging world power, China chose this opportunity to show the world its capabilities. On its current glide path, the PLA will possess the equipment and capabilities to conduct this mission by 2019. The one unknown is how well they can execute it. This scenario assumes that China has continued to develop and train joint concepts and methods. Given another ten years to train and refine integration of joint operations it can be assumed they will achieve a respectable level of proficiency. With the successful execution of this operation, the PRC gains a significant amount of honor for its humanitarian acts and respect for its growing military capabilities, increasing its Prestige in the world.

## Conclusion

China's economic growth has continued, even in difficult financial conditions, providing the PRC with increased means to counter threats to their security.<sup>160</sup> Territorial integrity and national unity have long dominated Chinese security interests, as they seek to protect themselves from internal and regional threats. The People's Liberation Army was specifically designed and postured to protect these national interests. The remarkable growth in the Chinese economy has allowed for modernization within the Chinese armed forces, slowly transforming the PLA into a modern force capable of defending the Chinese mainland. However, the very same economic growth that has allowed for military modernization has also added external threats to Chinese stability that the PLA must now be capable of addressing.

China's continued growth depends heavily on natural resources, specifically energy, that exceed internal resource assets. Unable to internally resource the energy demands that fuel economic growth, China has found it necessary to look outside its borders for natural resources. Without these resources, China's growth will stagnate. While China has been successful in securing its current resource requirements, this external supply has created a new security threat. Increasingly dependent on extended supply and trade routes to maintain its economy, China has created a situation in which it can no longer militarily safeguard its external interests. The PLA simply does not have the expeditionary capabilities to defend China's interests outside its borders. While it does have some small capacity, the current rate of modernization indicates that it will be several decades before China can undertake large expeditionary operations.

China's growing economy and military modernization has also led to a second concern for the PRC. Although unable to militarily secure access to resources, China's growing status as a world power will place additional demands upon its military. Unable to fully execute

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<sup>160</sup> Andrew Batson, "China Rises on Power of Stimulus," *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2009. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124768125855446621.html> (accessed 12 October 2009).

expeditionary operations, the PRC must find opportunities to conduct military and humanitarian operations of increasing complexity to protect their Prestige around the world. As a great power, China will be expected to contribute to peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. In the past, China has used its policy of non-interference into the internal affairs of other nations as its premise for non-participation in peacekeeping missions.<sup>161</sup> However, since 2002, China has increased its participation in these activities, a sign that it recognizes it must do so if it is to cultivate great power status and increase its Prestige in the world. The PRC must be cautious as it participates in these activities. The same weaknesses that currently prevent it from expeditionary operations also limit its ability to conduct peacekeeping and other missions. A poor performance in these types of operations will hurt China's Prestige, which may be the deciding factor in its involvement in external affairs. China must continue to improve its military through modernization as it has global interests, but is not yet capable of expeditionary operations.

China must continue to improve its force projection capabilities, but must also walk a fine line in doing so. To conduct expeditionary operations to secure its energy and resources, the PLA will continue to add new equipment and capabilities. However, these increases come at a price. Most of the equipment required for expeditionary operations can, and probably will be viewed as a threat to Taiwan.<sup>162</sup> The more of this equipment China procures to secure itself against external threats, the more the United States may view it with suspicion. In an attempt to provide for its security, China may actually bring itself into conflict with the United States. China's expeditionary capabilities must continue for its own security and global interests, but the

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<sup>161</sup> DoD, *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, 56.

<sup>162</sup> SinoDefense.com, "Type 071 Landing Platform Ship." The Type 071 LPD, especially after the commissioning of an aircraft carrier, will be able to launch attacks against Taiwan's weakly defended eastern coast. As the PLAN increases its inventory of these ships, it will continually increase the tension between Taiwan and the mainland.

PRC must remain cognizant of the possibility of creating new security challenges through its growth.

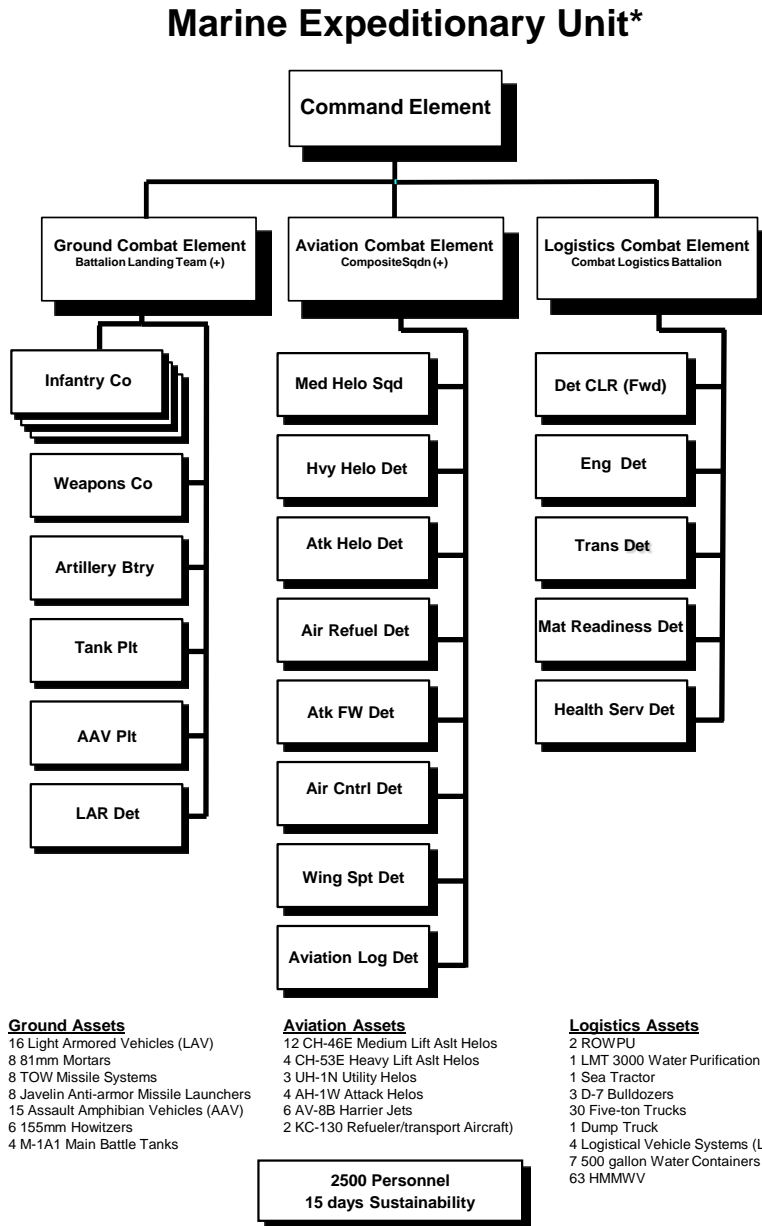
## APPENDIX 1: US Marine Corps Requirements for Successful Expeditionary Operations

- **Expeditionary Mindset.** Expeditionary Marine forces must establish and maintain an expeditionary mindset—an expeditionary culture—devoted to readiness and the mental agility and adaptability to accommodate changing conditions and accomplish rapidly changing missions with the forces and capabilities at hand.
- **Tailored Forces.** Marine forces are task-organized into MAGTFs to conduct expeditionary operations. MAGTFs are designed to accomplish the mission assigned and do not include forces or capabilities not required by the mission. Therefore, those forces needed to do the job—and only those forces—are employed.
- **Forward Deployment.** The presence of forward-deployed MAGTFs close to the crisis or objective area can expedite accomplishing the mission. They allow for a real deterrence, as the threat of employment is imminent and credible. Forward-deployed MAGTFs also can serve as a precursor to larger follow-on forces.
- **Rapid Deployment.** Expeditionary forces must be able to get to the crisis or AO quickly with all their capabilities ready to be employed. MAGTFs can rapidly deploy using airlift, sealift or movement or maneuver from a forward expeditionary site. Marines are always prepared to deploy anywhere in the world.
- **Expeditionary Basing.** Marines are prepared to take advantage of any opportunity to use expeditionary basing or sites to support rapid deployment and employment within the AO. Amphibious shipping, forward expeditionary sites, and intermediate staging bases are all methods the MAGTFs can employ to ensure the rapid buildup and effective employment of combat power.
- **Forcible Entry.** Expeditionary forces must be able to gain access to the AO despite the efforts of the enemy to prevent it. While Marines strive to avoid enemy strengths and take advantage of the enemy's weakness, MAGTFs must be prepared to defeat the enemy to allow follow-on operations. Marines are highly trained in forcible entry techniques such as amphibious assaults and helicopterborne (air assault) operations. Marines also train with allied, multinational, and joint forces such as United Kingdom Royal Marines, Republic of Korea Marines, and United States Army airborne forces.
- **Sustainment.** Expeditionary operations are often conducted in austere theaters or undeveloped areas of the world. Forces must be able to sustain their operations, providing the essential supplies and services necessary to keep the force manned and equipped to accomplish the mission. MAGTFs are well-suited to operate in these conditions as MAGTFs bring robust logistic and combat service support to the operation. Sea-basing, expeditionary sites, and the use of pre-positioned supplies and equipment assist in sustaining the force.<sup>163</sup>

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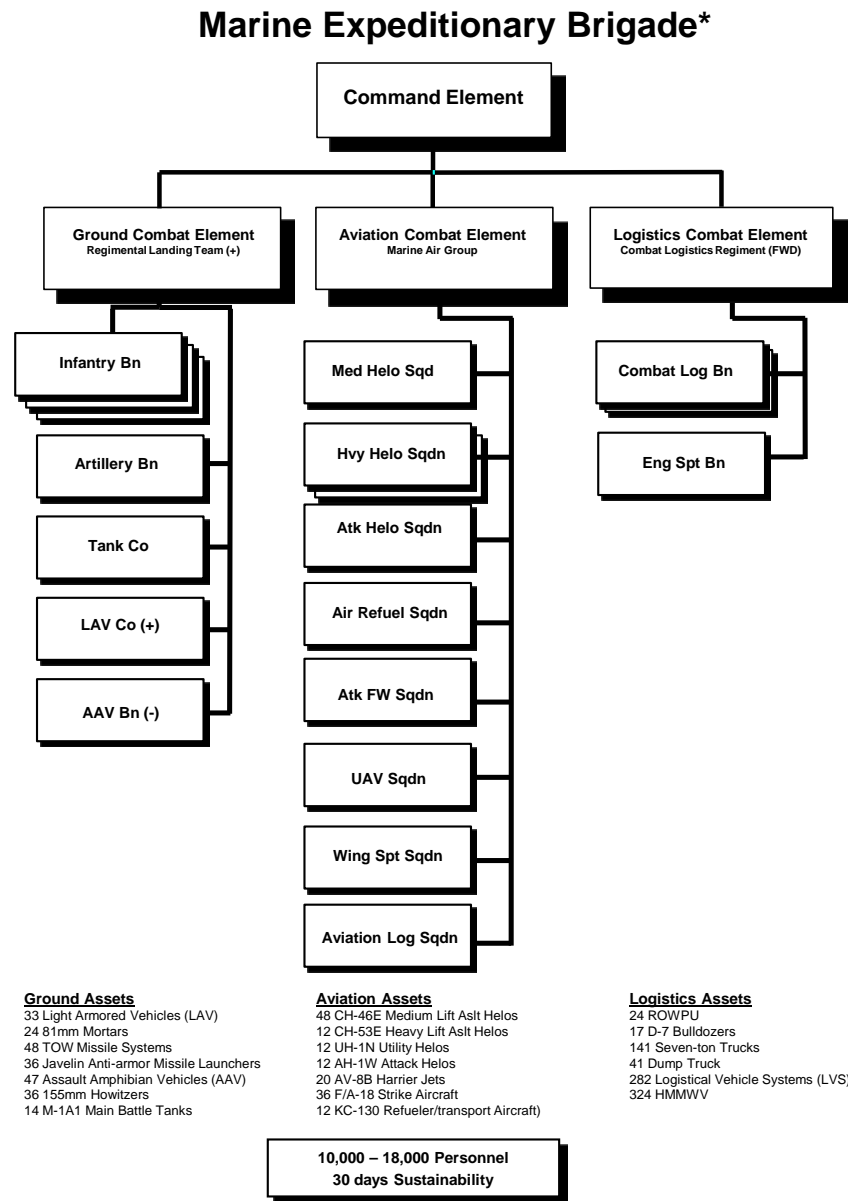
<sup>163</sup> DoD, *USMC DP1-0: Marine Corps Operations*, 2-4-2-5.

## APPENDIX 2: Organization and Structure of a Standard Marine Expeditionary Unit



\* United States Department of Defense, United States Marine Corps Detachment, US Army Command and General Staff College, "United States Marine Corps Service Roles, Functions, Capabilities, and Limitations" 17 July 2007.

# APPENDIX 3: Organization and Structure of a Standard Marine Expeditionary Brigade



\* United States Department of Defense, United States Marine Corps Detachment, US Army Command and General Staff College, “United States Marine Corps Service Roles, Functions, Capabilities, and Limitations” 17 July 2007.

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