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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES: TIME FOR CHANGE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: China and the United States: Time for Change.

Author: Major John M. Diaz, United States Marine Corps.

Thesis: The US can be influential in fostering a peaceful China by building strategic trust, and assisting diplomatically with the territorial disputes in Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Through its military presence in the Asia – Pacific region, the US can support diplomacy through positive and responsible interaction with the PLA.

Discussion: The growth of the Chinese military, along with the economic power that China has amassed in the last 20 years instills fear in the Asia – Pacific and throughout the world. This threat perception is mainly due to the lack of knowledge over China's expanding military, as well as the reason it seeks to project power beyond its shores. This essay draws on many sources to show the capabilities – in force projection – that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) currently has, and the economic, diplomatic, and informational impact that the People's Republic of China (PRC) has had on the US and its Asia – Pacific neighbors. This essay is divided into three parts. Part I of this paper will focus on analysis of the PRC's 2010 Defense White Paper as well as the Office of the Secret Defense (OSD) Report to Congress: *Military and Security Developments involving the People's Republic of China 2011*. Part II will highlight the PRC instruments of national power through DIME; because of the interconnectedness of diplomacy and economics they will be discussed together followed by military and information. Part III will recommend future engagement strategies between the US and PRC.

This analysis will focus on the elements of national power of the PRC – diplomacy, information, military, and economic (DIME). This paper will argue that the sources of instability within the Asia – Pacific region are the growth of the PLA into a regional force that can project power beyond its borders, tension between China and Taiwan, and Southeast Asia territorial issues. The US can be influential in fostering a peaceful China by assisting diplomatically with the territorial disputes in Southeast Asia, and adjusting policy on Taiwan. Through its military presence in the Asia – Pacific region, the US can support diplomacy through positive and responsible interaction with the PLA.

Conclusion: The US must foster a relationship with China that is characterized by positive diplomacy and military cooperation. Diplomacy and cooperation must include strategic trust, maintaining communication despite political disagreements, and focusing on commonalities of PRC and US core issues. The PRC must be clear in its strategic intentions and show that it is willing to work with neighboring countries by diffusing territorial issues and continuing strong economic cooperation within the region. The US must also be clear in strategic intentions in order to foster the positive growth of China.

Table of Contents

DISCLAIMER..... i

PREFACE..... ii

INTRODUCTION..... 1

PART I: ANALYSIS OF THE PRC’S 2010 DEFENSE WHITE PAPER 3

PART II: CHINA DIME

 Diplomacy and Economics..... 6

 Information..... 9

 Military..... 12

PART III: UNITED STATES AND CHINA ENGAGEMENT..... 14

CONCLUSION..... 18

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 25

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Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a one party system governed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As Mao Zedong wrote, "Every Communist must grasp the truth, 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.' Our Principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."¹ The CCP controls the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The PLA coupled with the booming Chinese economy are the PRC's main sources of power. Modern day China has the largest standing military and the second most powerful economy; their focus is expanding their military capabilities. The United States (US) military is second in size to China, but surpasses the PLA in military technology and experience. Worldwide, the US is the most powerful economy and the most influential country in foreign policy. The problem that arises, for the US and the global community, is developing an approach to deal with the strategic growth and modernization of the PLA. The framing of the problem is not merely a military one, but includes other instruments of national power.

From the US perspective, China must grow responsibly as a world power.² Human rights, economic world ethics, and military transparency are merely a few of the issues that China must improve upon. China, on the other hand, can make assertions that the US must accept that the CCP can remain intact without affecting trade and the economic success that China offers to the world. The situation can also be looked at from the perspective of third party nations that may conclude that the US and China are actually very similar, and that they have a responsibility to interact positively due to global impact.

Modern day China is significantly influenced by its relationship with the United States. From the late 1960's until the end of the cold war, the relationship between the US and China

was aimed at their common enemy, the Soviet Union. China experienced border clashes such as Zhenbao Island³ in 1969 and ultimately feared a Soviet invasion. Similarly, as the cold war progressed, the United States feared expansion of communism, and specifically, the prospect of military action by the Soviet Union. After the Sino – Soviet split⁴ in 1969, the US fostered a relationship with China to deter and defeat the Soviet Union. Economically, that relationship continues today, one that is beneficial to both nations, but due to regional issues, the two nations consider each other a threat.

The US must foster a relationship with China that is characterized by positive diplomacy, military cooperation, and strategic trust. This argument will illustrate the PRC's current strategic military transformation and modernization. It will also analyze diplomatic relations and their impact on current US – Sino relations and Asia – Pacific regional issues. This paper will apply the Instruments of National Power, diplomacy, information, military, and economic (DIME) to analyze potential approaches for the US to engage China. This paper will argue that the sources of instability within the Asia – Pacific region are the growth of the PLA into a regional force that can project power beyond its borders, tension between China and Taiwan, and Southeast Asia territorial issues.

As world powers, China and the US will naturally compete, but that competition can be positive or negative. Sino – US relations can lead to conflict if territorial disputes in Southeast Asia continue, and if China and Taiwan go to war over Taiwan's political status. This is not to state that military conflict between the US and China is inevitable, rather that the cause for tension is already there. Managing of this tension will depend on the military and diplomatic actions taken by the US and PRC. The US can be influential in fostering a peaceful China by building strategic trust, and assisting diplomatically with the territorial disputes in Southeast Asia

and Taiwan. Through its military presence in the Asia – Pacific region, the US can support diplomacy through positive and responsible interaction with the PLA.

Part I of this paper will focus on analysis of the PRC's 2010 Defense White Paper as well as the Office of the Secret Defense (OSD) Report to Congress: *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2011*. Part II will highlight the PRC instruments of national power through DIME; because of the interconnectedness of diplomacy and economics they will be discussed together followed by military and information. Part III will recommend future engagement strategies for US and China.

Part I: Analysis of the PRCs 2010 Defense White Papers

China's national defense goals are outlined in their 2010 Defense White Papers⁵ as the following: safeguarding national sovereignty, security and interest of national development; maintaining social harmony and stability; accelerating the modernization of national defense and the armed forces; and maintaining world peace and stability. The White Papers also reiterate China's historic policy of active defense, it will not attack unless attacked, but will take offensive action in defense of perceived aggression or challenge of sovereignty.⁶ The PRC also maintains a "no first use policy" – it will not use nuclear weapons first. Analysis of the White Papers suggests that relations with the US are portrayed with concern, but cross-strait relations with Taiwan have improved.⁷

The OSD defense report states that by 2020 China will likely be able to project and sustain a modest sized force (several battalions or a naval flotilla of up to a dozen ships) in low-intensity operations far from the mainland.⁸ Although cross-strait tensions have subsided recently, given this assessment, the PLA may realistically have the capability to sustain high-

intensity combat operations within Taiwan. Currently the PRC states that their strategy remains that of Deng Xiaoping, which is China's interest are served by focusing on internal development and stability while avoiding conflict and antagonism with major powers.⁹ As China becomes a major power, debate among Western military and civilian theorists is whether the increase in capability of the PLA's power projection is in order to protect China's interests or to become a hegemon in the Asia – Pacific.¹⁰

China's focus on power projection and its goal of Taiwan unification are evident.¹¹ The combination of these two is of deep concern to the US. Given that China and the US have both reported that cross-strait tensions have improved, the fact remains that China still sees Taiwan as part of China and not an independent state. The definition of "one China" is where the tension arises. The US sees "one China" as the current territorial holdings of the PRC since post revolution 1949 and "acknowledges" the PRC's view of "one China," but remains ambiguous to a common definition. This points to the current situation, in which the US treats Taiwan differently than it does any "territory" of another nation. Kamphausen and Scobell describe the effect of this difference of definition, when the US "promises" to support Taiwan from unprovoked military aggression as opposed to China "protecting" the territorial integrity of their nation. The PRC feels the need to prepare for a possible military confrontation with the US over Taiwan.¹²

The PRC sees "one China" as including Taiwan as well as encompassing Economic Exclusive Zones (EEZ) that span from the mainland to the shores of Okinawa, Japan and as far South as the Philippines. Moreover the EEZ are seen by the PRC as historically part of China, which complicates the matter even more as China holds this as a core issue. The PRC's territorial disputes within the region are a major source of US – Sino tension with Taiwan being

the principal concern. The definition of “one-China,” and how the US and the PRC interpret it, is inherently a source of conflict, but arguably an avoidable one.

According to the report to Congress there are four courses of action that China could take in seeking the unification of Taiwan. The first is a blockade of Taiwan. Assessments have shown that the PLA does not have this type of power projection capability yet, but will possibly obtain it by 2020.¹³ The PLA has already shown its resolve to such action when it required commercial maritime traffic to transit through mainland ports when it conducted missile tests in the Taiwan-straits in 1995-96. The second course of action is a limited force or coercion plan, a mix of kinetic and non-kinetic actions such as economic and political activities, cyber-warfare, special operations, and deception campaigns. Within the elements of national power, this is where the PRC has used, and will continue to use, information campaigns directed at obtaining and exploiting foreign technology, or what the US terms as “Information Dominance.”¹⁴ Essentially, China is already employing this course of action as a preparation of the cyber battlefield, with the exclusion of actual kinetic attacks.¹⁵ Third is an air and missile campaign, of which the PLA currently has the capabilities and systems to conduct. Finally, the fourth course of action is to conduct an amphibious landing and prosecute a conventional campaign to seize and control the island.¹⁶

The 2011 report to Congress is clear in stating that these are courses of action that the PRC could take to force Taiwan unification, and in reference to the missile campaign, attack a majority of its Asia – Pacific neighbors.¹⁷ If China took military action on Taiwan it would invite the US to support Taiwan. The PRC has stated in all of its published white papers that it would take military action if Taiwan declared independence, as shown in their action during the Taiwan Straits Crisis (1995-96), which was their reaction to the Taiwan pro-independence

administration of the mid-1990's. Given the reaction from the US and the world, the PRC is unlikely to initiate a campaign unless provoked from Taiwan or the US. The PRC currently does not have the capability to wage a campaign to take Taiwan by force, but it may in the future, and it has shown the resolve to send a strong signal.

The report to Congress focuses on the potential issues that can come from the China – Taiwan problem. It also emphasizes the growth of the PLA's maritime capabilities and its impacts to the region. Looking at the PRC's defense goals, it describes a force that attempts to do more good than harm. The report does not state what course the US should take to assist or deter PLA modernization, it simply concludes by stating that as China's regional interests expand so will their engagement in the region. The engagement will be toward building political ties and calming fears of their rise and expanding influence in the region and internationally.¹⁸

Part II: China DIME

Diplomacy and Economics

Since the 1990's China has transitioned from passive to active diplomacy. China is attempting to grow peacefully. PRC officials have adopted concepts of peaceful development, a harmonious world, and responsible stakeholder. These elements in Chinese diplomacy are in line with President Hu Jintao's theory of "three harmonies," seeking world peace, harmony in Chinese society, and reconciliation with Taiwan.¹⁹

The Taiwan Relations Act, Public-Law 96-8 (1979) provides provision for the US to sell arms to Taiwan, and in January 2010 the Obama administration approved US\$6.4 billion in defense articles to Taiwan. This action caused China to stop military-to-military relations with the US. The 2011 report to Congress states that the PRC cited the sale was a violation of their

core interest.²⁰ The recurring theme of China-Taiwan tensions and the diplomatic implication on China - US relations in the 2011 report to Congress is apparent. The report is clear in stating that since the election of President Ma Ying-jeou in Taiwan, “Beijing and Taipei have made significant progress in improving cross-Strait relationships,”²¹ however the report goes on to state that regardless of improving relationships, the PRC continues to develop military options for Taiwan, specifically those to, “...deter, delay, or deny third party involvement.”²² The US observes the PRC’s “one-China” policy, but is ambiguous to a common definition. The PRC’s strategic communication states that one of their core issues is Taiwan reunification, and as a result made anti-succession law in reference to Taiwan.

The PRC’s non-interference policy is almost always linked to the discussion of Taiwan. Along with the theory of the “three harmonies” China’s foreign policy, historically, has been based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. The PRC perceive interference as international institutions, often reflecting U.S. interests, limit the rights of sovereign states to develop, repress opposition and violate human rights, pursue mercantilist economic policies that interfere with free trade, and damage the environment.²³ The US and most democratic countries see China’s non-interference policy as contrary to world peace and stability, one of the PRC’s strategic goals. The central argument, for the PRC, on non-interference is sovereignty, the right to make decisions not subject to another authority.²⁴

China holds major investments throughout the world and consumes the majority of the raw and produced materials in the world. In addition, most of the world holds large investments in China. China has been able to prosper due to its economic reforms that show little

resemblance to communism today, in contrast to the Soviet Union, which fell apart because it saw the need for democratic and social reform as the way to achieve economic reform.

According to Zhiqun Zhu, China desires a peaceful world order and continued economic growth. Securing energy resources is the PRC's current foreign policy and economic objective. For almost 20 years, China has shown over an eight percent average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. This is attributed to China's 21st century policy of "reform and opening up," meaning participating in international relations, as opposed to the past policy of Deng Xiaoping of avoiding international responsibility and focusing on domestic growth.²⁵ Examples of the "opening up" policy, from a positive and negative perspective, are evident in world issues such as regional economic growth in Southeast Asia, nuclear proliferation, and territorial claims in the South China Sea.

From the late 1980's until 2010, China's trade within Southeast Asia grew exponentially. All 11 Southeast Asian states sought strong economic and diplomatic relations with the PRC; marked by double-digit bilateral trade growth, increased tourism, and bilateral/multilateral communication. Two-way trade with the PRC and many of its Southeast Asian neighbors grew to the range of US\$20 billion, and combined military exercises were becoming routine.²⁶ As the second decade of the 21st century approached, relations started to degrade as the PRC became more assertive, less cooperative, and the strategic growth of the PLA became more apparent. One of the ways that this has manifested itself was through territorial tensions.

The PRC perception that Southeast Asian countries are taking advantage of energy reserves and fisheries in contested areas became evident when Chinese fishing boats were detained by other countries' maritime agencies.²⁷ Access to these reserves could enhance China's energy security. The PRC has rejected jurisdictional claims by other nations. These

territorial disputes have become a rallying point within the UN Commission on Limits of Continental Shelf for the PRC, Vietnam, and the Philippines. To add to the instability of the area, the US military's surveillance activities in the region have caused standoffs with the PLAN. An example of this is the March 2009 incident with the surveillance ship, *USNS Impeccable*, was harassed by China. The US protested that the ship had the right of innocent passage in what is regarded as international waters. The PRC stated that the US was collecting intelligence on the PLAN in territorial waters. Ian Storey suggests that, "China has elevated the South China Sea dispute to be on par with sensitive core sovereignty issues such as Taiwan."²⁸

Successful relations between the US and PRC is defined by a continued strong economic and diplomatic relationship. The US and the world will not be able to deal with the economic collapse of China. Given China's population size and a government that would quickly lose control or overreact, this would spell international disaster.

Information

In June 2007, U.S. Pacific Command Commander Admiral Timothy Keating commented on his visit to the PRC, "Our Chinese guest said, 'here's what we'll do. You take care of the Easter Pacific, we'll take care of the Western Pacific, and we'll just communicate with each other'"²⁹ This comment is subject to interpretation; the Chinese may seek autonomy of the Western Pacific, waiting until it builds more power and control in the region in order to reclaim what it sees as their sovereign territory. On the other hand, the comment may suggest their willingness to actively promote regional stability and keep lines of communication and commerce open. Currently the PRC's intentions suggest the former rather than latter. The PRC's territorial disputes with the Philippines and Vietnam over offshore petroleum reserves in

the region are a testament to that. The nations of Southeast Asia that have territorial disputes with the PRC rely on the US to be the stabilizing force in the region. Their concern with the growth of the PLA is valid, but they do not want to choose between the US and China. Asia – Pacific nations, particularly in Southeast Asia, want to maintain good relations with both the PRC and the US.³⁰

Information operations will continue between China and the US. China has shown a propensity towards cyber attacks in order to obtain technology information and assess the integrity of US networks. Strategic communications is where the US and China will continue to compete in an effort to manage the message they are putting out to the world. The US will continue to insist that China needs to be more transparent, and cease its “non-interference” policy, such as in Sudan and Myanmar that condone human rights abuses. The PRC will continue to state that the US must not interfere with its domestic issues, that it is a growing nation, and that their goal is to promote peace and harmony. The management of these messages will be key for both actors.

The US can show greater clarity by adjusting its strategic communication; an example of this is the US Secretary of Defense missions’ that are key to national interest.³¹ Two of the missions are seeking to deny power projection and defending the homeland. Considering that two PRC defense goals are improving power projection and defending the homeland, there is a clash of ideals here between China and the US. The US maintains that if China had clearer strategic intentions for force projection then it would possibly be acceptable, but this position can also be interpreted as US hypocrisy, because the US can project power in order to protect the homeland, but one of their missions is to deny others the ability to do the same. It is understood

that the US uses power projection for defense purposes, thus the US should not state that it chooses to deny it to those who wish the same.

2011 Report to Congress of the Economic and Security Review Commission makes reference, on a number of matters, that China has a history of making promises and not delivering much.³² It is essential here for the US to take the higher ground and ensure that strategic communication on their part is above reproach. As the US seeks a China with clearer strategic intentions, the US should serve as an example, so as not to be looked upon as hypocrisy. The relationship between the PRC and US must have strategic trust.

Strategic trust is maintaining communication despite political disagreements. In an op-ed article in the *New York Times*, Admiral Mike Mullen's explains that strategic trust entails honesty, "Sometimes blunt honesty is what is needed to develop strategic trust."³³ He highlights that dialogue and a focus on commonalities is essential in trust building. Constant communication and information sharing are keys to trust, examples from a meeting between Admiral Mullen and the PLA's ranking general in 2011 are sharing of capabilities of US Predator drones and PLA nuclear submarines.³⁴ Further examples are combating common US and PLA threats: drug trafficking, piracy, and the movement of weapons of mass destruction. Admiral Mullen goes on to say that disagreements are not always bad. This goes back to honesty, as long as the US and China communicate truthfully, then it is a positive step forward. He concludes by stating:

We can shrink from this opportunity, or rise to it. We can let narrow interests and suspicion define our relationship, or work toward more transparency, more pragmatic expectations of each other, and more focus on our common challenges. That would be a great start toward strategic trust.

Military

International consternation over China's military transformation began in the mid 1990's when China began to expand its military position and attempted to intimidate Taiwan with ballistic missile tests.³⁵ China's 2006 Defense White Papers describes the goal of PLA modernization as focused on "foundation building" through 2010, "further progress" through 2020, and finally the strategic goal of building "informationized"³⁶ forces that can win wars by 2050.³⁷ By studying a country's military strategy, growth, actions, and roles, strategic intentions and policy motives of that country can be interpreted and defined. From the 1949 revolution until the mid 1980s, the PLA defined war as "the people's war", but recently it has transformed, according to their 2010 Defense White Papers, "mastering modern military science and technologies."³⁸ The PLA's interpretation of conflict is within three levels: wars, campaigns, and battles; the levels are informed by strategy, campaign methods, and tactics.³⁹

In the mid 1990's, the PLA made attempts at creating a joint force in an effort to execute joint campaigns and tactics. The PLA evolved their strategy from Joint Operations (JO) to Integrated Joint Operations (IJO). The distinction between these concepts was that JO focused on an individual service chain of command that did not integrate as a "joint force" with a focused purpose or mission. IJO on the other hand, flattens the chain of command, allowing PLA forces to leverage individual service strengths and capabilities while still having unified command and control. JO coordination was plan based, limited, and effects assessed by individual unit; whereas IJO coordination is action based, provides for depth of employment, and the effects are system based. An example of IJO is the PLA making commanders of the PLA Navy (PLAN), PLA Air Force (PLAAF), and Second Artillery permanent members of the Central Military Commission (CMC).⁴⁰

The PLA is organized by Military Regions (MRs) that are geographically based throughout China and its outlying islands. At the MR level, the Navy and the Air Force have deputy positions, but the Army commands the regions. Within the MRs, commanders employ IJO for training and logistics. Within the realm of logistics, the MRs have combined functions across civil services—such as hospitals—and essential services that both provide for joint logistics and serve the local economies within the MRs.⁴¹ During wartime, the organization is the War Zone, which can combine units from different MRs towards a campaign plan, and is commanded by a member of the CMC.

The PLA is still—and will likely continue to be—a conscript based force, although the PLA has made changes that mirror incentives that the US has employed. The PLA has instituted raises, increased job security, and created a Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps to support the increase in technical jobs. Benefit programs are available to PLA members and it has placed an emphasis on professional military education.⁴² Similarly, increases in pay, professionalization of the service member, educational benefits, and professional military education are all key programs that the US uses to retain military members and make a better war fighter.

In the last decade, the PLA has been focused on joint operations and training. In 2005, the PLA conducted Exercise Peace Mission in the Shandong Peninsula combined with Russian forces, which included a foreign force with air, ground, and sea integration. During Exercise Peace Mission 2007, the PLA deployed 1,700 troops via rail and combat air platforms thousands of miles into Russia, and conducted combined air and land operations with Russia and other militaries from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (a mutual security organization founded in 2001 by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia).⁴³ Within all the services of the PLA, training has been revolutionized using advanced simulators, fighting in adverse electronic

environments, amphibious assault exercises, and battle labs.⁴⁴ Combined and joint exercises have been a hallmark of US forces for the last forty years, as well as the use of simulators and labs to portray realistic environments.

Based on 2010 PLA Defense White Papers, the PLA's aim is trans-regional mobility, air-ground integrated capability, long distance maneuvers, and special operations.⁴⁵ To this end, the army is building a mobile force via armor, artillery, and airmobile power projection. Information warfare units, amphibious units within its army and marines are also initiatives that the PLA are developing and improving upon. The PLAN's aim is strategic depth for offshore defensive operations, integrated maritime capabilities, and nuclear counterattack.⁴⁶ The PLAN continues procurement of aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships, as well as development of their nuclear submarine program and anti-ship ballistic missiles. The PLAAF's aim is offensive and defensive operations, air strike, air and missile defense, early warning and reconnaissance, and strategic projection.⁴⁷ A glance at the roles of the US military branches reveals that the PLA is producing a force that will have similar capabilities to the United States.

Part III: United States and PRC Engagement

China's current military structure is based on the American model, made clear in their focus on building a robust force projection capability. As China looks to protect their economic and security interest, it will naturally intend to build a strong maritime navy to control the seas around them. The PLA's future course will be similar to the US model of force projection. Stated within the PLA's White Papers, their intentions are to protect their economic and security interests, defend their country, and promote world peace. By analyzing the PLA's capabilities

and actions, and based on their force projection building, it is plausible that the PLA intends to expand throughout the Asia – Pacific.

The US will have an increased presence in the Asia – Pacific region in the coming years; the 2012 US Strategic Defense Guidance states that the growth of China’s military must be done with greater clarity of their strategic intentions.⁴⁸ The PRC’s strategic communications states that it is a peaceful nation that wants to maintain world peace and harmony; conversely the PRC states that it will take military action if Taiwan declares independence. Coupled with their aggressive campaign to assert historic maritime claims in the region, the perception, within the Asia – Pacific is that China’s current actions may destabilize the region. This situation puts the US and China on a collision course. The US military is the stabilizing force in the region, and it must ensure that their presence in the region includes a positive relationship with the PLA.

In turn, defining a relationship with the PLA is the crux of the argument. The PLA’s involvement in humanitarian operations and pirate interdiction is positive global interaction, and the US conducts these operations as well. The US and the PLA must define their relationship as one of “emergency response” and cooperation in the Asia – Pacific, and possibly other regions. The PLA has shown a propensity to these types of missions with their involvement in UN peacekeeping. Combined Task force 151 (CTF 151)⁴⁹ is the counter piracy task force in the Gulf of Aden region, currently the PLAN contributes to the mission, but is not a member of the CTF. According to statements that Admiral Mike Mullen has made, combined US Navy and PLAN counter piracy operations were to be conducted in late 2011.⁵⁰ As of yet nothing public has been made confirming that the PLA and US have conducted these combined missions, but the start of a positive relationship is present.

Further definition of a positive relationship between the two countries requires that the US follow three steps: First, the US must posture in the Asia – Pacific, consistent with current US capabilities and exercises without the perception of containing China. Second, the US must ensure that their presence is known, but not visible, so that the US is not perceived as watching the PRC. Critical in this step, the US must have an information campaign that shows transparency, nested in strategic trust, in their intentions in the region. The third and final step is that the US must be clear on its strategic intentions in the Asia – Pacific. The strategic intent should be ensuring that LOCs remain open, freedom of international waters is maintained, and partnerships with the nations of the region are maintained. These steps are not intended to constrain the US or restrain others, but to allow the region to prosper and remain free of conflict. These steps are nested in the PRC’s core issues of a peaceful world order and continued economic growth.

The PRC maintains a policy of independent foreign and defense policy, but it has in fact participated in multilateral political and economic organizations. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is one such example. China is clear in its policy of no military alliances and affirms that the SCO is not one, but it is believed by many outside of the SCO that it was established to counterbalance NATO and the US. For instance, members of the SCO have cooperated on energy and conducted joint exercises.⁵¹ If China is willing to partner with its neighbors in a pseudo-alliance, based on diplomacy and economics, then it is possible that the PRC may consider the same with the US. As it is, the US and China both currently participate at the same multinational discussions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), Davos World Economic Forum, and Group of 20 (G20). The US must continue to expand its involvement with the PRC in multinational discussions and specifically in the UN.

Politically there is little motivation for China's government to change; American politicians must act progressively in their foreign policy. Under the assumption that the PRC remains in power the PLA, by 2020, will have the capabilities of American military forces. Therefore, the US cannot take a containment policy as it did with the Soviet Union. Given China's enormous economic strength and expanding military capability, the burden lies upon the US to influence China so it does not fail or transition to an expansionist government. The goal of the US and PRC should be to work with each other as opposed to against. This cooperation can only be reached when communication remains open. The PRC and US will reach this level in their relationship when issues such as the US providing defense weapons to Taiwan does not cause the PRC to cease engagement. It will equally mature when the US does not overreact when the PRC devalues its currency or when Southeast Asia territorial issues put the two militaries at odds.

Due to the interdependent economic cooperation of the PRC, Taiwan, US, and ultimately the world, the chances for conflict are miniscule. Thomas P.M. Barnett summarizes his views on the economic interdependence of the US and China, and ultimately the global nature of it in his book *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the 21st Century*. Barnett states, "The fundamental reality of the global economy explains why we won't be going to war with China."⁵² Presumably, Barnett may be cavalier in making such an assertion, but the fact remains that China's economic engine is one of their main sources of power and the PRC can not hold on to power without that engine. The US, and the world are invested in China, and it is that economic investment that keeps conflict at bay.

Conclusion

President Obama stated in *Priorities for 21st Century Defense* that the US is re-balancing efforts towards the Asian – Pacific region.⁵³ The United States will have a presence in and around the Taiwan Straits and Southeast Asia, in an effort to ensure freedom of passage and maintain security in the area. The PRC is focused on power projection, in order to protect its interest, and maintain world harmony. Taiwan integration is a core issue of the PRC as is territorial disputes within Southeast Asia. The PRC's rhetoric on dealing with Taiwan *de jure* independence attacks the US core issue of defending their ally, Taiwan. The nations of Southeast Asia rely on the stabilizing presence that the US provides in the region. All of these factors potentially put the US and China at odds.

In the book *On China*, Henry Kissinger comments on strategic trust and if it can develop between the US and the PRC, he admits that some consider it a contradiction in terms.⁵⁴ He posits that a serious joint effort involving continuous attention of top leaders (both US and PRC) is required to develop genuine strategic trust and cooperation. Mr. Kissinger also states that no other issue is more central to the PRC than preserving national unity.⁵⁵ This points to the issue in which the PRC and US may never reach consensus on, Taiwan unification. Mr. Kissinger comments that, "Successive Chinese leaders, while vigorously insisting on their perception of one China, have not pushed it to a showdown." Arguably the US has taken the same path, as the PRC has and stayed ambiguous to "one China," something that Mr. Kissinger has noted in his book.⁵⁶ The PLA National Defense University textbook *The Science of Military Strategy* states, "The Taiwan issue is the largest and the last obstacle we must conquer in the Chinese people's path to rejuvenation in the 21st century."⁵⁷ Again this is an issue that the PRC and US may continue to disagree on until the next generation of leaders comes into office in 2012. This

younger generation has grown up in a China that is at peace, politically unified, and whose economic performance has outpaced the rest of the world.⁵⁸

Political change in the PRC may not come for some time. China is a global economic power and that economic power will continue to feed the PLA. “Will China keep their current system and operate as it has for the next 30 years? Will the PRC eventually fall to the will of the people and move to democracy that consistent trade, the Internet, and exposure to the west will bring about?”⁵⁹ In *The China Fantasy*, journalist James Mann continually asks these questions and asserts that if the US treats China as an enemy, it will become one. Mann concludes that the threat perception of China has driven US diplomacy, economics, and strategic military engagement; he rejects the threat scenario and states that the US should allow China to evolve naturally. Richard Fisher challenges these ideas, and states that “fear” is what drove the George W. Bush administration to limit support for Taiwan’s potential desire for independence even though it may have emerged from a democratic process. He concludes that the US has lost leverage over China and even threatened America and Taiwan, by giving into this fear and “hoping,” that China would eventually act responsibly or friendly towards the US. Essentially, he concludes that the US must ensure that it manages (contains) the China “threat” because of a growing PLA with questionable intentions and transparency.⁶⁰

Scholars, politicians, and soldiers have wrestled with these options and all have come to their own conclusions, but the concern remains for the US and the global community of establishing an approach to deal with the strategic growth of the PLA. The US military must foster a relationship with the PLA characterized by positive military cooperation and beset in missions that both nations are conducting. The 2011 report to Congress analyzing China’s 2010 Defense White Papers is clear in concluding that the PRC’s future engagement will be toward

building political ties and calming fears of the rise and expanding influence in the Asia – Pacific region and internationally, but does not state a US position of containment or assistance. It also concludes that over the last ten years the PLA has improved its transparency, but that the future growth must be done with greater clarity on strategic intentions.⁶¹

Given this analysis by Congress, the timing is appropriate for the US to approach the PLA on creating lasting military-to-military relationships and easing territorial tensions. With the US being the stabilizing force in the Asia – Pacific region, it should be clear to the PRC that the US will remain in the region. If the true intentions of the PRC are to ease tensions in the region and build political ties, then this should be an avenue that is in line with their defense goals. Thomas P.M. Barnett offers a perspective to the contradiction that is the relationship between the US and China in a *World Politics Review* article:

If China were less bully-like with its neighbors over a plethora of disputed land and maritime border claims, America would logically be inclined to welcome Beijing's growing military might as sufficient relief to both its own weariness and the progressive loss of historical allies that have literally grown too old to play a meaningful security role anymore. But because Beijing has almost completely botched that aspect of its rise, Washington is beseeched by virtually all of China's neighbors for both arms and increased military cooperation and presence.⁶²

The point is that China and the US are constrained by their historic adversarial relationship. The conundrum lies in that the US sees the globalization of China as “losing” to the PRC and the PRC sees moving towards democracy as “surrendering” to the US. Barnett concludes that the easy answer is the US deploying 2500 Marines to Australia and China building a “carrier killer” missile.⁶³ He also states that the past generations within the PRC and US government have continued to promote this environment of fear and threat.

Whether the problem is threat, fear, or generational mistrust between the US and China, both nations must change. Military hegemony in the area, according to the 2010 Chinese

Defense White Papers, is not the PRC's intent. These White Papers contain plenty of references to increased tensions, international competition, and increased volatility in the region. Although it does not name any country it is directed at the US. Today and into the future, the US can balance the relationship with China by posture, presence, and clear intentions in the Asia – Pacific. Through these steps, the US military can support diplomacy in the region through positive and responsible interaction with the PLA. Establishing strategic trust must be a priority for diplomats and soldiers alike. US strategic communication with the PLA must be honest, even if it is in disagreement. By focusing on common core issues within the PRC and US (regional security, freedom of trade, controlling movement of weapons of mass destruction, and maintaining world peace and stability) a level of cooperation can be reached that has historically been mired in suspicion.

The PRC must be clear in their strategic intentions and show that it is willing to work with neighboring countries by diffusing territorial issues and continuing strong economic cooperation within the region. Equally the US must be patient in dealing with the PRC as the relationship is one that is relatively young in cooperation. The US will benefit from a successful China, and conversely the same is true. What does remain true is that the US – Sino relationship is beset in tension. Tension, that due to the presence of US forces in the Asia – Pacific can turn to conflict if the US – China relationship continues to be adversarial. Trust, focus on commonalities, military-to-military exchanges, continued economic cooperation and communication will all ease the tension between the US and China. The US must foster future positive change, and it can only do so by changing alongside China.

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- ³ Wikipedia. "Zhenbao Island" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_border_conflict (accessed April 10, 2012)
- ⁴ Wikipedia. "Sino – Soviet split" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split (accessed April 10, 2012)
- ⁵ China National Defense 2010 (Defense White Papers) March 31, 2011 http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7114675.htm. 6-7.
- ⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China*. 2009. 10.
- ⁷ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011, 9.
- ⁸ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011. 27.
- ⁹ Richard D Fisher. *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*. (Westport, CT: Praeger Securities International, 2008), 38.
- ¹⁰ Andrew Scobell and Roy Kamphausen, *Right Sizing The People's Liberation Army*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute. 2007. 32.
- ¹¹ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011. I.
- ¹² Andrew Scobell and Roy Kamphausen. 29.
- ¹³ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011. 2.
- ¹⁴ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011, 11.
- ¹⁵ In 2003 China is reported to be the source of over 294 successful hackings of DoD computers. 2005 reports of "Titan Rain," code name for Chinese Internet spies that broke into multiple US defense contractor networks. In 2006 the FBI reported that over 25% of computer attacks on US businesses originated in China. In 2006 China is reported to have attacked and compromised the computer systems at the US Navy War College and US Army Base, Fort Hood, TX causing US\$ 20-30 million in damage to each system. Richard D. Fisher *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*. Westport, CT: Praeger Securities International. 2008.181.
- ¹⁶ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011, 11.
- ¹⁷ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011, 12.
- ¹⁸ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011, 69.
- ¹⁹ Zhiqun Zhu, *China's New Diplomacy: Rationale, Strategies and Significance*, (Ashgate Publishing Limited: England, 2010), 13.
- ²⁰ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2009, 1.
- ²¹ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2009, 2.
- ²² Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2009, 2.
- ²³ Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997)
- ²⁴ Henry Kissinger, *On China*. (The Penguin Press: New York, NY, 2011), 514.
- ²⁵ Zhiqun Zhu, 193.
- ²⁶ Ian Storey, *Southeast Asia and the Rise of China*. (Routledge: New York, NY, 2011), 53.
- ²⁷ Ian Storey, 92.
- ²⁸ Ian Storey, 93.
- ²⁹ Richard D. Fisher, 13.
- ³⁰ Zhiqun Zhu, 6.
- ³¹ US Secretary of Defense missions that are key to national interest are: defeating al-Qa'ida; defeating and deterring aggression, including those seeking to deny power projection; countering weapons of mass destruction; effectively operating in cyber-space, space, and across all domains; maintain an effective and safe nuclear deterrent; and protecting the homeland.
- ³² Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress of the Economic and Security Review Commission*. 2011. 7
- ³³ M. Mullen, "A Step Towards Trust with China" *New York (NY) New York Times*, July 25, 2011 www.nytimes.com/2011/07/26/opinion/26Mullen.html?_r=2&hp
- ³⁴ M. Mullen, "A Step Towards Trust with China" *New York (NY) New York Times*, July 25, 2011 www.nytimes.com/2011/07/26/opinion/26Mullen.html?_r=2&hp

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- ³⁵ Phillip C. Saunders and Ross Rustici. *Chinese Military Transparency: Evaluating the 2010 Defense White Paper*. (Strategic Forum, National Defense University. July 2011), 2.
- ³⁶ Informatization is a concept that emphasizes the effects of information technology on military decision and weapons employment cycles. Officially adopted by Jian Zemin in 2002, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Military Commission (CMC), emphasized the need for employment of this complement as necessary for PLA's rapid modernization and enabling Integrated Joint Operations. Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*. 2009. 11.
- ³⁷ Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China*. 2009. 11.
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http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7114675.htm. 8.
- ³⁹ Richard D. Fisher, 68.
- ⁴⁰ Richard D. Fisher, 71.
- ⁴¹ Richard D. Fisher, 73.
- ⁴² Richard D. Fisher, 73.
- ⁴³ Richard D. Fisher, 75.
- ⁴⁴ Richard D. Fisher, 74.
- ⁴⁵ 2010 Defense White Papers P 9
- ⁴⁶ 2010 Defense White Papers P 9
- ⁴⁷ 2010 Defense White Papers P 9
- ⁴⁸ Department of Defense. *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. (January 2012), 2.
- ⁴⁹ CTF 151 is a multinational task force established in January 2009 to conduct counter-piracy operations under a mission-based mandate throughout the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) area of responsibility to actively deter, disrupt and suppress piracy in order to protect global maritime security and secure freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations. www.cusnc.navy.mil/cmef/151/index.html
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www.nytimes.com/2011/07/26/opinion/26Mullen.html?_r=2&hp
- ⁵¹ Zhiquan Zhu, 8.
- ⁵² Barnett, 229.
- ⁵³ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership*, 2.
- ⁵⁴ Henry Kissinger, 514.
- ⁵⁵ Henry Kissinger, 523.
- ⁵⁶ Henry Kissinger, 250.
- ⁵⁷ Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, *The Science of Military Strategy, English Edition* (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2005), 442.
- ⁵⁸ Henry Kissinger, 512.
- ⁵⁹ James Mann, 110.
- ⁶⁰ Richard D. Fisher, 250.
- ⁶¹ Office of Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*, 2011, 9.
- ⁶² Thomas P.M. Barnett, World Politics Review, *The New Rules: Hubris Drives Mistrust in U.S.-China Relations*, 09 APR 2011.
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