From Revolutionary Internationalism to Conservative Nationalism

The Chinese Military's Discourse on National Security and Identity in the Post–Mao Era

Nan Li

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Key Points

w Ever since Deng Xiaoping's 1985 "strategic decision" and the corresponding doctrinal change from the country's highest military decision-making body to change Mao Zedong's emphasis on preparing for an early, large-scale, nuclear war, the military of the People's Republic of China has engaged in a new discourse that is departing from Maoist ideology and moving in a more conservative, nationalist direction. This new military discourse has driven China's foreign policy away from its internationalist, class-based, and revolutionary foundation toward a proximal orientation, affecting not only the country's national security perceptions, but also the very concept of a Chinese national identity. In both realms—identity and security—the new Chinese military discourse has shifted from a radical, revolutionary internationalism to a post-Mao conservative nationalism.

w Beginning in 1985, China's armed forces—the People's Liberation Army (PLA)— began to transform itself from an army whose superiority stemmed from sheer numbers of personnel and that was geared toward fighting a major land-based "people's war" to a technology-based military capable of more active defense to deal with more variegated local contingencies. It is now assumed that most of these "local wars" are likely to take place along China's long and complex borders. However, since China's national boundary, identity, and interests had not been clearly articulated because of the hegemony of the Maoist class-based, transnational revolutionary discourse, a profusion of military literature has emerged since 1985 to delimit the Chinese nation; such literature diverges significantly from the Maoist discourse.

w With the decline of Maoism, another alternative voice—a quasi-liberal discourse—has also emerged among China's military officials and analysts. This discourse, which stresses peaceful approaches to resolving interstate disputes, also recognizes that under certain circumstances, military force as a deterrent may enhance the chances of peaceful resolution of interstate disputes in one's own favor, and that diplomatic negotiations may serve as delaying tactics for gaining preparation time for war or as a way to evade responsibility. Yet quasi-liberals emphasize that peaceful approaches toward resolving interstate disputes may be more desirable than the threat or use of force for reasons other than mere stratagems for relative gains.

w In the predominant, conservative military discourse, threats to China fall into three major categories: the general competitive nature of interstate relationships, which may affect Chinese national power relative to other countries; the "new frontiers" of interstate competition that may intensify, and where the survival interest of China would be negatively affected if China does not engage in that competition; and direct threats to the territorial integrity of China.

w The greatest security threat, according to the new military discourse, is the continued division of the Chinese nation,specifically the political separation of Taiwan from the mainland. This separation allegedly threatens China's survival by representing symbolic support for separatist forces in other areas on the margins of China, such as Tibet; directly threatening China's more prosperous coastal and maritime regions; and possibly becoming an obstacle in China's effort to develop ocean resources. Furthermore, according to the discourse, "Taiwan is geostrategically located at the confluence of Chinese, American and Japanese strategic interests." Hence, "America intends to check China in political terms, and protect its economic interests in Taiwan."

w If the new military discourse views threats as originating from conflicts between national interests, but no longer between antagonistic classes that transcend national borders, the means to neutralize such threats may also have to be viewed as *nationally organized* rather than *class-based.* Therefore, the articulation of such means has centered on three themes:national unity, the central role of a national military force in defusing external threats, and consolidation of the national territorial border.

w Because the PLA is the central institution that deals with external threats, it is only natural that it tends to take a bleaker view of China's security environment than civilian institutions do. The cozy relationship between the PLA and the Chinese Communist Party, China's two most powerful institutions, coupled with the almost total separation of the PLA from the control of state authorities,may not bode well for China's future security policy behavior. To establish more effective civilian control of the PLA, two institutional changes may be necessary: Separate the PLA from the party and place it under the control of state bodies, and expand the role of civilian policy and research institutions in the debates over national identity and security policy. These changes may become increasingly necessary, particularly if the PLA adopts a more aggressive nationalist agenda as it becomes stronger in the future.

w Because Chinese security policy is being "normalized"from revolutionary internationalism to nationalism, and the security challenges that China poses may be regional rather than global, regional balance of power may be a better strategy than global containment. Yet even regional balance of power may not be an appropriate strategy because in general terms, the kind of Chinese nationalism discussed here is defensive and conservative in nature, not yet imperialistic and offensive. Faced with an array of proximal security challenges, China's policymakers seek to alleviate them through anticipating positive external changes, engaging in diplomacy, and promoting economic and cultural interaction, which may have reduced the need to resort to force.

w Within this general framework of conservative and defensive nationalism,however, there is one element of Chinese national security policy that threatens an offensive posture, and that is Taiwan. China's leaders have hoped that political negotiations, increases in cross-strait investment and trade, and cultural affinity may eventually lead to peaceful reunification. Yet uncertainty about this optimistic scenario is

enhanced by Beijing's lack of real jurisdiction over Taiwan; the glaring gap in per capita wealth between the two; and Taiwan's movement toward democracy, which draws sympathy and support from Western countries. All of these factors may contribute to Taiwan's developing a distinctive identity that may become increasingly different and separate from that of the mainland. This new identity in turn may reduce Taiwan's willingness to reunify and strengthen its desire for independence.

w With the decline of revolutionary ideology in China, irredentist nationalism is turning into a cornerstone of regime legitimacy; hence, reunification with Taiwan becomes an issue of almost central significance, and an offensive military posture may be exercised to prevent Taiwan from going independent, if not to pursue steps for immediate reunification. Therefore, a balance-of-threat strategy essentially serves to increase the cost of such offensive threats so that only peaceful means can be pursued to resolve disputes. However, the PLA has one comparative advantage in its weapons inventory that is highly offensive and threatening and may increase Taiwan's vulnerability for its lack of effective countermeasures: theater ballistic missiles. However, the balance-of-threat strategy based on missile defense may be accompanied by an engagement strategy that aims to modify Chinese behavior so that it becomes more receptive to international norms.

I t has been a quarter of a century since the death of Mao Zedong, and China has experienced a dramatic transformation in those twenty-five years. While still ruled by a communist party, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has emerged as a major economic power by unshackling its command economy and privatizing many of its state-owned enterprises. Yet the Maoist revolutionary doctrine that distinguished the PRC as a leader of world revolution and national liberation movements in the 1950s and '60s is only now beginning to be reassessed. Ironically, the catalyst for this reassessment is the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which, as Nan Li explains in the following pages, has conducted an ongoing "discourse" since the mid-1980s on the relevance of Mao's conception of China's place in the world for contemporary international relations, and the corresponding role its national security policy should play in such a reconceptualized global arena.

The PRC has decidedly broadened and diversified its global links in the post-Mao era and, as a consequence, the PLA's discourse describes a much more "crowded"—and more competitive—world as viewed from Beijing. As Nan Li deftly shows in his examination of recent contributions in the PLA's professional literature, China today finds itself but one player among many in a world of diverse nation-states, where the rules governing interactions are weakly institutionalized and where one major power—the United States—is able to impose its will with few constraints from other power centers. If this sounds like the Realist school of international politics, it should simply serve to reinforce the view that China's leaders in the 1990s have dramatically altered the way they view the world. The anti-imperialist rhetoric that once sustained the PRC as the leader of worldwide revolution has been replaced by a debate among the country's military thinkers and analysts that remains global in its perspective, but more proximal, more defensive in its tentative policy conclusions.

That the PRC has pursued the path of pragmatism in global politics during the post-Mao era should come as no surprise. Apart from the disorienting fact of Leninist regimes' virtual extinction over the past decade, a pragmatic course has reflected the general approach to domestic and foreign policy of Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping. Today, there are simply no more revolutionary partners the PRC can add to its depleted geopolitical arsenal; the most it can hope for is a world of multiple power centers—the better to check U.S. influence. Nan Li reveals a Chinese military that now acknowledges the primacy of the nation-state—not classes—as the principal actor in international relations, and a particular concern with borders as the salient marker of national identity in such a global milieu.

What makes this discourse among Chinese military leaders profound is what Nan Li describes as its ultimate purpose—not simply a shift away from Maoist doctrine, but nothing less than the reshaping of Chinese identity itself. Turning away from the Maoist

emphasis on class and revolution, the new discourse Professor Li identifies among the PLA's analysts and military thinkers embraces a more conservative ideology, one that concentrates not only on the Chinese state, but also on the Chinese *nation.*

Obviously, such a fundamental change in the way Chinese see themselves in the world has significant implications for regional security. As Nan Li demonstrates in this Peaceworks report, the one facet of post-Mao China that has exhibited the most significant change is its national security paradigm. What used to be a revolutionary power that supported "liberation" movements throughout the Third World through money, arms, and political action has become a rather conservative giant concerned about its neighbors and borders, as well as about geopolitical balance. In short, the country has gradually shifted from a paradigm based on an international, class-based,and revolutionary ideology, in which imperialist powers are kept in check by support for national liberation movements among their former colonial territories, to a more conservative outlook that seeks to shore up the integrity and sovereignty of the Chinese nation in an era of globalization. In this kind of competitive global environment, survival is paramount, and Nan Li examines this new world as perceived by the PRC leadership—a world that offers new trade opportunities and, closer to home, an abundance of new energy and food resources, as well as raw materials, in neighboring territories and in the oceans to meet the demands of a rapidly growing population.

Inevitably, in any discussion of borders and identity in the context of China's security, the issue of Taiwan arises; this Peaceworks report is no exception. In a regional security environment fraught with passions on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, it is hard to strip away the ideological rubric and examine the issue in terms of the seeming vulnerability of this Asian giant to the threat of a "renegade province" off its shores. Yet, Professor Li sees in his examination of the PLA discourse the quintessential reason for concern over Taiwanese independence. It is precisely the post-Maoist focus on national identity among the PRC's leaders that makes Taiwan a special concern, as they attempt to project to the world—and to their own people—a strong, unified nation. A separatist Tibet and, more important, a Taiwan that seems to move in fits and starts toward independence suggest a weak and fragmenting China, one whose borders are uncertain and whose sovereignty appears internally challenged.

That the PRC seeks to strengthen its sovereignty through a redefinition of its popu-lace's identity should not be a concern to the West—particularly to the United States as a major player in the management of Asian security, argues Professor Nan. What may strike some as a source of concern,though, is how the PRC is going about such a redefinition—namely, the way military thinkers and analysts influence the conceptualization of a national identity and, thus, the practical dictates of the national interest and national security policy as well.

In Nan Li's brief examination of civil-military relations in the PRC, he reveals the close connection between the PLA and the Chinese Communist Party in the realm of national security decision making—a relationship that limits more "civilian" inputs, which rely less on force and defensive stratagems and more on international institutions and pacific settlement of disputes. Indeed, the predominant discourse on Chinese identity and security within the upper echelons of the PLA discounts the influence of a more "liberal"

strain in the discourse, and Nan Li makes an important contribution in this study by suggesting how the PRC's national security decision-making process could benefit by a more "civilianized" reorganization of civil-military relations.

If China's new national security doctrine focuses on more proximal threats, this should not obscure the fact that the country has geopolitical concerns as well. Indeed, China's proclaimed "strategic partnership" with Russia and arms sales to Pakistan and Iran underscore the fact that the PRC has not retreated to a "Fortress China." Yet these foreign policy initiatives can still be considered regional, and they are most likely pursued according to a collective worldview that the management of regional security issues should not be left to its two old rivals—the United States and Russia—alone. Like any other powerful nation-state on a Realist global chessboard, China follows the logic of balance of power in international politics.

On the issue of Taiwan, however, balance of power as the West's guiding principle in the management of Asian security seems somehow off the mark, perhaps disproportionate to the mutually perceived threat across the Taiwan Strait. Such a view informs Nan Li's advocacy of a "balance-of-threat" strategy in the Asian region as the new foreign policy team in the United States surveys the horizon of international security issues and numerous hot spots around the world. Yet, even though officials on both sides of the strait have become more moderate, more pragmatic on cross-strait relations (despite the PRC's "missile diplomacy" just before Taiwan's 1996 presidential elections), the consequences of acting on this mutual threat would obviously be much more severe for Taiwan if it comes to the use of force as a way of eliminating this particular national security challenge.

As part of its congressional mandate, the United States Institute of Peace has endeavored to bring new research and new voices to policy debates on different regions of the world, and this Peaceworks is just one of a number of the Institute's contributions on political change in the PRC and its implications for regional security. Previous Peaceworks reports have examined the devolution of party control in Anne Thurston's *Muddling toward Democracy: Political Change in Grassroots China* (No. 23, August 1998) and the nuances of the "engagement vs. containment" debate in Chen Jian's *The China Challenge in the Twenty-First Century: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy* (No. 21, June 1998). In addition, the Institute's Press has published several studies of negotiating behavior in different Asian countries through the Institute's Cross-Cultural Negotiation Project, including Scott Snyder's *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (1999) and a new edition of my *Chinese Negotiating Behavior: Pursuing Interests through "Old Friends"* (1999).

RICHARD H. SOLOMON
PRESIDENT
UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

Introduction

The eclipse of the Maoist era in the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been evident ever since Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms released significant sectors of the country's economy from the dual grip of the Maoist mobilizational development strategy and Soviet-style central planning. Yet a more remarkable and less visible departure from Maoist ideology—one that has more important implications for the United States and the management of Asian security—has been taking place in the ideational realm of China's armed forces.

Ever since Deng's 1985 "strategic decision" and the corresponding doctrinal change from the country's highest military decision-making body that same year to change Mao Zedong's emphasis on preparing for an early, large-scale, nuclear war, China's military has engaged in a new discourse that is departing from Maoist ideology and moving in a more conservative, nationalist direction. This new military discourse has driven China's foreign policy away from its internationalist and revolutionary foundation toward a proximal orientation, affecting not only the country's national security perceptions, but also the very conception of a Chinese national identity. What are the new dominant themes in Chinese military discourse regarding identity and security from 1985 to the present? How are they different from those of the pre-1985 period, and what may explain such differences? Are there alternative voices that challenge the predominant themes in the current military discourse? If so, how significant are they? What are the implications of China's new military discourse for U.S. policy and the management of Asian security? This study attempts to answer these questions.

While extensive studies have been done on the role of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and historical memory on the construction of identity, the role of the military in such an endeavor has yet to be seriously examined. Literature on civil-military relations tends to stress inter-institutional dynamics, which may also mean that inter-ideational dynamics tend to be de-emphasized.[1] This study intends to fill this lacuna through an examination of the Chinese military discourse in "imagining" a new Chinese national community. As such, this work could serve as a starting point for a comparative study of the role of the military in the development of national identity across geographical boundaries and time.

Equally important, if the old Maoist discourse had dire policy consequences, such as intense domestic class struggle and active support of radical movements in foreign countries, it is logical to assume that a new discourse representing an important departure from Maoism may also have significant policy effects. These effects may be quite significant because the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which includes China's ground, air, naval, and strategic missile forces, has become more involved in the development of China's national identity and security policy since 1985.[2] Therefore, a better

understanding of the military discourse on internal identity and solidarity, on the one hand, and external uncertainty and threats, on the other, may help to develop a better understanding of the nature and thrust of China's security posture and its implications for Asian security.

The central argument of this study is that the post-1985 military discourse has shifted significantly away from the Maoist discourse. Rather than the Maoist focus on subnational and transnational class-based identity, the new military discourse centers on issues of national identity. Such a shift, in turn, leads to a redefinition of security threats and the means to neutralize these threats. Rather than the Maoist premise of *class* security and threats, and class-based means to reduce such threats, the new military discourse has placed strong emphasis on *national* security threats and the means to neutralize them. In both realms—identity and security—the new Chinese military discourse has shifted from a radical, revolutionary internationalism to a post-Maoist conservative nationalism.

The use of the term "discourse" here represents a body of military literature that has emerged in post-1985 China. Such literature refers to edited volumes published by presses affiliated with the PLA and commentaries in China's military newspapers, such as *Liberation Army Daily*. All the authors are uniformed PLA personnel. Many are researchers and analysts from major PLA research and higher educational institutions, such as the Academy of Military Science and the National Defense University.

For a proper understanding of such a discourse, several caveats are in order. First, the term "conservative" is used here to connote a care for established institutions and tradition, such as an "organic" nation; the maintenance of "bounded" stability and order; and a preference for consolidation based on gradual development, rather than overextension based on revolutionary change. It also stresses the threat and use of force for maintaining bounded conservation and stability. In contrast, the term "quasi-liberal," as applied to alternative voices in the military discourse, connotes a preference for interactive dynamics, primarily through international institutions, involving multilateral negotiations and diplomacy or multilaterally agreed-upon nonescalatory control mechanisms for managing interstate disputes.

This study is not an analysis of the institutional dimension of civil-military relations nor of military-technical issues, such as organizational, technological, and budgetary changes. Rather, it examines the content of military literature that shapes consciousness on national identity, security, and defense. Because substantial research has been done on the more "tangible" institutional, military-technical changes,[3] an essay on this "fuzzy" variable regarding the formation of martial consciousness may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of post-1985 military and security development in China.

This study compares military discourse between the pre-1985 period and the post-1985 period, the dividing line stemming from Deng's "strategic decision" and the accompanying doctrinal change from the Central Military Commission (CMC), China's supreme military decision-making body, both requiring the PLA to make the "strategic transition" from preparing for an "early, total, and nuclear" war to preparing for local, limited wars.[4] While the former implies an intensified class-based conflict that transcends national borders, the latter refers to "peacetime army building" for national defense, with an eye toward addressing proximal contingencies to consolidate the nation's border. Such

a choice does not mean that there was no discourse on national identity before 1985, or that the discourse on class identity disappeared after 1985. It means only that the emphasis has shifted.

Following this introduction are four substantive sections. Section 2 investigates new themes in the post-1985 military discourse on identity and security and elucidates alternative views to the predominant themes in the discourse. Section 3 explores China's new conceptualization of national security threats based on the post-1985 military discourse. Section 4 examines the nature of civil-military relations in the PRC to discover why the military's new discourse has gained such widespread acceptance among the country's leaders. The concluding section discusses the practical implications of this shift and appropriate U.S. policy responses.

From Class Identity to National Identity in China's Military Discourse

During much of its history since its founding in 1927, the PLA served as an active instrument of revolution espoused by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its leader Mao Zedong. This revolution had two dimensions. The first is a subnational, or domestic, dimension in which a clear class differentiation was advanced in the classic Marxist fashion so that continuous struggle could be waged among opposing socioeconomic classes.[5] This class struggle privileged and enhanced the identity and interests of the revolutionary class, supposedly led by a vanguard party (in this case, the CCP) at the expense of the "counterrevolutionaries." The PLA's participation in this class struggle was manifested in its long years of armed struggle against the Koumingtang (KMT, or Nationalist Party), which symbolized "reaction" and "counterrevolution." After the founding of the PRC in 1949 following the CCP's victory over the KMT, class struggle continued as a central theme in CCP and PLA discourse. This struggle entailed a continuous revolution as embodied in incessant political campaigns to weed out domestic class enemies within the CCP, the government bureaucracy, the PLA, and throughout Chinese society. Its ultimate expression was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution during 1966–1976. The PLA, again, participated actively in these struggles.[6]

Class as the Central Category of Identity

As an extension of this subnational, class-based struggle and revolution, the second dimension—transnational or internationalist—emerged with the founding of the PRC. Mao's renowned 1949 declaration to "lean to one side" meant China's full membership in the Soviet-led socialist camp and its active participation in the messianic struggle against the Western capitalist countries. The PLA contributed significantly to this solidarity, as it dispatched an expeditionary force of "People's Volunteers" to fight "U.S. imperialists" on the Korean Peninsula during 1950–1953. Later, when Mao suspected that the Soviet Union had become a conservative, status quo power concerned more with preserving Soviet national interests than promoting international socialist revolution, he began to envision a global, class-based revolution on his own terms and embarked on a dual strategy of "people's war" and a "united front" drawn from lessons of the Chinese revolution. This strategy entailed active support of armed struggles by radical class-based and progressive national liberation movements throughout the world. These movements constituted what Mao called the world's "countryside," which would march against and finally conquer the world's "cities"—the Western capitalist powers.[7]

Again, the PLA was a central player in this strategy as China became extensively involved in the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1973, providing manpower, materiel, and

doctrinal support to North Vietnam and its movement in the south, the National Liberation Front (also known as the Viet Cong).[8] The PLA also took charge of training Maoist guerrillas in other Asian countries, Africa, and Latin America. But, more important, the highly revolutionized PLA directly confronted the new primary antagonist, the "bureaucratic capitalist" and "social imperialist" state of the Soviet Union, through several Sino-Soviet border skirmishes in early 1969, and "taught a lesson" to the Soviet "lackey" of India and the Soviet "puppet" of Vietnam through the border wars of 1962 and 1979.

From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, Chinese military strategy was obsessively defined by a numerically intensive "people's war," in which an imagined Soviet invasion would be bogged down and eventually neutralized by a Chinese guerrilla warfare of dispersion, mobility, harassment, and attrition. In such a scenario, national borders were deemed insignificant, as a large human "stream" equipped with a revolutionary consciousness presumably retreats away from or advances fearlessly across such an artificial demarcation.[9] Indeed, during the Maoist years, subnational and transnational revolutionary, class-based identity and interests permeated the Chinese military discourse. Any serious articulation of national identity and interests was criticized as "bourgeois," because these concepts assumed stability and hierarchy, the antithesis of the idea of revolution, which is assumed to be continuously mobile and egalitarian. These concepts also undermine narrowly articulated class identity and interests, an ontological necessity to sustain intraclass solidarity and interclass tension and antagonism.

Some scholars have argued that Mao, the CCP, and the PLA essentially represented Chinese nationalism, promoting Chinese national identity and interests under the guise of class-based, revolutionary rhetoric.[10] While it is plausible and even possible that some Maoist policy programs did not contradict Chinese national interests or even promoted such interests, there are two major reasons the dominant policy patterns under Mao suggested otherwise. First, on the domestic side, the political discourse based on subnational, class interests led to an elaborate and rigid class categorization, which had real consequences for the lives of ordinary people. Opportunities leading to power, prestige, and privilege, for example, were accessible only to class-based categories of people, such as workers, poor and lower-middle peasants, and revolutionary soldiers and cadres. People with "bad" class backgrounds, such as landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, "bad elements," rightists, feudalists, capitalists, revisionists, and the "stinking ninth category" of intellectuals, were largely denied such opportunities.[11] Meanwhile, generous foreign aid was provided to revolutionary or progressive movements in other countries. If one assumes the CCP and the PLA to be primarily Chinese nationalists, one must show that these organizations did not bestow largesse on foreign comrades-in-arms while discriminating against their fellow Chinese on the basis of rigid class categories. Since this is not the case, class-based, transnational, revolutionary ideology does appear to make a significant difference.

Second, on the external side, the argument that Mao, the CCP, and the PLA fought external wars to enhance Chinese national security interests is also problematic. In the case of the Korean War, Bruce Cummings shows that the real cause of the war was class antagonism inside Korea.[12] Other scholars argue that subnational and transnational,

class-based, revolutionary affinity and solidarity on the one hand, and deeply imbedded suspicion and hostility toward nonrevolutionary regimes on the other, may have been central factors in shaping Mao's decision to send the PLA across the Yalu River.[13] Indeed, had both North Korea and China been governed by nonrevolutionary, authoritarian regimes, headed by Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek, the idea of a war in Korea would have sounded fantastic. John Gaddis has argued recently that had it not been for radical internationalist ideology, the Cold War would not have been fought on such a global scale and with such ferocity.[14] Stephen Walt also shows a strong correlation between internal social revolutions and external wars.[15]

Both Gaddis and Walt might be pleased to find a ready audience for their ideas in the postrevolutionary China of today. Many Chinese, including both intellectuals and the population at large, now believe that Mao was indeed a revolutionary internationalist who promoted world revolution many times and in many places at the expense of Chinese national interests. They point out that if it were not for Mao's effort to please his revolutionary brethren in North Korea, China would not have "lost" half of the Changbai Mountain (on the border between China and North Korea). Some also believe that to avoid offending Stalin, Mao did not insist on his "returning" Outer Mongolia to China. Others argue that Mao acquiesced to Third World countries such as Burma by giving up Chinese territories in border agreements signed in the early 1960s. Moreover, some criticize Mao for impoverishing an already poor China by squandering resources and human lives in foreign wars and in other unnecessary and fruitless endeavors in the Third World where no obvious Chinese national interests were involved.[16] Indeed, those who argue that Mao, the CCP, and the PLA placed Chinese national identity and interests above anything else may need to show otherwise.

If revolutionary internationalism was a dominant mode of discourse during the Maoist period, what is its fate after Deng Xiaoping came to power following Mao's death in 1976? The moment of conservative restoration occurred during a plenary session of the CCP Central Committee in 1978, when it was declared that the central focus of CCP policy was no longer promoting domestic and international class struggle and revolution but, rather, "developing productive forces." A nation-building project, couched in the notion of the "Four Modernizations" (industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defense), was more firmly endorsed. The PLA, no longer required to participate in domestic class struggle and promote world revolution, also shifted its focus to "peacetime army building" and national defense. The demise of the Maoist radicals also made it possible for Deng to introduce a range of organizational changes in the PLA, which replaced those who were more concerned with Maoist radical politics with those more concerned with national defense. The reinstitution of military research and learning institutions has also contributed to the more coherent production of military literature.

Specifically, based on a policy endorsed by the CMC in 1985, the PLA began to transform itself from an army whose superiority stemmed from sheer numbers of personnel and that was geared toward fighting a major land-based "people's war" (which implied a massive Soviet invasion) to a technology-based military capable of more active defense to deal with more variegated local contingencies. It is now assumed that most of these "local wars" are likely to take place along China's long and complex borders. However,

since China's national boundary, identity, and interests had not been clearly articulated because of the hegemony of the Maoist class-based, transnational revolutionary discourse, a profusion of military literature has emerged since 1985 to delimit the Chinese nation; such literature diverges significantly from the Maoist discourse.

The Nation-State as the Central Category of Identity

The central Maoist premise is that socioeconomic class, not the nation-state, is the central category defining internal identity, organization and security, and external insecurity, threat, and struggle. To the Maoists, the neo-realist premise of the nation-state as the central category defining external anarchy and domestic hierarchy is artificial.[17] The domestic realm, they argue, has never been hierarchically organized because of dynamic class antagonism and struggle based on economic and social change. On the other hand, the international realm is not exactly disorganized: Class differentiation transcends national boundaries, and opposing classes organize themselves based on transnational class identity and interests; hence, class struggle has never been confined within national borders.

This Maoist thesis has been seriously contested in the post-1985 Chinese military discourse. "After the founding of the state in 1949," declared a *Liberation Army Daily* commentary, "the theoretical foundation for national defense construction was not able to make the timely shift from the premise of [domestic and international] class struggle to that of promoting national interests." As a result, "driven by ideology, class and partisan interests [were] overly stressed while national interests [were] neglected."[18]

According to the post-1985 military discourse, the emphasis on large-scale class struggle produced several major negative effects on national identity and interests. First, domestic division and tension mounted as people were arbitrarily divided into opposing class categories. Also, promoting class-based world revolution meant the provision of material support for foreign revolutionary movements and expensive preparation for the ideology-driven total war. Both "have cost us dearly." Moreover, "as China was busy criticizing 'bourgeois authorities,' other countries occupied our territories in the South China Sea." More important, though, as China was busy with domestic and transnational class struggle, other major countries concentrated on national economic, scientific, and technological development. "In 1960, the Gross National Product (GNP) of China was at the same level with Japan. By the early 1980s, it was one-quarter of Japan's. It declined to one-fifth of Japan's by 1985." As a result, "the gap in the economic, scientific, and technological levels between China and other major countries expanded to the extent that China is now faced with the danger of 'being expelled from the globe' *[kaichu qiuji]*."[19]

To reverse this historical blunder, the new discourse acknowledged that "class and partisan interests [should] become subordinate to national interests. . . . Modernization of the Chinese nation, including modernization of its national defense, is now of paramount significance." It is therefore absolutely necessary "to restore the good name for *national interests* and hold high the banner of *national interests*," and this is an "inescapable choice for any country intending to join the ranks of the great powers." Specifically, "it is necessary to strengthen research on national interests and clarify how such interests dictate the status, role and functions, and tasks of national defense."[20]

If interests are now tied to the nation-state but no longer to socioeconomic classes

within or outside it, what then are the central interests of China? First naturally is its national "development interest" (*fazhan quanyi*), which has already been codified in the notion of the Four Modernizations. But for such development to proceed smoothly, it is indispensable that China become externally secure. Therefore, China's "survival interest" (*shengchun quanyi*), which defines the central role of the PLA, is as important as the development interest. Both are mutually reinforcing. External security enhances stability, which contributes to development.Steady development leads to prosperity and consolidation, which enhance external security.[21]

Explaining the Shift in China's Military Discourse

What accounts for the shift from revolutionary internationalism to nationalism? Some observers suggest that external changes—such as the general decline of political ideologies in world affairs—may have influenced the thinking of Chinese leaders, which in turn contributed to the shift from a revolutionary, internationalist foreign policy to one that is state-centric and oriented toward nation building. Such ideological decline is reflected in the gradual winding down of the radical Maoist or national liberation movements after the end of the Vietnam War, which may have reduced the external opportunities for the Maoists to exploit in order to promote their radical agenda. Also, the "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy after Gorbachev came to power in 1985 may have denied China the opportunity to pursue a radicalized, militant foreign policy toward the Soviet Union. Both conditions may have weakened the Chinese leadership's Maoist camp in its internal struggle with the nation-building camp of Deng Xiaoping and his followers. While highly plausible, such an explanation may not adequately account for the gap between external changes and internal ideological and doctrinal adjustments, the lack of consensus among domestic groups regarding these adjustments, and domestic changes that preceded external changes.

Radical Maoist policy, for instance, continued to be dominant well into the late 1970s, even though the decline of national liberation movements took place during the early 1970s. Also, even though the CCP leadership replaced the radical Maoist policy with a nation-building policy in the late 1970s, the PLA leadership was highly ambivalent about this shift away from Maoism until the mid-1980s. Finally, the PLA's shift from preparation for a major war against the Soviet "social imperialists" to the promotion of national defense occurred in 1985. At the time, it was not clear whether Gorbachev's new thinking would translate into the removal of the "Three Obstacles" (heavy concentration of Soviet troops along the Sino-Soviet border, Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia), China's precondition for improving Sino-Soviet relations. Apparently, besides external changes,some domestic developments that may not be closely related to external changes may have also contributed to this shift.

Mao's death and the arrest of the radical Maoist leaders (known as the "Gang of Four") in late 1976 may be a crucial domestic factor that contributed to such a shift, since it led to the final consolidation of the nation-building camp. The contrast in the fate of the Four Modernizations (or nation-building) program before and after 1976 may help to illustrate this point. The program was introduced as early as 1973 by Premier Zhou Enlai and was somewhat implemented by Deng after he was rehabilitated in 1975 as the first deputy

premier of the State Council. However, Deng was severely criticized as "reversing the verdict of the Cultural Revolution" by the Maoist radicals in late 1975 and early 1976. As a result, he was removed from office and the nation-building program came to a halt. It was not until 1978 that the program was firmly adopted by the CCP leadership, as Deng was also rehabilitated in the following years.

But the CCP leadership's endorsement of nation building did not necessarily mean that the PLA would follow suit. China's military actually benefited greatly from the radical Maoist policy of "domestic class struggle" and "supporting world revolution" because many PLA leaders were promoted for being actively involved in these Maoist projects during the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, organizational and personnel changes in the top echelons of the PLA were another crucial domestic factor contributing to such a shift. But unlike the Maoist purges, Deng retired a large number of PLA leaders with Maoist radical tendencies after becoming the CMC chair in 1982. He accompanied this action with the promotion of younger officers who were less tainted by Maoist politics and more concerned with national defense. This consolidation, in turn, ensured the PLA's firm endorsement of Deng's nation-building program. Finally, the restoration of many military research and learning institutions, which were eliminated during the Cultural Revolution, also enabled a more coherent articulation of the national defense program through the steady production of new literature on ideology and military doctrine, as cited in this study.[22]

Alternative Voices in the New Military Discourse

Naturally, such a profound shift in ideology and doctrine has garnered its share of criticism from alternative voices in the new discourse. But unlike the vicious "character assassination" and confrontational rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution, this contestation takes the form of accommodation. Rather than launching a frontal attack on Maoism, for instance, the new military discourse either integrates the more moderate, nationalist aspects of the Maoist discourse into itself or makes new points that render Maoist arguments irrelevant. On the other hand, the Maoists may also choose vulnerable moments in the nation-building camp, such as the period just after Tiananmen, to insert their "class struggle" rhetoric into the mainstream military discourse.[23] In general, though, the Maoist discourse has been losing its appeal as nation building has been making more and more progress. In domestic policy, for instance, mass mobilization campaigns and incessant purges of higher leaders based on "class struggle" within and outside the PLA rarely occur, while the policy agenda is dominated largely by issues of economic development and defense modernization. In foreign policy, generous aid is no longer provided to radical ideology-based movements or regimes. Some Chinese scholars, for instance, suggest that a central reason for the worsening of the PRC–North Korea relationship is China's reluctance to provide Pyongyang with unrestricted aid and financial assistance as it had before.[24]

With the decline of Maoism, another alternative voice—a quasi-liberal discourse—has emerged among China's military officials and analysts. This discourse, which stresses peaceful approaches to resolving interstate disputes, also recognizes that under certain circumstances, military force as a deterrent may enhance the chances of peaceful

resolution of interstate disputes in one's own favor, and that diplomatic negotiations may serve as delaying tactics for gaining preparation time for war (*huanbing zhiji*) or as a way to evade responsibility (*tueihuei zheren*). Yet quasi-liberals emphasize that peaceful approaches toward resolving interstate disputes may be more desirable than the threat or use of force for reasons other than mere stratagems for relative gains.

To be sure, the predominant conservative-nationalist voice in the Chinese military's discourse, unlike the Maoist and quasi-liberal strains, contains a strong defensive orientation. The emphasis on national identity and the consolidation of national borders clearly moves the conservative-nationalist worldview away from the Maoist preoccupation with support for revolutionary movements in faraway places to a concern with proximal security threats that directly affect China's national interests—the cohesion of the Chinese nation foremost among them.

How does the conservative-nationalist discourse conceptualize such threats, especially in a more interdependent world? The next section of this study examines such a redefinition of threats in the military's conservative-nationalist discourse.

China's New Conception of National Security Threats

To the extent that internal identity and security are defined by external insecurity and threat, strenuous efforts have been made to demonstrate such insecurity and threat. Again, no longer tied to domestic and transnational class antagonism, such threats are now identified with the nation-state. The new threats fall into three major categories: the general competitive nature of interstate relationships, which may affect Chinese national power relative to other countries; the "new frontiers" of interstate competition that may intensify, and in which the survival interest of China would be negatively affected if China does not engage in that competition; and direct threats to the territorial integrity of China.

The PRC in a Competitive International Environment

On interstate relationships, the new military discourse now shares the realist view that such relationships reflect the interests of sovereign, autonomous nation-states. What is similar between this discourse and the earlier Maoist discourse is that both assume relationships are necessarily dominated more by competition and struggle than by accommodation and cooperation. What is new is that interstate competition replaces interclass antagonism as the new form of struggle.

Specifically, while many in the West believe that the decline of intense ideological, bipolar competition and the acceleration of economic interdependence will increase the chances of interstate cooperation and peace, the Chinese military discourse is less sanguine about such a prospect. Some military thinkers argue that as superpowers become increasingly uninterested in peripheral areas, regional power vacuums may emerge. This may provide the incentive for second-tier powers to seek regional hegemony by intimidating weaker adversaries; this, in turn, may trigger arms races such as the ones that already have occurred in the Middle East and Asia.[25] Such arms races may escalate and extend into the realm of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. In the longer run, these factors may increase the probability of regional wars and, in some situations, even regional nuclear wars.[26]

Similarly, economic interdependence may constrain war if all parties assume that the cost of going to war, which is exacerbated by disrupted economic interdependence, is too high to risk. But the Gulf War, in which Iraq swiftly invaded Kuwait and then was quickly defeated by U.S.-led allied forces, showed that countries do go to war to protect or promote economic interests when it is assumed that war can be won quickly and decisively so that costs can be minimized. Also, military operations are still carried out to prevent weapons proliferation and to stop drug trafficking, as shown in the Israeli raid on Iraqi nuclear facilities and the U.S. invasion of Panama, respectively. In addition, economically weakened

states may attempt to enhance their status by a military buildup or by fighting small wars. Rich countries can afford to spend a large amount of money to sustain high-quality military forces without having their economies negatively affected. Finally, arms sales offer highly profitable businesses for many Western countries. All these factors may promote military conflicts in the future, according to the new military discourse.[27]

Furthermore, while it is true that the probability of war among Western states is low since the end of the Cold War, the chances of military conflicts among the non-Western developing countries can be high. Western countries enjoy a higher level of economic development and share similar cultural norms. However, in the developing countries, rapid population growth, a lack of employment opportunities and investment capital for development, and rapid depletion of resources for feeding the population lead to competition for limited capital and natural resources. Such competition may sometimes cause military conflicts.[28] Also, most of the non-Western countries are heterogeneous in religions and ethnicity either within their societies or between them. This suggests that the chances for commonly agreed norms to regulate both intra- and interstate relationships are relatively low. Finally, since many of these countries have artificial borders imposed by the European colonial powers, disputes over border territories may occur more frequently. These factors may increase the probability of military conflicts in the developing world.[29]

The new discourse goes on to assert that because conflicts in the developing world may affect Western interests, they may provide incentives for the West to intervene militarily. As the gap between the West and the non-West expands rapidly because of accelerated scientific and technological changes in the West, the constraint on the West to conduct military operations in non-Western areas may be removed, and these areas may be used as testing grounds for the West's new military doctrine and high-tech weaponry.[30] Finally, such conflicts are not confined to the relationship between and among the developing countries or between the West and the non-West. The transitional countries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are also fraught with ethnic, religious, and territorial tensions and disputes, some of which have already erupted into open military conflicts.[31]

In short, contrary to the proclamations of some Western thinkers that the end of the Cold War is the end of history and the triumph of Western liberal-capitalist institutions and norms, the Chinese military discourse treats the Cold War's end as the removal of the fetters of class-based political ideology on history. As a result, history begins as the Cold War ends, ushering in a multipolar, yet anarchic, era in the international realm in which nation-states are the central actors, an era that bears similarity to another Chinese historical period known as the "Spring and Autumn and the Warring States" (*chunqiu zhanguo*). In such an era, "life in some countries may be rich, open, colorful, and civilized. In other countries, however, it can be miserable, congested, and amoral." Increased economic interdependence and cultural interaction may facilitate mutually beneficial development and understanding, but they may also lead to more friction and conflicts than if such interaction had not occurred. Interstate relationships may become increasingly volatile and unstable with accelerated global economic and technological change. Some countries may be doomed to poverty for being unable to narrow the widening gap between themselves and the advanced industrial and technological world. While the possibility of a zealous, ideology-driven global war may be a thing of the past,

limited, local wars may occur more frequently for these reasons, according to the new Chinese military discourse.[32]

"New Frontiers"

Because China belongs to the Third World, as claimed by the new military discourse, the country is faced with the grim prospect of interstate competition for resources and space. Accordingly, the issue of "new frontiers" has emerged as a central theme. These frontiers are where future interstate competition would intensify, and where China's continuation as a viable nation-state would be challenged if it chose not to participate in the competition. Some discussions have focused on Antarctica and outer space as strategic frontiers;[33] however, the oceans have drawn the most attention in the new military discourse.

Some writers argue that the oceans will become the principal focal point of contention among the developing countries. Among their reasons is that the demand for foodstuffs will grow tremendously with rapid population growth in most of these countries and with improved living standards in some of them. At the same time, growth in the grain supply may soon reach its limit because of a finite amount of arable land and pastures. The technological revolution in agricultural production may soon reach its limit in enhancing productivity. The increasingly precarious balance between demand and supply will force the attention of the developing countries on the oceans as a relatively underexplored frontier rich in fish and plant resources.[34]

Moreover, accelerating industrial development in these countries will soon exhaust the reserves of mineral and other raw material resources of industrial and economic value. On the other hand, deep seabed mineral deposits, such as manganese nodules (containing the raw materials for electronic, aerospace, and machinery industries) and cobalt (for steel alloy used to make missiles and rockets), are abundant and, in the case of manganese nodules, even growing. Like oceanic food resources, these deep seabed deposits remain relatively unexploited.[35] Furthermore, current economic development is led largely by fossil fuels, such as coal and oil. The nonrenewable nature of these fuels, coupled with increased extraction and consumption, will eventually exhaust proven reserves on land and again would focus the attention of most consumers to offshore reserves, which are abundant and still relatively underdeveloped. The difficulty of developing atomic energy because of scarce uranium reserves and the high cost of extraction may also direct attention to the oceans as a source of the hydrogen isotope deuterium ("heavy water").[36]

Finally, economic development and prosperity are usually associated with global trade, and robust trade depends on relatively unfettered access to transportation routes, including sea lanes. Because coastal and maritime regions are tied more closely than the hinterland to such routes, they also tend to be centers of economic prosperity. As such, they are the major sources of internal revenue, and their security is crucial to the survival of a country. At the same time, their exposure makes them vulnerable to foreign military attacks. Therefore, their security and protection determine whether a country can continue to exist in the fierce interstate competition for survival, according to the Chinese military discourse.[37]

Analysts point out that China's arable land per capita is only a third of the world's average, but that the country must feed the world's largest population, whose growth will not level off until the middle of the next century even if the current family planning policy is effectively implemented. Also, industrial and economic development is rapidly depleting raw material and energy resources on land. Importing energy means diverting revenue that could be used for other types of development. In the meantime, China is transforming itself from a landlocked, agricultural economy to a maritime trading economy. This leaves China no choice, according to the new military discourse, but to participate in the intensified competition for survival and development space in the oceans.[38]

Territorial Threats

Besides new frontiers, direct threats to China's territorial integrity have also become a focus of the new military discourse. When the Maoist, class-based discourse was dominant, the integrity of national territory was not a central issue. To strengthen class and united-front solidarity or friendship, parcels of territory were ceded to foreign countries.[39] Also, domestic class struggle and civil war necessarily divided the otherwise unified nation. A glaring example is the separation of KMT-controlled Taiwan from the CCP-governed mainland, the outcome of long years of class-based civil war. Because national identity and interests are now of paramount importance in the new military discourse, "reterritorialization" of the Chinese nation has become a central theme: "The core of national interests is its territorial integrity. . . . A nation cannot exist without territory." Therefore, "whether national territory is secured affects crucially the survival and development of the Chinese nation and the livelihood of generations to come." While the world is becoming smaller because of technological advances in communication and transportation, "it is still very difficult to find a single country that would share its territory with other countries."[40] Because internal identity and integrity are based on and defined by external differences and threats, the central issue becomes: What constitutes the major threat to China's territorial integrity?

Taiwan and Maritime Territories

The greatest security threat, according to China's new military discourse, is the continued division of the Chinese nation. After the return of Hong Kong and Macao to China, the central issue is the political separation of Taiwan from the mainland. This separation allegedly threatens China's survival in several ways. First of all, Taiwan's separation may represent symbolic support for separatist forces in other areas on the margins of China, such as Tibet, which directly threatens the unity and survival of the Chinese nation. Moreover, a separate Taiwan well armed with offensive weapons directly threatens China's more prosperous coastal and maritime regions. Also, a hostile Taiwan may become an obstacle in China's effort to develop ocean resources. These factors affect China's survival interest negatively.[41]

Furthermore, according to the discourse, "Taiwan is geostrategically located at the confluence of Chinese, American, and Japanese strategic interests." Hence, "America intends to check China in political terms and protect its economic interests in Taiwan." Therefore, the United States sells advanced arms to Taiwan "far beyond the need for

Taiwan's self-defense." Without effective control of Taiwan, "the U.S. defensive line will retreat thousands of kilometers to Guam and Hawaii." Japan has also coveted Taiwan: "500 million tons of Japan's raw materials each year and 85 percent of its energy are shipped through the sea lanes around Taiwan. Ships that carry materials to Japan pass through the Taiwan Strait every 12 minutes. If these sea lanes are cut off, the Japanese economy will be fatally jeopardized. . . . Japan is certainly unwilling to allow its lifeline to pass under a unified China." The United States and Japan may threaten China's survival in attempting to prevent China's reunification.[42]

Another major threat to China's survival concerns the dispute between China and its neighbors over maritime territories. China disagrees with North Korea, South Korea, and Japan over how to define each country's continental shelf in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea. Both China and Japan claim sovereignty over Diaoyutai (Senkaku). China and Vietnam also disagree on how to draw the border line in the Tonkin (Beibu) Gulf.[43] The most contentious issue, however, is the Spratley Islands in the South China Sea.

China's new military discourse views the Spratleys as crucial to China's survival interest for several reasons. Although all the isles and reefs amount to only 20 square kilometers, the Law of the Sea Treaty indicates that whatever state controls the Spratleys can claim sovereignty over the 800,000 square kilometers of maritime territory in the South China Sea. This is an area known as the "second Middle East," rich in oil and natural gas reserves; it also has rich mineral and tropical plant and fish resources. The Spratleys straddle the vital sea lanes between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, but more important, the southernmost reef of the Spratleys is more than 1,600 kilometers away from Hainan Island. "This maritime defense depth is of crucial importance to the security of our country under conditions of modern weapon technology (which renders military strikes longer range, faster, and more precise)," according to China's new military discourse. If the Spratleys are occupied or controlled by other countries, "our maritime defense perimeter would be reduced by several hundred kilometers. Also, our economic and military activities in the South China Sea would be constrained by other countries."[44]

Analysts note that while China has historically claimed sovereignty over the Spratley Islands, and while Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei have also made similar claims, most of the isles are occupied by foreign countries. More important, these countries have sped up the exploration of oil and natural gas and the construction of permanent structures such as lighthouses and other quasi-military facilities across the archipelago. Because the South China Sea is the salient aspect of China's "new frontier," these claims and activities have directly violated the territorial integrity of the Chinese nation and threaten its development, survival, and strategic interests.[45]

Border Threats

The land border between China and its neighbors, according to this discourse, is another area where China's survival interest may be threatened. While three-quarters of the more than 20,000-kilometer-long land border has been settled through diplomatic negotiations, the rest still remains to be resolved. The 2,000-kilometer-long Sino-Indian border has yet to be agreed on by the two sides. India still "occupies" a region of more than 90,000 square kilometers on the eastern sector and an area of 450 square kilometers

on the western sector of the border. Both countries also disagree over an area of more than 2,000 square kilometers in its middle sector. Similarly, the land border between China and Vietnam has yet to be clearly defined. Also, although China and Russia reached agreement over the eastern sector (4,200 kilometers) and the western sector (54 kilometers) of their common border in 1991 and 1994, disagreement over major islands on the Heilong River and Ussuri River has yet to be revolved. The linkage between external "antagonistic" forces and religious and ethnic "separatist" forces in Tibet and Xinjiang may also undermine the territorial integrity and therefore the survival of the Chinese nation.[46]

Finally, the tension between the North and the South on the Korean Peninsula may also jeopardize China's national security. Economic decline and famine in the North, the reluctance of the North Korean government to introduce economic reform, its interest in nuclear weapons, and the military standoff reinforced by a continued U.S. military presence in the South may cause instability both in North Korea and in North-South relations. A possible collapse of the North or the eruption of war may mean a high security cost for China, either through massive refugee inflows or the need to take preventive measures to ensure its own security.[47]

Means to Neutralize Threats

If the new military discourse views threats originating from conflicts between national interests, no longer between antagonistic classes that transcend national borders, the means to neutralize such threats may also have to be viewed as *nationally organized* rather than *class-based*. Therefore, the articulation of such means has centered on three themes: national unity, the central role of a national military force in defusing external threats, and consolidation of the national territorial border.

National Unity

The end of the Cold War removed the danger of a global ideological conflagration, and this certainly enhances China's security. On the other hand, according to the discourse, China still faces many external threats, albeit limited in scope. In such a competitive environment filled with uncertainty and threats, internal identity and cohesiveness are deemed absolutely necessary to diffuse such external threats. For this to happen, however, the revolutionary concept of "large-scale class struggle" needs to be jettisoned because such struggle leads to internal infighting and division; undermines national unity; and, in this case, impedes the Chinese from identifying with the Chinese nation.[48]

Moreover, economic reform "has produced different strata and groups that have different interests. . . . Even in the state bureaucracy, financial, political, and military agencies have different interests and needs. They all have some impact on policymaking and implementation, and influence national behavior to a certain extent." However, "an important indicator of a mature modern nation is its ability to transcend party, class, ethnic and other group interests . . . and make policy based on national interests." This is because "national interests are higher than any particular interest or the sum of all particular interests in a nation." To coordinate interests, the government may set regulations and develop institutions for channeling diverse interests to the common interests.[49]

More important, "a common goal needs to be carefully chosen and articulated so that people can identify with it in their hearts and minds." This goal cannot be so broad and lofty (as in the notion of world revolution) that it cannot be realized and is therefore irrelevant to the average person, nor so narrow that it excludes many people (as in the concept of class struggle). "The *survival of the Chinese nation* is an ideal common goal." It is not too broad or too narrow, and it also connotes a "consciousness of worry and concern" (*youhuan yisi*) over external threats. "This consciousness should stimulate a sense of responsibility over the destiny of the nation, and an enterprising spirit to improve the survival environment of the country." This in turn provides the commonalty that serves the basis of national cohesiveness and unity.[50]

To further reinforce popular identification with this common goal, it is also necessary to open up the general question of national defense to public debate. "Without understanding the relevant issues through debate, people will have problems in identifying with this goal." Also, some level of rational and intelligent debate may reduce the chances for policy blunders. As noted, "many decisions to launch and escalate wars are based on miscalculation of other countries' intentions and capabilities. These decisions cause internal division, economic depression, and political turmoil, outcomes contrary to the original wishes of these countries." On the other hand, too much public debate may also undermine central coordination and control, and cause confusion, miscalculation, and escalation of interstate tension. Therefore, such debate requires careful coordination. "Concrete, specific military and diplomatic programs are not subjects to open debate."[51]

The Role of Military Force

Beyond national unity, specific methods employed by the state to avert threats are also extensively discussed in the discourse. "Political diplomacy, economic cooperation, and scientific and cultural exchange all serve to enhance national interests." The quasi-liberal discourse points out, for instance, that to fight wars, countries must sustain unusually high military expenditures, draining scarce resources from and delaying economic development. For states that lack overwhelming unilateral superiority, protracted interstate wars also negatively affect economic interests and security of neighboring countries, as shown by the Iran-Iraq war, invariably contributing to a regional economic recession. Moreover, advancements in military technology render modern war unprecedentedly destructive. Also, with proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, war may more easily escalate and cross the nuclear threshold. Therefore, rather than achieving the desired objective, states may find conducting a modern war prohibitively costly. Furthermore, launching wars over territorial disputes may not necessarily lead to a fundamental resolution of issues and points of contention. On the contrary, as shown in border wars between Iran and Iraq, Iraq and Kuwait, Syria and Jordan, and India and Pakistan, war exacerbates tensions and deepens hatred, sowing the seeds for newer wars, further disrupting border stability.[52]

Because Third World countries, including China, are relatively poor, their central task is economic development, the success of which depends on a peaceful environment and peaceful resolution of interstate disputes. The peaceful resolution of such disputes not only enables these countries to concentrate their resources and attention on developing

their own economies, it is also conducive to enhancing mutual understanding and trust, which should contribute to a friendly environment in which economic cooperation and exchange may thrive. Finally, the peaceful resolution of disputes may deter power politics and hegemonism. Because interstate disputes over territories and natural resources may provide excuses for intervention by major powers and the violation of sovereignty of countries involved, peaceful resolution of these disputes may reduce the conditions for intervention, thus reducing the potential for such actions by a superpower.[53]

If peaceful resolution of disputes can sometimes be more desirable than the threat or use of force, what then are the specific approaches, according to China's new military discourse? Three are specified in the quasi-liberal discourse: negotiation, military diplomacy, and nonlethal means of resolving disputes. First, several major aspects of negotiation have been explicated. In border disputes, for instance, negotiation requires first of all that steps be taken to maintain the status quo and tranquility—including withdrawing armed personnel from, or preventing them from entering, the disputed areas—and to establish a mechanism of verification based on mutual trust to increase transparency. A joint investigation of the dispute is also necessary to clarify the current status and to establish the factual basis for negotiations.[54]

During the negotiations, several principles may be followed. One such principle is "mutual understanding and accommodation" (*huliang hurang*), requiring both sides to sit down peacefully, explain in earnest their own position and listen patiently to the other side's view, and attempt to find commonalties and narrow differences. This principle not only helps to explore mutually acceptable ways of resolving the dispute but also enhances mutual understanding and trust, thus creating a positive and friendly atmosphere, which should enhance the chances of reaching agreement. In general, the quasi-liberal discourse urges following the principle of being "fair and reasonable" (*heqing heli*): "All countries treat territory as sacred and inviolable, and are unwilling to make territorial concession to others. But if both sides pursue only unilateral interests and are disrespectful of the interests of the other side, this leads not only to irresolution of disputes, but may also threaten one's own territorial sovereignty." As a result, it is both desirable and necessary to strike an appropriate balance between national principle on the one hand and flexibility based on a good understanding of current reality on the other. Flexibility in turn should lead to mutual adjustment and concessions, which may provide practical benefits to both sides in a dispute.[55]

Finally, in negotiations on disputes over territories that are rich in natural resources and involve many countries, the basic principle is "sovereignty belongs to us, but disputes can be shelved, and exploration can be carried out jointly." The quasi-liberal discourse acknowledges that certain disputes may be too difficult to resolve quickly because of either too large a gap in understanding or the involvement of too many parties. One approach is treating the resolution of the dispute as a prerequisite for improving the overall interstate relationship. While this may serve as an impetus to search for a mutually agreed-upon solution, it may also increase the chances of more frictions and misunderstanding, possibly leading to armed clashes. Naturally, this may not only negatively affect the interstate relationship, but also complicate the territorial dispute. An alternative approach is to shelve the dispute for the time being and focus on improving the interstate

relationship. "This may contribute not only to the normalcy and stability of the disputed area, but also to dispelling mutual misunderstanding of each other's position." Also, the joint exploration of natural resources connects the otherwise separate contending parties and brings about economic benefits to all, which may in turn contribute to a positive atmosphere for reasonable resolution of the dispute in the future.[56]

Military diplomacy, which is considered an approach that may contribute to alleviation of interstate tensions, involves ports of call and military personnel visits, joint military exercises, and military participation in international scientific expeditions. The quasi-liberal discourse recognizes that military diplomacy may serve egoistic national interests. For example, military visits may serve the purpose of exercising influence and control over smaller states, which may also exploit such opportunities to enhance their own security. Ports of call could also fulfill the goal of deterring potential adversaries by demonstrating military might. Moreover, joint exercises and participation in scientific expeditions may make it possible to enhance national interests within bilateral and multilateral institutional or legal frameworks. On the other hand, quasi-liberals argue that military diplomacy may indeed promote mutual understanding, enhance cooperation, and solidify friendship, particularly if it increases transparency regarding military intentions and capabilities. This in turn should contribute to lowered interstate tensions.[57]

Finally, nonlethal, low-intensity means of resolving disputes are another new approach that has attracted scholarly attention. It is recognized that particular types of defensive methods can be developed and deployed to reduce or prevent aggressive or illegal behavior of a foreign intruder, but not to the extent of destroying the intruder's arms and personnel. This alternative in turn may "reduce the chances for the dispute to escalate to the levels of a diplomatic incident, an armed conflict, or even a regional war." In resolving disputes over fishing rights and interests, for instance, naval ships can be equipped with specialized fishnet cutters, which can damage the fishing equipment of the intruder but not the intruder's ship and personnel. Also, if foreign warships cruise too close to naval bases, towboats equipped with loudspeakers can be used to warn intruders away from territorial waters rather than firing warning or real shots. This approach should prevent escalation that could be caused by more militarized approaches.[58]

While necessary, however, these methods are not sufficient to ensure the survival of the Chinese nation, according to the predominant voices in China's new military discourse. Because threats to survival may escalate into military conflicts, the crucial role of military force must not be neglected. Moreover, while some of these threats may be alleviated through bilateral or multilateral diplomacy and trade, "a credible military force posture may enhance the chances for political and economic approaches to succeed without resorting to force." Finally, the current emphasis on economic development carries with it the seed of a new competition. "After twenty or so years of strategic adjustment, the world will enter an era of fierce competition." In the meantime, accelerated scientific and technological innovations lead to great advances in the sophistication of arms. "While China's defense modernization must subordinate itself to economic development, the tendency of beating swords into ploughshares also needs to be reversed." If the technological gap between China and other major countries is allowed to widen rather

than to be narrowed, China may end up in a "hostage crisis," in which its survival is at stake and therefore economic development itself is endangered.[59]

For the military to become an effective means to neutralize threats and enhance China's survival interest, some argue that the military itself needs to adjust on several fronts. First of all, notions such as world "class struggle" or "politics takes command," in which "small disagreements are elevated to the level of class struggle and comrades are treated as enemies," must be abandoned. Severe internal divisions caused by these notions only reduce the effectiveness to deal with external threats. Also, because the central role of the military is now national defense against external threats, rather than class struggle against domestic and external class enemies, its composition and ideational outlook should be more *national* than *class-based*. This means that "under the banner of national interests, we do not require that every military personnel becomes a communist. But it is necessary that everyone becomes a nationalist (*minzhu zhuyize*) and a patriot (*aiguo zhuyizhe*)."[60]

Finally, because the military no longer serves the purpose of promoting internal class struggle, world revolution, or preparing for global war, the Maoist emphasis on "human factors" such as a "people's war" and "revolutionary consciousness" has been largely de-emphasized. The new emphasis has been placed on developing technology-intensive services such as the navy, the special-operations and quick-reaction detachments of the ground forces, the air force, and the strategic missile forces. Such development stresses mobility-based force projection, survivability, and lethality.

The shift of emphasis from "people's war" to technology is allegedly necessary for several reasons. Because future competition, threats, and potential military conflicts are more likely to occur in the maritime regions and on the high seas, a navy more capable of forward-deployment is indispensable. Land-based threats may arise from border regions that tend to be geographically remote and complex; such conflicts may occur unexpectedly and be short in duration. To gain the upper hand, special-operations forces designed for the peculiar geographical conditions of a particular border region and rapid reaction forces are also absolutely necessary. Because "local war under modern conditions" cannot be won without air superiority, a more sophisticated air force is also crucial. Furthermore, because of nuclear weapons proliferation, the nuclear option cannot be completely excluded from future local war scenarios; hence, a strategic rocket force is also indispensable. Finally, because future threats are limited in scope, a credible technology-based military deterrent may be sufficient to keep threats from escalating into open conflicts.[61]

Border Consolidation

The ways and means to consolidate China's long and complex border are another crucial issue in the military's ideological and doctrinal shift as reflected in its new discourse. During the Maoist period, the sanctity of this border was largely neglected, and small pieces of territory were ceded in order to strengthen revolutionary solidarity and friendship. In contrast, the new principle of border defense is "fighting for every inch of land and every drop of water" (*cuntu bizheng, disui burang*). Such a principle "applies to any country, no matter how big or how powerful it is"; it also applies to *friendly* countries. The military discourse notes that China's northern border defense was neglected during the 1950s for reasons of revolutionary solidarity and friendship, and that "China paid a

high cost as its relationship with its northern neighbor [the Soviet Union] deteriorated." As a result, the discourse concludes, "sovereignty is sovereignty, and friendship is friendship. No matter how close and friendly, we can't be generous on the territorial question. In international relations, interstate relationships shift frequently, but national interests stay eternal."[62]

Specifically, economic development of the border regions is deemed crucial to neutralize threats and enhance border security: "A higher living standard leads to popular support for, and identification with, the government and the military. With a heightened sense of patriotism, people are more willing to follow border regulations and participate in reserve training." Needless to say, economic development also contributes to better social order. Economic prosperity also helps to stabilize the morale of the border military units because military facilities are better maintained, and communications and transportation are highly developed. Conversely, "In economically backward border regions, people live a poor life, infrastructure is underdeveloped, and border defense construction is also weak. All these make it very difficult to conduct border defense work."[63] The military discourse notes in particular that the border between China and Outer Mongolia is relatively tranquil. This is attributed to the relative economic prosperity of Inner Mongolia, stemming from farming and trade—the envy of the Outer Mongolians, who still keep their nomadic way of life. Similarly, it is hoped that an economic strategy based on directing the more prosperous coastal provinces to invest in Tibet may dampen popular support for "separatism."[64]

However, economic consolidation must also be accompanied by military consolidation. "Otherwise, economic prosperity cannot be sustained," according to the discourse. Border regions still face possible "foreign aggression," subversion by ethnic and religious "separatist forces," and smuggling and drug trafficking, all of which may disrupt stability along the border. Military consolidation first of all requires concentrating resources on "flash points" (*re dian*) where disputes over territorial and maritime interests constitute a "clear and present danger." Second, it is necessary to concentrate resources on specific items in the content of military consolidation. For border regions on the plateau, these items include transportation and communications facilities, materiel stockpiles, and quick reaction and control capabilities in cold weather and high altitude. For maritime regions, the items include developing larger combat ships capable of "offshore" (*jin hai*) operations, a departure from the old emphasis on smaller ships for "coastal" (*jin an*) defense, and medium- and long-range combat aircraft.[65]

Finally, the narrow and static notion of "guarding the border" (*shubian*) must be replaced by the more modern and dynamic concept of "flexible border defense" (*da bianfang*), according to the military discourse. *Shubian* refers to the defense of a static land or coastal "line" from enemy crossing, but "today, such line-based defense cannot fulfill the sacrosanct task of border defense, since modern border defense involves the multiple tasks of defending against foreign aggression, securing border social stability, promoting border economic development, and enhancing interaction with foreign countries." *Da bianfang* allegedly meets the new requirements of national security for several reasons—above all, for the creation of a more substantial border-management space. For instance, "it corrects the unscientific error of the old concept treating China's

coastal line as the border." Instead, the coastal line is now claimed to be the *center* of China's economic activities, as the imagined border is pushed considerably outward. Also, the new concept "relies on advanced reconnaissance technologies to create a more substantial surveillance space." This "surveillance space" in turn gains more early warning time for reaction, thus enhancing China's security. Finally, unlike the old concept, which stresses passive reaction and resistance, the new concept requires the deployment of modern military technologies. Such technologies make it possible for China to deter provocation, thus further ensuring China's survival interest.[66]

Of course, it is one thing to argue that military thinkers and analysts have particular views on how their country's national security policies should be oriented and prioritized. It is quite another thing to attempt to show that these views—especially if they touch on such an amorphous yet crucial issue as national identity—go largely unmediated into the stuff of policymaking. Even in mature communist regimes, where party, state, and the security apparatus enjoy a high degree of collusion, the armed forces have always been subjected to political control and party discipline.

Yet in the case of the PRC, the conservative nationalist strain of the military's discourse, while not defining Chinese foreign policy and national security, apparently has come to serve as the new paradigm among the PRC's leaders for shaping a new national identity and assessing China's external security environment. How the PLA acquired such a role is the subject of the next section.

Chinese Nationalism and Civil–Military Relations

This study has shown that the post-1985 Chinese military discourse has shifted significantly away from Maoist ideology and doctrine. Regarding national identity, this discourse treats the nation-state as the central category that defines internal identity and security as well as external differences and competition, rather than the Maoist premise of subnational and transnational socioeconomic classes. Regarding threats to security, unlike the Maoist assumption of domestic and transnational class antagonism, this discourse regards interstate competition as the central source of threats. These threats include the general competitive nature of the interstate relationship, which may affect Chinese national power relative to other countries; the "new frontiers" of such competition, where the survival interest of China would be negatively affected if China does not participate in the competition; and direct threats to the territorial integrity of China. Regarding the means to neutralize such threats, instead of the Maoist premise of class-based means, this discourse advocates nation-based means, including national unity, a nationally organized military force, and the consolidation of national boundaries. All these support the central argument of this study, that the Chinese military discourse has shifted significantly from Maoist revolutionary internationalism to conservative nationalism.

What then is the practical influence of this shift in the Chinese military discourse? The implications can be discerned at three levels: the military-societal relationship, the military-party-state relationship, and intramilitary relationships.

At the societal level, there has been plenty of evidence to show that nationalist sentiment has been on the rise in recent years among Chinese intellectuals, foreign policy analysts, and the masses.[67] Besides immediate external events, a variety of systemic changes or factors may have contributed to the rise of Chinese nationalism. Modernization, for example, means more wealth and technological advances, enabling people to do things more efficiently and resolve bigger problems. As such, it may translate into a national sense of empowerment and self-confidence. Increased mobility from cross-regional flows of labor and materials to take advantage of economic scale may mean an enhanced national consciousness and identity, eventually weakening local and provincial identities. Increased interaction between China and foreign countries may also awaken consciousness about the difference between what is Chinese and what is foreign. Such consciousness might have been less pronounced had such interactions not occurred. Because of its authoritarian nature, the Chinese regime may also restrict liberal challenges and channel public consciousness toward the more collectivist and nationalistic direction. However, these factors may be necessary but not sufficient to account for the rise of nationalism in China, because the content of this nationalism is dominated by issues of national identity and security, including Taiwan, the South China Sea, and other irredentist claims. Therefore, it

is highly plausible that the PLA's agitation (usually dubbed "national defense education") for a bounded historical and geographical space known as China that needs to be secured, and its attempt to match this agitation with military capabilities, may be another crucial factor contributing to the rise of nationalism in China.

Yet the rise of Chinese nationalism needs to be qualified in several ways. Among those who benefit only marginally from the wealth and technologies of modernization, for instance, the prevalent sense may be one of frustration, vulnerability, discontent, and disfranchisement, rather than confidence and empowerment. The nationalizing effect of cross-regional mobility may be somewhat mitigated by a market-induced countervailing trend: devolving decision making from national bureaucracies to localities, firms, and individuals. Increased contact with foreign cultures may have the effect of developing multiple or new identities just as plausibly as its leading to the reinforcement of the old identity and rejection of the newer ones. Also, the liberalizing and pluralizing trend associated with the more diffused wealth, technology, and information may be so significant that the regime's effort to channel public consciousness toward nationalist and collectivist goals may prove to be quite difficult. While in the minority, there is also a highly resonant and expanding liberal voice among China's intellectuals, who could prove to be decisive in elucidating the linkages between globalism, marketization, and the diffusion of liberal-capitalist values.[68]

Furthermore, because of budgetary, technological, and organizational constraints, it may be difficult for the PLA to develop the military capabilities that can match its pronounced irredentist claims, particularly if its potential adversaries also engage in military modernization. Even though external events such as the Gulf War and the conflict in Kosovo may serve as catalysts for accelerating PLA modernization, they may also remind the PLA that the cost of military adventurism may still be too high because of the substantial gap in technology between the Western militaries and the PLA, and the higher probability of Western military intervention in intrastate affairs. Finally, the possible loss of benefits from the disruption of economic ties between China and other areas of the world may also persuade the Chinese leaders not to pursue irredentist claims through the threat or use of force.

Nationalism and the PRC's National Security Decision Making

One should recognize that China is not a liberal democracy, nor even a democratizing polity, but rather a postrevolutionary authoritarian regime in which political power is still highly monopolized by a Leninist party. Even though the CCP has surrendered substantial decision making to the market in order to invigorate the economy (which does not contradict and may very well serve the party's mercantilist goal of enhancing "comprehensive national power"), it still controls the media and makes important decisions on allocating substantial material resources. As shown in China's reaction to the bombing of its embassy in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the party can manipulate the meaning of external events and public sentiment for its own purpose, particularly if the party's legitimacy relies more and more on a managed nationalist agenda and less and less on a revolutionary agenda based on class struggle. It can also choose to be

"persuaded" by the PLA to increase funding for defense modernization to match capabilities with irredentist claims. Finally, party and PLA leaders can remain insensitive to the putatively high cost that China's bellicose behavior incurs in disrupting economic ties, as shown in the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. Aggressive behavior may also take place if party and PLA leaders calculate that the cost may be higher for taking too little or too much action, or that the cost of a middle-range response may be lower than the cost the response may incur to the adversary. For these reasons, the rise of Chinese nationalism and its implications for Asian security may deserve more careful analysis.

With regard to the military-party-state relationship, the premise that the new discourse represents a PLA view that is fundamentally different from that of the party may not be empirically valid. As pointed out previously, it is the party that initiated the nation-building program at the expense of class struggle and world revolution; the PLA actually lagged behind in following the party line. Within the general new paradigm of nation building and defense, however, different bureaucracies have developed their own institutional biases and priorities that may differ from one another. To be sure, the PLA's support of the ideological shift may be viewed as a tactical maneuver in the mundane realm of bureaucratic politics. Viewed in such a way, the PLA is simply another actor in the Chinese political arena that is competing for attention and material resources. Because the PLA is the central institution that deals with external threats, it is only natural that, compared with civilian institutions, it tends to take a bleaker view of China's security environment. For instance, it has become almost routine for the PLA to confront the more dovish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whether the issue involves weapons proliferation, the South China Sea, or Taiwan.

In the end, inter-institutional conflicts are arbitrated by top party leaders. On many of these issues, the party's arbitration has favored the PLA, and such support may embolden the army to be more assertive in the debate over national security policy. Unlike Western militaries, which are more narrowly focused on the functional and technical issues of the military profession and leave national identity and security issues in civilian hands, the PLA apparently is involved heavily in both areas. This is not to say that Western militaries are totally divorced from national identity and security policy debates or that Chinese civilian officials are completely excluded from such debates in their country. Rather, it suggests only that because this policy arena tends to be dominated by civilians in Western countries and by the PLA in China, the role of the militaries in the West and the role of civilians in China tend to be marginal and weak.

A Model for Civilian Control of the PLA

A central reason for the seemingly weak civilian control of the PLA may be that the armed forces are accountable only to the party, not to state authorities such as the National People's Congress (NPC) and the State Council.[69] The cozy relationship between the PLA and the party, China's two most powerful institutions, coupled with the almost total separation of the PLA from the control of state authorities, may not bode well for China's future security policy behavior.[70] The PLA's current advocacy of a conservative and defensive nationalist agenda, rather than a more expansionist one, stems from its calculation that the Chinese economy is not yet large enough to sustain a bigger defense

budget and that the PLA is still far less powerful than the Western militaries, but much less beholden to institutional checks and balances.

To establish more effective civilian control of the PLA, two institutional changes may be necessary. One would separate the PLA from the party and place it under the control of the NPC and the State Council. This means that the Central Military Commission would answer to the NPC but not the CCP Politburo, and that a genuine Ministry of National Defense would be established within the State Council.[71] The second would expand the role of civilian policy and research institutions in the debates over national identity and security policy, and reduce and minimize the role of the PLA in this arena so that it can be confined to its narrower military-technical concerns. Both changes may not only establish more effective institutional checks and balances, but also allow for more of the quasi-liberal voice to contest and contain the nationalistic rhetoric of the PLA. These changes may become increasingly necessary, particularly if the PLA adopts a more aggressive nationalist agenda as it becomes stronger in the future.

Regarding the influence of the new discourse on intra-PLA relationships, some observers suggest that the new discourse represents a group of disgruntled military intellectuals in a factional power struggle within the PLA leadership. It is certainly true that there was a witch hunt for those who advocated a "bourgeois ideology" of "nationalizing" or "statizing" the army (*jundui guojia hua*) right after the 1989 Tiananmen protests, and a reemphasis on the class identity (*jieji xing*) of the PLA. However, this brief change of course may have been an exception to the norm, since major political battles had been fought prior to 1985, battles that the Dengists had largely won. After the removal of Yang Baibin as director of the PLA's General Political Department in 1992, this change of course was reversed, and national defense and military modernization again became the central theme of the PLA discourse, even though the party's absolute leadership of the PLA has also been stressed.[72]

Conservative Nationalism as Paradigmatic Shift or Doctrinal Change?

The focus of this study is to document the shift of meaning in Chinese military discourse. As emphasized throughout this work, the primary purpose of the new discourse seems to be educational—namely, to transform the cognitive paradigm that shapes the way the PLA thinks about external threats and internal identity. The issue of how effective the new discourse has been in causing a paradigmatic shift may require a separate analysis. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that such a shift is occurring. A survey of recent analyses on the PLA and interviews with PLA personnel suggest that the Maoist paradigm has generally lost its appeal, because little evidence exists to show that China has any active program in promoting domestic class struggle and supporting radical insurgent groups in foreign countries.[73]

On security policy, the central concern is defined by a neo-nationalist discourse and dwells on national identity issues, such as the mainland's reunification with Taiwan, and on national security issues, such as defending national territory and securing trading routes, economic resources, and industrial infrastructure. On warfighting doctrine, the new emphasis has been placed on preparing for technology-based local, limited wars, in

which pre-emptive strikes and quick resolution are stressed. These are significant departures from the Maoist emphasis on preparing for a total war based on numerical superiority in troop levels, in which second strikes and protraction play the central role.[74]

   If such a new paradigm has come to shape the contours of China's national security policy, what do these new policies call for regarding specific, proximal "threats"? More important, how should the United States adjust its policies for the management of Asian security in light of these new threat perceptions?

Implications of China's New Military Discourse for U.S. Policy and the Management of Asian Security

I f the Chinese military's new discourse has indeed resulted in a new paradigm for assessing national security threats, what should be the appropriate U.S. response to this paradigmatic shift? Such a response may need to involve two major elements:balancing and engagement.

With regard to balancing, there are three alternatives: Cold War–style containment, balance of power, and balance of threat. The Cold War–style containment, which involves an all-out military buildup, trade embargo, and linking human rights violations to economic and military sanctions, is apparently unwarranted. China's security goals now center on nationalist-based irredentist claims over areas close to China's borders, not on an ideology-driven global crusade and hegemony. But these proximal claims are not yet matched with appropriate capabilities. This means that China is not going to compete with the United States in Europe, South America, Africa,and, to a lesser extent, in the Middle East, as did the Soviet Union;nor is China interested in organizing a competing alliance.

Imposing economic sanctions as a component of the containment policy may hurt ordinary Chinese much more than they hurt the regime. Containment may also fuel xenophobia in China,leading to a bellicose Chinese policy that may hurt Western interests in both China and Asia. Assuming a containment-induced tension that escalates into a hot or cold war in which China is defeated (as happened to Germany and Japan in World War II and to the Soviet Union in the Cold War) and fragments, the United States may be unwilling to deal with the high cost of postcollapse assistance,including handling a possible civil war, massive refugee exodus, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction into undesirable hands, as well as occupying China militarily and financing reconstruction.

Because Chinese security policy is being "normalized"from revolutionary internationalism to nationalism, and the security challenges that China poses may be regional rather than global, regional balance of power may be a better strategy than global containment. Yet this strategy may suffer from two inadequacies.First,balance-of-power advocates tend to be concerned less with the specific threats than with the overall regional security challenges that a nationalistic China may pose. The lack of careful analysis of specific threats,however, may produce overreaction. On the basis of general concerns, maximalist measures such as organizing alliances and forward deployment of military forces soon follow. Such measures are not only likely to cause a waste of resources in response to exaggerated security challenges, but may also trigger tension prematurely. The lack of careful analysis of threats may cause underreaction as well—namely, a minimalist

insensitivity toward changes. Such a myopic policy will not be helpful in enhancing national interests or regional security.[75]

The second inadequacy is that balance-of-power advocates seldom examine the possible effects that internal factors such as regime type may produce on foreign policy behavior and therefore may neglect the plausible assumption that while modernization may empower and nationalize China, it may also liberalize it. To the extent liberal democracies may be more peaceful with one another than with authoritarian or revolutionary regimes, a liberalized, democratized China may be the ultimate solution to the security challenges of Asia. To compensate for these two inadequacies, a balance-of-threat strategy and an engagement strategy may be necessary.

What separates balance of threat from balance of power is that the former deals with specific threats, while the latter relates to the general concern of a rising power that may challenge the status quo. The latter may not be an appropriate strategy because in general terms, the kind of Chinese nationalism discussed here is defensive and conservative in nature, but not yet imperialistic and offensive. Faced with an array of proximal security challenges, China's policymakers seek to alleviate them through anticipating positive external changes, engaging in diplomacy, and promoting economic and cultural interaction, which may reduce the need to resort to force.

China's Security Challenges

With the end of the Cold War, China certainly feels much less vulnerable regarding its long border with Russia. This fact can be attributed to several developments: the breakup of the Soviet Union and the decline of Russian economic and military power; the successful conclusion of a 1997 bilateral arms reduction treaty and the most recent border demarcation negotiations; Russian fear of NATO expansion, which motivates Russia to develop a more cooperative relationship with China, including sales of advanced arms to China; and increased economic interaction stemming from direct foreign investment and trade.

Nevertheless, there are still sources of friction, such as Russian suspicion of Chinese intentions after acquiring Russian advanced arms; disagreement over the ownership of some islands in the Ussuri and Heilong Rivers; and Russian complaints of too many Chinese laborers and traders in Russia's Far East. However, it is difficult to see how these sources of tension may cause military conflicts. The prominence of nuclear warfighting in Russian military doctrine to compensate for its decline in conventional capabilities; China's agreement to deploy offensive arms acquired from Russia sufficiently far away from Russia; Chinese dependence on Russia as the primary source of high-tech arms; and Russia as a potential ally in deterring Western "hegemonism" may help to reduce the incentive for China to adopt an offensive military posture regarding Russia. Also, the number and scope of disputes over islands have been reduced in recent negotiations, and prospects for them to be resolved are reportedly good. Strenuous efforts are also being made to regulate border transactions on both sides, some of which have turned out to be relatively successful.[76] Finally, Chinese leaders certainly may be more concerned with other priorities and would like to see a relatively tranquil, status quo relationship with Russia.

China's relationship with Mongolia and the Central Asian states may be complicated

by the fact that northwestern China contains substantial ethnic minority communities made up of the predominant nationality in those countries. But the potential for any significant conflict is mitigated by successful multilateral arms reduction and bilateral border demarcation negotiations, as well as agreements on investment, trade, and aid. Both may reduce the incentive for these countries to either actively support or provide safe haven for ethnic and religious separatist movements from these regions of China. These agreements are accompanied by China's domestic policies of promoting investment and trade, affirmative action programs, migration, and repression of "separatist" groups within provinces adjacent to these states. These policies may achieve varying degrees of success, and some may have the unintended effect of aggravating interethnic tension in these provinces. Yet it may be premature to argue that such tension is so acute that some sort of interethnic civil war is in the making that may escalate to interstate armed conflict because of outside intervention or Chinese cross-border incursions to destroy the separatists' "safe havens."

China may also feel less vulnerable in its relationship with the Southeast Asian countries and North Korea. Even though China has disputes with some Southeast Asian countries over maritime and land territories, they are neither necessary nor sufficient to lead to military conflicts. The seeming lack of military capabilities to sustain an offensive operation over the disputed Spratley Islands; the high cost of constructing and maintaining structures on those faraway, unprotected reefs; the possible high cost of oil and natural gas exploration in remote, insecure maritime regions; and the possible disruption of trade and investment with these countries all may contribute to China's inclination toward diplomatic rather than military solutions to these disputes. This inclination may explain China's increasingly visible profile in regional cooperative bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum.[77]

China has also come close to resolving its land border dispute with Vietnam, an initiative that has been accompanied by clearing land mines in border regions and building cross-border roads. Developing cross-border infrastructure also characterizes China's relationship with other adjacent Southeast Asian countries, all of which contribute to increased bilateral investment and trade. Frictions may arise from increased interaction, but few may warrant the need to resort to force. In the case of North Korea, China attempts to improve its relationship by providing fuel and food aid and encouraging North Korean leaders to adopt Chinese-style economic reform policies so that economic conditions can be improved and the flow of refugees can be reduced. China also works with South Korea and the United States to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula and to resolve nuclear proliferation issues. While some of these policy programs may work better than others, and while disagreements remain between China and some of the region's countries, it is difficult to foresee any imminent and major military conflict in which China plays a central role.

However, China may feel highly vulnerable in its relationship with India. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by several major developments, including India's control of large chunks of territory that China claims; the disruption of recent bilateral efforts to alleviate border tension and resolve territorial disputes by India's recent testing of nuclear weapons, which has created another obstacle in improving their relationship; the

operation from India of an active Tibetan independence movement, which is quite successful in internationalizing the Tibet issue and enhancing an independence consciousness within Tibet; and a relatively low level of bilateral investment and trade.

In addressing its vulnerability with India, however, China is most likely to take a defensive position that focuses on conserving what is in its possession, rather than an offensive posture that places an emphasis on acquiring what it claims. Such a defensive position may entail stockpiling materiel and improving communications and road linkages at forward positions along the borders and developing infrastructure that links these positions with the rear so that reinforcements may be more swiftly deployed in the event of conflict. Some intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) may also be redeployed to enhance nuclear deterrence. Such efforts would most likely be accompanied by providing military aid to Pakistan, which may in turn deflect Indian military pressure on the Sino-Indian border.

Several factors may encourage China to take such a defensive stance, including India's acquisition of nuclear weapons; difficult logistics to sustain an offensive operation on high, remote, and geographically harsh plateaus; and the general perception of the disputed territories as barren mountain ranges that have little economic value. An exception to this perception is the land under Indian control called Arunachal, which China also claims as its territory. But the Chinese claim may be used more as leverage in negotiating with India over territories that are under Chinese control, but also claimed by India, than as an agenda item to be acted upon. Chinese security analysts at least privately acknowledge that it may be immensely difficult for China to recapture this land in the near future.[78]

Uncertainty about Taiwan

Within this general framework of conservative and defensive nationalism, however, there is one element of Chinese national security policy that threatens an offensive posture, and that is Taiwan. China's leaders have hoped that political negotiations, increases in cross-strait investment and trade, and cultural affinity may eventually lead to peaceful reunification. Yet uncertainty about this optimistic scenario is enhanced by Beijing's lack of real jurisdiction over Taiwan; the glaring gap in per capita wealth between the two; and Taiwan's movement toward democracy, which draws sympathy and support from Western countries. All of these factors may contribute to Taiwan's developing a distinctive identity that may become increasingly different and separate from that of the mainland. This new identity in turn may reduce Taiwan's willingness to reunify and strengthen its desire for independence. On the other hand, with the decline of revolutionary ideology in China, irredentist nationalism is turning into a cornerstone of regime legitimacy; hence, reunification becomes an issue of almost central significance, and an offensive military posture may be exercised to prevent this centrifugal trend, if not to pursue steps for immediate reunification.

Therefore, a balance-of-threat strategy essentially serves to increase the cost of such offensive threats so that only peaceful means can be pursued to resolve disputes. Even though China's more offensive, threatening posture may increase Taiwan's vulnerability, several factors may serve to alleviate this vulnerability. The fact that Taiwan is in a

defensive posture means that it can inflict very high casualties on an invading force even without significant superiority in the quality and quantity of arms (because the defensive side is much less vulnerable behind fortifications than the offensive side, which is in the open). The provision of a large number of advanced air defense,antiship, and antisubmarine weapons systems by the United States and European countries to Taiwan may have also made it extremely difficult for the PLA to establish air and sea superiority over the ninety-mile-wide Taiwan Strait, a requisite for successful sea-crossing and amphibious landing operations. In addition, the PLA still has inadequate air and sea offensive capabilities. All these factors may persuade the PLA that the cost of invading Taiwan is too high.

However, the PLA has one comparative advantage in its weapons inventory that is highly offensive and threatening and may increase Taiwan's vulnerability for its lack of effective countermeasures:theater ballistic missiles (TBMs). TBMs alone may not cause an invasion and occupation of Taiwan,nor are they precise enough to constitute a significant threat to military targets. Nevertheless, the use of TBMs against civilian population centers and infrastructure might cause widespread panic, which could trigger an economic meltdown because of a loss of confidence among investors and consumers. Their use might also disrupt sea transportation around Taiwan, on which the island's trade-based economy depends heavily. Therefore, a balance-of-threat strategy may center on how to diffuse this missile threat, for instance, by developing a missile defense system.

However, the balance-of-threat strategy based on missile defense may be accompanied by an engagement strategy that aims to modify Chinese behavior so that it becomes more receptive to international norms. Without engagement, the security challenges posed by a nationalistic China may be difficult to resolve. Some observers argue that an engagement strategy amounts to bandwagoning and appeasement, but such an argument is convincing only if an engagement strategy is *not* accompanied by a balance-of-threat strategy that may incur higher costs for free-riding behavior.

By the same logic, an engagement strategy itself should also be formulated so that benefits are matched by obligations. Joint programs on defense conversion, for example, should not become a conduit for transferring dual-use technologies to military applications;if they do, penalties should be imposed. Programs to reduce the asymmetry of information should also be reciprocal. Similarly, track-two diplomacy in the realm of security should be more specific and clearer about its objectives so that it can be better implemented and adjusted. Besides transparency of military intentions and capabilities, accident prevention, debates on security issues, and regular meetings between top military personnel from both sides to reduce misperceptions and misunderstanding, such programs may go one step further to include education on the functions and role of the military in a rule-of-law-based constitutional setting. As shown in this essay, there indeed exists a minority of quasi-liberals in the PLA who are more receptive to new ideas and norms, and they may serve as points of entry and expansion for the engagement strategy. Indeed, by modifying domestic norms so that they become more compatible with international norms, the chances of mutual misperception, defection, and conflict should be greatly reduced.

Notes

1. For major works on national identity construction and nationalism, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and the collection of essays and extracts in John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). For major works on civil-military relations, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957); and Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960).

2. The rise in the PLA's role in reconceptualizing Chinese national identity and security policy somewhat corresponds with its withdrawal from both the domestic class-struggle politics of the Cultural Revolution and the support of radical Maoist movements abroad. The PLA, for instance, became highly vocal in the internal debates over the Spratley Islands crisis in the late 1980s, over proliferation issues, and most recently over the issue of Taiwan. For the extent of the PLA's withdrawal from the domestic politics of the Cultural Revolution, see Nan Li, "Political-Military Changes in China, 1978–89," *Security Studies* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1994/95): 428–29. The impression on the increasingly assertive role of the PLA in foreign and security policy was gained in interviews with analysts from the National Defense University, Beijing, February 1998. See also David Shambaugh, "China's Military in Transition: Politics, Professionalism, Procurement, and Power Projection," *China Quarterly,* no. 146 (June 1996): 273; and Michael Swaine, "The PLA in China's National Security Policy: Leaderships, Structures, Processes," *China Quarterly,* no. 146 (June 1996): 375.

3. For an overview of these changes, see Shambaugh, "China's Military in Transition." For changes in civil-military relations, see David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China: The Political Work System in the People's Liberation Army," *China Quarterly,* no. 127 (September 1991); Li, "Political-Military Changes in China"; and Ellis Joffe, "Party-Army Relations in China: Retrospect and Prospect," *China Quarterly,* no. 146 (Summer 1996). For the PLA's role in national security policy, see Swaine, "The PLA in China's National Security Policy." For doctrinal changes, see Alastair I. Johnston, "China's New 'Old Thinking': The Concept of Limited Deterrence," *International Security* 20, no. 3 (Winter 1995/96); Paul Godwin, "From Continent to Periphery: PLA Doctrine, Strategy and Capabilities toward 2000," *China Quarterly,* no. 146 (June 1996); and Nan Li, "The PLA's Evolving Warfighting Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics, 1985–95: A Chinese Perspective," *China Quarterly,* no. 146 (June 1996). For budgetary analysis, see Shaoguang Wang, "Estimating China's Defense Expenditure: Some Evidence from Chinese Sources," *China Quarterly,* no. 147 (September 1996). For defense industry and technology, see John Frankenstein and Bates Gill, "Current and Future Challenges Facing Chinese Defense Industries," *China Quarterly,* no. 146 (June 1996). For organizational changes, see Nan Li, "Organizational Changes of the PLA, 1985–97," *China Quarterly*, no. 158 (June 1999).

4. For this shift, see Li, "The PLA's Evolving Warfighting Doctrine."

5. See Mao Zedong, "Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society," in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1975), 13–21.

6. From 1967 to 1972, 2.8 million PLA personnel, including one-third of the PLA officers, directly participated in the class struggles of the Cultural Revolution, leading to purges and counter-purges within the PLA. See Teaching and Research Faculty on Party History and Political Work, *Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun zhengzhi gongzuo shi* (A History of the Chinese People's Liberation Army's Political Work) (Beijing: National Defense University, 1988), 119–50, 233–35, and 297–98.

7. For major related literature, see Tang Tsou and Morton Halperin, "Mao Tse-Tung's Revolutionary Strategy and Peking's International Behavior," *American Political Science Review,* no. 69 (March 1965); Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); Lyman Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967); and J. D. Armstrong, *Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

8. On PLA support for communist forces in Vietnam and Laos, see Military History Department of the Academy of Military Sciences, *Zhongguo renmin jeifangjun qishi nien 1927–1997* (Seventy Years of the Chinese People's Liberation Army 1927–1997) (Beijing: Military Science Press, 1997), 585–91; Li Cheng et al., eds., *Jianguo yilai junshi baizhuan dashi* (One Hundred Major Events in Military History since the Founding of the State) (Beijing: Knowledge Press, 1992), 220–23.

9. The idea of "the people" is essentially a class concept, because those who had "bad" class backgrounds did not belong to the category of "the people" but, rather, to that of "enemy of the people."

10. For the so-called realist, or national interest–based, interpretation of Chinese foreign policy, see Allen Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960) and *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975); Donald Zagoria, *Vietnam Triangle* (New York: Pegasus, 1967); Michael Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978); and Melvin Gurtov and Byong-moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

11. Former CCP secretary Hu Yaobang, for instance, acknowledged that about 200 million Chinese were persecuted one way or another during the Cultural Revolution.

12. See Bruce Cummings, *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

13. For revolutionary, ideology-driven, and other idiosyncratic and nondefensive interpreta-tions of China's entry into the Korean War, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Shuguang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War,* 1950–1953 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995); Michael M. Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin, and the U.S.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997). For an interpretation of Chinese foreign policy behavior under Mao that combines ideology and domestic politics, see Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1948–1956* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Sergie N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

14. John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

15. Stephen Walt, "Revolution and War," *World Politics* 23, no. 3 (April 1992): 323–33. Walt, however, suggests that revolutionary regimes are not inherently expansionist. But the perception of them challenging the status quo may trigger pre-emption by the alliance of status quo powers before the assumed challenge becomes credible. This tends to draw revolutionary regimes into external wars more frequently than nonrevolutionary regimes.

16. Conversations with Chinese bureaucrats, analysts, intellectuals, and college students, Beijing, February and October 1998. While some do believe that a number of Maoist foreign

policy programs had enhanced Chinese national prestige, identity, and security, many argue that most of these programs were ill-conceived, because many conflicts could have been either avoided or contained so that loss of Chinese lives and resources could have been substantially reduced. Some are particularly resentful that certain countries took a "free ride" on generous Chinese aid, showed little gratitude, later used debt payment as a leverage in extracting further concessions from China, or even fought a war against China.

17. For the new, structuralist variant of realism, which may reflect the context of rigid bipolar competition of the Cold War, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979). For the "soft" variant that still allows human intervention to modify structure, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1966). See also E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939).

18. See Qin Chaoying et al., "Qiantan guojia liyi xueshuo" (An Elementary Discussion of the Doctrine of National Interests), *Liberation Army Daily,* July 29, 1988, collected in *Guofang sibian lu* (Reflections and Debates on National Defense), ed. Zeng Guangjun (Beijing: Long March Press, 1992), 52. The literary meaning of the Chinese term *guojia* is "country and family." It can be translated into either "nation" or "state," according to *A Chinese-English Dictionary* published by China's prestigious Commercial Press. The English term "nation" is used here because it has a culturalist connotation that is closer to the meaning of "country and family."

19. Cui Yuchen et al., "Da guofang yu minzu ningjuli" (Grand National Defense and National Cohesiveness), *Liberation Army Daily,* December 2, 1988, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 78; Zeng Guangjun, "Menglong xintai xi" (An Analysis of the Ambivalent Mentality), *Liberation Army Daily,* March 31, 1989, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 63. See also Fang Min et al., *Da Guofang* (Grand National Defense) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press), 46; even though this book is not published by a military press, the main author is a PLA colonel who teaches at a military school.

20. Zhang Xinsheng et al., "Guojia liyi wansui" (Long Live National Interests), *Liberation Army Daily,* July 15, 1988, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 46.

21. Ibid., 44.

22. See Li, "Organizational Changes of the PLA."

23. See Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China," 553–67.

24. Interview with Chinese scholars at the China Institute for Marine Development Strategies, February 1998.

25. Chen Xiaogong, "Jiushi niandai de shijie junshi xingshi" (The World Military Situation in the 1990s), *Liberation Army Daily,* September 7, 1990, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 26–27. This observation is in line with the 1998 SIPRI report on world military spending. The report identifies the Middle East and Asia as the only exceptions to the general decline of military spending because of the Cold War's end. The Asian financial crisis may cause a decline of military spending in Asian countries that are affected by the crisis, but such a decline is cancelled out by increased spending in the Indian-Pakistani conflict, the tension between Taiwan and mainland China, and the Sri Lankan civil war.

26. Ibid.; Dong Wenxian, "Hehou shidai, haishi houhe shidai?" (Post-Nuclear Era or Late Nuclear Era?), *Liberation Army Daily,* January 19, 1990, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 34–39.

27. Sa Benwang, "Haiwan weiji dui shijie junshi xingshi de yingxiang" (The Impact of the Gulf Crisis on the World Military Situation), *Liberation Army Daily*, January 11, 1991, collected in

Zeng, *Reflections and Debates*, 40–43; Liu Xiaokun et al., *Dangdai shijie junshi redian touxi* (Perspective on Military Flash Points in the Contemporary World) (Beijing: Military Sciences Press, 1996), 116–37; Chen, "The World Military Situation," 23–24.

28. Xi Runchang et al., *Shijie zhengzhi xin geju yu guoji anquan* (New Configuration of World Politics and International Security) (Beijing: Military Sciences Press, 1996), 279–81, 295–96; Liu et al., *Perspective on Military Flash Points,* 29–31; and Li Qingshan, "Ziyuan zhengduo yu weilai junshi chongtu" (Competition over Natural Resources and Future Military Conflicts), *Liberation Army Daily,* April 27, 1990, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 97–99.

29. Xi et al., *New Configuration,* 276; Chen Xiaogong et al., "Shijie zheng chuzai xinjiu zhanlue geju jiaoti de guodu shiqi" (The World Is in the Transitional Period from the Old Strategy to the New Strategy), *Liberation Army Daily,* January 4, 1991, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 20.

30. Xi et al., *New Configuration,* 298–99; Liu et al., *Perspective on Military Flash Points,* 31–32; and Chen, "The World Military Situation," 28–29.

31. Xi et al., *New Configuration,* 294; Liu et al., *Perspective on Military Flash Points,* 26–28.

32. Zhang Jingyi, "Gaixi xiashiji chu quanqiu zhanglue huanjing" (A General Analysis of the Global Strategic Environment Early in the Next Century), a speech delivered at an academic conference on army building, August 12, 1988, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 1–7.

33. Fang, *Grand National Defense,* 47–61; Cai Wenyi, "Zhai taikong jinzheng mianqian de xuanzhe" (Choices in Face of Competition in Outer Space), *Liberation Army Daily,* August 23, 1987; Jiang Guoling, "Jiang Yanguang touxiang zhanlue zhigaodian" (Focus Attention on Strategic Commanding Heights), *Liberation Army Daily,* March 27, 1987. Both in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 104–109.

34. Cai Wenyi, "Cong ziyuan weiji kan guofang" (Natural Resources Crises and National Defense), *Liberation Army Daily,* November 18, 1988, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 91–92.

35. Ibid., 92.

36. Ibid., 93.

37. Fang, *Grand National Defense,* 42; Chen Fangyou et al., "Junren xuyao haiyang guan" (It Is Necessary for the Military Personnel to Develop Maritime Consciousness), *Liberation Army Daily,* May 29, 1987, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 100–103.

38. Cai, "Natural Resources Crises," 93–94.

39. One recent account complains that "China's transfer of the Bailongwei Island (in the center of the Tonkin [Beibu] Gulf) to Vietnam in supporting the revolutionary struggle of the North Vietnam people in 1957" has immensely complicated bilateral negotiations on demarcating waters in the gulf. See Mao Zhenfa et al., *Bianfang lun* (Theory of Border Defense) (Beijing: Military Sciences Press, 1996), 137; this work is *neibu faxing,* or for internal circulation.

40. Ibid., 34–36.

41. Li Jijun, *Junshi zhanlue siwei* (Mode of Thinking for Military Strategy) (Beijing: Military Sciences Press, 1996), 156. Li is a deputy commandant of the Academy of Military Sciences.

42. Ibid., 156–57.

43. Mao, *Theory of Border Defense,* 135–37.

44. Ibid., 137–39, 209–10; Li, *Mode of Thinking,* 158–59; Fang, *Grand National Defense,*

44–47; Li Shizhong, "Qianghua haiyang guotu yishi sanyi" (Three Comments on Strengthening the Consciousness of Maritime Territory), in *Lun junxin ningju* (On Cohesiveness of Military Morale), ed.Wong Shiping et al. (Beijing: Liberation Army Press, 1990), 43–48; this work is *junnei faxing,* or for circulation within the military.

45. Mao, *Theory of Border Defense,* 141–43.

46. Ibid., 132–35, 139–41.

47. Some PLA personnel, however, hold the view that the prospect for stability on the Korean Peninsula is good. They argue that famine in North Korea is not as acute because of international relief efforts. Also, the regime is introducing some economic reform measures. Moreover, there is no political opposition in the North. Finally, the economic crisis in the South and the election of Kim Dae-jung as the president of South Korea may lead to a more accommodating policy on the part of the South. Interviews with the faculty of the National Defense University and analysts of the Academy of Military Sciences, Beijing, February 1998.

48. Cui et al., "Grand National Defense," 75–76.

49. Zhang, "Long Live National Interests," 45–46.

50. Cui et al., "Grand National Defense," 76.

51. Ibid., 78.

52. Mao, *Theory of Border Defense,* 222–23.

53. Ibid., 224.

54. Ibid., 226.

55. Ibid., 223–24.

56. Ibid., 227–29.

57. Liu Jixian et al., *Haiyang zhanlue huanjing yu duiche yanjiu* (Research on Maritime Strategic Environment and Policy Response) (Beijing: Liberation Army Press, 1996), 309–10; this work was for internal circulation.

58. Zhang Zhaozhong, "Junshi geming jiqi dui weilai haijun fazhan de yingxiang" (Revolution in Military Affairs and Its Impact on the Future Development of the Navy), *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management), no. 19 (June 1996): 53–54. Zhang is the director of the Science and Technology Teaching and Research Section at the National Defense University in Beijing.

59. Zhang, "Long Live National Interests," 45; Zeng Guangjun, "Shijie yuan weidao hua jian weili de shihou" (The World Is Still Far from the Time to Beat Swords into Ploughshares), *Liberation Army Daily,* April 28, 1989, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 66–70.

60. Bin Yan, "Zhai junshi xunlian zhong peiyang jituan jinzheng yishe" (Cultivate the Consciousness of Group Competition in Military Training), *Liberation Army Daily,* March 10, 1989, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 474.

61. Zhang Xinsheng, "Zhiliang, jundui de shengming" (Quality, the Life of the Military), *Liberation Army Daily,* January 3, 1992, collected in Zeng, *Reflections and Debates,* 1–7 (separate preface).

62. Mao, *Theory of Border Defense,* 17–18.

63. Ibid., 26.

64. Interview with the faculty of the National Defense University, Beijing, February 1998.

65. Mao, *Theory of Border Defense,* 16–17.

66. Ibid., 5–6.

67. For a discussion of intellectuals' "dream of an empowered China," see Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Intellectuals' Quest for National Greatness and Nationalistic Writing in the 1990s," *China Quarterly,* no. 152 (December, 1997): 725–45. For foreign policy analysts' emphasis on great power diplomacy to construct China's great-power identity, see Gilbert Rozman, "China's Quest for Great Power Identity," *Orbis* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 383–402. Widely publicized mass demonstrations in front of Western diplomatic compounds in China after the Chinese embassy bombing in Belgrade may have reflected the surge of populist nationalism.

68. See Yong Deng, "The Chinese Conception of National Interests in International Relations," *China Quarterly,* no. 154 (June 1998): 311–16.

69. The CMC, for instance, answers to the CCP Politburo, but not to the NPC. Similarly, the Ministry of National Defense is an official facade because all its functions are divided among the four PLA general departments (General Staff, General Political, General Logistics, and General Armament). The four departments are accountable to the CMC, but not to the premier of the State Council. Therefore, there is very little regular legislative oversight and executive control over military affairs in China. See Li, "Organizational Changes of the PLA," 322.

70. Informal arrangements do exist for central policy coordination. In foreign affairs, for example, there is the CCP Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG). It is difficult, however, to tell how effectively this small group can rein in the PLA, because the army's representation in it is minimal. Also, the CCP's propensity for small informal groups for policy coordination may reduce the need for establishing state-based coordinating mechanisms, such as a national security council. These informal arrangements may also hinder the development of norms regarding the rule of law by undermining the legitimacy of formal state institutions. On FALSG, see Swaine, "The PLA in China's National Security Policy," 372–77.

71. Besides strengthened civilian control of the PLA, this change may have two other benefits. If China introduces genuine political reform such as multiparty competition for political offices, for example, gradually separating the PLA from the party may make it easier for the army to finally become a nonpartisan, politically neutral institution concerned primarily with functional and technical issues. This in turn reduces the likelihood of the PLA's meddling in democratic politics. Also, a genuine Ministry of National Defense (desirably civilianized) may remove and absorb a large number of political-military and administrative functions out of the current PLA general departments and thus make it possible to develop a more streamlined higher-command structure that is focused more on military-technical matters.

72. Current political epithets, such as building the PLA into a "revolutionary, regular, and modern army" and Jiang's admonition that the PLA "pay attention to politics" (*jiang zhengzhi*) carry very different meanings from what they did earlier. "Revolution" and "politics" now really mean that the PLA remains loyal to the party and to no other institution. In other words, these terms no longer mean promoting intra-PLA class or "lines" struggle, as they did during the Cultural Revolution.

73. This is the general impression the author gained from several interviews with PLA analysts, Beijing, February and October 1998.

74. See Li, "The PLA's Evolving Warfighting Doctrine."

75. One balance-of-power advocate, for example, suggests that Taiwan is not vital to U.S. strategic interests in Asia because the United States has maintained its maritime preponderance in the region even though it ended its military cooperation with Taiwan in the early 1970s. But

China was weak relative to Taiwan in the early '70s. As long as Taiwan could effectively defend itself and remained friendly to the United States, a formal military alliance was unnecessary for continued U.S. preponderance. At that time, China also had to devote considerable attention to the Soviet threat from the north and the Vietnamese threat, which distracted its attention from its southeastern maritime flank. The Chinese economy was also highly agrarian and self-sufficient then; its dependence on trading routes, oceanic raw materials, and overseas markets for economic growth was minimal. This self-sufficiency certainly reduced China's incentive to challenge U.S. preponderance. Also, China acquiesced to a heavy U.S. military presence in Asia at that time because it served Chinese interests by reducing Soviet influence in the region. Most of these conditions, however, have changed during the past two decades. It now seems that China's dominance over Taiwan may greatly enhance its bargaining leverage, particularly if it chooses to negotiate a reduction of the U.S. military presence in Asia. For the minimalist position, see Robert Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-First Century," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 113–14.

76. For a recent account of Sino-Russian border conditions, see "Russians Gaze with Envy across the Border at China," *New York Times,* July 20, 1999.

77. For an account of Chinese diplomatic success in Southeast Asia, see "Softly, Softly," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* June 10, 1999, 28–30.

78. Interview with the faculty of the National Defense University, Beijing, February 1998. See also Mao, *Theory of Border Defense,* 140.

About the Author

Nan Li currently teaches political science at the University of Cincinnati, having also taught courses on international relations and Asian politics at Dartmouth College, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Eastern Kentucky University. From 1993 to 1994, Nan was a postdoctoral fellow and associate at Harvard University's John M. Olin Institute. He was a senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in 1997–98, during which he conducted the initial research for this Peaceworks report. Nan has published articles on Chinese civil-military relations and military doctrine in *China Quarterly, Security Studies,* and *Armed Forces and Society.* He completed his undergraduate education at Jilin University in China and earned a master's degree in journalism and political science from the University of Missouri, Columbia; he holds a Ph.D. in political science from Johns Hopkins University.

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