

# Observations on Military Modernization and International Influence – An Alternate View

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# The PLA of 2006

- Vastly different than the PLA of 1996, now with greater capabilities
- But much remains the same
- A “Big Bang” in 1999 was the result of
  - An emphasis in planning and training to deter further moves by Taiwan toward independence and, if necessary, to be prepared to use force to prevent Taiwan independence;
  - Moderate reductions in personnel, as well as the beginnings of significant increases in funding coming available to the smaller force;
  - Changes in the conscript, NCO, and officer management systems to promote a smaller, better educated, more technically-proficient PLA;
  - The promulgation of new regulations to outline a new operational doctrine and an increased emphasis on realistic training;
  - The introduction of significant numbers of new Chinese-produced weapons and equipment into the force, as well as an increase in imports from Russia. Perhaps the most important equipment factor was the increasingly widespread availability of computers, electronics, and communications equipment

# Continuing Traditions

- The PLA remains a party-army, loyal to the Chinese Communist Party
- Political officer system guides ideological and political work at all levels and is becoming more tactically and technically proficient
- Process of consensus building through meetings at all levels among leaders and troops continues

# But

- The PLA is still led primarily by officers with a ground force background
- Only gradually are non-army officers coming into senior-most positions
- The PLA is an excellent student of modern foreign military campaigns
- No Chinese military officer has planned for or commanded *in combat* the integrated joint operations using the new doctrine and potential capabilities developed over the past decade

# Major Themes

## “Army Building”

- “Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese Characteristics”
- “Mechanization and Informationalization”
- Force Size
- Force Structure
- Personnel Changes
- Equipment
- Reserves/Militia

## “Preparation for Military Struggle”

- Doctrine
- Training
- Logistics
- Professional Military Education
- Equipment
- Mobilization

# Chinese Military Doctrine

- Still based on People's War
- Emphasizes mobilization of the Chinese people and economy to support future campaigns
- Civilian support coordinated by National Defense Mobilization Committee system
- Assumes mainland China will be attacked in future conflicts

# Chinese Military Doctrine

- Retains traditional elements of speed, surprise, deception, and use of stratagem
- Integrates mobility, firepower, special operations forces (SOF), and information warfare (IW), with reserve units, militia forces, and civilian support
- Will use best forces, including “Assassin’s Mace”
- Strike from a distance, also attempt to draw the enemy near

# Chinese Military Doctrine

- Aims to prevail early in battle, but understands “a large-scale war cannot be won by a single decisive battle”
- Understands the decisive nature of the offense
- Allows for the possibility of preemption
- Understands military power is one element of Comprehensive National Power, but not necessarily the right tool for all jobs



# Ballistic and Cruise Missile Force

- Considered an “Assassin’s Mace”
- April 1997, DOD report:
  - China probably will have the industrial capacity, though not necessarily the intent, to produce a large number, perhaps *as many as a thousand*, new missiles **within the next decade**. Most new missiles are likely to be *short-range or medium-range, road-mobile, and fueled by solid propellants*. All of them are expected to have greatly **improved accuracy** over current systems, and many will be armed with **conventional warheads**. (emphasis added)

# Current Inventory

- 20 CSS-4 and 20-24 CSS-3 ICBMs
- 14-18 CSS-2 IRBMs
- 19-50 CSS-5 MRBMs
- 10- 14 JL-1 SLBMs
- 710-790 CSS-6/CSS-7 SRBMs
- DF-31 (in 2006?)/DF-31A(in 2007?)/JL-2(in 2007-2010?)
- Estimated up to 60 ICBMs capable of reaching the United States by 2010

# Additionally

- Conventionally-armed CSS-5/DF-21 under development or deployed
- Reportedly working on arming DF-21 with a maneuverable warhead that can hit ships at sea
- Ground force has one, and possibly two, surface-to-surface missile brigades in the Military Regions opposite Taiwan

# Precision Guided Munitions (PGM)

- China fielded its own ground-, air-, and sea-launched anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCM)
- Lethality of ASCM inventory increased with advanced Russian imports
- Land-attack cruise missiles (LACM) under development
- Working on air-delivered PGMs
- Some Russian air-delivered PGMs and Kh-31P Anti-Radiation Missiles likely available

# Actual Warfighting Potential Limited

- U.S. has employed these weapons in quantities that far overshadow the current PLA inventory
- First weeks against Iraq in 2003, the U.S. used over 20,000 PGMs and 800 Tomahawks
- Size of the PLA missile arsenal makes it destructive, but is it large enough to be decisive?

# Preferred 10-15 Year Timeframe

- Chinese writings and programs indicate the desire for another 10-15 years of development before the PLA reaches the levels of an advanced military
- But, should the PLA be ordered to take action before modernization is complete, its **senior officers will obey the command of their civilian leadership** and put together the best effort using the forces and weapons available to accomplish the political goals assigned

# Ground Force

- Approximately 35 maneuver divisions and 45 maneuver brigades
- About half are “heavy” (armored or mechanized) units
- Two “amphibious mechanized infantry” divisions and one, possibly two, “light mechanized infantry” divisions
  - Require specially outfitted air transport or sealift

# Emphasis on

- Air defense
  - In group armies
  - 1/3 of reserve units are AAA
  - In militia, including infrastructure repair
- Anti-terrorist training by PLA, PAP, reserves, militia, and police
- Nuclear, biological and chemical defense training
- Rapid reaction, mobilization, logistics, new equipment training, joint operations



# Force Projection Units

- One SOF unit in each Military Region
- Tactical reconnaissance units in group armies and divisions, including the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
- Army Aviation (helicopter) units
- SRBM brigade(s)
- Remainder of the ground force trains for less likely contingencies as part of China's deterrent force from invasion or terrorist attack

# Recognized Shortfalls

- Properly trained officers and NCOs
- Command and headquarters training
- “Integrated Joint Operations” (true joint operations)
- Night operations, new equipment training, etc
- This year’s emphasis is on realistic training and “training as you fight”

# Strategic Deterrence

- *The Science of Military Strategy:*
  - **“Strategic deterrence is based on warfighting... The more powerful the warfighting capability, the more effective the deterrence.”**
  - **“Strategic deterrence is a major means for attaining the objective of military strategy, and its risks and costs are less than strategic operations... Warfighting is generally used only when deterrence fails and there is no alternative.... Strategic deterrence is also a means for attaining the political objective.... Without resolute determination and firm volition, deterrence is feeble.”** (emphasis added)

# Strategic Deterrence

- *The Science of Military Strategy:*
  - "China currently has a limited but effective nuclear deterrence and a relatively powerful capability of conventional deterrence and a massive capacity of deterrence of People's War. By combining these means of deterrence, an integrated strategic deterrence is formed, with comprehensive national power as the basis, conventional force as the mainstay, nuclear force as the backup power and reserve force as the support."

# *My Judgment* of Likely Chinese Leadership Perceptions

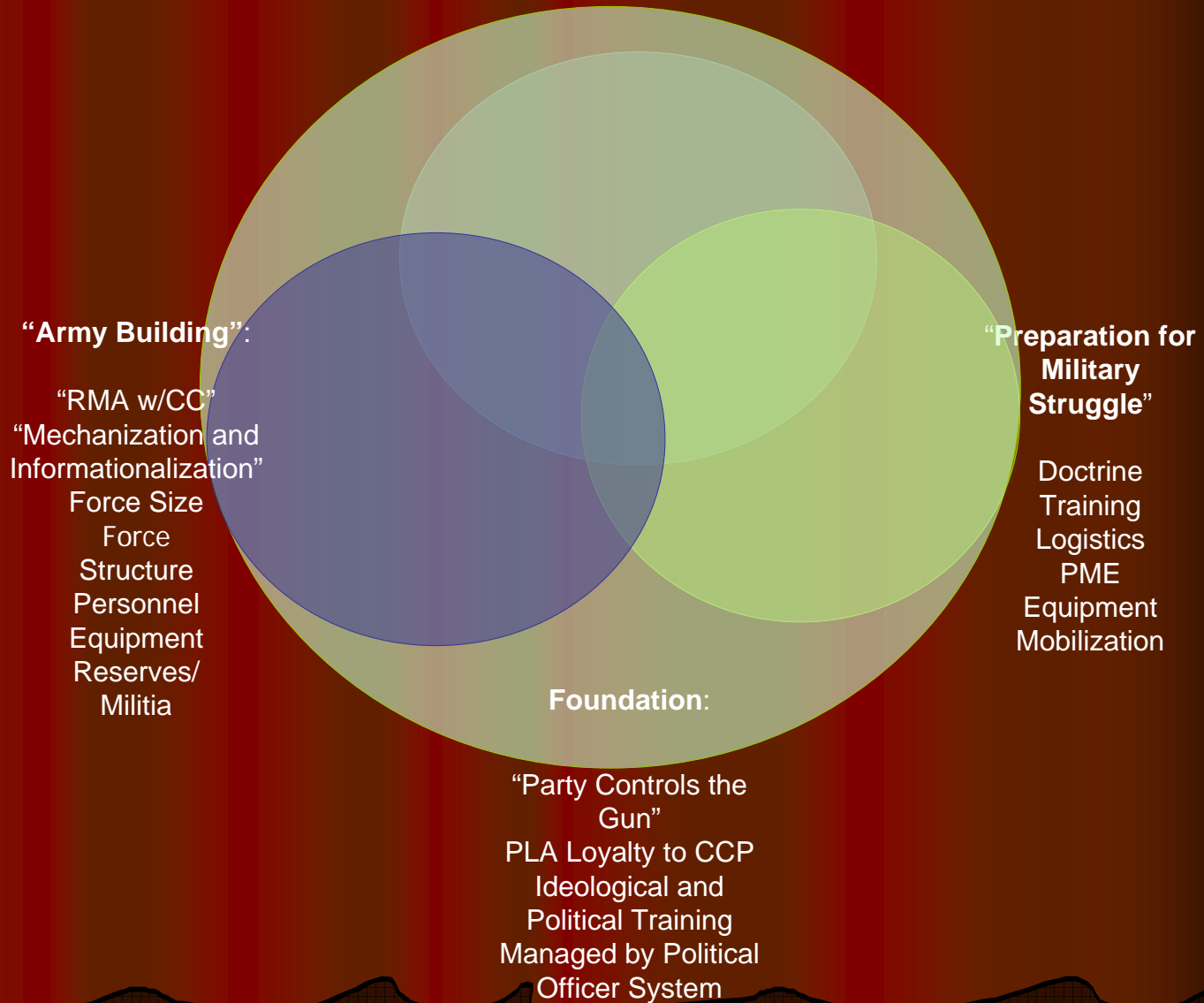
- Progress in all of areas of modernization
- But not so much to advocate with confidence use of force in the near-term, unless required by developments external to the PLA
- Actual numbers of advanced weapons and units available remain limited
- Consistent with deterrence, retaliation if attacked, and defense of sovereignty

## Goal: Strategic Deterrence

Build credible force

Display determination

Insure “deterred” parties understand



# Conclusions

- PLA *is not* trained, organized, or equipped to conduct U.S.-style joint operations, but is attempting to emulate many realistic U.S. training methods
- Official PLA doctrine places much less emphasis on force projection and missiles
- PLA C4I capabilities appear to be much less “robust” than in U.S. forces
- The PLA remains a ground force-heavy organization

PLA Active Duty	% of Total Force (Estimated personnel)	% of Total Force (Personnel)	U.S. Military Active Duty
Army	69%	36%	Army
Navy	11%	26%	Navy
(Marines)	(.4%)	13%	Marines
Air Force	17%	26%	Air Force
Second Artillery	4%		



# Final Thoughts

- The future of PLA modernization is not set in stone
- Improvements in transparency, candid dialogue, and exchanges about capabilities and intentions *on all sides* could be helpful
- I remain open to new evidence and look forward to new analysis