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China Strategic Perspective Released: Assessing the PLA's Role in Elite Politics

Co-authored by Dr. Phillip C. Saunders and Michael Kiselycznyk

Washington, D.C. – The Institute for National Strategic Studies of the National Defense University is pleased to announce that the second China Strategic Perspective written by Dr. Phillip C. Saunders and Michael Kiselycznyk has been released.

The study reviews the last 20 years of academic literature on the role of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Chinese elite politics. It examines the PLA's willingness to support the continued rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and to obey directives from top party leaders, the PLA's influence on the selection of China's top civilian leaders, and the PLA's ability to shape the domestic political environment. These questions will be critical in assessing military influence on China's 2012 leadership transition.

Over the last two decades the discussion of these three issues has largely been shaped by five trends identified in the literature: increasing PLA professionalism, bifurcation of civil and military elites, a reduced PLA role in political institutions, reduced emphasis on political work within the PLA, and increased military budgets. Together, these trends are largely responsible for the markedly reduced role of the PLA in Chinese elite politics.

The study is available at this link:

<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/docUploaded/China%20Strategic%20Perspectives%202.pdf>

Dr. Phillip C. Saunders is the Director of the [Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs](#) at the Institute for National Strategic Studies. Michael Kiselycznyk has conducted research for the Center and was research assistant to Dr. Saunders.

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