

UNITED STATES MILITARY-TO-MILITARY CONTACTS WITH  
THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY: CAN IT  
FURTHER U.S. POLICIES AND AIMS IN  
THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION?

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Strategy

by

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2003

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# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No.  
0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 06-06-2003	2. REPORT TYPE thesis	3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) 05-08-2002 to 06-06-2003
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4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE UNITED STATES MILITARY-TO-MILITARY CONTACTS WITH THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY CAN IT FURTHER U.S. POLICIES AND AIMS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION? Unclassified	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S) Nakagawa, Mark, T	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army Command and General Staff College 1 Reynolds Ave Fort Leavenworth, KS66027-1352	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER ATZL-SWD-GD
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9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS ,	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  
A1,Administrative or Operational Use  
06-06-2003  
US Army Command and General Staff College  
1 Reynolds Ave  
Fort Leavenworth, KS66027-2314

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT  
The growth and importance of the People's Republic of China (PRC) necessitates that the United States foster a relationship that ensures a stable, prosperous, and peaceful Asia-Pacific region. Given the status and role that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) takes in the PRC, military-to-military contact between the United States Armed Forces and the PLA is vital. Mirroring the political tides between the two countries--from the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979 to the halting of military-to-military contacts after the Belgrade Embassy bombing in 1999 and EP-3 incident in April 2001-- military-to-military contact is slowly growing again. The purpose and intent of the contacts are to foster access and understanding. Weak reciprocity and inadequate transparency by the PLA are issues that hamper relations. Information about the efficacy of military-to-military contact with the PLA is difficult to gather, thus this analysis draws on analogous experiences from previous contact programs with the Soviet Union and Indonesia to argue that the contact programs can foster behavior supporting U.S. interests. The thesis concludes with recommendations to improve the contact programs between the U.S. Armed Forces and the PLA.

15. SUBJECT TERMS  
People's Republic of China (PRC); United States; Regional security; People's Liberation Army (PLA); Dipolomacy; Military aid

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:	17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 85	19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Buker, Kathy kathy.buker@us.army.mil
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a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number 9137583138 DSN 5853138
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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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Thesis Title: United States Military-to-Military Contacts with the People's Liberation Army: Can It Further U.S. Policies and Aims in the Asia-Pacific Region?

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency.

## ABSTRACT

UNITED STATES MILITARY-TO-MILITARY CONTACTS WITH THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY: CAN IT FURTHER U.S. POLICIES AND AIMS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION? by Major Mark T. Nakagawa, 78 pages.

The growth and importance of the People's Republic of China (PRC) necessitates that the United States foster a relationship that ensures a stable, prosperous, and peaceful Asia-Pacific region. Given the status and role that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) takes in the PRC, military-to-military contact between the United States Armed Forces and the PLA is vital. Mirroring the political tides between the two countries--from the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979 to the halting of military-to-military contacts after the Belgrade Embassy bombing in 1999 and EP-3 incident in April 2001--military-to-military contact is slowly growing again. The purpose and intent of the contacts are to foster access and understanding. Weak reciprocity and inadequate transparency by the PLA are issues that hamper relations. Information about the efficacy of military-to-military contact with the PLA is difficult to gather, thus this analysis draws on analogous experiences from previous contact programs with the Soviet Union and Indonesia to argue that the contact programs can foster behavior supporting U.S. interests. The thesis concludes with recommendations to improve the contact programs between the U.S. Armed Forces and the PLA.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The endeavor to embark on this thesis was possible through the patience and guidance of my Committee members, LTC Paul Cal and LTC John Anderson, and especially Dr. Nicholas Riegg. Their patience, assistance, and guidance are truly appreciated.

Rusty Rafferty and John Rogers, the librarians at the Combined Armed Research Library, were instrumental in accessing and gathering material for my research. Without their invaluable assistance, my research would not have been possible.

I thank my wife, who endured numerous hours of my typing instead of exploring and enjoying the Fort Leavenworth experience. Finally, I would like to thank my mom, for her belief in me.

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## ACRONYMS

APCSS	Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies
DCT	Defense Consultation Talks
DoD	Department of Defense
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMET	International Military Education and Training (military training in a grant basis to foreign military and related civilian defense personnel both in the United States and overseas facilities)
MMCA	Military Maritime Consultative Agreement
MMCP	Military-to-Military Contact Program
NDU	National Defense University
PACOM	Pacific Command
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PDMA	Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
TCT	Traveling Contact Teams
TEP	Theater Engagement Plan
TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Plan
UN	United Nations

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Tremendous possibilities exist for all nations to build a better future . . . but only if we are wise enough and determined enough to do the hard work necessary today to create a peaceful international environment. . . . Peacetime military engagement can be a valuable tool for shaping this environment and preventing conflicts from occurring.<sup>1</sup>

General Henry H. Shelton, *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda*

General Henry H. Shelton, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, believed that the United States armed forces could work with friends and allies to promote peace and stability throughout the world. His three-part plan included overseas presence, a vigorous joint and combined exercise program, and direct military-to-military contact. Shelton believed that a more secure peace could be established through a cooperative military effort between the United States and other nations.<sup>2</sup>

The use of the military to promote peace and stability in the world is not new. Militaries have long complemented and worked in conjunction with diplomatic and economic forces to promote peace, stability, and prosperity. In the post-Cold War era, no country has yet emerged to challenge the United States' globally dominant position. However, several countries are emerging as regional powers that may eventually challenge the United States' dominant position. One of these is the People's Republic of China (PRC).

#### Definition of Military-to-Military Contact

The military-to-military contact program (MMCP) described by Shelton was established by the Department of Defense (DoD) as a part of the Military Assistance



Program. The goals of military assistance are to help friends and allies deter and defend against aggression and to contribute to the common defense. Military assistance promotes overseas presence and peacetime engagement while improving the defense capabilities of allies and friends, while demonstrating U.S. commitment to defend common interests. Military assistance helps sustain vital U.S. security relationships that reduce regional tensions and promote regional stability. In addition to the MMCP, military assistance also includes Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and several other programs.<sup>3</sup>

Originally, the MMCP was established in 1993 as a means of facilitating contacts with the emerging democracies of Northern, Central, and Southern Europe. Although a majority of funding and effort are still channeled to the European Theater, a good deal flows to the Pacific Theater. In some countries, but not in the PRC, the MMCP maintains some teams of U.S. military personnel within the Ministry of Defense. These military liaison teams help create Traveling Contact Teams (TCTs) with expertise in specific functional area, such as the creation and management appropriate to democratic societies. The information provided by the TCTs is tailored to the host nation's particular needs. In addition to TCTs, the objectives of the MMCP may be accomplished through the use of familiarization tours, conferences, and exchanges of civilian and military personnel.<sup>4</sup>

While there is still no formal MMCP with China, the United States and the PRC have had a number of less formal military-to-military confidence building contacts since the 1980s. the history of these contacts, their pros and cons, will be discussed at length in chapter 4.

### Thesis Question

The primary question to be answered by the thesis is, Can United States military-to-military contacts with the People's Liberation Army further U.S. policies and aims in the Asia-Pacific region? First, current U.S. policies in the Asia-Pacific region and towards the PRC must be identified to be able to answer the question. If the answer to the thesis question is "no," then, what actions and policies might be pursued to achieve the desired effects? If "yes," what additional actions and policies might further the desired effects?

### Relevance

China is a critical actor in determining the stability of the Asia-Pacific region. According to former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Winston Lord:

China is not only the most populous country in the world . . . it has the largest standing army. . . . China is a nuclear power, and along with France, the only country in the world still testing nuclear weapons. . . . China possesses ballistic missiles, including ones capable of reaching the United States. It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, with the rights and responsibilities that go with membership in that exclusive club.<sup>5</sup>

The United States formulates policies based on its national interests. The *National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2002 (NSS)* outlines that a positive relationship with the PRC is in the national interest of the United States:

The United States' relationship with China is an important part of our strategy to promote a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region. We welcome the emergence of a strong, peaceful, and prosperous China. . . The United States seeks a constructive relationship with a changing China. We already cooperate well where our interests overlap, including the current war on terrorism and in promoting stability on the Korean peninsula. Likewise, we have coordinated on the future of Afghanistan and have initiated a comprehensive dialogue on counterterrorism and similar transitional concerns. Shared health and

environmental threats, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, challenge us to promote jointly the welfare of our citizens.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to U.S. interests in a politically stable and peaceful Asia, economics are an important aspect of U.S. relations with the PRC. Using current foreign exchange rates, China ranks sixth in 2001 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after the United States, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom, and France, but ranks second to the United States when Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)<sup>7</sup> is used to compare GDPs.<sup>8</sup> Based on conservative assumptions, by the year 2020, China's economy (measured by PPP) is projected to be equal to that of the United States, and by the year 2075 China's GDP could well be double that of the United States. With this large and growing economic base, China is already a regional actor and, most probably in the future, will be a major global actor. Accordingly, it is important assess what type of political and military relationships between the United States and the PRC will most be in the United States' long-term interest. Current policy implies that military-to-military contacts serve vital U.S. interests. Examining that assumption is the object of this thesis.

#### Limitation

No clear set of official, measurable criteria is available to assess the efficacy of the MMCP with the PLA. Even using the DoD's categorization of U.S.-China military-to-military engagement<sup>9</sup> and U.S. Pacific Command's (PACOM) Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP), a basic assessment is difficult reach. In order to adequately answer the primary thesis question, chapter 3, Methodology, will outline the methods used to overcome this limitation.

Access to DoD information on contacts with China is constrained. Currently, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reviews, then approves or disapproves, every

proposed military-to-military contact with the PLA. If not classified, a great deal of the material reviewed by Secretary Rumsfeld is identified as “sensitive,” and not generally available to the public.<sup>10</sup>

On the Chinese side, there are also limitations on information. Although general literature about the PRC is abundant, the availability of PLA military-to-military literature is severely limited. This issue will be further developed in chapter 2, Literature Review. Access to Chinese academia, government officials, and military officers are constrained due to the closed and controlled nature of the PRC. Because of these limitation much reliance has been put upon documents translated by U.S. academics, or articles translated from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).

#### Delimitations

To assist answering the thesis question, historical research has been focused upon military-to-military relations from June 1989, the Tiananmen Square Incident, to December 2002, when the DCT were re-established.

Comparisons and contrasts will also be made with U.S. military-to-military contact with the Soviet Union and Indonesia from 1960.

#### Summary

The growth and importance of the PRC requires the United States to foster a broad political and diplomatic relationship with the Chinese to ensure a stable, prosperous, and peaceful Asia-Pacific region. The relatively young relationship between the two countries has had its share of peaks and valleys. Whether a more formal military-to-military contact program has been or can be a viable venue for fostering the broader relationship is the question to be answered. This chapter has introduced a number of

issues surrounding military-to-military contacts between the United States and China.

Chapter 2 will discuss and review the available literature on military-to-military contact between the United States and the PRC.

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<sup>1</sup>Henry H. Shelton, "Shaping A Better World: Military Engagement in Peacetime." *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda*. 1999. [available online]; available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/1299/ijpe/shleton.htm>; Internet; accessed 11 November 2002.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>*Military Assistance*. 1995. [available online]; available from [http://www.dod.mil/execsec/adr95/appendix\\_j.html](http://www.dod.mil/execsec/adr95/appendix_j.html); Internet; accessed 19 April 2003.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Lord quoted in Donald Jer Get, "What's With the Relationship Between America's Army and China's PLA?" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 15 September 1996), 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>*The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2002), 27-28.

<sup>7</sup>Purchasing power parity (PPP) is the standard used by the CIA to compare the real economic power of various countries. Technically, it is a theory that states that exchange rates between currencies are in equilibrium when their purchasing power is the same in each of the two countries. This means that the exchange rate between two countries should equal the ratio of the two countries' price level of a fixed basket of goods and services. [available on-line]; available from <http://pacific.commerce.ubc.ca/xr/ppp.html>; Internet; accessed 9 February 2003.

<sup>8</sup>*Country Watch*, [available on-line]; available from <http://www.countrywatch.com/includes/grandk/gdpnumericppp.asp>; Internet; accessed 9 February 2003.

<sup>9</sup>The DoD categorizes U.S.-China military-to-military engagement as (1) Defense Policy Visits (normally Joint Staff/Office Secretary of Defense/State Level); (2) High Level Visits (normally Combatant Commander and higher); (3) Professional Visits (mixed level); (4) Confidence Building Measures; (5) Multinational Fora.

<sup>10</sup>Additionally, the FY2000 Defense Authorization bill stipulates that the Secretary of Defense may not authorize any military contact with the PLA that would create a national security risk due to an inappropriate exposure to specified advanced U.S. military capabilities. The specified advanced U.S. military capabilities are: Force

projection operations; Nuclear operations; Advanced combined-arms and joint combat operations; Advanced logistical operations; Chemical and biological defense and other capabilities related to weapons of mass destruction; surveillance and reconnaissance operations; Joint warfighting experiments and other activities related to a transformation in warfare; Military space operations; Other advanced capabilities of the Armed Forces; Arms sales or military-related technology transfers; Release of classified or restricted information; Access to a Department of Defense laboratory. Congress felt compelled to legislate military-to-military contact with the PLA because of two arguments. First, China's use of military-to-military contact to modernize the PLA, which could ultimately threaten the United States and our Asian allies. Second, the U.S. military has not received equal (reciprocal) benefits from its exchange with the PLA. Allen, 1999.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

U.S. experts on China, and the literature that they publish, generally fall into one of two groups. The first group believes that the PRC and the PLA do not currently pose a threat to the United States, and to keep China from becoming a threat, the United States should pursue a full engagement policy -- diplomatically, economically, academically, culturally, and militarily. Henry Kissinger wrote, "The group's belief was summed by the Clinton administration's two slogans, engagement and strategic partnership. The Wilsonian premise that democracies can hold no enemies. . . is believed to strengthen the forces favoring international cooperation and internal pluralism."<sup>1</sup> Stanley Roth, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia during the Clinton administration, verbalized the view in a May 2000 speech when he stated:

Our objective is a strong, stable, prosperous, and open China, one which respects and builds upon the diverse views and strengths of its own people. Our strategy is to integrate China into regional and global institutions, helping it become a country that plays by the accepted international rules, cooperating and competing peacefully within those rules. 'Engagement' is the coherent set of tactics to accomplish this strategy, working with China at every level and at every available opportunity to manage, if not resolve, specific differences and identify and expand issues on which we take a common approach.<sup>2</sup>

The second group believes that China poses a threat to the United States and is likely to become a future adversary. This group advocates caution in exchanges interacting with China. Kissinger describing the group wrote:

China as [a] morally flawed, inevitable adversary, currently focused at Taiwan, eventually the Western Pacific, and eventually the global equilibrium. This view believes that the United States must deal with the PRC much in the same manner as the Soviet Union during the Cold War -- as a rival and a challenge, reducing trade whenever possible to nonstrategic items, creating an alliance of Asian states to help America share the burden for the defense of Asia and to contain China.<sup>3</sup>

Larry M. Wortzel, a retired Colonel and former U.S. Army attaché to China, believes that China is a potential adversary. He wrote:

While China continues to insist that it may use force to reunite Taiwan and the mainland, and makes veiled threats against US forces in Korea, it would be foolhardy for the United States Army to engage in military-to-military exchanges that would improve the PLA's ability to project force.<sup>4</sup>

Like Wortzel, Bill Gertz, investigative reporter for *The Washington Times*, believes that China is a threat. In his book, *The China Threat*, Gertz wrote:

While the China threat is not yet in the same league as that posed by the nuclear-armed Soviet Union during the Cold War, Beijing is a serious danger nonetheless. As a dictatorship with no regard for human life and no input from outside its small circle of Communist Party policymakers, it has repeatedly shown itself to be prone to miscalculations on a staggering scale--miscalculations that have cost tens of millions of its own people's lives. . . The China threat is real and growing.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, literature about China and the PLA, must be scrutinized based on the perspective and perceptions of the authors. Authors' analysis and recommendations in military-to-military contact tend to vary based on these two views.

Another factor to consider is that, according to Ellis Joffe, "The PLA has indeed been 'discovered,' and its study has been politicized. Who would have imagined a decade ago that the U.S. government would plan to establish a Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs?<sup>6</sup> Or, more ominously, that, as indicated by a Luce Foundation poll published in late October 1999, more than fifty percent of Americans would view China's 'military prowess' as a threat to U.S. security interests?"<sup>7</sup> Thus, in addition to the two groups that view China and the PLA as a potential threat or a potential ally and partner, the issue of U.S. domestic politicization enters into the discussion.



### Limited PLA Specific Literature

Although general literature about the PRC is abundant, specifics about the PLA, especially military-to-military contacts, are less common. According to noted Sinologist David Shambaugh, the number of PLA scholars are limited,

For the simple fact that there are few incentives for a China scholar to take up the PLA as a subject area of primary research: there are no university jobs in comparative politics, international relations, or security studies that are specifically designed for a PLA specialist; there are few knowledgeable professors to train such students; there exist extremely limited fieldwork opportunities in China.<sup>8</sup>

Primary and secondary Chinese literature is abundant, but is difficult to obtain outside of China. Shambaugh noted that the *Xinhua Shudian* (New China Bookstore) in China carries much military related material, but is difficult to obtain outside of China. He lamented, “Our major Chinese studies library collections in the United States and other countries are doing a poor job of collecting these materials. Surveys of the best, the Fairbank Center Library at Harvard and the Sinological Institutes in Heidelberg and Leiden, respectively, reveal that these facilities are acquiring only a fraction of what is possible. The Library of Congress is even worse.”<sup>9</sup> Even if the materials were obtained, reading, translating, digesting, and using the works is an arduous challenge for even native speakers. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) does not have adequate resources to effectively translate the available material.

Access to primary and secondary Chinese literature is thus limited, and when available, a bit tainted. In an authoritarian society such as the PRC, free expression of thought and idea are stifled. FBIS translates Chinese articles and broadcasts, and distributes the transcript; however, caution must also be exercised when using translated documents for they are not edited and contain their original PRC biases.

Only a few policy and defense oriented private sector research groups and think tanks scrutinize the United States and China's military-to-military contacts, and they, too, generally fall into the two categories listed above. Among the organizations that does not view China as a threat to the United States are the American Enterprise Institute and the Henry L. Stimson Center. Among the organizations that view China as a potential or inevitable threat are the Heritage Foundation and the RAND Corporation. Military oriented academic institutions such as the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs (imbedded within the Institute for National Strategic Studies at NDU), the Strategic Studies Institute (U.S. Army War College), and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (PACOM) take a more balanced view between the two groups.

The definitive Chinese document that outlines the PRC's national defense policies and progress in national defense is the white paper published by the PRC Information Office of the State Council titled *China's National Defense in 2002*. The white paper outlined the PRC's and PLA's goals of peaceful development, an independent foreign policy of peace, and implementation of a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. Of particular interest is the statement that international security cooperation is playing an increasingly important role in maintaining world and regional peace and stability. In the pursuit of developing international security cooperation, the PRC and the PLA have endeavored to increase membership and participation in international forums.<sup>10</sup> The document reported on the PLA's military-to-military contact program. Of the more than one hundred countries that the PLA has established contacts with, the white paper highlighted relations with Russia and Japan, and not the United States.<sup>11</sup> The PLA's white paper provided insights into the PLA military strategy and planning, much in the

same manner that *The National Security Strategy* and *National Military Strategy* outlined the strategy and planning for the United States and the armed forces.

### Specific Literature Review

The definitive American historic account of military-to-military contact with the PLA is Kenneth W. Allen's and Eric A. McVadon's *China's Foreign Military Relations*, published by the Henry L. Stimson Center in October 1999. Both authors are retired military officers that served in the American Embassy in Beijing -- Allen as the Assistant Air Attaché (1987-89) and McVadon as the U.S. Defense and Naval Attaché (1990-92). They leverage their experiences in Beijing along with extensive research to publish the report. The PLA's goals and the process of military exchanges are analyzed. The report also outlined the history and background of the military-to-military contact between the United States, Russia, Japan, and Korea. Explaining the PLA's purpose in conducting military-to-military contact, Allen and McVadon wrote, "Through its foreign relations programs, the PLA has been able to maximize its collection efforts using high-level and functional-level exchanges, while minimizing the ability of foreign countries to learn about the PLA."<sup>12</sup> Both fall within the group that supports expansion of the MMCP.

The PLA has benefited more from the MMCP than the United States. Through past contacts, the PLA has modernized and improved its training, logistics, and warfighting capabilities. The PLA has not yet reached a level of capability or competence to challenge the U.S. military. Despite the PLA's attempts at collecting to improve their capabilities and the apparent lack of reciprocity and transparency of continued relations with the PLA, Allen and McVadon advocate continuing engaging the PLA.<sup>13</sup>

Allen and McVadon concluded their research by asserting that long-term, as well as day-to-day contact between the two militaries, are vital to improving and garnering a better understanding of the PLA. The U.S. military should engage in long-term military-to-military contacts to ensure the opportunity to exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual concerns. An effective program is critical for maintaining open channels of communications between the two militaries, particularly during times of increased tensions. Accordingly, the MMCP with the PLA should be part of an overall coordinated, Sino-U.S. policy. The United States must take care to build consensus and support both inside and outside the military for bilateral programs with the Chinese. At the same time, the United States should be vigilant, recognizing common desires for peace, stability, and economic progress. The last sentence of Allen's and McVadon's report reads, "Each military needs to better understand the other's capabilities and limitations, so as to minimize misperceptions and miscalculations about the other's intentions and capabilities."<sup>14</sup> Allen and McVadon asserted that the potential for the United States for not engaging the PLA outweighs the risks of engaging.

David M. Finkelstein and John Unangst, in their report, *Engaging the DoD: Chinese Perspectives on Military Relation with the United States*, studied and reported on the PLA's perspective of military-to-military contact. The report's value is quickly recognized when one realizes that the Chinese perception differs from that of the U.S. military and policy makers. The report highlighted several key points of difference between the United States and the PRC. It also:

1. Provided insight and rationale behind the PLA's reluctance to respond to U.S. demands for transparency and reciprocity.

2. Identified the role of the Chinese defense oriented think tanks in Beijing that influence the Chinese decision making process in military relations.
3. Highlighted the potential of Track II<sup>15</sup> initiatives in military relationships.
4. Diagrammed the Chinese “inter-agency” decision process as it relates to military relationship.
5. Pointed out that the rationale used by the United States to justify military relations with the PLA really irritates the PLA.<sup>16</sup>

Finkelstein and Unangst analyzed the Chinese perspectives on military-to-military contact and recommended possible remedies to improve the relationship. For example, on the issue of transparency and reciprocity,<sup>17</sup> the most contentious point for the United States in military-to-military contacts with the PLA, the report explain that the PLA will not become “operationally” transparent until the United States becomes “strategically” transparent.<sup>18</sup> Such a demand by the PLA sets the standards impossibly high for the United States to achieve, and no progress can occur without significant concessions. Finkelstein and Unangst argued that in reality of the impossibly high standard is not so difficult to achieve. The PLA grudgingly becomes more transparent when the political relationship is going well, however, progress will be slow and incremental. The best time to make progress is during the lead time to summits or other high level meetings when the atmosphere is friendly and there is a need to publicly announce progress.<sup>19</sup>

Another area of interest that Finkelstein’s and Unangst’s report highlighted is that the “PLA does not believe that the U.S. DoD is serious about working toward a ‘constructive strategic partnership’ with China or the PLA. Chinese military officers and civilian analysts assess that the U.S. military sees the PLA more as a potential adversary than a potential partner.”<sup>20</sup> Based on this, it is not prudent for U.S. analysts to simply

mirror U.S. perspectives when dealing with the PLA. Finkelstein and Unangst provided analysis and insight giving a better perspective on the PLA. Believing that the PLA may be a potential threat, the authors analyzed the data in their report very critically. Used in conjunction with the PLA's white paper, the report provides the basis of the analysis in chapter 4, as well as the conclusion and recommendations of chapter 5.

Research and theses written by military officers also provide history and background, as well as analysis of the topic. Most notable are the works by Major David K. Hsu's thesis from the Naval Postgraduate School, "United States Military-to-Military Contact with the People's Liberation Army of China" and U.S. Military Academy instructors Colonel Russell D. Howard's and Lieutenant Colonel Albert S. Willner's, *China's Rise and the U.S. Army: Leaning Forward*. The research and conclusions the officers reached all recommend a continuation of military-to-military contact with the PLA. The variance among the group is the level and degree of participation of the military-to-military contact. Hsu's research and analysis of the positive impacts of the MMCP in influencing the governments and militaries of Indonesia and El Salvador to take actions in U.S. interests were especially applicable to this thesis. I used these works to formulate the analysis and conclusion of the thesis.

Hsu researched and conducted a cost-benefit analysis of whether military contacts between the United States and the PLA will be advantageous to American interests. He researched both sides of the argument. Hsu conjectured that China may be a potential enemy in the future, and by engaging in MMCP, we may fight the same forces that we train in the future, or allow the PLA to help it establish itself as a regional hegemon. To counter the argument of assisting a potential adversary, Hsu used the case studies of

Indonesia and El Salvador to assert that participation in MMCP with the U.S. armed forces caused a decline in “long-held traditions of strong military influence over civil administration and oppression towards their own population.” He further asserted that, “the United States has gained significant access to top military and civilian leaders in foreign nations. On some occasions, this has resulted in influencing these individuals and has led to significant changes in patterns of behavior of the host nation’s security forces.”<sup>21</sup>

Hsu stated that:

Although, access does not always translate into the type of influence that the United States desires, it gives the United States an opportunity to expose foreign security forces to American values and beliefs. . . the case studies of Indonesia and El Salvador have shown that military-to-military contact stands along side with other tools of influence, such as economic aid, as a potentially influential program of engagement.<sup>22</sup>

An issue that Hsu failed to address is the inadequacy in comparing China with Indonesia and El Salvador. Indonesia and El Salvador are relatively small countries that unlike China, are not considered a regional or major actor. Thus, the two countries are not considered in the interests of the United States. Diplomatically, militarily, and economically, Indonesia and El Salvador do not pose a threat.

Hsu concluded his thesis by stating the United States should pursue military-to-military contacts with the PLA to ensure access to the influential, decision-makers. He further asserted that if the United States were to increase the MMCP with the PLA, the most appropriate programs would be to expose mid-level officers to professional military education systems.<sup>23</sup> Hsu’s research was extensively used to prove the effects of the MMCP in the formulation of Indonesia policies and actions that were in U.S. interests.

Russell D. Howard's and Albert S. Wilner's article, "China's Rise and the U.S. Army: Leaning Forward," assessed the new security strategic environment between the United States and the PRC following the September 2001 terrorist attacks. Several scenarios exist that strategists and policymakers will need to consider for the future. "While we cannot predict what environment will emerge and how strategists and policymakers will act or react," Howard and Wilner believe that "it is incumbent upon the U.S. Army to conduct military diplomacy efforts in a manner that will reduce the potential for miscalculation and misunderstanding."<sup>24</sup>

The authors addressed U.S. assessments of China, including potential conflicts, Chinese views about meeting the U.S. threat, and China's current and emerging capabilities. The assessments prepare for the question to be answered by the article, "How should the U.S. Army prepare now to meet China's rise?"<sup>25</sup> Howard and Wilner contended that the U.S. Army should take a dual-track approach that seeks to improve relations through increased military exchanges with Chinese counterparts, while at the same time training and educating U.S. ground forces to meet any potential threat. They advocated a policy of strong military exchanges tied to set objectives and a reciprocal framework to improve understanding, reduce tensions, and increase transparency. While engaging in the MMCP, the U.S. Army must not compromise its warfighting capability, or contribute to China's combat readiness or deployment capability. The purpose of continuing the MMCP is to reduce the opportunity for conflict.<sup>26</sup>

In the unlikely event that diplomacy fails to resolve potential issues, and conflict between the United States and the PRC becomes inevitable, Howard and Wilner



advocated a need to devote more resources to understanding how “the Chinese military approaches strategic issues and how they fight.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the works drafted by military officers, military related publications from the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) provided additional background and future implications of MMCP contacts between the U.S. armed forces and PLA. Most useful were Thomas L. Wilborn’s *Security Cooperation with China: Analysis and a Proposal* and Colonel Jer Donald Get’s *What’s with the Relationship between America’s Army and China’s PLA? An Examination of the Terms of the U.S. Army’s Strategic Peacetime Engagement with the People’s Liberation Army of the People’s Republic of China*. Wilborn described the cooperation between the two countries during the 1980s and proposes security cooperation programs for the 1990s, following the Tiananmen incident. The report analyzed the role of the PRC in the future and the potential benefits and risks of improving U.S.-China security relations, to include MMCP. He also contended that “in reality, renewed security cooperation has not significantly enhanced U.S. influence in Beijing thus far, and probably will not do so in the near future. But it can expand the opportunities for American officials to explain U.S. positions. . . .”<sup>28</sup> He concluded by writing:

The renewal of U.S. security cooperation with China, potentially the most influential nation in the region, strengthens stability in East Asia by supplementing other dimension of Sino-American relations, thereby increasing U.S. involvement with China and-perhaps more significantly-enhancing the perception that the United States is fully engaged with the PRC. . . . U.S.-China military-to-military relations should be kept at a level sufficient to keep an inter-military dialogue going but modest enough not to strain the capacity of either side.<sup>29</sup>

Get’s report for the SSI examined the terms of the U.S. Army’s engagement with the PLA as a part of a greater study of the restoration of functional exchanges with the

PRC following the Tiananmen Incident. Get studied the background and history of maintaining the MMCP with the PLA. He answered the question of the U.S. Army renewing ties with the PLA in three parts: “First, China is relevant to U.S. interests; second, the United States can positively influence the PRC as China develops into a world power; and, third, one of America’s most effective engagement tools is the U.S. Army.”<sup>30</sup> Get then evaluated the terms on which the U.S. Army should renew its engagement with the PLA. Using an assessment of past successes and failures, Get made recommendations that the U.S. Army must:

1. Establish a comprehensive long-range strategy with clearly identified mission objectives.
2. Prioritize and coordinate the identified objectives.
3. Develop tactics, techniques, and procedures to attain these objectives.
4. Establish measures of effectiveness to track the progress made toward the attainment of particular goals and objectives.
5. Conduct periodic assessments to refine the engagement strategy.<sup>31</sup>

Wilborn’s and Get’s works were instrumental in shaping the recommendation and conclusion, chapter 5, of this thesis.

#### Additional Resource Review

The majority of research material for this thesis will be from secondary sources, predominately Western journals, periodicals, newspapers, papers, and reports. The use of the Internet allows the accessing of recent works, which enabled a more detailed analysis. However, caution must be exercised to ensure that the sources used are credible.

In addition to facilitating research, the use of the Internet allowed the author to contact and consult subject matter experts and officers researching, publishing, and

working in military-to-military contact with the PLA. The experts were initially contacted on the Internet, and provided input either by e-mail correspondences or telephone interviews. The following were contacted and consulted: Major Robert Modarelli (Office of the Secretary of Defense), LTC Albert Wilner (Assistant Professor of International Relations at the United States Military Academy at West Point), LTC Mark Chakwin (PACOM China Desk Officer), and Mr. Kenneth Allen (Former Assistant Air Attaché posted in Beijing and Senior Analyst for the Center of Naval Analysis). LTC Chakwin and MAJ Modarelli provided valuable and current U.S. and PACOM policy input. LTC Wilner and Mr. Allen provided analysis, insights, and published articles.

### Conclusion

Though limited, a sufficient amount of literature and material is available for research. The majority of authors reviewed, with the exception of Gertz, advocate establishing a more robust MMCP with the PLA. Gertz paints the PRC as “the most serious national security threat the United States faces at present and will remain so into the foreseeable future.”<sup>32</sup> He advocates a policy of replacing the Communist government with a democratic alternative. The majority of authors agree in part with Gertz’s assertion that the PRC, and thus, the PLA, may become a threat in the future. However, unlike Gertz, the majority of authors do not advocate or believe it is possible for us to engineer in the short or medium term, a replacement of the present government with a democratic alternative. Instead, the authors propose a policy of working with the PRC and PLA by increasing understanding and mutual respect for the purpose of peace, prosperity, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region through the military-to-military contact program. The

difference among the authors is apparent in the degree of MMCP each nominates.

Without exception, all authors recognize the PRC and PLA's potential in the future.

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<sup>1</sup>Henry A. Kissinger, "Face to Face With China," *Newsweek*. Vol 137, 16 April 2001, 34-35.

<sup>2</sup>Roth quoted in Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America*. (Washington D.C.: Regency Publishing Inc., 2000), 50.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, 34-35.

<sup>4</sup>Larry M. Wortzel, *China's Military Potential* (US Army War College, 2 October 1998), 10.

<sup>5</sup>Gertz, xi-xiv.

<sup>6</sup>The Study of Chinese Military Affairs is imbedded within the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the (U.S.) National Defense University. The Department was created by an act of Congress in FY 2000 following the release of the *Cox Report* in January 1999.

<sup>7</sup>Ellis Joffe, "Eight Points for Attention," *Seeking Truth From Facts: A Retrospective on Chinese Military Studies in the Post-Mao Era* James C. Mulvenon and Andrew N.D. Yang, editors. (CA: Rand Corporation, 2001). [available on-line]; available from <http://www.rand.org/publications/CF/CF160.ch10.pdf>; accessed 26 November 2002.

<sup>8</sup>David Shambaugh, "PLA Studies Today: A Maturing Field," *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age*. James C. Mulvnon and Andrew N.D. Yang, editors. (CA: Rand Corporations, 1999), 9.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 15

<sup>10</sup>Over the past two years, China has worked hard to boost the formation and development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and continued to support and participate in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region (CSCAP), Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) and other activities for multilateral security dialogue and cooperation. Thus, playing a positive role in deepening regional security cooperation with Asian characteristics. The Information Office of the State Council (PRC), *China's National Defense in 2002*, 9 December 2002 [Available on-line]: available from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/natdef2002.html>; accessed 4 February 2003.

<sup>11</sup>The relations between the armed forces of China and Russia, under the guidance of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation, have kept strengthening and developing, and high-level contacts between the armed forces of the two sides have maintained their good momentum. Sino-Japanese military ties were resumed at the end of 2001. Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*. Report #32 (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1999), 42.

<sup>13</sup>Allen and McVadon cite three reasons for continuing military-to-military contact with the PLA. They are: (1) U.S. military uses the military exchange program to demonstrate U.S. military capabilities and deterrence; (2) Provides greater opportunities for Track II level dialogues; and (3) The United States has a valuable role in helping shape the views of other countries about the PLA. By engaging and learning more about the PLA, the United States has the opportunity to share information with other countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia about the PLA as a whole, and to help shape their long-term political-military policies regarding the PRC. Allen and McVadon, 73-74.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>15</sup>Track II diplomacy is considered everything that is not official diplomacy and ranges from cultural, academic, and athletic exchanges, to NGO activities. It even includes contacting another government through an intermediary if a government does not have a formal diplomatic relations with another government.

<sup>16</sup>David M. Finkelstein and John Unangst, "Engaging the DoD: Chinese Perspectives on Military Relations with the United States." (VA: Center for Naval Analysis, 1999), 2.

<sup>17</sup>U.S. military and officials state that the PLA does not allow the same degree of visibility and access to bases, weapon systems, and personnel that the U.S. Armed Forces allow for them. U.S. visits and contacts are not nearly as extensive as the ones the Chinese receive in America.

<sup>18</sup>By "strategically" transparent, the PLA requires the United States to clearly elucidate the strategic ambiguity surrounding Taiwan and cease further arms sale; U.S. intent and interests in the Asia-Pacific region, vis-à-vis encouraging the Japan to take a more proactive security role to contain China.

<sup>19</sup>Finkelstein and Unangst, 81-82.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>21</sup>David K. Hsu, "United States Military-to-Military Contact with the People's Liberation Army of China. (Masters thesis, Naval Post Graduate School, June 2002), 53.

<sup>22</sup>Hsu, 54.

<sup>23</sup>In Hsu's case studies, Indonesia and El Salvador were recipients of IMET funding. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) is part of the overall Security Assistance program that the United States uses to engage foreign militaries. The IMET program pays for the training or education of foreign military and a limited number of civilian personnel. IMET grants are given to foreign governments, which choose the courses their personnel will attend. The Department of State's foreign aid appropriation process, the Department of Defense implements the program. *IMET*, [available on-line]; available from <http://www.ciponline.org/facts/imet.htm>; accessed on 24 March 2003.

<sup>24</sup>Russell D. Howard and Albert S. Wilner, "China's Rise and the U.S. Army: Leaning Forward," *Northeast Asia Regional Security and the United States Military: Context, Presence, and Roles*. (U.S. Air Force Academy, CO: Institute for National Security Studies, November 2002),95-96.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*,114-15.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*,122.

<sup>28</sup>Thomas L. Wilborn, *Security Cooperation with China: Analysis and Proposal*. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1994), 26-27.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*,26-27.

<sup>30</sup>Colonel Jer Donald Get, *What's with the Relationship between America's Army and China's PLA?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College1996), vi.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, vi-vii.

<sup>32</sup>Gertz, 199.

CHAPTER 3  
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The goal of this thesis is to answer the primary question: Can United States military-to-military contacts with the People's Liberation Army further U.S. policies and aims in the Asia-Pacific region? The methodology for this thesis will be deductive analysis using historical background and cultural perspectives, as well as the use of comparative case studies. The analysis will also draw some criteria for measuring the success of past MMCP with China from PACOM's TSCP. In examining arguments for and against Sino-U.S. military-to-military contact program, the analysis will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the basic U.S. policy aims in the region for which China may be relevant?
2. What are China's probable and expressed national interests in the region? What are the security and military implications of those interests? Are there commonalities with U.S. security and other interests? Are there points of potential misunderstanding or conflict?
3. How might an MMCP increase or decrease the potential threat of China to the United States?
4. Are the arguments for maintaining or expanding the MMCP internally consistent?
5. Will the dangers or threats asserted by opponents of MMCP persist whether or not the MMCP continues?
6. Are there feasible methods of offsetting and limiting any dangers posed by the MMCP?
7. Will the gains from the MMCP offset any increased risks from the MMCP?

Despite the somewhat limited military-to-military contact between the United States and China from 1989 to the end of 2002, the usefulness of U.S. military ties to China will be analyzed in terms of the benefits to U.S. interest. Because of the limited examples and the difficulties of assessing the value of continuing the military-to-military contact with the PLA, those contacts will be compared and contrasted to MMCP between the United States and two other countries, the Soviet Union (prior to 1992) and Indonesia.

Analysis of the main thesis question will be done in chapter 4, while chapter 5 will attempt to answer the secondary thesis questions, make recommendations, and conclude the thesis.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

In April 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft collided with a Chinese F-8II, destroying the Chinese aircraft and killing its pilot. The incident immediately halted all forms of military contact. Since the 11 September terrorist attack, relations between the United States and the PRC have slowly improved. As stated in the 2002 *The National Security Strategy*, “We already cooperate well where our interests overlap, including the current war on terrorism<sup>1</sup> and in promoting stability on the Korean peninsula.”<sup>2</sup>

Much in the same way that the United States identifies a constructive relationship with China to be in its national interest, China also identifies a good relationship with the United States to be in its national interest. China’s President Jiang Zemin, in a speech at the George Bush Presidential Library in October 2002, stated, “China and the U.S. ought to step up consultation and cooperation in these fields [weapons proliferation and the situation on the Korean Peninsula], for this serves the common interest of the two countries. . . We stand ready to keep in touch with the US, cooperate more closely with each other. . . and promote peace and stability in the world.”<sup>3</sup>

In Asia, China is a major regional state actor, wielding significant economic and political influence in the region. The potential influence wielded by China is underpinned by the might of the PLA. Although under civil control, the PLA exerts notable power and influence within the PRC, especially in the areas of foreign relations, defense, and historically, internal security.<sup>4</sup> According to Gurtov and Hwang, “the military’s

willingness to voice its policy views on major issues and the top party leaders' consultation of the military's views are now fixtures on the political scene. And that development coincides with the central leadership's need of military muscle to back its definition of the national interest."<sup>5</sup> China considers the use of military force and the threat of force as last resort instruments of foreign policy. According to the PRC's White Paper titled, *China's National Defense in 2002* regarding the issue of Taiwan, "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. The Chinese government will. . . strive for prospects of peaceful reunification with the utmost sincerity and the maximum effort. But it will not forswear the use of force." The white paper further discusses PLA employment:

This guideline [white paper] stresses the deterrence of war. In accordance with the needs of the national development strategy, the PLA, by employing military means flexibly and in close coordination with political, economic and diplomatic endeavors, improves China's strategic environment, reduces factors of insecurity and instability, and prevents local wars and armed conflicts so as to keep the country from the harm of war.<sup>6</sup>

Given China's attitude toward the use or threat of use of its military as an ultimate instrument of power, plus the PLA's strength, the United States has long wrestled with the questions of whether and how to engage the PRC's military establishment. Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor to former President George H.W. Bush, stated, "I think we have everything to gain by it [military-to-military contact] and nothing to lose. . . of all the important groups in China, the one most isolated and therefore most in need of outside exposure is the military."<sup>7</sup>

On the opposite side of the question, opponents of military-to-military contact with the PLA, perceive China as a threat as highlighted by the *Cox Report*. They believe that China's goal is continuing the MMCP is to increase the overall capability of its forces through espionage.

## History of Military-to-Military Contact with the People's Liberation Army

The relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China began in 1949 with the Chinese Communist Party's Red Army victory over the U.S. supported Nationalist government. The defeated Nationalists fled to Taiwan, where they continued to operate as the Republic of China (ROC). The United States military maintained a relationship with the military of the ROC until 1979, when the United States recognized the PRC as the legitimate government of China. During the Korean War, to ensure security of its southern borders and to assist his fellow Communist brother Kim Il Sung (leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea), Mao Zedong (leader of the PRC) issued the order for the Chinese People's Volunteer Army to fight the American imperialists.

The relationship between the United States and the PRC did not significantly improve during the 1960s. In fact, progress was not made until 1972 when, in an effort to counter the Soviet Union, President Richard M. Nixon made an unprecedented visit to China. By 1979, the relationship evolved to the point where the PRC received full diplomatic recognition.

Since normalization in 1979, military-to-military contacts have occurred, albeit infrequently, with varying degrees of effectiveness and success. The zenith of military-to-military contact occurred in the late 1980s, when the United States, through its Foreign Military Sales was prepared to sell military equipment to the PLA.<sup>8</sup> However, the Tiananmen Incident in June 1989 stopped those sales and fundamentally changed the path of Sino-U.S. relations that had been followed from the time of President Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972. Low level military-to-military contacts only resumed in 1991

when U.S. National Defense University “CAPSTONE”<sup>9</sup> delegates visited China, and the PLA Defense Attaché posted in Washington D.C. received U.S. Pentagon briefings about U.S. military operations in the Gulf during Operation Desert Storm.

More formal military-to-military contact was re-established only when the Clinton administration realized the need to shift policy towards the PRC from one of confrontation to one of increased engagement. The developing crisis over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program contributed strongly to this decision. In October 1993, Chas W. Freeman, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, was sent to China.<sup>10</sup> Following the visit, Secretary of Defense William Cohen began to advocate expanding military-to-military contacts.<sup>11</sup> In August 1994, he sent to the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, a memorandum that stated:

Our security posture dramatically improves if China cooperates with us. In order to gain that cooperation, we must rebuild mutual trust and understanding with the PLA, and this could only happen through high level dialogue and working level contacts. . . . The military relationship with China could pay significant dividends for the DoD. Let us proceed in a forward-looking, although measured, manner in this important relationship.<sup>12</sup>

Over the next six years, exchanges between the top defense and military leaderships increased. Visitors from China to the United States included Defense Minister Chi Haotian; Central Military Commission (CMC) Vice Chairman Zhang Wannian, PLA Chief of the General Staff; the directors of the General Political Department and the General Logistics Department; and PLA Air Force and PLA Navy commanders. Visitors from the United States to the PRC included Secretaries of Defense William Perry and William Cohen, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John M.D. Shalikashvili and General Henry H. Shelton, the service secretaries and chiefs of staff, and the combatant commanders of the U.S. Pacific Command. These official military contacts

between the United States and China were comparable to the level that existed during the 1980s, although FMS programs were not revived.<sup>13</sup>

In conjunction with the high level military-to-military contacts, the Clinton administration introduced and attempted to institutionalize other confidence-building measures. The most important measures were the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), the annual Defense Consultation Talks (DCT)<sup>14</sup>, and joint observance of military exercises. The PLA observed RIMPAC and Cope Thunder exercises, while General Shelton observed a military exercise in the Nanjing Military Region during his November 2000 visit to the PRC. Other confidence building measures included greater transparency measures (PLA officers visiting U.S. military facilities and receiving briefings on military doctrine); humanitarian assistance and disaster relief cooperation, “sand table” and joint exercises; and port calls. Functional exchanges took place between the national defense universities of both countries, staff colleges, and logistics and military medicine institutions.<sup>15</sup>

The military-to-military contact program mirrors the peaks and valleys that have characterized the multifaceted and complex Sino-U.S. relationship. Just as the relationship was improving during the mid-1990s, several events quickly caused setbacks. In 1995, the Clinton administration issued a tourist visa to former Taiwanese President Lee Teng Hui to visit his alma mater, Cornell University, to attend an alumni event in June. In protest, PLA Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Liu Shunyao cut his visit to the United States short. The planned visit by the Defense Minister, General Chi Haotian, was postponed. In November of 1995, Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye resumed military-to-military contact with a visit to China. However, the

contact was quickly terminated when, during the spring of 1996, the PLA conducted a military exercise consisting of firing rockets into the Taiwan Straits. In response, the United States immediately deployed two aircraft carriers to the region. The United States cancelled the rescheduled visit of PLA Defense Minister Chi Haotian.<sup>16</sup>

The next incident that caused a setback in the turbulent Sino-U.S. relationship was the congressional suspension of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Defense Conversion.<sup>17</sup> Two consecutive events dealt severe blows to military-to-military contact-- the release of the *Cox Report*<sup>18</sup> in January 1999 and the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May 1999.<sup>19</sup> The *Cox Report* pressed the Clinton administration to limit the scope of military-to-military contacts with the PLA, and particularly PLA observation of U.S. training and sensitive military facilities. The effects of the Chinese Embassy bombing were more tangible -- storms of protest from the PRC and a suspension of almost all military contacts and planned visits. Suspended visits included one by PLAN Commander Vice Admiral Shi Yunsheng (planned for June 1999, in conjunction with a planned port call to Hawaii and Seattle); a PLA visit to the Sandia National Laboratories' Cooperative Monitoring Center; the USMC Commandant General Charles Krulak visit to China; and a visit by Secretary of Defense, William J. Cohen.<sup>20</sup>

Sino-U.S. relations improved only after the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in September 1999, where Chinese leader Jiang Zemin and President Clinton discussed a resumption of consultative meeting, and the November 1999 U.S.-China agreement on China's entry into the World Trade Organization. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell resumed the relationship with a visit to China, followed by the Deputy Chief of the Chinese General staff Lieutenant General Xiong

Guangkai's visit in January 2000 for the Defense Consultation Talks. Several other important visits followed including Secretary Cohen's visit in July 2000.

The renewed contacts only lasted until April 2001, when a U.S. Navy EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft collided with a Chinese F-8II, destroying the Chinese aircraft and killing the pilot. The EP-3 made an emergency landing on China's Hainan Island. Twelve days later, after tense negotiations, the crew was allowed to leave Hainan Island. The aircraft was subsequently cut into pieces and flown off the island.<sup>21</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld subsequently ordered a case-by-case review of all proposed bilateral military-to-military exchanges, requiring all existing and future programs to be personally approved by him<sup>22</sup>

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks led to slightly improved Sino-U.S. relations.<sup>23</sup> A bilateral MMCA working group meeting was held in September 2001 in Guam. A U.S. NDU "CAPSTONE" delegation visited China in February 2002. President Bush traveled twice to China, and Chinese Vice President, now President, Hu Jintao visited the United States. From April to May 2002, the PRC President Jiang Zemin visited President Bush at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. Among the issues discussed during the summit in Texas were the resumption of military-to-military contacts.<sup>24</sup>

In June 2002, the Pentagon officially re-initiated military-to-military contacts when the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Peter W. Rodman, visited Beijing. MMCA working group meetings were held in April 2002 and December 2002. In November 2002, PLA cadets visited the United States Military Academy. The same month, the U.S.S. Paul F. Foster, a Spruance Class Destroyer, conducted a port visit to the Chinese city of Qingdao. In December 2002, a PLA National

Defense University (PRC) delegation visited the United States.<sup>25</sup> On 9 December 2002, Douglas J. Feith, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and PLA General Xiong Guangkai, the Deputy Chief of the Chinese General staff, met at the Pentagon, renewing the annual Defense Consultative Talks.<sup>26</sup> Admiral Thomas Fargo, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, visited China following the DCT.

From normalization of relations, through the collapse of the Soviet Union and to the present, the political and military relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China has oscillated to the same degree. Currently, in the year 2003, relations are relatively good. Should the United States seek to expand its military-to-military relationship?

#### Converging and Diverging Interests

Countries pursue foreign policies to achieve their perceived national interests. The basis of the Sino-U.S. relationship during the 1970s and 1980s was in part, perhaps, to counter the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, that basis for the relationship seemed to have shifted to ensure peace, stability, and prosperity of the region. The two paramount issues that can bedevil the relationship are those concerning the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan.<sup>27</sup>

The maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula appears to be in the interests of both the United States and the PRC. During his October 2002 visit to President Bush's ranch at Crawford, Texas, then Chinese President Jiang Zemin stated, "We Chinese always hold the position that the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear weapon free. . . .But, today, President Bush and I agreed that the problem should be resolved peacefully."<sup>28</sup> Economically, if war ravaged the South Korean economy, then



recovery and re-building of the whole Korean Peninsula would probably require massive infusion of economic assistance. The economies of not only Korea, but also the PRC and Japan could also be greatly affected. Such a situation would not be in the interest of America or China.<sup>29</sup>

Although uncertain, the PRC does appear to possess some degree of influence over North Korea. In addition to being a key supplier of energy and food, China ensured North Korea's existence by the PLA's intervention during the Korean War. Kim Jong Il, the current leader of North Korea has visited China a number of times, including trips in May 2000 and early 2001. Dr. Jing Dong Yuan, Senior Research Associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies and instructor of Chinese politics and Northeast Asia Security and arms control at the Monterey Institute for International Studies, in an article for a Hong Kong newspaper, *The South China Morning Post*, asserts that using the influence at its disposal, China can best serve its own (and the United States') interests by seeking a diplomatic and political solution to the problems on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>30</sup>

While the Korean Peninsula is a case where interests may largely converge, Taiwan is a case where United States and Chinese interests appear to diverge. The United States recognizes the "one China" policy, but remains committed to Taiwan's de facto independence under the auspices of the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and the moral imperative of promoting a democratic government. The PRC considers Taiwan to be a renegade, twenty-third province. Although the United States has clearly recognized the legitimacy of the PRC and the de facto independent status of Taiwan in three communiqués,<sup>31</sup> there appears to be some ambiguity about what actions the United States might or might not take were Taiwan to precipitate a crisis by declaring independence.<sup>32</sup>

However, there is no ambiguity that the United States would militarily oppose a PRC invasion of Taiwan without provocative actions first being taken by Taiwan. The U.S. commitment to the security of Taiwan was reasserted during the spring of 1996, when the PLA conducted a ballistic missile exercise, firing into the Taiwan Straits, before the first democratic presidential election in Taiwan.<sup>33</sup> The United States deployed the U.S.S. Nimitz and U.S.S. Independence carrier battle groups to the vicinity of the Taiwan Straits to show American resolve and commitment to the security of Taiwan. At the end of the day, conflict was avoided, but the situation was tense. The Taiwan situation will likely remain a source of friction for Sino-U.S. relations.<sup>34</sup>

#### Goals in Military-to-Military Contacts

Because of converging and diverging interests in the Asia-Pacific region, the potential for mishaps and, on the other hand, cooperation is great. A possible avenue for creating better relations between the two countries might be increased military-to-military contacts. The expressed goals of military-to-military contact for the United States and the PRC were stated by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, in a 14 May 1997 address at the PLA National Defense University when he outlined the mutual goals as being to “decrease suspicion, further mutually beneficial military cooperation, and lessen the chances for miscalculations in a crisis.”<sup>35</sup>

Professor Jin Canrong, Deputy Director of the Center of American Studies at *Renmin* (The People’s) University of China, further explained the importance and relevance of military-to-military contacts. He stated:

In the past, the belief was that economic and trade relations was [sic] the “ballast” stabilizing Sino-US relations, but in fact merely maintaining economic contacts is still not enough, as military exchanges between the two countries are also very

important. Military exchanges can enhance the coefficient of stability in relations between the two countries.

Mutual understanding in military affairs will make for a more accurate grasp of the interests of both sides and thus reduce the possibility that rules will be broken . . . Sino-US relations have become more strategic in nature, and actually the key strategic element is the military.<sup>36</sup>

The DoD identified missions and goals for its MMCP for each regional combatant commander. The three primary goals of a TSCP (formerly called the Theater Engagement Plan) are influence, access, and competent coalition partners. Specific goals of U.S. military-to-military engagement with the PLA, outlined in PACOM's current TSCP:

1. China acts as a constructive regional player--committing to peaceful international settlement of territorial disputes.
2. China and United States achieve clarity and transparency on long-term military plans regarding Taiwan, TMD, regional presence, and engagement.
3. China maintains a normal, baseline level of military interaction.
4. China establishes bilateral and multi-lateral procedures, communications interoperability, and other issues for humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and search and rescue activities.

According to Allen, the PLA's published goals (based on the PLA's white paper) for military relations are to:

1. Shape the international security environment to support key national security objectives.
2. Improve political and military relations with foreign countries.
3. Provide military assistance to developing countries.
4. Enhance China's military and defense industry modernization by acquiring technology and advancing key research and development programs through foreign assistance.
5. Help China's military leaders, younger officers, and civilian cadre acquire modern military knowledge, especially from the developed world, in doctrine,

operations, training, military medicine, administration, and a host of non-combat related areas.<sup>37</sup>

The first three stated goals are directly related to supporting China's overall foreign policies, which underlie the inherent political nature of the PLA. The last two goals are issues for those in the United States who do not wish to further relations with China use to strengthen their case against improving military relations with China.

Similarities can be found in both the U.S. armed forces and PLA goals, specifically in shaping the regional and global environment to fit in the interests of each country. The difference is evident in the PLA's goals to enhance its capabilities and knowledge.

#### Military-to-Military Contact with the PLA

The MMCP with the PLA has been tenuous, reflective of the fragile Sino-U.S. relationship. However, even limited military-to-military contacts can have desirable effects. In Get's report, he wrote, "there is significant anecdotal evidence of engagement leading to the Chinese government's acquiescence to U.S. initiatives." He cited several examples of the PRC's assistance in pursuing U.S. interests. Get contended that using the access and direct means of communications with the PLA gained through the MMCP, the United States was able to persuade the PRC to support two key U.S. interests during the Gulf War. Specifically, the PRC did not veto the UN Security Council resolution allowing the use of force to liberate Kuwait, and the U.S. military obtained technical information on Chinese weapons systems used by the Iraqi forces to develop countermeasures.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, Get asserted that through the confidence gained from MMCP, the PRC cooperated with the United States in other areas such as: (1) PRC

assistance in stopping the North Korean nuclear weapons program during the mid-1990s; (2) agreement to open its markets to U.S. farm products; and (3) China's adoption of a law that allows its citizens to recover damages from the government for infringement of their rights. Get further argues "there is also ample evidence that, when the U.S. Government has chosen to focus its resources, there are few countries in the world that have been able to resist."<sup>39</sup>

Based on the limited MMCP between the U.S. armed forces and the PLA since 1989, Finkelstein and Unangst state that the PLA claims to have taken U.S. security concerns seriously, and have taken actions that have been helpful to U.S. interests. The PLA cites three specific incidents and actions undertaken by China, based on increased MMCP, to be in the interest of the United States. The examples cited were: (1) efforts to support the Four Party Talks on Korea, (2) ending military cooperation with Iran on WMD, and (3) ending missile sales to Pakistan.<sup>40</sup> The instances were the result of an overall policy to improve Sino-U.S. relations in what the Clinton administration called "comprehensive engagement."<sup>41</sup>

The first example cited by Finkelstein and Unangst of increased military contacts resulting in PLA and PRC actions supporting U.S. interests occurred on 9 December 1997, when the PRC supported the United States in the Four Party Talks on Korea. The event brought together the four major participants of the Korean War--the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the PRC, and the United States -- for the first international discussions on replacing the 1953 armistice agreement.<sup>42</sup> Without the assistance and cooperation of China, the Four Party Talks would not have occurred.

Although nothing of significance was agreed upon, the meeting of the representatives of the four nations laid the groundwork for future discussions.

The second instance of military contacts, in conjunction with diplomatic efforts furthering U.S. interests, occurred on 10 September 1997 when the PLA announced the ending of military cooperation with Iran to develop weapons of mass destruction. Chinese Premier Li Peng signed a set of regulations implementing nuclear export controls. The regulations limited Chinese nuclear exports to only facilities under International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) safeguards. The PRC also joined the Zangger Committee (on nuclear trade) on 16 October 1997.<sup>43</sup> Then, the PRC issued new export control regulations on dual-use nuclear items on 17 June 1998.<sup>44</sup>

The final incident the PLA claims that military contacts resulted in actions in the interests of the United States occurred during the preparation for the Clinton-Jiang summits. The 1998 summit in Beijing produced a joint statement on South Asia and on biological weapons, effectively ending missile sales to Pakistan.<sup>45</sup>

Critics of the MMCP between the U.S. military and the PLA argue that despite the PLA's claims of helping U.S. interests, Chinese actions are contrary to their statements. These critics state that the PRC is not yet a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime,<sup>46</sup> Nuclear Suppliers Group (requires full-scope safeguards), nor the Australia Group (restricts chemical and biological weapons). PRC weapons proliferation has persisted within trends that suggest more ambiguous technical assistance to other countries, longer range missiles, more indigenous capabilities, and secondary proliferation. The 1998 Rumsfeld Commission report identified China's proliferation as a "threat."<sup>47</sup> The counter argument to the critics is that despite the PRC's past behavior of

weapons proliferation, a concerted effort is being pursued to abide by the international agreements and limit proliferation of WMD and missile technology.

The examples cited above seemingly indicate that U.S. military-to-military contacts, in conjunction with an overall strategic policy, can have positive, although somewhat limited effects. Get best sums the situation by writing, “There are limits both to the degree of PRC accommodation and to what the United States can focus at any particular time.”<sup>48</sup>

#### Military-to-Military Contact with the Soviet Union

The relationship between the United States and the PRC is relatively young, whereas, the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union began in 1933, when the two nations established formal, diplomatic ties. Similar to the Sino-U.S. relationship, the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States had its ups and downs, but both countries found it in their interest to maintain the dialogue, even in the worst of times. Following the end of World War II, military-to-military contacts supplemented the diplomatic dialogue between the United States and the USSR.<sup>49</sup> The underlying purpose of maintaining a military-to-military program was to avert a disastrous, nuclear World War III. The same logic that drove Soviet-U.S. military contacts seems applicable to the Sino-U.S. MMCP.

According to former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (1969-74) and Staff Secretary to President Eisenhower (1954-61), General Andrew Goodpaster, “great potential benefits,” and a method to “cool down military confrontation” were reasons for engaging the Soviet Union in military-to-military contact. He further stated that it was to our benefit to have Soviet tactical commanders visit our units in the field and actually see

our combat equipment. His personal experiences suggested that actually viewing our troops and equipment greatly impressed Soviet commanders with U.S. technological capabilities. Although visiting actual units would have been a great opportunity for reciprocal visits to the Soviet Union, General Goopaster stated that the chance for opposing field commanders to meet and gain a mutual appreciation of the one another was just as valuable.<sup>50</sup>

During the Cold War, officers and officials at both the Pentagon and Soviet General Staff argued about the utility of maintaining military-to-military contact, just as today there are arguments about Sino-U.S. contacts. The Soviet-U.S. military contacts seemed, to some, to squander valuable resources instead of preparing for possible conflict with each other. The counter argument was that serious conflicts between the two superpowers did not escalate to catastrophic consequences because of the military-to-military contacts. Two serious instances that could have quickly escalated were Germany in 1958-61 and Cuba in 1962.<sup>51</sup>

An outstanding example of the utility of Soviet-U.S. military contact was the Incidents at Sea Agreement signed in 1972.<sup>52</sup> Rear Admiral Ronald Kurth, former President of the Naval War College from 1987 to 1990, noted that the Incidents at Sea Agreement “relieved the potential for the day-to-day disasters which were present in the late 1950s and early 1960s and has led to increases in mutual understanding and confidence.”<sup>53</sup> Experience has shown that the creation of a direct naval channel of communications involving the service staffs and attaché personnel, in addition to yearly formal meetings, has allowed issues that bother, or conversely please, either navy, to be handled expeditiously and professionally. Through the Incidents at Sea Agreement and



the contacts that have resulted from the agreement, situations involving the U.S. Navy or U.S. Air Force contacting their Soviet counter-parts on the open sea and sky resulting in serious incidents were minimized, thereby reducing the possibility of escalation.

The pinnacle of U.S. and Soviet military-to-military contacts during the Cold War occurred in June of 1988, when Admiral William Crowe Jr., then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited the Soviet Union. The following year, Marshal Sergie Akhromeyev, then Chief of the General Staff (USSR) visited the United States. Of his visit and discussions with Admiral Crowe, Marshal Akhromeyev said in an interview for the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestia*:

We spent many hours, perhaps dozen of hours, discussing with Adm Crowe – and in very great detail-the substance of the USSR and U.S. military doctrines. It was the most frank discussion that there can be between the military leaders of the USSR and the United States, and it was, at the same time, confidential. . . .I expressed our concern and drew attention to the U.S. actions, which pose a danger to the Soviet Union. It was an open and pointed discussion, but we attempted to understand one another.<sup>54</sup>

Admiral Crowe said that he came away from his meetings with Marshall Akhromeyev with a better sense of Soviet concerns about U.S. and NATO military strategy. In an interview published in the 26 December 1988, issue of *Time*, Admiral Crowe said, “I wasn’t negotiating anything. But if better relations are to be achieved, the military should participate in and contribute to the process.”<sup>55</sup>

Following these and other visits, senior military officers in 1989 signed the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (PDMA) agreement. Similar in scope to the Incidents at Sea Agreement, the PDMA applies not just to naval forces, but to all armed forces. The agreement addresses four categories of military activities: (1) military operations near the territory of the other state; (2) use of lasers; (3) operations in areas of

high threat, risk, or tension; and (4) interference with command and control networks. The agreement creates a responsibility in each of the cases to behave with caution, to communicate to avoid problems and incidents, and to terminate activities if notification of problems is received.<sup>56</sup> A similar agreement with China would clearly be in U.S. interests. It is rational to think that senior U.S. and PRC military-to-military contacts might lead to similar results.

In the conclusion of an article written in 1989, Kurt Campbell wrote of the necessity of continuing the MMCP between the United States and the Soviet Union:

Since the earliest days of the cold war, both superpowers have seen fit to regulate their rivalry through at least some level of military dialogue and exchanges. The current climate of U.S.-Soviet rapprochement and reassessment has opened up possibilities for much greater military involvement in the superpower relationship. Indeed, the very complexity and urgency of the issues concerned-the need to examine conventional arms control and work to prevent and resolve dangerous military situations-demand the more active involvement of the military. These new responsibilities for the armed forces should not pre-empt or complicate civilian diplomacy with the USSR. Rather, the expansion of the scope and significance of braided dialogues should be seen as an increasingly necessary adjunct to traditional avenues of diplomacy.<sup>57</sup>

The importance of great power military-to-military contacts was further elaborated by Kimberly Marten Zisk:

Military contacts provide each side with a unique lens for viewing the other side's intention and capabilities, and being seen in return, ensuring each side's security at a time of international uncertainty. . . Both military planners and the state as a whole benefit from having this alternative channel of communication and intelligence, as well as an opportunity to learn from each other. Whether the end result is reassurance about each side's defensive intentions or warning about their disappearance, military contact programs serve hard-headed military goals.

Military contact programs may become an increasingly useful security tool in the current international environment, where the end of bipolarity makes alliance structures more fluid than before and regional security concerns more salient to all states in the absence of a superpower guarantee of stability. The lenses that these contact programs provide give military organizations a means to decrease the

uncertainty of the security environment they face, and thereby increase both international stability and the ability of all states to plan well for the future.<sup>58</sup>

As China's economic and military potential inexorably expands, the arguments of Zisk cannot be ignored. Just as we engaged with the Soviets to advance U.S. foreign policy interests, so too can an expanded MMCP with the PRC advance our interests both within the Asia-Pacific region and increasingly around the world. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz has stated, "We think that contacts between our two militaries can contribute to reducing misunderstanding and building a more secure Asia in the future."<sup>59</sup> Much in the same manner that the U.S. and Soviet military discussed and settled upon the Incidents at Sea Agreement and PDMA, the U.S. military and PLA discussed and agreed upon the MMCA, most notably, immediately after the EP-3 incident, to ensure similar occurrences do not occur again. Additionally, since 1997, the annual DCT meeting between the two militaries has increased mutual understanding and trust between the leaders of both militaries.

#### Military-to-Military Contact with Indonesia

Unlike our MMCP with the PLA where the efficacy is difficult to assess, our MMCP with the Indonesia Armed forces has had definite results that served the interests of the United States. Looking at our programs and their results in Indonesia provides an idea of what might be accomplished by an expanded Sino-U.S. program.

In his thesis, David Hsu catalogued a few of the positive effects of United States MMCP with Indonesia. Hsu cited the following officers as examples of participants in military-to-military contacts who have taken actions in Indonesia that have improved the country and were also in the national interest of the United States. The officers and their activities included:

1. General (Retired) Feisal Tanjung, former Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief  
 Opened Indonesian military-to-military contacts in the 1990s.  
 Chaired the Military Honor Council that disciplined errant officers involved in shooting civilians in Dili, East Timor, in 1991.  
 Punished other military personnel who abused human rights.  
 Instituted and supported human rights awareness training for all senior officer of the Indonesian armed forces.
  
2. Lieutenant General (Retired) Yunus Yusfiah, former armed forces Chief of Staff for Socio-Political Affairs (third ranking post)  
 Wrote a thesis, "The Role of the Mass Media in Developing Countries (Indonesia)", while a student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in 1979. As  
 President Habibie's minister of information, worked to eliminate the government department that controlled all of the media.
  
3. The late Colonel Slamet Sidabutar, military commander in East Timor  
 Initiated legal training and briefings on the need to respect human rights within days of his assumption of command.  
 Reinstated training programs on international law, conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, for all subordinate commanders in East Timor.  
 Died in 1998 in a helicopter crash in East Timor.<sup>60</sup>

The officers listed above were a sample of a group that were recipients of various military engagement programs, most notably the IMET program, which allowed Indonesian officers to attend U.S. professional military education institutions. While attending the institutions, the Indonesian officers were exposed to concepts and ideas that resulted in "Increasing civilian victories in civil-military clashes (that) underscore. . . [the] break with Indonesia's long tradition of strong military influence. In addition, command responsibility and steps towards international norms on human rights are significant emerging concepts that are turning over long held mores."<sup>61</sup>

Colonel (Retired) Haseman, former U.S. Army Defense Attaché posted in Indonesia, has stated that during the 1990s when the bilateral relationship between the United States and Indonesia had been strained due to the situation in East Timor, a key

group of Indonesian officers, who had participated in military-to-military contact programs with the United States, resisted the call to “shut off the Americans,” because it would harm interests to them and the United States.<sup>62</sup>

It would be advisable to try to promote a similar view among PLA officers on the commonality of interests, which the United States and China share. Chapter 5 will discuss several possible venues where commonality of interest can be further explored.

### Conclusion

Comparing the PRC with the Soviet Union and Indonesia may seem incongruous. However, all the countries share some important attributes. All three countries have been dominated or were greatly influenced by the military; all militaries were involved in revolutionary wars or wars of independence; the countries have had to deal with large and diverse populations dispersed over large areas; and all three have or had potentially significant, geo-strategic differences with the United States. The United States and the former Soviet Union and Indonesia all long recognized the necessity of maintaining rudimentary systems of access to understand each other. To do otherwise could have resulted in catastrophic consequences. Military-to-military contacts, working in conjunction with Track II contacts, have been successful in fostering greater understanding, access, and influence between the parties. In the cases of the Soviet Union and Indonesia, the MMCP has benefited U.S. interests. During the Cold War, a catastrophic conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was avoided. For Indonesia, the establishment of a more democratic form of government and the civilian control of the military resulted.

While the Sino-U.S. MMCP is still in its infancy, it is reasonable to expect the efficacy of the program to be as great as what has been achieved in the Soviet Union and Indonesia. Since 1989, United States and Chinese military-to-military contacts have proven themselves to be viable. Clearly U.S. military-to-military contacts with the PLA have and can further U.S. policies and aims in the Asia-Pacific region.

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<sup>1</sup>David M. Lampton believes that Beijing and Washington will both seek to avoid any appearance of deteriorating relations during the war against terrorism, and modest progress will likely be made in trade and leadership exchanges. With respect to the global struggle against terrorism, Beijing has its own reasons to cooperate in the intelligence sharing and money laundering areas, as it already has done. In the United Nations, we can expect Beijing to support General Assembly and Security Council actions that give the United States considerable practical latitude, but which do not formally endorse specific forceful U.S. actions in specific places. Beyond the visible spectrum of cooperation, China may provide further help "behind the curtain." David J.Lampton, "Small Mercies: China and America after 9/11." *The National Interest*. Winter 2001/02. [available on-line]; available from <http://www.nixoncenter.org/publications/articles/TNIwint0102dml.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2003.

<sup>2</sup>The *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 27

<sup>3</sup>Peter Harmsen, "Jiang Seeks Closer China-US Cooperation Ahead of Bush Summit," *Hong Kong AFP*, 25 October 2002; Translated from Chinese-Mandarin; available from FBIS.

<sup>4</sup>Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*. (MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 106-07.

<sup>5</sup>According to *China's National Defense in 2002* (White Papers), China's national interests are, "...a peaceful international environment and a favorable climate in its periphery. And its development will make even greater contributions to world peace and human progress." Mel Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China's Security: The New Roles of the Military*. (CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 295

<sup>6</sup>"China's National Defense in 2000," Information Office of the State Council, 16 October 2000, [available on-line]; available from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/cnd0010/china-001016wp.htm>; Internet.

<sup>7</sup>Scrowcroft quoted in Bradley Graham, "U.S. Weighs Stronger Relations with China: Pentagon Seeks Improved Military Ties," 22 July 2002, *The Washington Post*, A9.

<sup>8</sup>The Foreign Military Sales program to the PLA included the following projects: \$550 million Project Peace Pearl to upgrade avionics for the PLAAF F-8 fighter/interceptor; \$62.5 million AN/TPQ-37 counter artillery radar; \$28.5 million program to upgrade two 155mm ammunition facilities; and \$8.5 million Mark-46 Mod-2 anti-submarine torpedoes.

<sup>9</sup>CAPSTONE is an orientation and training program for new flag officers and flag officer-designates administered by the National Defense University.

<sup>10</sup>Jing-Dong Yuan, "Sino-US Military Relations Since Tiananmen: Restoration, Progress, and Pitfalls." *Parameters*, Spring 2003. [available online]; available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/03spring/yuan.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 March 2003.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Secretary of Defense, "U.S.-China Military Relationship," memorandum for Secretary of the Army, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Air Force, I-94/18035, date unspecified. [available online]; available from <http://www.gwu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB19/12-01.htm>; Internet; accessed 30 March 2003.

<sup>13</sup>Yuan.

<sup>14</sup>The Defense Consultative Talks were first proposed by former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry to Minister of National Defense General Chi Haotian during the General's visit to the Pentagon in December 1996. During President Jiang's visit in October, formal agreement was reached on holding regular meetings. These talks institutionalize senior-level interactions in the security and defense areas to facilitate better understanding and communications between the U.S. and PLA militaries. The delegations discuss global and regional defense issues, finalize military-to-military schedule of contacts, and exchange briefings on humanitarian relief operations. "First U.S.-China Defense Consultative Talks December 11-12," *Defense Department release*, 10 December 1997. [article on-line]; available from <http://www.usconsulate.org/hk/uscn/others/1996-97/971210.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 May 2003.

<sup>15</sup>Although not officially considered military-to-military contact, a variety of Track II programs were initiated. PLA officers attended seminars at Harvard University and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies; participated in working group meetings at the Council for Security and Cooperation in Asia-Pacific and in visiting fellow programs at the Atlantic Council, George Washington University; and the Monterey Institute of International Studies' Center for Nonproliferation Studies; and the Washington Intensive Seminar on Nonproliferation sponsored by the Center for Nonproliferation. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>The Joint Defense Conversion Commission (JDCC) was established in October 1994 in an agreement by US Defense Secretary William Perry and China's Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND) Director Ding Henggao. Under the agreement, the two sides agreed "to promote the orderly use, for peaceful purposes, of defense industrial, technological and scientific facilities and personnel not needed for defense requirements." The agreement was intended to provide US assistance to Chinese conversion of military and defense facilities for civilian commercial applications. The JDCC initially established two projects, one to develop electric buses and another to upgrade China's air traffic control system. The provision of an integrated air traffic control system to China, however, came under political attack in the United States, since it was alleged that this radar system could enhance the capabilities of China's Air Force. There were also allegations about regarding the role of a friend and policy advisor of Perry. As a result of these issues, on 9 October 1995, the US House of Representatives, reacting to allegations that JDCC projects could aid China's military, decided to cut funding for the JDCC. The JDCC was officially discontinued in July 1996. Jason Glashow, "China Tech Transfer Faces Congressional Inquiry." *Defense News*, 8 January 1996. 1,20; Nigel Holloway, "Beating a Retreat." *Far Eastern Economic Review*: 26, 22 August 1996 [journal on-line]; William Triplett, *Defense News*, 9 October 1995. 23-24: [journal on-line]; available on-line from <http://www.hti.org/china/jdcccorg.htm>; Internet; accessed 31 March 2003.

<sup>18</sup>The *Cox Report*, released by the United States House of Representatives Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China in January 1999, stated that the PRC had stolen design information on the United States' most advanced thermonuclear weapons through penetration of our national weapons laboratories and, as a result, has increased its nuclear weapons capabilities. For more information, see *House Report 105-851*, January 1999; [available on-line]; available from <http://www.gpo.gov/congress/house/hr/105851-html/index.html>; Internet; accessed 13 March 2003.

<sup>19</sup>On 7 May 1999, the PRC Embassy in Belgrade was accidentally bombed. The embassy moved to the new location in 1996, but the database used for targeting was not updated to reflect the new location. After negotiating and a paying a compensation of \$28 million, military contacts resumed in January 2000.

<sup>20</sup>Yuan.

<sup>21</sup>Following the EP-3 Incident, during 14-15 September 2001, the United States and China conducted a special Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) meeting at Agana, Guam. U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Tom S. Fellin and PLA Maj. Gen. Zhan Bangdong from the Ministry of National Defense of the PRC discussed the general principles of international law and treaties and the principles and procedures for the safety of military aircraft and military vessels operating in the vicinity of one another.



Additionally, both sides agreed on the importance of continuing to use the MMCA process to reduce the possibility of air and maritime incidents. The special meeting concluded by recommending that the MMCA's next working group session address the issues of military aviation and maritime safety and continue the dialogue on these issues. "U.S., China MMCA talks Completed," PACOM News Release #023-01, 15 September 2001. [available on-line]; available from <http://131.84.1.218/news/news2001/rel023-01.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 February 2003. The MMCA has the goal of establishing a forum to discuss issues of maritime safety and operations between the People's Republic of China and the United States. MMCA does not in itself develop legal protocols binding on both countries, rather its intent is to work out issues that can be guided by existing international agreements. Established in 1998 by an agreement between the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the Chinese Minister of National Defense, MMCA is a process for conducting military exchanges to strengthen maritime safety between the two countries. The first meeting to discuss MMCA was held in the PRC in July, 1999 with representatives of the U. S. Defense Attaches Office in Beijing and the PRC Ministry of National Defense Foreign Affairs Office. A second session was hosted by U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii in June, 2000 with representatives of the U.S. Navy and the naval component of the People's Liberation Army. During this meeting, the U.S. Navy representatives stressed the need to develop expert level discussions and for both armed forces to abide by international laws and maritime customs to avoid mishaps. Additional exchanges between the two countries to discuss international standards of communications at sea were held in San Diego in December 1998, and in Qingdao, China in May, 1999. These two working groups reached a common understanding of the protocols that serve as the basis for routing communications between ships and aircraft. These working groups set the stage for a follow-on meeting held in March 2000, in Beijing to review their reports.

<sup>22</sup>Yuan.

<sup>23</sup>Since September 11, U.S. officials have come to see Beijing as an important potential ally in the fight against global terrorism, while PRC offices see the anti-terrorism campaign as a chance to improve relations with Washington and perhaps gain policy concessions on issues important to Beijing. Kerry Dumbaugh, "China – U.S. Relations," *Issue Brief for Congress (IB98018)*, 17 July 2002. [available on-line].

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>The PLA delegation's visit was a reciprocal exchange of a CAPSTONE program for newly selected flag officers. Hosted by the (U.S.) National Defense University, sixteen officers (two LTGs, twelve MGs, two COLs) and five officials from the PLA visited NDU, the Pentagon, Command and General Staff College, and the Naval Post Graduate School.

<sup>26</sup>Feith and Xiong discussions included Taiwan, North Korea, Iraq, and future military exchanges. They agreed to disagree about the issue of Taiwan. As for North

Korea, both agreed that a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula was in the interest of both countries.

<sup>27</sup>For the purpose of brevity in this thesis, other converging interests will not be discussed. As highlighted by *The National Security Strategy, White Paper on China's National Defense in 2002*, and the press release cited below, converging interests include, but are not limited to the global war on terrorism and the respect for human rights.

<sup>28</sup>“President Bush, Chinese President Jiang Zemin Discuss Iraq, N.Korea,” Office of the Press Secretary, 25 October 2002. [article on-line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021025.html>; Internet; accessed 2 May 2003.

<sup>29</sup>Jing-Dong Yuan, “ Using Its Influence Behind the Scenes,” *South China Morning Post*, 11 February 2003, [available on-line]; available from <http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/chinainf.htm>; Internet; accessed 31 March 2003.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>The PRC considers the issue of Taiwan the most paramount issue of its policy. The PRC considers Taiwan a renegade province, thus, an internal, not foreign issue for debate. The U.S. policy is outlined in the Three Communiqués (Shanghai 1972, Normalization of Relations 1979, and Arms Sales to Taiwan 1982) and the Taiwan Relations Act. The Shanghai Communiqué established the U.S. policy of “one China.” The Second Communiqué states that, “The United States of America recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China. Within this context, the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.” (Joint Communiqué, 1979) In response, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act that stated the United States will ensure the security of Taiwan. The 1982 Communiqué was issued in response to the Taiwan Relations Act – reiterating the Normalization of Relations Communiqué.

<sup>32</sup>The long-standing United States position is that the issue of reunification be handled by the Chinese people on both sides of the straits, but that policy was founded on the understanding that the question of Taiwan would be resolved peacefully. The leadership in Beijing never renounced the possible use force against Taiwan, and China has threatened to use force against Taiwan under various scenarios, including Taiwan's construction of nuclear weapons; a revolt on the island; or a declaration of independence, even if that declaration is the outcome of a democratic process such as a plebiscite or democratic elections. Under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, any threat to the peace and security of Taiwan is of grave concern to the United States. The act explicitly states that the United States is obliged to make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient defense capability and committed the United States to help Taiwan defend itself in case of Chinese aggression. “Taiwan Strait: 21 July 1995 – 23 March 1996,”

*Federation of American Scientists Military Analysis Network*. [available on-line]; available from [http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/taiwan\\_strait.htm](http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/taiwan_strait.htm); Internet; accessed 1 April 2003.

<sup>33</sup>In early March 1996, China began a week-long series of ballistic missile tests and announced it will conduct an additional set of live fire military maneuvers as well. Together they constituted the fourth set of major military exercises the People's Liberation Army had undertaken in the straits since July 1995. On March 5, 1996, the Xinhua News Agency announced that the People's Republic of China would conduct missile tests from March 8 through March 15, 1996, within 25 to 35 miles of the 2 principal northern and southern ports of Taiwan, Kaohsiung and Keelung. These tests, and the military exercises that preceded them last year, were clearly meant to intimidate the people of Taiwan in the run-up to the presidential election. On March 23, 1996, the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan elected Lee Teng-hui as their first directly elected President. President Lee had served as the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan since 1988. Taiwan's electorate demonstrated to Beijing that its bellicose campaign of threats and intimidation was ill-conceived and ineffectual. Rather than diminishing support for President Lee, as Beijing and the PLA had hoped, the People's Republic of China's round of missile tests and live-fire military exercises seemed only to have served to solidify his support; President Lee won with some 54 percent of the vote. "Taiwan Strait: 21 July 1995-23 March 1996," *Federation of American Scientists Military Analysis Network*, [available on-line]; available from [http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/taiwan\\_strait.htm](http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/taiwan_strait.htm); Internet; accessed 1 April 2003.

<sup>34</sup>Although secondary compared to the issue of Taiwan issue, other diverging interests include but not limited to human rights issues (restrictive one child policy, prison labor, executions, and religious persecution), territorial issues (Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands), continuing conflict with India, and the proliferation of WMD and ballistic technology.

<sup>35</sup>Shalikashvili quoted in Yuan.

<sup>36</sup>Dejun Wang, "Turnaround in China Policy of the Bush Administration," *Hong Kong Ta Kung Pao*, 30 October 2002. Translated from Chinese-Mandarin; available from FBIS.

<sup>37</sup>Ken Allen, "U.S.-China Military Relations Not a One-Way Street," 13 December 2001. [available on-line]; available from <http://www.stimson.org/?SN=ME20011221208>; Internet; accessed 19 December 2002.

<sup>38</sup>Get, 18.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>40</sup>Finkelstein and Unangst, 3.

<sup>41</sup>The highlights of the engagement policy were two summits. The first occurred on 29 October of 1997, when PRC President Jiang Zemin visited the United States. On 29 June 1998, President Clinton reciprocated and visited China. President Clinton's goal, since 1996, was to develop with China, a "constructive, strategic partnership. . . to prevent the emergence of China as an American foe in Asia." For President Jiang, cooperation with the United States was China's need for "a normal, peaceful environment for conducting domestic economic reforms." Susan V. Lawrence, "Sparring Partners," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (9 July 1998), 12-13.

<sup>42</sup>Wendy Lubetkin, "Historic Four-Party Talks on Korean Peninsula Open in Geneva," 9 December 1997. [available on-line]; available from [http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/1997/97120901\\_epo.htm](http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/1997/97120901_epo.htm) accessed 2 April 2003.

<sup>43</sup>The Zangger Committee was formed in the early 1970s to establish guidelines for implementing the export control provisions of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (Article III[2]). According to the Article, "Each State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to provide: (a) source or special fissionable material, or (b) equipment or material especially designed or prepared for the processing, use or production of special fissionable material, to any non-nuclear-weapon State for peaceful purposes, unless the source or special fissionable material shall be subject to the safeguards required by this article. "Zangger Committee," [available online]; available from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/zangger>; Internet; accessed 3 April 2003.

<sup>44</sup>Shirley A. Kan, "China's Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Missiles: Current Policy Issues," *Issue Brief for Congress*. (Washington D.C.: The Library of Congress, 25 July 2002),2. [available on-line]; Internet; accessed 3 April 2003.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>46</sup>The PRC is not a signatory of the international agreement. The agreement is a set of voluntary guidelines that seeks to control the transfer of missiles that are inherently capable of delivering at least a 500 kg payload to at least 300 km. *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>49</sup>Wade J. Williams, "Expanding the U.S.-USSR Military Dialogue" *Preventing Nuclear War*. Barry M. Blechman, editor. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 146.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>51</sup>The case in Germany occurred when Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev threatened to turn control of the access routes to West Berlin over to East Germany, thereby leaving the United States and Allies with the choice of either withdrawing or war.

In 1969, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt took the unprecedented step in lessening the tension by abandoning the policy of non-recognition of East Germany and its frontiers. In 1962, Khrushchev introduced intermediate-range nuclear missiles into Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis was finally resolved after Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles in return for a U.S. not to invade Cuba, and secret assurances that the U.S. missiles in Turkey would be withdrawn. David Kaiser, "Issues and Images: Washington and Moscow in Great Power Politics," *The Limited Partnership: Building a Russian-U.S. Security Community*. James E. Goodby and Benoit Morel, editors. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 95-98.

<sup>52</sup>The purpose of the agreement was to minimize incidents on the sea and air which could quickly escalate. Prior to the signing of the agreement, U.S. and Soviet naval and air force ship, submarines, and aircraft played a dangerous "cat and mouse" game that could have escalated and triggered a conflict between the two superpowers. The agreement forced the United States Navy and Soviet Navy to: observe the letter and spirit of international regulations for preventing collisions at sea; refrain from provocative acts at sea that could increase the risk of war; notify mariners of actions on the high seas that could increase the risk of war; and notify mariners of actions on the high seas that represent a danger to navigation or to aircraft in flight. Williams, 151.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>54</sup>Akhromeyev quoted in Kurt M. Campbell, "The Soldiers' Summit," *Foreign Policy*, Number 75, (Summer 1989), 86-87.

<sup>55</sup>Crowe quoted in Campbell, 87.

<sup>56</sup> Steven E. Miller, "Russian-U.S. Security Co-operation on the High Seas." *The Limited Partnership: Building a Russian-U.S. Security Community*. James E. Goodby and Benoit Morel, editors. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 256-57.

<sup>57</sup>Campbell, 91.

<sup>58</sup>Kimberly Marten Zisk. "Contact Lenses: Explaining U.S. – Russian Military-to-Military Ties," *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 25, Issue 4, Summer, 1999. [available on-line]; available from Ebsco Host; Internet; accessed 20 August 2002.

<sup>59</sup>Wolfowitz quoted in Grahman, A9.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 35-37.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>62</sup>Haseman quoted in Hsu, 35.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We will work with China where we can -- such as the Korean Peninsula; and we will disagree where we must -- as we do with some of China's proliferation activities. I believe this engagement recognizes China for what it is -- an emerging power, poised to either contribute to, or detract from, the tides of economic dynamism, cooperation, and trust that are filling the Pacific Basin.<sup>1</sup>

-- Kurt Campbell, *Parameter*

Whether the effects of the U.S. MMCP with the PLA will ultimately help to persuade the PRC to pursue policies complementing U.S. national interests remains open to debate. However, based even upon the limited examples of military-to-military contacts with the PLA, and the case studies of the Soviet Union and Indonesia, some optimism seems warranted. One is then led to ask, what policies and procedures might the United States take to foster a more effective MMCP with the PLA, so as to further U.S. policies and aims in the Asia-Pacific region? In the scope of this thesis, overarching, radical policy changes are not considered possible or practical. Thus, more realistic and pragmatic approaches will be recommended.

#### Current Issues With Military-to-Military Contacts

The MMCP is considered an integral aspect of foreign policy for the United States and the PRC, yet a definitive policy, or doctrine outlining the specifics does not exist. In 1996, Get opined that a doctrine to "guide the development of military-to-military contacts, a key part of America's military engagement with the Chinese, has been a succession of *ad hoc* experiments subjected to unnecessary, counterproductive, and personality-driven internecine rivalry."<sup>2</sup> Howard and Wilner have voiced the opinion

that success of any MMCP with the PLA will depend not only on resources and a clear focus on the end state, but also that:

Central coordination by the Army G-3 and consultation with war fighters in U.S. Army Pacific, U.S. Army, Japan, and U.S. Forces Korea and other Army and joint command in the region is essential. So is incorporating the advice and analysis of the United States Defense Attaché Office, Beijing, into any proposed Army effort. Equally important are ties to Army G-2 (Intelligence) and G-4 (Logistics), Joint Staff (J-5 Policy), and OSD (China Desk) to ensure awareness and integration of ongoing programs and concerns that can affect any initiatives.<sup>3</sup>

A definitive policy or doctrine must be formulated and drafted to be able to better focus resources towards a common, focused goal of establishing and maintaining a strong and effective MMCP with the PLA.

In addition to the lack of a definitive policy or doctrine, two major points of contention for the United States in conducting the MMCP with the PLA are the issues of transparency and reciprocity. The PLA does not allow the same degree of visibility and access to bases, weapon systems, and personnel that the U.S. armed forces allow. U.S. visits and contacts are not nearly as extensive as the ones the PLA receives in America. While the U.S. military is said to show the Chinese the crown jewels of our military, the PLA is reluctant to show the Americans much. Moreover, the PLA is inherently secretive and insular, even when it comes to dealing with Chinese civilian leaders.<sup>4</sup> Transparency runs counter to the ancient teachings of Sun Tzu, who famously penned in *The Art of War*, “The formation and procedure [of] the military should not be divulged.”<sup>5</sup> One of the issues for expanding military-to-military contact will be increased U.S. military access to PLA bases, weapon systems, and personnel.<sup>6</sup>

While the United States desires to deter potential adversaries by displaying the might of its forces,<sup>7</sup> many Chinese perceive the display of force and might as American

arrogance. Some military officials in Southeast Asia echo the same sentiment. One PLA official said he and other Chinese are “insulted by the suggestion, made all too clear, that China needs to be deterred and is being shown things for that purpose.” He asked rhetorically, “Why should China be transparent if the United States is talking, acting, and treating China as an adversary to be deterred.”<sup>8</sup>

Allen and McVadon argue that when analyzing the PLA, we cannot use a mirror image and expect the same standards or expectations from the PLA that we present and offer to the PLA. As explained by a senior PLA official, “It is true that China now sees transparency as a general matter serving its interests by fostering mutual trust and confidence, but the PLA still has reasons [unelaborated] for some prudent limitations.” Other PLA officials cite the lack of the PLA transparency as “a means of deterrence by not showing how backward the PLA really is.”<sup>9</sup>

As for the issue of reciprocity, the PLA response is, “the Western militaries show all foreign military visitors the same military facilities and weapons systems in their countries, therefore, it is only right that China gets to see everything that everyone else gets to see. Meanwhile, the PLA shows Western military delegations everything [meaning very little] in China that it shows to all other foreign military delegations.”<sup>10</sup> Another Chinese assertion is that the U.S. military has seen more than China has shown to any other countries, including countries like Thailand and Pakistan with whom China has had close relations for years.<sup>11</sup>

Officials in Japan and Southeast Asia are little concerned with China’s views on reciprocity. Japan is not concerned with visiting PLA facilities, but rather more interested in discussing strategic issues with PLA leaders in Beijing such as the situation in North



Korea. The Japanese believe that they will not learn much from visiting the PLA facilities, but believe that they will learn Beijing's strategic intentions by continuing a dialogue over several years with PLA leaders.<sup>12</sup>

For the U.S. military, reciprocity and transparency are issues that will not be easily solved. At the heart of the matter is the cultural difference between the relatively young, western, and open society epitomized by the United States, versus the ancient, Asian, Confucian based, closed Chinese society. Both countries recognize the differences in their definitions of reciprocity and transparency and agree to disagree, thus, placing further limits on the MMCP between the two countries. The United States should recognize the differences in the definitions of the terms, and accommodate the PLA. By initially limiting military-to-military contacts in areas not considered contentious,<sup>13</sup> the issues of reciprocity and transparency can be minimized.

#### Small Steps

A reasonable method and procedure in expanding the MMCP with the PLA is to begin with small, measurable steps. Such small steps would involve improving our observation, listening, and learning skills when dealing with the PLA. The U.S. goals in pursuing military-to-military contact with the PLA are clearly stated in the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* and PACOM's TSCP. The underlying purpose of military-to-military contact is to increase access and influence, and also to lessen misunderstandings.

First, to maximize the utility of military-to-military contacts with the PLA, policies and procedures must be undertaken by the U.S. military to better understand and

gain more knowledge about the PLA. According to the Report to Congress, *2002 Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*,

The Net Assessment report survey show little is known about the most significant aspects of Chinese military power. Chinese secrecy is extensive. China reveals little in its Defense White Paper about the quantity or quality of its military forces.<sup>14</sup>

The *Report to Congress* highlights the staggering gap of knowledge about the PLA. Rather than immediately attempting to fill the knowledge gap, a prudent method may be to slowly endeavor to gain more information about the PLA. According to Ken Allen, when meeting delegates from other countries, the U.S. military invariably assumes the role of the instructor and teaches (or in some cases, preaches) to the delegates. As a result, opportunities where we can learn from the delegates are quickly transformed into a U.S. dominated command or capabilities briefing.

Every year, the PLA's top six officers average at least one foreign trip abroad, covering a total of about twenty to twenty-five countries, and hosts a total of fifty to seventy-five foreign counterparts each year. Admittedly, compared to foreign trips undertaken by senior U.S. military officers, the number of trips taken by the PLA officers pale in comparison. Nevertheless, each of the high-level visits gives the PLA the opportunity to discuss strategic national security issues, as well as substantive military operational issues. The majority of the visits provide the PLA the opportunity to gather material and information to help in the modernization and reform efforts of the PLA.<sup>15</sup>

The PLA utilizes an exhaustive, but relatively quick, annual military contact decision-making cycle that encompasses various elements of the military and government. The organizations involved in the decision-making cycle are the Foreign Affairs Office (FAO), Central Military Commission (CMC), Ministry of National

Defense (MND), Commission for Science Technology and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND), four general departments (General Staff/GSD, General Political/GPD, General Logistics/GLD, and General Armament/GAD), National Defense University, Academy of Military Science, Navy, Air Force, Second Artillery, and the China Institute for International Strategic Studies.<sup>16</sup> The coordinated effort between the PLA and ministries within the PRC ensures that every PLA delegate has a specific mission to accomplish, to gather further information about the capabilities of the U.S. military, and ultimately, about the United States.

When compared to their PLA counterparts, U.S. military delegates that visit the PRC and PLA are not as organized or prepared. The approval process requires about the same time as in the PRC, but does not require the degree of coordination and approval from the Department of State that the PLA must get from the MFA.<sup>17</sup> Once Secretary Rumsfeld approves the request, the delegation is formed. Delegates visiting the PLA rarely meet or receive any briefings or training prior to departure. Because the PLA rarely, if ever, allows visitations other than the “show case units,” different U.S. military delegates repeatedly visit the same units. On the rare occasion that other units or locations are visited, the delegates are not cognizant of what to look for, or ask. Thus, rather than actively attempting to close the gap of our knowledge of the PLA, the gap continues to widen.

Allen recommends following the example set by PLA delegates visiting the United States. Military-to-military contacts with the PLA can be used to lessen the knowledge gap of the PLA. Instead of treating the visits to the PLA through the eyes of a typical tourist, military delegates should use similar techniques and methods the PLA use

to exploit their military visits by asking poignant questions and take keen observations and notes.<sup>18</sup> The U.S. armed forces should leverage each reciprocal visit. Instead of visiting the “show case units” that delegates repeatedly tour, request trips to other units and regions. To lessen the chance of refusal based on the relatively sub-standard and poor state of the units, day visits can be requested that do not require overnight stays. Relatively simple procedures that do not require major policy or procedural changes could be used. Such procedural requirements would include the requirement for every military delegate visiting the PLA to be pre-briefed by the military attachés posted in Beijing. The attachés can quickly brief the delegates about the country and PLA. They are very cognizant of the gaps in knowledge of the PLA and can prep the delegates to look for and/or ask questions. If meeting the military attachés are not possible, the visiting delegate can be given a pre-brief or reading packet prior to leaving the United States. Part of the pre-briefing can include a briefing on turning the questions back at the PLA. For example, if a PLA officer asks, “How does the U.S. Army select officers for promotion?” After answering the question, the U.S. officer should ask the PLA officer, the same question. Before leaving the PRC, the delegates should then be debriefed by the military attachés to lessen the gap in knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

As the gap in the knowledge is lessened, a better assessment of the PLA can be made and future military-to-military contacts further tailored to meet needs.

#### Fostering Midgrade Officer “Guanxi”

In addition to gradually closing the PLA knowledge gap, the U.S. military must seek to expand *guanxi*, or personal relations, among midgrade officers in the U.S. military and the PLA. To better influence the future of Sino-U.S. relations, fostering

*guanxi* among the midgrade officers is of paramount importance. The utility of fostering such relationships was expressed by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, when he stated, “If you get two generals together for a visit, you gain a few years of dividends, but if you get two majors together you reap the benefits for a few decades.”<sup>20</sup>

In the PRC, a generational divide exists over the issue of military-to-military contacts. Rising midgrade officers are often more amenable to expanding discussion with the U.S. military. As a general rule, in the PLA, compared to their seniors, midgrade officers have benefited from greater educational and training opportunities and have traveled abroad, resulting in a broader understanding and more critical perspective on foreign militaries. Howard and Wilner recommend expanding upon the successful contacts between U.S. Army Foreign Area Officers and their PLA counterparts, which would promote contacts with those officers most likely to be promoted. The *guanxi* established could contribute to future Sino-U.S. relations.<sup>21</sup> Among midgrade officers, such programs as the IMET, successful in Indonesia, and participation in humanitarian and United Nations peacekeeping operations might be exploited.

The fostering of midgrade officers personal relations between U.S. military and PLA officers is a policy that will bear fruit, not immediately, but years in the future. The dividends gained from engaging mid-level PLA officers would allow unprecedented access and influence in the future, which would be in the interests of the United States.

#### Intersection of Common Interests

Cooperation and mutual understanding are possible in areas where the interests of the United States and China intersect. Incorporating the intersections, the U.S. armed

forces can further its knowledge of the PLA and also foster midgrade officer relations.

*The National Security Strategy*, highlighted in Chapter 1, outlined common interests of both countries: promoting stability on the Korean peninsula, fighting the war on terrorism, and confronting shared health and environmental threats.

In his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the then Commander of PACOM Admiral Dennis C. Blair described relations with the PLA:

It is in the interest of the United States to interact with the PLA to address common interests, such as combating terrorism, peacekeeping operations, search and rescue, counterdrug, counterpiracy, and humanitarian assistance. These interactions should be reciprocal and transparent and serve to reduce misunderstanding and the risk of miscalculations on both sides.<sup>22</sup>

In areas where interests intersect, the United States and the PRC has and can work well. Admiral Blair identified the common interests where Sino-U.S. interests meet.

Working on common interests, a more viable MMCP can be fostered.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the issues identified above, another possible venue of intersection is through the participation in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations (PKO). China's 2002 white paper reports on the PLA's willingness to participate in UN PKOs. According to the report, since 1990, the PLA has participated in ten UN PKOs and since January 2002, has prepared to provide UN PKOs with engineering, medical, transportation, and other logistical support teams at appropriate times.<sup>24</sup>

Cooperation and participation between the U.S. armed forces and the PLA in programs supporting areas of common interests as identified in the *National Security Strategy* and the PRC's white paper, as well as possible UN PKO missions would further the MMCP between the two countries. The majority of goals outlined in PACOM's TSCP and the PLA's white paper are achieved if both countries participated in such

programs. Better understanding and mutual respect can invariably result by working in cooperation on common interests.

The DoD categories for U.S.-China military-to-military engagement include (1) Defense Policy Visits (normally Joint Staff/Office Secretary of Defense/State Level); (2) High Level Visits (normally Combatant Commander and higher); (3) Professional Visits (mixed level); (4) Confidence Building Measures; and (5) Multinational Fora. Based on the recent events and the discussion above, the categories with the most potential gains are in professional visits, confidence building measures, and multinational fora.

In the area of professional visits, in addition to the CAPSTONE program discussed previously, a resource that should be leveraged more is the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS).<sup>25</sup> Reporting directly to PACOM, APCSS supports the TSCP in a non-warfighting academic environment, focused at strategic issues. The center hosts seminars, conferences, as well as a twelve weeks executive course and one week senior executive course. The twelve weeks course<sup>26</sup> is focused on building relationships among future leaders and decision makers of the region while the one week course<sup>27</sup> is an intensive program for current leaders and is comprised of military officers at the two-three star level and civilian equivalents from the region. Both courses, especially the twelve weeks executive course, are great opportunities to engage PLA officers. Although not in the same breadth or depth as the IMET program, the courses offered by APCSS are a good small step in improving Sino-U.S. relations. APCSS president, retired USMC Lieutenant General H.C. Stackpole comments about the center's mission:

We create opportunities for important dialogue between military and civilian defense officials in 45 Asia-Pacific countries. . . We take a proactive approach in discussing sensitive security issues with the hope of promoting stability and

avoiding future problems in the region, because the cost of conflict is too great for all our peoples.

When the future military and civilian defense leaders who have attended activities at this Center use diplomacy rather than conflict to resolve differences, then our value will be fully realized. As we all work to achieve an understanding of these very serious issues, a lasting bond develops.<sup>28</sup>

Officers desiring attendance to the courses are recommended by the military attachés, the officers best able to judge the potential benefits derived from increased contacts with the PLA.

In the area of confidence building measures and multinational fora, the U.S. military can cooperate with the PLA in conducting UN PKO. The PLA has expressed and have demonstrated a willingness to participate in UN PKOs. Although a member of the UN Security Council, the PRC has not participated in PKO missions until 1989. The PLA's first large scale PKO contribution was the deployment of 800 engineers to Cambodia in 1992-94. Since then, the PLA has deployed approximately 1,400 peacekeepers to operations in Iraq, Kuwait, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Its most ambitious deployment to date is the deployment of close to 200 engineers and medics to Congo in March 2003.<sup>29</sup> U.S. military and PLA cooperation should not be limited to just PKO for the two militaries can also increase cooperation and contacts in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. According to Howard and Wilner, the shared experiences in both UN and humanitarian and disaster relief operations could have tremendous benefits for both countries, not only by improving capabilities to respond to activities, but also by offering a relatively benign avenue of pursuing reciprocal visits and enhance transparency.<sup>30</sup>



## Conclusion

The rise of the People's Republic of China is certain. The issue is whether the relationship between the United States and China will be adversarial or one of a strategic partnership. A quasi-adversarial relationship is what we have, but is it in the best interest of either country? Why are there not more mechanisms in place to develop a better relationship? A possible mechanism, successfully employed in the Soviet Union and Indonesia, is the formalized military-to-military contact program. As expressed by Scobell, "Military-to-military relations is important because it opens up multiple channels of communications where members of the two armed forces can learn more about each other firsthand, and the myths and stereotypes each hold of the other can be dispelled. Security cooperation should not mean that the program is not well conceived and prudently tailored to serve the interests of the U.S. national security."<sup>31</sup>

This thesis has argued and concluded that military-to-military contact with the PLA has and can further U.S. policies and aims in the Asia-Pacific region. To further improve and expand the MMCP, the United States armed forces must first undertake policies and procedures to better understand and gain more knowledge about the PLA. Second, the group to target and invest resources in is not just the senior level officials and officers, but rather the midgrade level officers of both countries that will have an impact in the future.

The steps recommended in the thesis to improve the MMCP are small, incremental steps, which will require patience and time. Much in the same way that the Great Wall, stretching 4,500 miles, from the mountains of Korea to the Gobi Desert, was built and rebuilt by different dynasties over a span of over 1,000 years, the military-to-

military contact program between the United States military and the People's Liberation Army requires time, patience, and nurturing for the program to develop.

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<sup>1</sup>Kurt Campbell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 6 November 1997, quoted in Jing-Dong Yuan, "Sino-US Military Relations Since Tiananmen: Restoration, Progress, and Pitfalls," *Parameters*, Spring 2003, [journal/on-line]; available from <http://Carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/03spring/yuan.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 March 2003.

<sup>2</sup>Get, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Howard and Wilner, 114.

<sup>4</sup>Jason Zengerle, "Welcome Mat," *New Republic* 220, no. 16 (19 April 1999): 13.

<sup>5</sup>Sun Tzu quoted in Zengerle, 13.

<sup>6</sup>One of the PLA's contentions about the current state of non-reciprocal visit is that the state of PLA bases and facilities are not up to Western standards--thus, the visitors will not be comfortable. A more realistic reason may be that the PLA do not wish to show the state of its facilities and units to the visiting Americans.

<sup>7</sup>Mike Pillsbury, noted China academic states, "China thinks we're weak and declining." So, when PLA officers visited, the Pentagon ensured that they observed what one [Clinton] administration official calls "the full range of American power." PLA officers apparently received the signal. Mike Pillsbury notes a more respectful tone in the writings of PLA officers who have visited the United States and toured the various facilities. Shambaugh quoted in Zengerle, 14.

<sup>8</sup>Allen and McVadon, 40.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*,40.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*,41.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*,41.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*,41.

<sup>13</sup>In accordance with the FY2000 Defense Authorization bill, which stipulates that the Secretary of Defense may not authorize any military contact with the PLA that would create a national security risk due to an inappropriate exposure to specified advanced U.S. military capabilities.

<sup>14</sup>*Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, 12 July 2002, [on-line]; available from:<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jul2002/d20020712china.pdf>; Internet; accessed 15 March 2003.

<sup>15</sup>Allen and McVadon, 43. The majority of delegates concentrate on the following core military capabilities such as training, logistics, operations, and personnel issues. The bulk of the PLAs modernization efforts in downsizing, acquiring new weapons systems, and streamlining command and control are attributed to military-to-military contacts with the U.S. and other countries' military forces.

<sup>16</sup>Groups or elements planning on foreign visits first submit packets to the FAO for consideration. Each submission packet includes a schedule, proposed budget, and agenda. The FAO consolidates, priorities, and works with the GLD to produce a consolidated budget. The whole package is then submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Any visits to or from China involving a senior level military or civilian officials (Lieutenant General and above or their equivalent) requires the coordination and approval from MFA. Once approval is reached from the MFA, coordination and approval is required from the GSD and CMC. After Lieutenant General Xiong, the Deputy Chief, General Staff, who handles intelligence and foreign affairs for the PLA approves the request, General Fu Quanyou, the Chief, General Staff approves the request. From General Fu, the packet is submitted to General Chi Haotian, the vice chairman of the CMC, responsible for foreign affairs. The process is relatively quick; approval of the whole request packet is usually reached before the PLA's Spring Festival in late January/early February. Flexibility is built into the system to allow for any required foreign visits that were not anticipated allowing special arrangements and budgetary considerations on a case by case basis. After receiving approval for the complete packet, the process begins again for each separate visit. The review process of each foreign visit to or from the PRC ensures that all aspects of the government (the Chinese Communist Party, foreign affairs, economy) and of course, the military, coordinate and plan each visit to maximize its effectiveness and efficiency. Each delegate that travels overseas is typically composed of a senior flag officer, several military and government/provincial officials, and one or two subject matter expert (SME) about the topic to be discussed or studied during the visit. The delegates meet and receive briefings and training about their visits. During the delegation's visit, the SME asks a myriad of questions and receives answers and most times, samples or products to take back home to study. Other members of the delegations likewise ask questions, not the specificity of the SME, but nonetheless, ask questions and also receive answers. Allen and McVadon, 13-15.

<sup>17</sup>The U.S. process for MMCP approval is slightly similar to the regimented PLA process. Unlike the PLA, U.S. requests does not require explicit coordination and approval from the U.S. equivalent of the MFA, Department of State, and the GSD and CMC, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Requests for MMCP usually originate in PACOM, and depending upon the event, the lead headquarters coordinates with the PACOM China Desk Officer (DO), who begins initial coordination with the Department of State's regional directorate. If the event is an Army MMCP, the U.S. Army Pacific submits the

request to the Department of Army, G3 Section of the Foreign Military Engagement and the PACOM China DO. The DOs staff and submit the request to the Army Secretariat in the Office of Secretary of Defense China Policy. The DO coordinates with his equivalent in the Department of State. The request is staffed and submitted to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. After approval from Under Secretary Feith, the request is submitted to the Deputy Committee for staffing and approval. After receiving Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz's approval, the request is submitted to Secretary Rumsfeld for approval. Roger Cavazos, phone interview by author, 30 March 2003, Leavenworth, KS.

<sup>18</sup>The delegates are not asked, authorized, nor ordered to conduct covert collection, but rather conduct overt collection and observations, much in the same way that any observant military professional conducts when assessing a potential adversary.

<sup>19</sup>Kenneth W. Allen, interview by author, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 25 February 2003.

<sup>20</sup>Linda D. Kozaryn, "U.S., China to Resume Military Relations," *American Forces Press Service*. 20 February 2000. [journal/on-line]; available from <http://www2.hickham.af.mil/news/newsarchive/2000/2000010.htm>; Internet; accessed 8 February 2003.

<sup>21</sup>Howard and Wilner, 109-10.

<sup>22</sup>Congress, Senate, Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture, Statement of Admiral Dennis C. Blair, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, 5 March 2002. [on-line]; available from [http://www.senate.gov/~armed\\_services/statement/2001/010327db.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/~armed_services/statement/2001/010327db.pdf); Internet; accessed 17 March 2003.

<sup>23</sup>For a specific example of the intersection of common interests, see MAJ Thomas A. Seagrist's 2001 MMAS thesis, "Special Operations Forces in a Peacetime Engagement Strategy with the People's Republic of China." Seagrist researched whether SOF engagement with the PLA is in U.S. interests. His cost-benefit analysis indicates that SOF engagement in limited incidents such as search and rescue and humanitarian relief are in U.S. interests.

<sup>24</sup>*China's National Defense in 2002*.

<sup>25</sup>APCSS was established by on 30 September 1994, when President Clinton signed H.R. 4650, which included \$3 million for the start-up of the center. APCSS opened on 4 September 1995, in Honolulu, Hawaii. The center was created and established, patterned after the European Center for Security Studies (Marshall Center). APCSS is a regional study, conference, and research center with a non-warfighting mission to enhance cooperation and build relationships through mutual understanding and study of comprehensive security issues among military and civilian representatives of the United States and other Asia-Pacific nations. The Center provides a focal point where national officials, decision makers, and policy makers can gather to exchange ideas,

explore pressing issues and achieve a greater understanding of the challenges that shape the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region. Its focus is on the increasingly complex interrelationships of the military, economic, political, and diplomatic policies relevant to regional security issues. *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*. [available on-line]; available from <http://www.apcss.org>; Internet; accessed 14 May 2003.

<sup>26</sup>Participants in the twelve weeks courses are limited to officers in the O-5 to O-7 or civilian equivalent. Fellows examine past and present regional security issues, potential security programs, and roles and missions of the military. The curriculum focuses on the non-warfighting aspects of security and international relations, and challenges Fellows to develop a regional perspective. Finally, security is examined as a comprehensive mix of political, economic, social, as well as military aspects. Study and discussion emphasize national level strategies and policies. *Ibid*.

<sup>27</sup>The curriculum emphasizes the impact of change in the region, and the evolving military roles and capabilities. Through a challenging program of guest speakers, interactive workshops, and seminar game scenarios, senior fellows share perspectives and develop cooperative approaches to security issues of common concern. *Ibid*.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>29</sup>Associated Press, "China to Aid UN Peace Mission in Congo." 10 February 2003. [article on-line]; available form <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/issues/congo/2003/0211china.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 May 2003.

<sup>30</sup>Howard and Wilner, 113.

<sup>31</sup>Andrew Scobell, *China and Strategic Culture*. May 2002. Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA. [available on-line]; available from <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/culture/culture.htm>; Internet; accessed 8 February 2003.

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