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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

CHINA'S EVOLUTION TOWARD BECOMING A MORE RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL
STAKEHOLDER

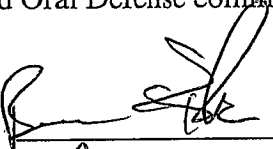
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Executive Summary

Title: China's evolution toward becoming a more responsible international stakeholder

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Thesis: The last several years have seen a noticeable rise in Chinese military investment that supports military operations other than war (MOOTW) on the part of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA). Participation in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DA) and a first ever Maritime Security deployment are all aspects of China's realization that rising to become a global power requires increased responsible stakeholder in security and stabilization.

Discussion: China is expanding its access to resources and markets in South Asia and Africa. To have more influence in these regions, China is employing a combination of Hard and Soft Power influence. In the last decade, China has increasingly participation in UN peacekeeping operations as a multilateral effort to ensure peace and stability in areas in which China has an economic interest. The aftermath of the Tsunami on December 26, 2004, had a profound impact on Southern Asia and it was apparent by the Chinese reaction that it did not have near the capability to respond to a crisis as other nations did. In order to be recognized as a global and even regional power, China would need more than a large army, large inventory of missiles and a large GDP. The PLA would need to develop the capability to extend military influence beyond the mainland and Taiwan Straits. A combination of investment in amphibious ships, a hospital ship, transport helicopters, and large transport airplanes represent an evolutionary change from a previous emphasis on deterrence and denial capabilities. In the next decade, China will have the ability to act unilaterally if necessary to influence areas of interest and respond to crisis beyond their borders.

Conclusion: China's rise to become an economic power has forced a political and military policy shift. A dependency on open access to international ports and resources has been met by a need to protect and promote China's interests abroad. Combined with a public relations campaign to become a more responsible stakeholder has led to the growth in expeditionary capabilities. To have increased credibility in the region, the PLA can be expected to utilize this capability in the future regional disasters and crisis. China needs to maintain a favorable image and open sea lanes for economic growth if it wants to continue its current economic rate of growth.

Table of Contents

	Page
Disclaimer.....	i
Preface.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Conventional Military.....	3
Smile Diplomacy.....	6
Expeditionary Capabilities.....	8
Aviation Lift Capabilities Gap.....	12
Peacekeeping Missions.....	14
Effect on U.S. relations.....	17
Endnotes.....	21
Attachments.....	25
Bibliography.....	27

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Preface

The facts, figures, and ideas expressed in this paper were gained from research conducted and obtained by unclassified means. The annual Report to Congress on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the most encompassing source of information on Chinese defense. This highly descriptive and comprehensive report provides a broad picture of the PRC's development; however I wanted to look more in depth into China's ability to operate beyond its borders. Having been stationed in PACOM for nearly four years I have an appreciation of the capabilities that the United States has relative to other nations in the region. China is commonly depicted as an adversarial threat that is emerging as the United States next conventional foe. To have a better understanding of China's intentions, it is important to look at all elements of national power and how they are being used in concert. I was particularly interested in the completion of China's first Landing Platform Dock (LPD), and future plans to build a class of Landing Helicopter Docks (LHD) and how these new capabilities might be employed.

This paper links the increased participation of Chinese troops in peacekeeping operations, and the evolution in PLA capabilities to diplomatic efforts that the PRC has used to gain access and influence abroad. Using the premise that you can tell a lot about a nation by the type of Navy it has, it can be argued that China will continue its policy using the military in a supporting role to economic and political interests. The elective courses of Energy Security and History of the Pacific in addition to the other courses at Command and Staff influenced my interest in understanding China and how their military might be employed in the future.

Introduction

The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) continues to rise as a major influential power in the world and its role in the international community changes to reflect that position. China's economy has grown at a remarkable rate due to shifting toward a more market-oriented economy. China's investment in military expenditures has grown at an equally remarkable rate drawing growing concern from the international community. The nature of military spending is going through a change from investment in the large People's Liberation Army (PLA) to a more modern, responsive force. Development of modern weapons systems such as ballistic and cruise missiles, advanced submarines, and the acquisition of foreign military technology have caused speculation as to the future role of the PLA in the international community. The history that has shaped China provides some explanation for PRC investment in denial weapons for defense complimented by expeditionary capabilities to extend China's influence abroad. A delicate balance has been maintained to ensure that Chinese hard power is employed to complement soft power.

The growth of China to become the world's third largest economy has created a significant increased demand for natural resources. Using all instruments of national power, China is expanding access to resources and markets in South Asia and Africa. Most influential has been the shift in 1993 to becoming a net importer of oil (see attachment A). China is employing a combination of Hard and Soft Power influence; however the most promising measure is a combination of the two. The world has seen a noticeable rise in the PLA's capability to conduct military operations other than war (MOOTW). Participation in United

Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DA) and a first ever Maritime Security deployment are all aspects of China's realization that rising to become a global power requires increased responsibility for any stakeholder in security and stabilization.

The hundred years (1840-1945) period of humiliation at the hands of foreign nations has had a profound impact on the way Chinese look at national defense. Since the end of Japanese occupation in 1945 the Chinese have placed a high priority on maintaining a large army capable of defending its borders. The last two decades have seen double digit spending increases in the PLA, however the size of the force has been slightly reduced. This spending has been on the acquisition of capabilities, in particular foreign engineered weapons to replace aging or obsolete equipment. The majority of funding has gone to the Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and the Air Force (PLAAF). In order to understand the current evolution, it is necessary to look at the manner in which the PLA is spending money, and the trend toward increased deployment in security and stabilization operations.

The PLAN has recently commissioned several ships that are substantially more capable than the aging PLAN fleet that was designed around the Taiwan Straits situation. The capability to project power far beyond the coastlines of mainland China is possible with the purchase of advanced surface combatants and submarines. A significantly different step was marked with the commissioning of the PLAN's first Landing Platform Dock (LPD) and China's first large Hospital Ship. Along with these ships, China has made significant investment in aviation lift capabilities that will enable logistical movement and heavy lift capability. These ships and aircraft are only the initial investment in a larger expeditionary fleet that will enable China to respond to troubled spots throughout the Pacific region and to the African coast.

Secondly, it is necessary to take account of the Chinese role in peacekeeping operations. In the last two decades, China has gone from a policy of relative isolationism to participating in a substantial number of UN missions. The PRC has participated in multilateral peacekeeping operations throughout Africa as well as operations in Europe and the Caribbean. China has maintained an unofficial policy of not taking the lead in international missions; however it boasts that the PLA contributes more forces to UN missions than any other member of the UN Security Council.

Lastly, the response of the United States and other maritime nations should be carefully derived. As the sole Super Power, the United States will continue to influence the region; however China's economic growth and influence should not come without an expectation that China take a larger burden of responsibility. The role of maintaining security, stability and responding to disasters is incumbent upon a nation who aspires to have significant influence beyond its borders. China has moved from a position of being a recipient of aid to being an aid provider. This role is part of the "smile diplomacy" that has gone a long way toward gaining access to markets and resources abroad. As stated in the Annual Report to Congress by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, "U.S. policy encourages China to participate as a responsible international stakeholder by taking on a greater share of responsibility for the health and success of the global system from which China has derived great benefit"¹. China is well on their way to answer this challenge through changes in policy and procurement of capital assets that will enable them to respond to events that directly affect China's interests.

Conventional Military

An examination of history explains the desire to retain a strong military capable of defending the territorial integrity of China from foreign powers. China was an advanced civilization that began trading with the West in the Thirteenth-century. Over the centuries, trade with China grew and ports were opened to foreign merchants. This trend continued until the introduction of Opium by the British, and eventually led to The Opium War with Britain in 1842. The Chinese military was unable to defeat the British and suffered a humiliating defeat. The Boxer rebellion in 1900 struck a further blow at the power and prestige to the Chinese “Boxers” by a consortium of foreign militaries². The outcome of this conflict was consolidated control on Chinese territories by various foreign nations. The last and most devastating defeat to the Chinese was the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937-1945 that resulted in massive loss of Chinese lives that is estimated at 15 to 20 million.³ This period saw the rise of Mao Zedong’s influence as he organized a large force that resisted the Japanese. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has continued to grow to become the world’s largest military force.

As the world’s largest standing army, the PLA has seen limited action. The PRC has had a policy of intervention as a manner of self-defense being deployed in four conflicts to include the Korean War (1950-1953), border conflicts against India (1962), the Soviet Union (1969), and Vietnam (1979). Growth in international trade, especially since the 1970’s has relied on open sea lanes. Since 90% of world trade moves via the oceans, naval power has become increasingly important. In the last several decades, defense spending has shifted from a conventional force capable of fighting attrition style warfare to that of a modern high-tech force. The double digit growth of the Chinese GDP has accompanied an equal increase in defense spending. In 2007, China claimed to spend 4.3% or \$81.48 billion on defense.⁴ The Department of Defense

estimates China's total military-related spending for 2007 could be between \$97 billion and \$139 billion.⁵ This estimated spending would equate to 5 to 6% of GDP compared to the US expenditure of 4.4%. Exact figures are difficult to ascertain due to the China's lack of transparency.

The rapid growth of the Chinese economy has put great strains on access to natural resources. In the last decade, China has become the world's third largest importer of oil and second largest consumer, after the United States. China currently imports over 53 percent of its oil or around 4.04 million barrels per day in the first three quarters of 2007. The vast majority of oil is transported by ship transiting through the Malacca or Lombok/Makassar Straits. By 2015, China's oil consumption will rise to 10-12 million barrels per day.⁶ Security of maritime shipping lanes is essential to the Chinese economy and the PLA has recently begun to address the need to develop the means to counter threats and disruptions to shipping lanes.

China maintains a strong conventional military capability in response to the deep running distrust of foreign powers and credibility with regard to on-going regional disputes. Economic prosperity that has been brought about by the market-based economy has forced China to preserve a delicate balance of military strength focusing on deterrence and denial. During the 1990's, the Chinese invested in a large missile and submarine arsenal that was mainly in response to the on-going dispute with Taiwan. In the last decade, an evolution toward expeditionary operations has emerged in the PLA. An increase in the deployment of peacekeeping forces abroad, new military appropriations toward maritime expeditionary capabilities, and airlift has marked a transformation in the focus of PLA resources. China is becoming more engaged with regional and global affairs using its military to complement soft

power politics. As an emerging great power China will seek to project this expeditionary power farther from their borders and continue to develop more advanced capabilities.

Smile Diplomacy

The aftermath of the Tsunami on December 26, 2004 had a profound impact on Southern Asia and it was apparent by the Chinese reaction that it did not have near the capability to respond to a global crisis as the United States. In order to be recognized as a global and even regional power, China would need more than a large army, large inventory of missiles and a large GDP. The PLA would need to develop the capability to deploy military forces beyond the mainland and Taiwan Straits.

The Tsunami that struck the Western coast of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand attracted international attention and required a massive effort to alleviate further loss of life. The initial response to the tsunami disaster was a pledge for \$2.6 million by China. This contribution was proven to be woefully inadequate as Taiwan offered \$5 million, The United States offered \$350 million and Japan followed with \$500 million. The following week, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced that China would donate \$63 Million. The most visible assistance came by way of the United States Navy and Marine Corps team responding with a Carrier Battle Group and two Marine Expeditionary Units with nearly 80 aircraft and dozens of ships supplying relief supplies to Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia. The Chinese contributed a 35-member medical team and several plane loads of supplies.⁷ In response to the herculean U.S. effort, Robert Kaplan commented that "Humanitarian work in the Indian Ocean has provided a major victory in both the war on terrorism and the more low-key effort of managing China's re-emergence as a great power. Not only did the Abraham Lincoln strike group show Muslim

Indonesians that America is their friend, it also proved how helpful our sailors can be compared to the Chinese Navy, which floundered in its relief efforts.’’⁸ The US was clearly able to demonstrate that it remains the undisputed force of power and influence in the region and that military capability can significantly contribute to positive international public perception.

Promoting a more favorable image of China has been a high priority of the PRC since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. China has long been criticized for its poor human rights record and lack of openness. In the last 20 years, China made noticeable strides toward gaining greater acceptance and influence in the world. Hosting the 2008 Olympics was monumental for China’s public image. The PRC spared no expense in preparation for the Olympics and spent an estimated \$42 billion making it the most expensive games ever according to the Wall Street Journal. In comparison, the Athens Olympics cost Greece \$15 billion in 2004.⁹ The Olympics were a key aspect in promoting China’s role in the international community since it was a highly publicized event that had continuous world-wide media coverage for several months.

Less obvious efforts have been made toward promoting China in the international arena to gain acceptance and accessibility. Several factors have driven a policy of “smile diplomacy”; one of which is diplomatic recognition as the official China as opposed to the government in Taipei, another is the resumption of their historic role as the central influence in Asia. The soft power missions that the PLA has increasingly participated in are complimented by the rising influence in the Pacific Region and Africa through economic means. Peacekeeping operations, Humanitarian Assistance, Freedom of Navigation have all been conducted in coordination with economic investment abroad. The traditional role of China as a low key international actor is slowly being replaced by a more engaged role which is more proportional to its economic status as a global power.

Expeditionary Capabilities

Since the Asian tsunami of December 2004, a dramatic change in the amphibious element of the PLAN has taken place. This evolution to a more diverse PLA can partially be attributed to the humility that China felt due to the lack of ability to respond to the tsunami. The PLAN has had a modest sized amphibious fleet consisting of over two dozen Type 072 Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs).¹⁰ These LSTs can deliver shore to shore movement through an open bow or stern gate in close proximity to a beach. This fleet is ideally suited for missions that are limited in distance and duration like crossing the Taiwanese Straits. Designed to transport troops and equipment from one point to another, the LST is not capable of operating as a long range platform for sea-based operations. Shortcomings in long-range lift, logistics, and air support have hindered China's ability to project amphibious forces beyond their coastal waters.

On 21 December, 2006 the first Type 071 Landing Platform Dock (LPD) was launched from the Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding yard in Shanghai.¹¹ This ship represents a significant advancement in PLAN capabilities since it can carry an entire Battalion of 400-800 Marines. Features such as flight deck with multiple helicopter pads, a large hanger space, command and control capability, and a well-deck make this ship capable of projecting military influence well beyond China's current limits. Estimates are that the well-deck is capable of carrying 15-20 amphibious armored vehicles or up to four Landing Craft Air Cushion vehicles (LCAC).¹² The addition of a well-deck and LCAC capability would allow rapid ship to shore movement to unprepared beach landing sites. A large flight deck enables multiple helicopters to move forces beyond the beach and the hangar bay enables maintenance to be performed while underway.

Following the launch of the Type 071 LPD, a report in India's *Force* magazine noted that China plans on constructing up to six Type 071 LPDs and up to three Landing Helicopter Docks (LHDs). The major difference between the current LPD and the future LHD is a larger flight deck that provides the capability to simultaneously launch eight helicopters as oppose to two to four on a LPD. An amphibious fleet of this size would be able to transport more than 7,000 troops for regional operations and 4,000 for more distant operations provided they had additional logistical shipping.¹³ This capability could also be deployed for a whole range of missions such as; providing a maritime amphibious platform for helicopters to send humanitarian aid to a disaster area, protecting investments abroad or evacuating citizens from conflict zones. This blue water force could project Chinese influence to anywhere on the world that was accessible by sea.

Within a year of commissioning the first LPD, the Chinese launched their first large naval hospital ship; the Type 920. The timing seemed to demonstrate the intention to increase soft power as a compliment to the development of a maritime projection capability. Similar to the capability of the USNS *Comfort and Mercy*, the Type 920 is able to respond to a range of situations and capable of providing health services in support of military conflict or as an element of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

While the primary mission of the USNS *Comfort and Mercy* is to "provide a mobile, flexible, and rapidly responsive afloat medical capability for acute medical and surgical care in support of amphibious task forces activities located in areas where hostilities may be imminent."¹⁴ These ships have been used repeatedly in the last decade to provide humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and promote goodwill in the region. The USNS *Comfort* conducted a four-month humanitarian mission that provided medical help to nearly 380,000 people in Central

and South America.¹⁵ USNS MERCY was activated for a humanitarian assistance deployment to Southeast Asia in late April 2006; treating more than 60,000 patients, performing more than 1,000 surgeries, providing 16,000 pairs of eyeglasses, administered more than 19,000 immunizations.¹⁶ Prior to the launch of the Type 920, the PLAN operated two smaller transport-ship converted hospitals for coastal emergency response.¹⁷ The Type 920 enables expeditionary operations the flexibility of providing acute medical treatment resident to the amphibious task force, increasing the PLAN's blue water capability.

The PLAN has recently introduced a new air cushion craft that is larger than previous models that transported troops only. The new air cushion craft resembles the US Navy's LCAC in both size and appearance. The timing of production and design of this craft make is clearly intended for the Type 071 LPD. This LCAC provides the ability to operate in waters regardless of depth, underwater obstacles, and can precede inland despite terrain.¹⁸ The introduction of the Type 071 LPD, Type 920 Hospital ship and PLAN LCAC provide the ability to perform a wide range of missions, however this is an evolutionary improvement and not a revolutionary change. A limitation of numbers may maintain an ease in tensions with Taiwan, however the remarkably short duration of six months to complete the Type 071 could quickly alter this limitation and warrant our continued attention.

The addition of several ships to the PLAN in and of itself should not alarm other nations although the ability to produce these ships and others on a massive scale could ultimately alter the balance of powers in the region. This concern was noted in a December 15th letter to President Elect Obama, where Senators Collins (R-ME) and Landrieu (D-LA) urge the President elect to strongly support a "robust" shipbuilding priorities that will help the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard to reach its objectives afloat. They argue that the Navy must budget 12 ships

annually to attain the services goal of 313 ship fleet. The current fleet stands at 283 today and is funded for seven additional ships in 2009. At this rate of production, "by 2015 the Chinese Navy is projected to be larger than ours."¹⁹ Similar concerns were expressed by the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee in 2007 that China has a massive ship building capability that is quickly surpassing the U.S.

In terms of commercial ship building, China is turning out 5,000 commercial ships a year versus 300 by the United States. They're turning out an average of three submarines a year versus one by the United States. Undergirding that capability is a production of 480 million tons of steel versus 99 million tons by the U.S. a five to one advantage.²⁰

Commercial shipbuilding capability can easily be shifted to produce naval shipping and cause alarm for both industrial implications to the economy and potential to shift the balance of naval power.

A maritime expeditionary force comprised of several amphibious ships, a guided missile cruiser, a destroyer and a submarine would resemble a Marine Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) capable of providing a highly mobile and self-sustaining force to effectively undertake missions anywhere in the world accessible by sea. The complexities of conducting offensive amphibious operations at a distance from home makes the PLAN expeditionary force a limited concern for the next decade. The size of this force is also a limiting factor in that an ESG has the ability to conduct numerous missions, however does not have the size force to establish a significant foothold on foreign soil. The role that the PLAN will most likely fill is to provide a platform for conducting disaster relief and responding to regional security threats in the South China Sea. Employing instruments of hard power to deliver aid to victims of natural disaster will soften regional and even global perceptions of China's intentions by making HA/DA a critical capability of the PLA.

Aviation Lift Capability Gap

A key component for any military operation is logistics. Sealift is far more efficient than Airlift in term of mere tonnage though restraints on accessibility make Airlift a necessary capability. Military operations in general, especially Disaster Relief operations where access via roads has been affected makes Airlift mobility a key capability. Degradation to infrastructure or sheer remoteness can limit the amount of supplies, equipment and personnel that can be employed to an area of operation. Transport aircraft and helicopters have been given a low priority by the PLAAF in relation to the expenditures on advanced fighter aircraft. The PLAAF has a small dedicated aerial transport fleet that is limited in numbers and capability.

The number of helicopters in China is very limited and this became a critical factor during the recovery efforts following the Sichuan earthquake in May of 2008. More than 100 Mi-17 and Black Hawk helicopters were dispatched from every national military region.²¹ In terms of numbers this was response was comparable to the US response to the 2004 Tsunami relief effort, but in capability it was severely lacking. Nearly a dozen ship-based Marine CH-53E's and Navy MH-53E's heavy lift helicopters played a critical role with their ability to carry payloads in excesses of 30 tons. In response to the Sichuan earthquake, China had a single Mi-26 heavy lift transport helicopters to carry equipment. The PRC was shamefully forced to accept Russian assistance to provide additional Mi-26's.²² This gap in capabilities was yet another humbling instance where China demonstrated a lack of ability to conduct critical disaster response due to resource shortfalls.

On November 4th 2008 China signed an agreement with a Russian military manufacturer Oboroprom to purchase four Mi-26 helicopters and create a Chinese financed joint venture to

manufacture a new version to give China a heavy lift fleet that would have a 30 ton capacity.²³ The stated intent of these helicopters is for civilian use; however future production could fill the PLAN's critical capability gap.

A limited number of civilian heavy lift helicopters would give the Chinese the ability to provide assistance to domestic or regional disasters, however the three branches of the PLA require a larger fleet of medium lift helicopters to move soldiers and equipment. In May, a manufacturing plant in southwest China has started to assemble Russian-designed Mi-171 transport helicopters, the export version of the Mi-8 (HIP). China plans to build at least 20 helicopters in 2008 with assembly kits supplied by a Russian plant in Ulan-Ude and later increase production capacity to 80 aircraft per year.²⁴ This medium lift helicopter is a key aspect to providing flexibility to an amphibious based expeditionary force.

The PLAAF has fourteen IL-76MD large turbo-jet transport aircraft that were acquired from Russia in the early 1990's. Each IL-76MD could carry 190 troops, or three armored vehicles, over a distance of 6,100 km, and drop them directly into enemy zone. The aircraft's airdrop and cargo handling equipment allows it to load, unload and air drop paratroopers, material and cargo quickly. In 2005, China contracted to purchase an additional 34 IL-76MDs.²⁵ The majority of the PLAAF's current transport capability is provided by a fleet of nearly 100 Y-8 medium sized turbo-prop transport aircraft that are similar in size and range to a C-130.

As China becomes more dependent on foreign sources of energy and markets, it will need increased capabilities of Airlift to respond to disruptions and threats to their national interests. Acquisition of additional Mi-26 heavy lift transport helicopters and the eventual joint production of an entire fleet will fill a much needed void in the movement of heavy equipment. The

opening of a domestic plant for the mass production of Mi-171 will replace the current aging fleet of smaller utility helicopters. Lastly, the large purchase of IL-76MD's will provide the PLAAF a larger strategic lift capability to respond during threats to national interests and peacetime missions that require lift of troops and equipment beyond the mainland.

Peacekeeping Missions

Two decades ago China did not participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Since 1990, China has sent approximately 5,600 personnel to 15 UN peacekeeping missions, contributing the most troops among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.²⁶ The number and size of missions has increased nearly every year. China's role has not been limited to Asia; forces have been sent to Kosovo, Liberia, Congo, Darfur, Lebanon and Haiti. The expanse into the western hemisphere in 2004 drew attention as a 125 member force of police was sent to Haiti to quell a revolt. The Vice Minister of The Ministry of Public Security Meng Hongwei stated "This is our country's obligation in safeguarding world peace. China, being a responsible major country in the world, should play such a role."²⁷ This increased involvement in UN peacekeeping missions creates a positive image of the PRC and its assumption of a larger portion of the responsibility for international security and stability. Since the PLA currently does not have the ability to project military influence overseas unilaterally, the multilateral employment through the UN has provided an alternative to promote China's interests.

The largest number of Chinese peacekeeping missions has been in Africa. Increasingly, China has looked to Africa as a source for natural resources and economic ventures. China's interest in maintaining order and stability is related to the fact that trade between China and Africa has quadrupled since the beginning of this decade. China is now Africa's third largest

commercial partner after the US and France, and second largest exporter to Africa after France.²⁸ This economic investment has been dispersed throughout Africa, but most noticeably in regions that have traditionally been avoided by the western investors due to instability and corruption. Between 2004 and 2007, Chinese laborers were abducted in four different countries. In Sudan, Kenya, and Ethiopia oil facilities were attacked by rebel movements. In Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia, and Congo armed movements or political opposition groups have threatened to harass Chinese enterprises.²⁹ This escalation in violence has encouraged China to increase the level of participation in UN peacekeeping operations in the last decade (see attachment B).

The traditional role of quiet participation in financial investment and diplomacy with regard to Africa has been going through a noticeable dynamic change. To avoid raising concern, of expansionism or aggression, China has limited its international operations to UN missions and humanitarian relief efforts. Employing the military through peacekeeping and humanitarian mission creates the sense that China is doing its part as a responsible global power. The role that China is participating in UN operations has begun to alter in the last several years. Since 2003, missions are shifting from police and military observers to that of forces of the PLA. The number of PLA soldiers has gone from zero in 2003 to 1,814 in 2007, and make up 87% of Chinese contribution to UN missions.³⁰ The manner in which Chinese economic interests are dispersed across Africa and the geographic separation from Asia require China to deal with African security through the multilateral system of the UN.

The crisis in Darfur is a prime example of Chinese economic interests in access to raw materials driving a foreign policy decision. A force of 315 PLA soldiers clad in UN blue berets participated in peacekeeping operations to promote stability in the Darfur region. Energy-hungry China is Sudan's key political and economic ally, investing in the country and importing over

two-thirds of its oil output, estimated at about 500,000 barrels daily. Since fighting broke out in Darfur in 2003, it repeatedly used its veto power in the U.N. Security Council to prevent tough measures against Sudan.³¹ Prior to sending in peacekeepers, China had been criticized for its support for the regime in Khartoum. Sudan is listed as a state sponsor of terrorism, and the Sudanese government has been arming and supporting the Janjaweed militias that have terrorized the people of Western Darfur. China has continued to provide arms for the Sudanese government despite a UN arms embargo during the on-going war in Darfur that has resulted in an estimated two million deaths. The Chinese peacekeeping force consisting mostly of engineering units focuses on the construction of infrastructure providing a positive public relations response to Chinese involvement in the region.

In near proximity to the ongoing mission in Darfur, a series of attacks on Chinese commercial shipping has taken place along the coast of Somalia. According to *India's Force* magazine, 1,265 Chinese commercial vessels had passed through that area this year and 20 per cent of them had been attacked by pirates, while seven had been hijacked. In response to this, the PLAN deployed a guided missile cruiser, a destroyer and a replenishment tanker to the region. Admiral Wu Shengli, the PLAN's Chief of Navy, remarked: "It is the first time we are going abroad to protect our strategic interests armed with military force, and it is also the first time for us to organize a naval force on an international humanitarian mission, and the first time for our navy to protect important shipping lanes far from our shores".³² The deployment of PLAN ships at such a distance marks another significant step for China in extending international influence.

The sustained deployment of a naval force can be both a training mission for the conduct of future maritime expeditionary forces and a political message that China is going to be a larger

stakeholder in international security issues. International consensus accepts that piracy is an illegal challenge to security giving China justification to project power in response to this threat to China's interests.

Effect on U.S. relations

The economic prosperity of China should be complimented by an investment in the Asian region and beyond to promote stability and development. In 2007, China surpassed Germany to become the world's third largest economy. If China were to continue to grow at its current rate of 13 percent, economists say it could surpass Japan in as soon as three years and the United States in 18 years to become the world's No. one economy.³³ This remarkable growth brings about an equal dependence on natural resources. China is the second largest consumer of oil imports and like the US is dependent on open sea-lanes for the transport of its resources. As China's role in international trade grows, freedom of the seas has become a higher national priority. To ensure the safe transfer of goods and ensure unimpeded access to the natural resources that feed the increasing appetite of China's industrial and transportation sector, defense appropriations have changed to reflect a transformation in security interests.

China and the US have not always shared the same security interests; however they do share a strong economic relationship that makes each nation financially dependent on the other. The signing of the Shanghai Communiqué unfreezing of the relationship between China and the United States representing one of the great successes of U.S. foreign policy in the Twentieth-Century. It ended 23 years of open hostilities between China and the United States, including the Korean War.

When the U.S. established diplomatic relations with China (Jan 1, 1979), the economic trade was at \$2.4 billion and now it is over \$300 billion. Each nation is each other's largest

trading partner.³⁴ On the 30th anniversary of US and Chinese diplomacy, the Chinese

Ambassador stated:

First of all, China and the United States are both big countries with significant influence in the world. Developing a constructive and cooperative relationship serves the interests of their two peoples and works for world peace, stability and prosperity. Second, China and the United States have extensive common interests despite their different social systems and cultural heritages. The two countries are partners, not rivals, still in no way enemies. It is up to both sides to steer their relationship clearly and firmly in the direction of constructive cooperation³⁵

The US will continue to observe the PRC's development with a careful eye with the annual release of the OSD report and the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Report.

Pacific Command (PACOM) will continue to serve as the United States Department of Defense's (USDOD) most capable combatant command. PACOM consists of approximately 250,000, or about one-fifth of total US military strength. US Navy and Marine forces are numerically the largest elements in the Pacific Region. U.S. Pacific Fleet includes five aircraft carrier strike groups and U.S. Marine Corps Pacific possesses about two-thirds of US Marine Corps combat strength. The entire U.S. Navy-Marine team has more than 180 ships, and 1,400 aircraft. U.S. Air Forces Pacific comprises approximately 39,000 airmen and 350 aircraft; and Army, Pacific has about 50,000 personnel, including four Stryker brigades. USPACOM also has more than 1,200 Special Operations personnel.³⁶ In recent years, PACOM has taken numerous steps to address security concerns in the region. US forces in Korea have pulled back from the DMZ in a more defensive posture, and the island of Guam has been built up to surpass Okinawa as the hub of US Navy and Marine presence. PACOM participates in nearly constant military exercises with host-nation training and humanitarian missions across the Pacific gaining positive publicity for US military in the local media. This close relationship is a force multiplier when a

crisis requires forces to respond to an area. When the Tsunami struck in 2004, a relationship enabled the use of Utapao Naval Station to serve as the headquarters for US relief efforts.³⁷

Existing host nation relationships and maritime expeditionary capability enabled 15,000 sailors, soldiers, airmen and Marines to provide the people of the disaster region relief aid. Twenty-four U.S. naval ships and one Coast Guard vessel moved into the region in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. The Combined Support Force 536 operated thousands of air and sealift missions to deliver almost 25 million pounds of relief supplies and equipment, 500,000 gallons of water, and relieved the suffering of thousands in several nations affected by the Tsunami.³⁸ The flexibility to mobilize a response to a disaster on the other side of the world while simultaneously conducted two wars is a feat that currently only the United States military is able to achieve. Recognition as a global power requires influence and support of a nation's friends and allies in times of need.

The international community has witnessed the transformation of China's economy in large part due to the shifting toward a more market-oriented economy. Just as China's economy has been welcomed into the international community, so should its military. The traditional view of looking at China as a potential adversary, has contributed to a prolonged investment in denial weapons such as ballistic and cruise missiles, and attack submarines. An evolution toward developing expeditionary capability with investment in Amphibious Ships, Hospital Ships, transport helicopters and hovercraft mark a distinct change in PRC military appropriations. Investment in expeditionary capability should not be viewed in isolation. The diplomatic policy of "smile diplomacy," has opened doors for Chinese investment and access to foreign markets and resources. Investment in developing nations financially and in terms of peacekeeping forces has growing degree of international engagement. China is a stakeholder in many new

developments in Asia and Africa largely in part due to access to foreign oil and gas. Economic investment has driven foreign policy and military procurement to ensure security in these lesser developed areas.

The current role of the United States as the center of influence in the Pacific will continue until China is able to respond to disasters and security challenges that arise. China's economic growth and influence should not come without an expectation that China take a larger role of responsibility in the community. The burden of maintaining security, stability and responding to disasters is incumbent upon a nation who aspires to have significant influence beyond its borders. In the next several years, the world will see a gradual increase in the deployment of PLAN ships and PLA forces in response to international crisis. There is a good chance that in a tsunami or major earth quake in the future, we will see Chinese soldiers being flown in Chinese helicopters launched from PLAN amphibious ships floating off the coast to provide assistance. China's military modernization programs warrant our continued attention, however near future capabilities and involvement indicate China's move toward becoming a larger stakeholder in the stability of the international community.

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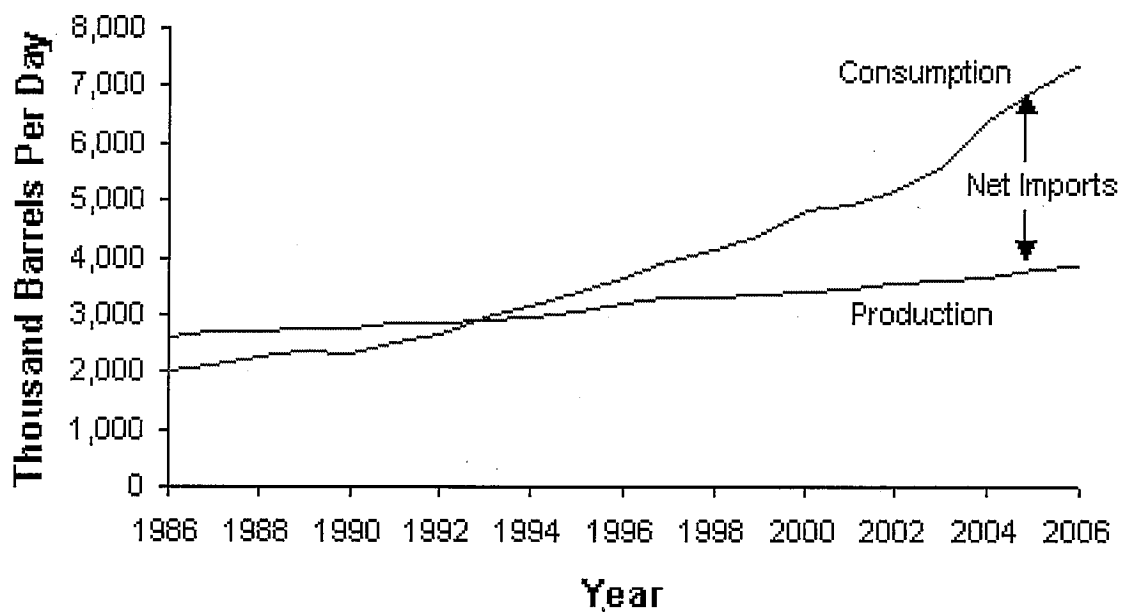
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Attachment A:

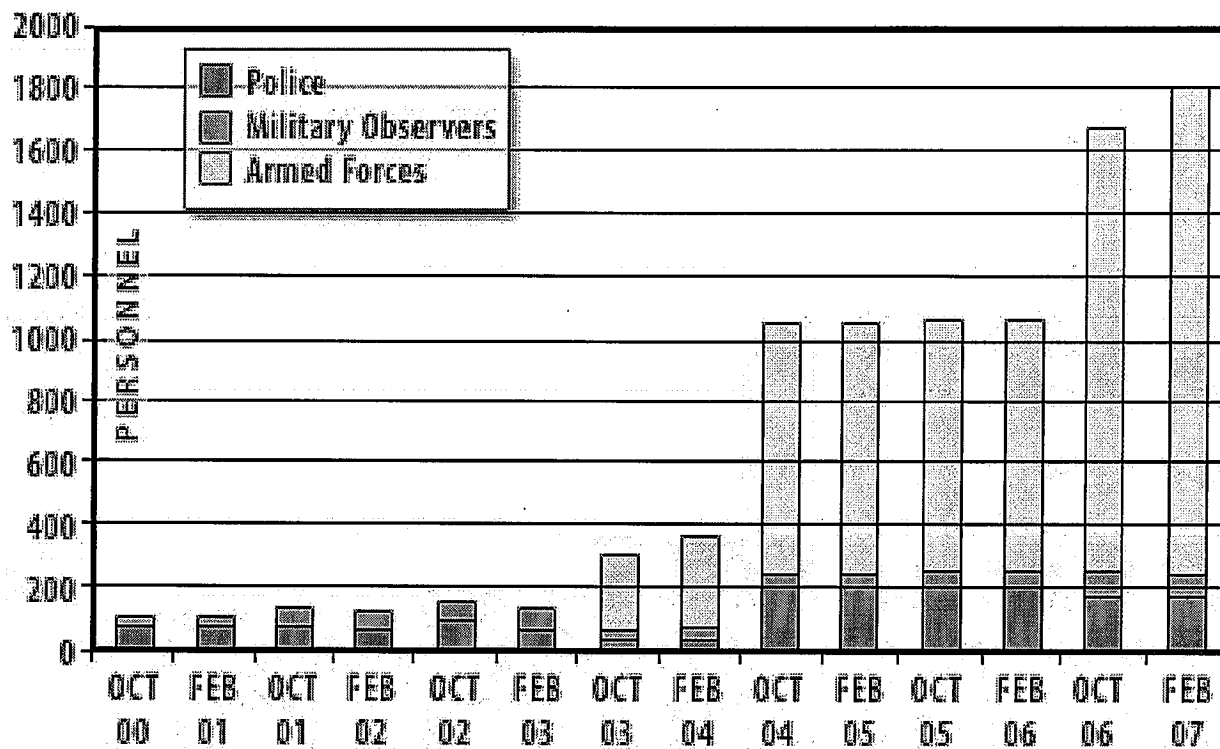
China's Oil Production and Consumption, 1986-2006*

Source: EIA *International Petroleum*

*2006 is Jan-Aug only

Attachment B:

CHINESE CONTRIBUTION TO U.N. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS



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