

Winning Friends and Influencing People with Guns:
Understanding the Growth of China's Military Diplomacy

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Abstract

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Beginning in roughly 2002, China's once reclusive military commenced upon a steadily expanding program of military diplomacy activity that now includes dozens of annual engagements with scores of states involving thousands of personnel. This dissertation seeks to understand the factors that have contributed to the remarkable rise in Chinese military diplomacy activity during the decade from 2002 to 2012. More specifically, the dissertation focuses on examining two of the common, yet understudied, assertions in the literature on Chinese military diplomacy. The first assertion is that the growth of China's military diplomacy is due to China's desire to protect its growing international economic interests. The second assertion is that China uses its military diplomacy activities to promulgate positive images of the state to its domestic and international audiences, using these images to promote China's international status. This

dissertation examines these two assertions by formulating complete arguments for each, beginning with the relevant theoretical foundations and then linking these theories to the empirical patterns of behavior manifest by two representative case studies: the People Liberation Army's combined exercises with other states and its humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) engagements.

Examination of the first assertion regarding China's international economic interests as a driver of China's expanding military diplomacy reveals significant correlations between China's major trading partners, the global transportation routes upon which China depends for its commercial prosperity, and the states China chooses to engage in combined exercises and HA/DR operations. Examination of the second assertion regarding the use of military diplomacy as a means to promote positive images of the state likewise reveals patterns of activity that support the hypothesis. The economic and political attributes of the states China chooses to engage, Beijing's characterization of those engagements, and the sizes of those engagements are calculated to satisfy the expectations of China's domestic audiences for manifestations of China's improving international status while also acknowledging international wariness regarding China's increasing international security presence.

To be sure, China's expanding military diplomacy activity is motivated by multiple factors, each of which deserves further study. However, this dissertation makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how China's economic interests and image building goals relate to China's growing international security presence. Given the tensions inherent in China's rise, understanding these factors is of value to policymakers in the United States and elsewhere who must understand how and why China's international military activity is changing as they consider strategic responses.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia
COSTIND	Commission for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense
CSCAP	Council on Security Cooperation in Asia and Pacific Region
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMC	Central Military Commission
DoD	Department of Defense
DOTS	Direction of Trade Statistics
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
ETF	Escort Task Force
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GATT	Global Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MD	Military Diplomacy
MND	Ministry of National Defense
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDU	National Defense University
NEACD	Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue
OBOR	One Belt, One Road
PAP	People's Armed Police
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAA	People's Liberation Army Army
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force

PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SA	Security Assistance
SAR	Search and Rescue
SASTIND	State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense
SC	Security Cooperation
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCT	Self-Categorization Theory
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
TCP	Theater Campaign Plan
UN	United Nations
UNPKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

In November 2013, the US was among the first states to respond to help requests from the Philippines in the aftermath of Super-typhoon Haiyan. Within days, the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington*, two escort cruisers, US Air Force C-17 and C-130 cargo aircraft, more than a dozen helicopters, and hundreds of Marines were busy delivering tons of relief supplies to the areas most devastated.¹ For decades, such international humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations have been a mainstay of peacetime US military operations. Survivors of events like the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and tsunami or the more recent Tohoku Earthquake and tsunami have literally been able to look to the skies shortly after those events to see US military aircraft arriving to deliver relief supplies and rescue personnel. Over the years, such military diplomacy efforts have contributed to positive perceptions of the US as a global leader.² In contrast to the decades of US military diplomacy activity, China's military—the People's Liberation Army (PLA)—has until recently refrained from such international activity. Interestingly, two and a half weeks after Typhoon Haiyan wreaked such devastation on Tacloban City, the *Peace Ark*, a 10,000 ton, purpose-built People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) hospital ship, arrived off the coast of Leyte Province and began contributing to international relief efforts.³ The deployment of the *Peace Ark* to the Philippines for disaster relief marked yet another instance of China's steadily expanding international military diplomacy activity. Although in 2013 this deployment was still as novel as it was commendable, the trend lines of PLA military diplomacy indicate such activity is becoming a regular part of China's international

¹ BBC News, 2013. "Typhoon Haiyan: US Carrier Boosts Philippines Relief Effort," *BBC News*, November 14, Accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24936387>.

² Julius Caesar Trajano, 2014. "Phillippines-US Pact Shows a Human Face", *Asia Times*, April 29, Accessed November 21, 2014. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/SEA-01-290414.html.

³ Xinhua News, 2013. "China's Hospital Ship Begins Treating Patients in Disaster-hit Central Philippines." *Global Times*. November 25. Accessed November 30, 2013. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/827493.shtml#.UqIU4Y2A2U1>.

security strategy. The novelty is giving way to normalcy with significant implications for the changing world order.

Since roughly 2002, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of the People's Republic of China has been expanding its military diplomacy efforts to now include, among other activities, combined exercises and training with the militaries of other states as well as the afore-mentioned HA/DR operations. The growth of China's military diplomacy activity is manifest, in part, by its diversity, frequency, size, locations, and by the greater number of states with which China engages.⁴ The growth of Chinese military diplomacy presents analysts with an interesting puzzle. A brief comparison with the US' military diplomacy helps illustrate the nature of the puzzle. As the state with the world's most powerful military, the US is by far the largest practitioner of military diplomacy for clearly discernible reasons. The US maintains bilateral and multilateral security alliances with dozens of other states, maintains cooperative security partnerships with scores of others, and stations tens of thousands of military personnel on overseas bases. Consequently, US military diplomacy activities are a matter of course during its daily military operations. These activities serve important purposes for the US in that they functionally and symbolically strengthen security alliances and partnerships, enhance interoperability between military forces, and promote international access and influence for US forces in preparation for various contingencies.⁵ China, on the other hand, continues to eschew military alliances, denies designs for overseas military bases, claims it will never seek hegemony, and maintains an "omnidirectional" [*quanfangwei*] security policy that, rhetorically at

⁴US Department of Defense, 2009. *Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009*, Annual Report to Congress, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 54.

⁵ US Department of Defense, 2011. *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense, V-10.

least, does not target any specific third country.⁶ Absent US-style strategic rationales for engaging in military diplomacy, how then does one explain China's growing military diplomacy activity?

This dissertation asks, "How do we explain the growth of Chinese MD activity from 2002 to 2012?" Answering this primary research question is important for at least three reasons. First, examination of China's military diplomacy provides useful insights into Chinese grand strategy and the manner by which China is pursuing this strategy. This research derives these insights by asking a series of important secondary questions. For example, with what states does China most frequently engage in military diplomacy? What do the frequency, locations, and sizes of China's military diplomacy activities reveal about China's relations with other states? How does military diplomacy correlate with China's broader diplomatic and economic relationships with other states? What do the patterns of Chinese military diplomacy reveal about the factors influencing those patterns? Answering these questions by tracing the patterns of Chinese military diplomacy longitudinally over time allows one to assess the coherence of China's strategic rhetoric with the realities of its strategic behavior, thereby painting a truer picture of Chinese strategic intentions.

Second, answers to these questions are also useful to US and other policymakers tasked with formulating their own policy responses to China's growing international security presence. Successful foreign policy formulation in the US, Japan, India, and elsewhere depends upon policymakers being well-informed of Chinese behavior and its motivations. As China's economic and military power continue to grow, the propensity for a spiraling security dilemma increases. Indeed, as Thucydides first observed, and diplomat-scholar Susan Shirk more recently

⁶ Xiandong Han and Chunzhu Jin, 2008. "Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao yu Xin Anquan Guan [China's Military Diplomacy and New Security Concept]," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi [Contemporary International Relations]* (2), 50.

writes, “Historically, rising powers cause war not necessarily because they are innately belligerent, but because the reigning powers mishandle those who challenge the status quo in one way or another.”⁷ Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill further warn, “Leaders in both China and the United States will face a huge challenge in coming decades as a rising power rivals a ruling power. Historically, statesmen have failed this test: 11 of 15 such cases since 1500 ended in war.”⁸ Discerning the nature of China’s growing international military presence and formulating a wise response is vital for policymakers facing these historical odds of conflict.

Third, beyond the policy contributions, examination of China’s military diplomacy adds to our understanding of international relations theory by illustrating how a rising China seeks to secure its growing international interests while managing security dilemmas with either an established hegemonic power—the US—or its many neighbors. China’s growing military diplomacy presents a fascinating case study by which to examine the tenets and predictions of liberal and realist international relations theories as well as social identity and self-categorization theories. Indeed, the great debate about China’s place in the international system centers on the uncertainty regarding the strategic choices China may make. Liberals contend China will recognize the benefits of the liberal world order that has enabled its prosperity and will generally seek its interests within the constraints of that order. Realists generally contend that China will grow dissatisfied with the constraints of the current world order as its power grows relative to its competitors and will seek to alter the current system in radical ways. Social identity approaches suggest Chinese national identity adds a useful perspective that helps observers understand the national psychology that might influence Beijing to go in one direction or another. The

⁷ Susan L. Shirk, 2007. *China: Fragile Superpower*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 261.

⁸ Graham Allison and Robert D. Blackwill, "Will China Ever Be No. 1?" *Foreign Policy.com*, February 16, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/16/will_china_ever_be_no_1_lee_kuan_yew (accessed April 21, 2015).

dichotomy of the debate rhetoric is clear, but the reality of the dichotomy is far more uncertain than the proponents for each view contend.⁹ As research analysis shows, China's military diplomacy activities are as notable for their caution as they are for their expansion. The prevailing themes of China's military diplomacy—counterterrorism, counter-piracy, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs), and HA/DR cooperation, for example—place China on the same side as the US and other major powers regarding these headline issues. In other words, China's international security presence is growing, but the nature of its growth is not (yet) disrupting the international order.

With the strategic, policy, and theoretical value of understanding Chinese military diplomacy in mind, this dissertation focuses on examining two of the commonly cited explanations for the growth of Chinese military diplomacy activity in the existing literature on the subject. First, China's military diplomacy has expanded because of the perceived need to protect its growing international economic development interests. China's reliance on foreign trade as an engine for domestic economic development has created concern in Beijing over the vulnerability of those interests to various forms of disruption. These concerns have caused Beijing to consider how the PLA might be employed in protecting these interests. However, while China's expanding international interests spur a corresponding desire by Chinese leaders to protect those interests, China must be careful in how it does so because of the security dilemmas created by its rise.¹⁰ The US-led regional security architecture has shown itself to be accepting of security behaviors it considers either unobjectionable or contributory to maintaining the current system. Thus far, there appears to be a certain level of hegemonic permissiveness

⁹ John G. Ikenberry, 2001. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

¹⁰ Denny Roy, 2013. *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security*, New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 80 and 153-156.

regarding China's international military activity so long as those activities do not disrupt the stability of the US-led security order. The PLA's military diplomacy activities meet these strategic imperatives.

A second assertion in the literature is that the PLA employs military diplomacy as a tool to improve China's international image and improve its status among nations. In so doing, it must address the sometimes-conflicting expectations of two audiences: the Chinese domestic population that increasingly expects evidence of Chinese greatness on the world stage and due deference from foreign states, and the international community that watches China's resurgence with some concern. Simply stated, the patterns of PLA military diplomacy support the premise that Beijing is acting to satisfy the image and behavioral expectations of both audiences. Taken together—the desire to protect China's growing international economic interests and the desire to improve China's national image—provide significant insights pertinent to understanding of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy.

The dissertation proceeds in the following manner. Chapter One begins with a working definition of military diplomacy and a brief discussion of its theoretical purposes and practices including references to US military diplomacy doctrine and practice for use as benchmarks by which to consider Chinese practices. It then charts the existence of the dependent variable of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy, surveying the empirical record of overall activity with an emphasis on the 2002-2012 period of growth. This survey is made possible by the author's development of a large database of Chinese military diplomacy activity. This comprehensive database, not found elsewhere in the literature, includes more than 500 PLA military diplomacy engagements as reported in a variety of sources including China's defense white papers, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, Chinese state media sources, US and international

academic literature, and US government sources. This database also includes roughly 45 additional variables including locations, frequency, sizes, and types of activity along with economic, political, and geographic characteristics of the states China engages in its military diplomacy activity.

With the dependent variable thus established in Chapter One, Chapter Two commences with a review of the literature on Chinese military diplomacy including both Chinese and international sources. The review focuses on drawing out the various explanations asserted for the growth of PLA military diplomacy activity and then examining the explanations for their completeness in terms of linking the assertions to theory and practice. The review reveals a significant gap in the literature as most assertions are not supported by empirical evidence. Chapter two then selects two of the assertions—Chinese military diplomacy driven by the need to protect China’s growing international economic interests and the desire to improve China’s national image—for further research. Finally, the chapter introduces the methodology and research bounds, the two case studies—combined exercises and HA/DR engagements—as well as the analytical framework by which to evaluate the strength of the two hypotheses for the growth of China’s military diplomacy. The intent is to create a complete argument for each assertion that links theory to practice, supported by substantial evidence.

Chapter Three examines the growth of Chinese military diplomacy from the perspective of protecting China’s international economic development interests, correlating the growth of the activity with the growth of China’s trade and security interests. The chapter begins with a review of the pertinent international relations theories that describe why and how states act to protect their interests in the international system. The chapter continues with a review of China’s international economic interests before moving to the heart of the chapter, an examination of the

two military diplomacy activity case studies and how they correlate in various ways to China's international economic interests. Analysis of the two case studies suggest strong support for the asserted explanation that the growth of China's military diplomacy is indeed driven in significant manner by the need to protect the state's international economic interests.

Chapter Four presents what is perhaps the more novel of the two literature assertions by examining the growth of Chinese military diplomacy from the perspective of the activity as an image building and status-seeking endeavor. The chapter draws on social identity and self-categorization theories to explain the useful role military diplomacy plays in satisfying domestic demand for proof of Chinese status in the international system at the same time that it allays international concerns about China's growing power. Once more, the chapter examines the patterns of Chinese military diplomacy, correlating the patterns with status attributes of the states China engages in military diplomacy. The chapter concludes that military diplomacy provides a useful avenue by which Beijing can satisfy the strong nationalist undercurrents of Chinese society in a relatively benign manner acceptable to the international community.

Chapter Five briefly summarizes the findings of the preceding chapters, presents implications of the research for theory and policy and lays out avenues for future related research. With this introduction to the dissertation complete, we now turn to Chapter One for an introduction to military diplomacy in general and a survey of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy in particular.

CHAPTER ONE:

China's Expanding Military Diplomacy

This chapter sets the context for the bulk of the dissertation by introducing readers to the definition of military diplomacy and how that definition was formulated, including some observations regarding the theoretical purposes, premises, and practices of military diplomacy in general. It then demonstrates the growth of Chinese military diplomacy in a broad survey of historical Chinese MD activity, focusing on the period from 2002 through 2012.

Definition, Premises, and Practice of Military Diplomacy

Before delving into the specifics of Chinese military diplomacy (MD) practices, this chapter begins by considering MD from a more generic perspective, including formulation of a working definition, understanding its intended purposes, and introducing its basic practices.¹¹

This dissertation defines “military diplomacy” as the employment of a state’s military capabilities during peacetime to shape the international political environment in ways supportive of national interests.¹² Formulating a definition for the term “military diplomacy” is a challenging task that requires careful consideration of the concept, its purposes, and the range of activities that fall under its rubric. Part of the definitional challenge stems from the frequent use of parallel or subcategory terms such as “defense diplomacy,” “security diplomacy,” “security cooperation,” or “military engagement” that share certain MD conceptions and purposes, but maintain other distinct differences in purpose or practice.¹³ Part of the difficulty also arises from the fact that not all states use the term ‘military diplomacy’ to describe their activities, nor do all states agree on which military activities fall under the heading of military diplomacy. This

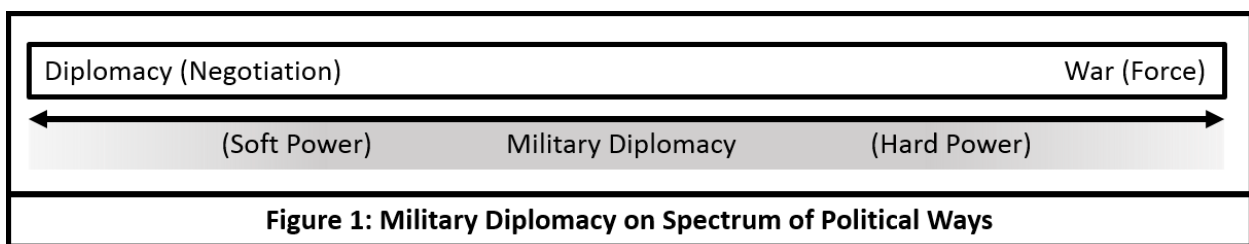
¹¹ ‘MD’ is not an established acronym for ‘military diplomacy.’ This dissertation adopts MD simply for the convenience of not writing out ‘military diplomacy’ at every use.

¹² This definition of military diplomacy is the author’s conception.

¹³ See, for example, Dennis C. Blair, 2013. *Military Engagement: Influencing Armed Forces Worldwide to Support Democratic Transitions*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

dissertation adopts the term “military diplomacy” because it is the term [*junshi waijiao*] most frequently used in Chinese sources to generally describe the growing range of PLA international activities.¹⁴ The 2002 *Chinese Military Encyclopedia* broadly defines “military diplomacy” simply as “diplomatic activities that represent the military interests of the nation.”¹⁵

While the words “military” and “diplomacy” each possess distinct meanings individually, when placed together in the somewhat oxy-moronic term “military diplomacy,” definition becomes more challenging. The first consideration is conceptual. A military’s core purpose is to wage war in the political interests of the state. The core purpose of diplomacy, on the other hand, is to achieve the political interests of the state through non-violent means including persuasion and negotiation. To be sure, these two instruments of power do not operate independently of each other. Diplomacy often relies upon the threat of military force to achieve its purposes while the employment of military force typically ends with some form of diplomatic negotiation. Given this interaction, and accepting Clausewitz’ premise that war is “a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means,” we can situate military diplomacy activities somewhere in the middle of a spectrum of political ways (see Figure 1).¹⁶



Military diplomacy is, at its heart, the employment of military capabilities to achieve political objectives short of using force. With this important caveat in mind, MD activities take

¹⁴ David Shambaugh, 2013, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*, New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 299. See also Xiao, Tianliang, Gang Ma, and Chunjiang Li, 2011. *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao [Military Diplomacy of New China]*. Beijing: National Defense University Press.

¹⁵ Chinese Academy of Military Science, 2002, *Chinese Military Encyclopedia [Zhongguo Junshi Bailiao Quanshu]*, Supplemental Volume, Beijing: Academy of Military Science Press, 280-282.

¹⁶ Carl Von Clausewitz, 1984. *On War*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 87.

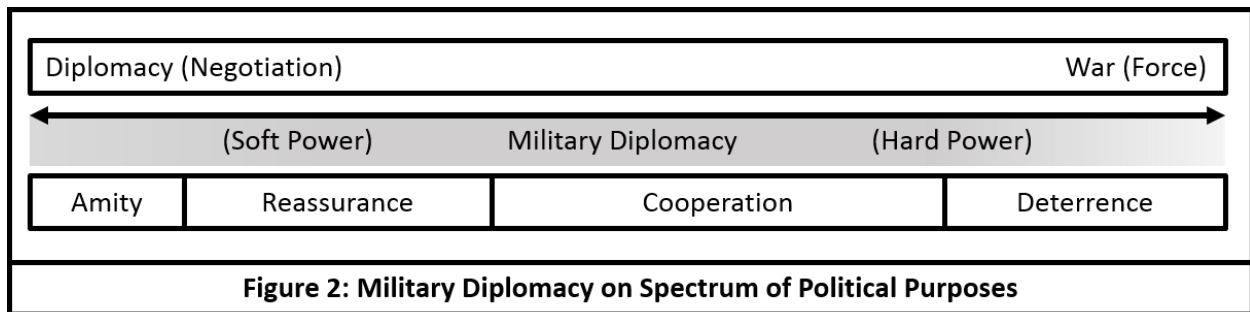
place on their own spectrum of political purposes, the accomplishment of which relies on the hard power aspects of a military-in-being, the soft power aspects, or a combination of both. For example, deterrence has always been a key component of a standing military's diplomatic usefulness.¹⁷ Deterrence is clearly on the hard power side of the spectrum, relying on either implicit or explicit threats of the use of force to achieve their political objectives. Other military diplomacy activities focus primarily on employment of military capabilities in ways intended to promote positive, or at least benign, perceptions of a state's intentions, actively downplaying perceptions of threat in favor of perceptions of cooperation, reassurance, and even amity. Thus, military capabilities, traditionally seen as hard power tools, can be used by states as tools of soft power, a combination Joseph Nye famously calls "smart power."¹⁸ Writes Nye, "There is much more to military resources than guns and battalions and more to military behavior than fighting or threatening to fight. Military power resources have long been used to provide protection to allies and assistance to friends. Even the behavior of fighting on behalf of friends can engender soft power...Non-coercive and benign uses of military resources can be an important source of the soft power behavior of framing of agendas, persuasion, and attraction in world politics."¹⁹ A definition of military diplomacy then must include the idea that a primary purpose of the activity is to achieve the political objectives of the state by employing the soft power aspects of the military instrument of power. These soft-power political objectives revolve around cooperating to address shared security threats, reassuring partners of security commitments or, conversely, reassuring partners of benign intentions, and even contributing to feelings of interstate amity. From this, we can see that there is a spectrum of political purposes within MD ranging from

¹⁷ See, for example, Thomas C. Schelling, 2008. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

¹⁸ Joseph S. Nye, 2011. *The Future of Power*. New York, New York: Public Affairs. Xiii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

creating and reinforcing feelings of interstate amity and reassurance purposes on the soft end, to deterrence purposes on the hard end (see Figure 2).



A second definitional consideration is temporal in nature. When does military diplomacy occur? In reality, it occurs to varying degrees during both peacetime and wartime. Although the use of force dominates military planning and operations during wartime, military diplomacy plays continuous and vital roles in a variety of ways and for a range of reasons. For example, during wartime, building and maintaining coalition forces capable of planning and executing combined operations requires continuous, skillful employment of military (as well as traditional) diplomacy. It is important to note, however, that these wartime aspects of military diplomacy generally have their roots in peacetime practices of military diplomacy. Coalitions or alliances capable of conducting effective wartime operations are not created *ex nihilo* in the hour of need. Instead, the majority of the groundwork for building combat effective wartime coalitions typically occurs during peacetime by way of military diplomacy.

Because the US military is by far the world's largest practitioner of military diplomacy, familiarity with US conceptions and practices of military diplomacy is useful for the purposes of examining MD in general.²⁰ Although this dissertation is not a comparative analysis of US and Chinese MD, US military doctrinal documents provide useful theoretical constructs by which to

²⁰ US Pacific Command (PACOM) alone participates in more than 1500 military diplomacy activities each year with foreign militaries in the Asia-Pacific area of operations. See Global Security.org, 2015. *Exercises--Pacific Command*. August 16. Accessed October 21, 2015. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/ex-pacom.htm>.

benchmark international—and Chinese—practices of MD. In the US conception of the phases of conflict, military diplomacy activities primarily occur during “phase zero” as “shaping operations” designed to preclude the necessity for the use of force, or to facilitate the combined

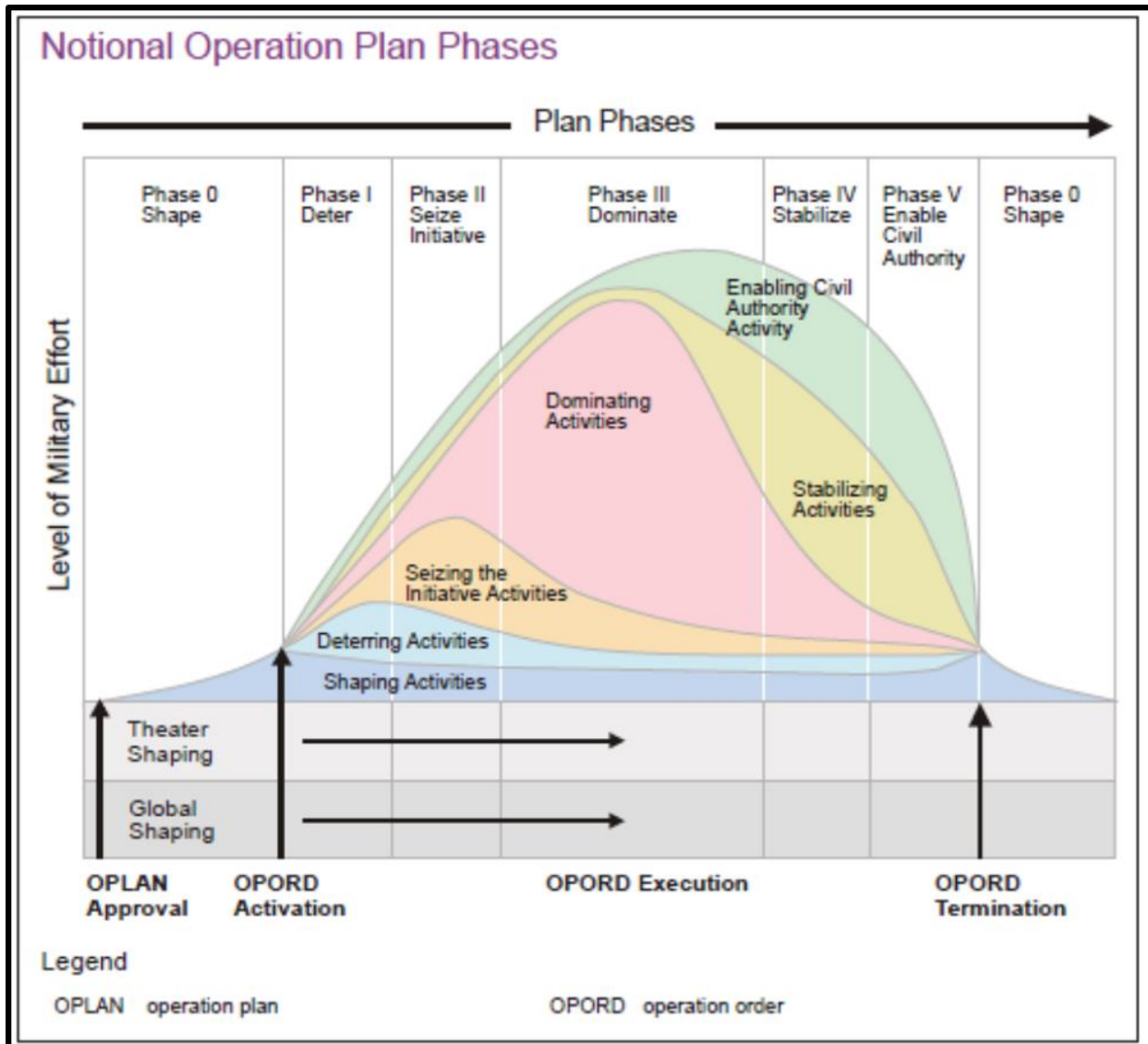


Figure 3: US Doctrinal Timelines for “Shaping” (Military Diplomacy) Activities
 (Source: US Department of Defense, 2011, *Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense, III-39.)

use of force should it become necessary.²¹ Phase zero is the peacetime environment that prevails

²¹ Charles F. Wald, 2006, "New Thinking at USEUCOM: The Phase Zero Campaign." *Joint Force Quarterly* (National Defense University) 4 (43): 72-75. For more on US conceptions of military operational plan phases and

pre-conflict, and a return to phase zero conditions is the eventual post-conflict goal. Figure 1 depicts a key graphic from Department of Defense Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, captures the level of military effort applied to various activities through the phases of military operations.²² It is important to note that within the graphic, phases one through five focus on conflict with the adversary state while phase zero conditions continue throughout the remainder of the theater/region and the globe. Moreover, shaping activities take place throughout the conflict period. Thus, shaping operations, as described in the introduction to this dissertation, are a commonplace day-to-day peacetime activity for much of the US military. Considering the fact that China's last significant armed conflict occurred against Vietnam in 1979, this observation that military diplomacy is predominantly a peacetime endeavor is especially pertinent in China's case. A useful definition of military diplomacy, therefore, will acknowledge this temporal aspect of MD.

The final, and perhaps most acute, definitional challenge deals with the types of activities that fall under the rubric of military diplomacy. There are, frankly, too many military diplomacy activities to include in a concise definition. Moreover, military activities—whether they fall under the category of military diplomacy or not—inherently communicate both intended and unintended political messages to multiple international audiences.²³ Therefore, a common military diplomacy activity—combined exercises, for example—may be viewed by participants as reassuring, while simultaneously being perceived as threatening—deterrent or coercive—by states observing or excluded from the activity. This means that there is an inherent, complex

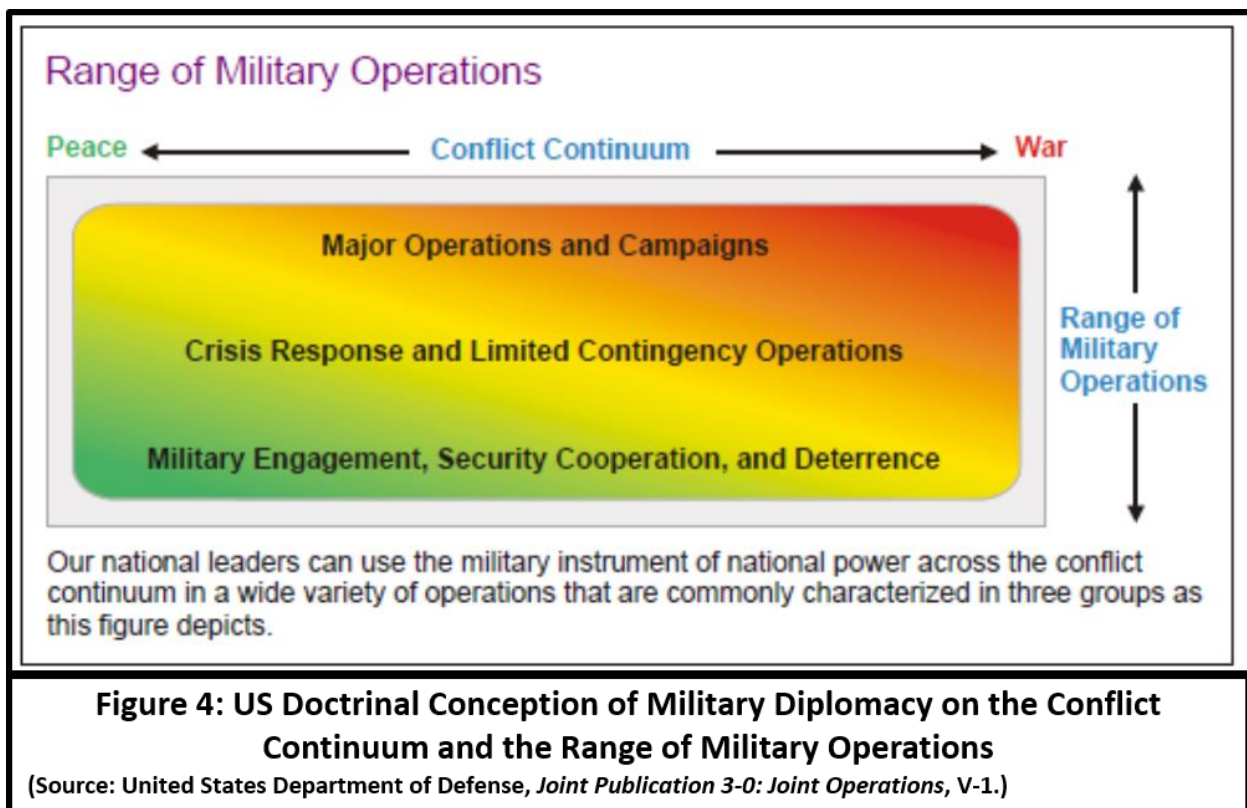
the types and purposes of activities that occur during each phase, see US Department of Defense, 2011, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense.

²² US Department of Defense, 2011, *Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense, III-39.

²³ For a classic look at the challenges of strategic signaling and interpretation of such signaling, see Robert Jervis, 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

ambiguity between military diplomacy activities and the political purposes they are intended to achieve. However, we can again look to the US experience for insights into the general types of military activities that serve diplomatic functions.

The official US military lexicon does not include the term “military diplomacy,” choosing instead to subdivide the general concept into more specific headings of “military engagement,” “security cooperation,” and “deterrence.”²⁴ However, taken together, the concepts cover the range of activities that generally fall under the umbrella of MD. Figure 4 is a



graphic from US Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, that shows where these three activities fit within US conceptions of the range of military operations.²⁵

²⁴ United States Department of Defense, 2013. *Joint Publication 1-02: Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense.

²⁵ United States Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, V-1.

Again, it is important to note that they demonstrate use of military capabilities short of the use of force.

In US doctrinal parlance, “military engagement” is “the routine contact and interaction between individuals or elements of the Armed Forces of the United States and those of another nation’s armed forces, or foreign and domestic civilian authorities or agencies to build trust and confidence, share information, coordinate mutual activities, and maintain influence. Military engagement occurs as part of security cooperation, but also extends to interaction with domestic civilian authorities”²⁶ This definition emphasizes the soft power aspects of MD, relying on mutually beneficial interactions to yield improved trust, more ready cooperation, and greater influence. This definition also includes the idea that military diplomacy activities involve contact and interaction with both military and civil elements of another state. Engagement includes activities such as the establishment of military attaché offices, defense and security dialogues and conferences, high-level defense and military official visits, and the myriad public diplomacy activities conducted by military personnel stationed at overseas bases with local politicians and civic organizations.

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) is the US defense agency tasked with overseeing the planning, coordination, and execution of US security cooperation activities worldwide. As defined by DSCA,

Security cooperation (SC) comprises all activities undertaken by the Department of Defense (DoD) to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve strategic objectives. It includes all DoD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, including all DoD-administered Security Assistance (SA) programs, that build defense and security relationships; promote specific U.S. security interests, including all international armaments cooperation activities and SA activities; develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations; and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access

²⁶ United States Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, V-10.

to host nations. It is DoD policy that SC is an important tool of national security and foreign policy and is an integral element of the DoD mission.²⁷

In line with the activities described above, DSCA has responsibility for several specific security cooperation activities that are common elements of military diplomacy. First, DSCA administers the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Program, wherein the US sells arms and services to foreign states as determined by the US Department of State in the interest of US and international security.²⁸ DSCA also administers logistical support for US humanitarian assistance and disaster relief programs (executed by the geographic combatant commands), as well as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program wherein foreign military personnel attend US military service schools and training programs. Security cooperation also includes combined exercises with foreign militaries, typically planned and executed by the geographic combatant commands in accordance with their regionally focused theater campaign plans (TCPs).²⁹

Finally, deterrence activities take place as part of military diplomacy to dissuade adversaries from using force to achieve their political objectives by presenting them with a credible retaliatory force that raises the costs of employing violence to an unacceptable level.³⁰ Military diplomacy activities rely most on their hard power aspects when it comes to achieving the political goal of deterrence, albeit still short of the use of force. United States Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, explains the types of activities that support the deterrence mission:

The sustained presence of strong, capable forces is the most visible sign of US commitment to allies and adversaries alike. However, if sustained forward presence fails

²⁷ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2012. "Security Assistance Management Manual." *Defense Security Cooperation Agency*. April 30. Accessed May 12, 2015. <http://samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ United States Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Planning*, II-3.

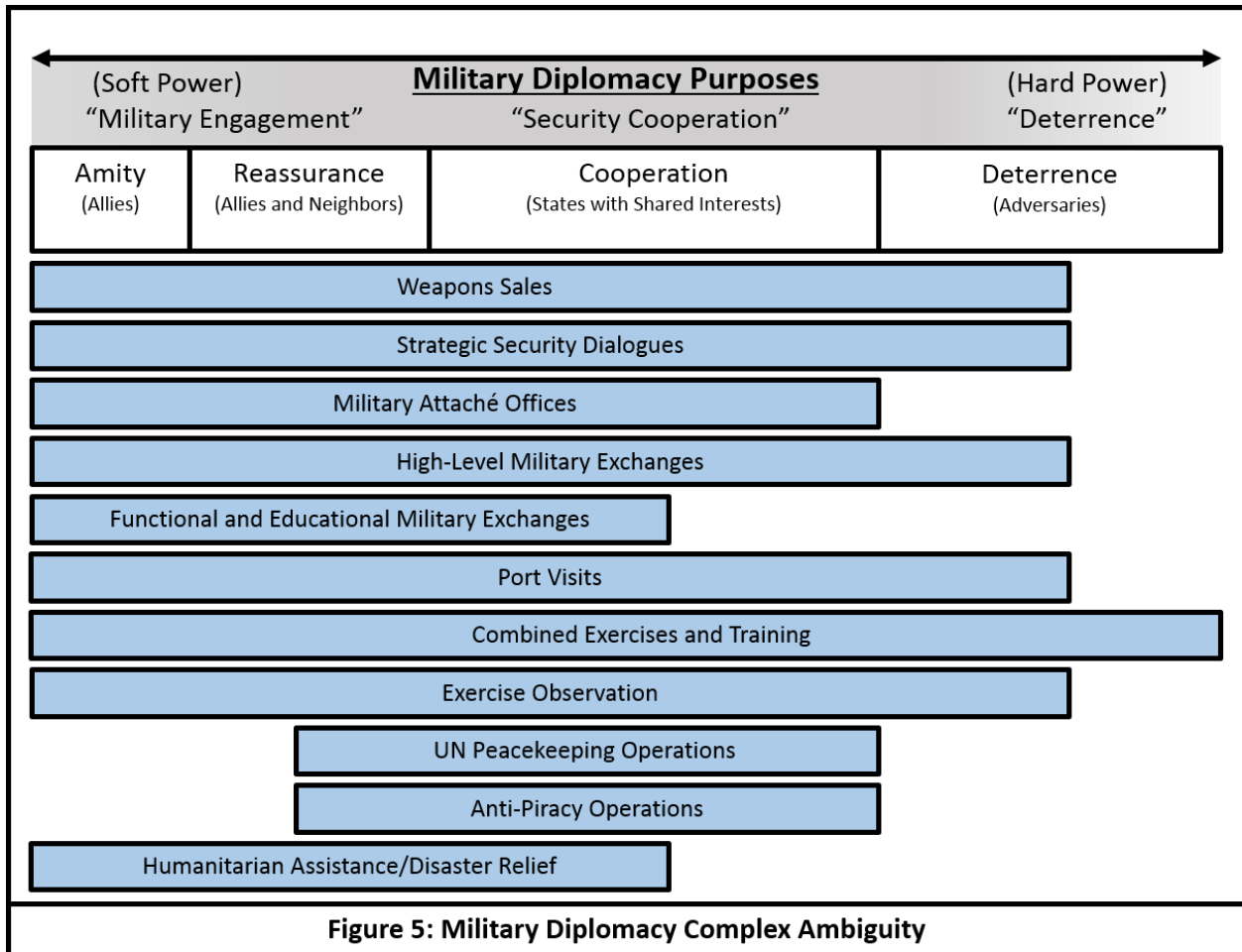
³⁰ United States Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, V-10 to V-11.

to deter an adversary, committed forces must be agile enough to transition rapidly to combat operations. In addition to forces stationed overseas and afloat, forward presence involves periodic rotational deployments and redeployments, access and storage agreements, multinational exercises, port visits, foreign military training, foreign community support, and both military-to-military and military-to-civilian contacts.³¹

“Sustained forward presence” is an example of the continuous military diplomacy practiced by US military forces. It requires cooperative partnerships with foreign militaries and general political support from partner states. While forward presence is possible for short periods with the concurrence of political elites alone, long-term forward presence is made possible when broader segments of host nation publics also recognize the benefits of such presence. Long term presence is also made easier when effective military diplomacy is practiced all the way down to the level of individual US military personnel and their accompanying family members who practice cultural sensitivity when they interact with local civilians.

Once more, we note that the activities listed as supporting the deterrence aspects of military diplomacy also play roles in military engagement as well as security cooperation, again illustrating the complex ambiguity of MD activity. Figure 5 captures a portion of this ambiguity using common military diplomacy activities. Each activity has multiple purposes depending upon the audience. Weapons sales, for example, can simultaneously demonstrate interstate amity, reassure allies and partners, promote cooperation, and deter potential adversaries. Indeed, the higher the weapons technology shared by one state with another state, the higher the perceived confidence in the friendly nature and future of the interstate relationship. The opposite holds true in cases where a state enacts an arms embargo or refuses to sell its most capable weapons to another state. At the same time, providing a state with advanced weapons can help deter a common adversary from resorting to force to achieve its political objectives. The same kind of analysis may also be applied to other military diplomacy activities.

³¹ Ibid., V-11.



Before turning to the next section of this chapter where we shall engage in a more specific discussion of Chinese MD conception and practice, there remain three additional general premises regarding MD to consider. First, military diplomacy activities are not—or should not be— independent initiatives conceived and executed unilaterally by the military. Instead, they are one facet of a state’s overall grand strategy and should operate in a manner complementary to other state instruments of power and in coordination with the departments and agencies responsible for employing those instruments. US MD activities, for example, can be traced from the specific activity all the way through a series of nested guidance documents ranging from various theater campaign plans to the *National Security Strategy of the United States*. While coordination of MD activities is occasionally problematic, in general, the US Departments of

State and Defense operate from the same set of national security guidelines. Any state's military diplomacy activities therefore, must be viewed as serving the national interest within the context of its overall security, diplomatic, and economic situation in the international community. Indeed, the subordination of MD to overall grand strategy holds true for China as well. Section V of China's 2000 Defense White Paper affirms, "Military diplomacy should serve the state's overall diplomacy..."³² Military diplomacy therefore requires states to make judgments about their overall relationships with other states—especially the quality and direction of the relationship—and the military diplomacy activities in which they engage can reveal those judgements to observers.

Second, military diplomacy is as much about symbolism as it is about function. The US doctrinal publications cited previously acknowledge both the symbolic and functional purposes of MD when they discuss things like "visible signs of commitment to allies and adversaries alike" at the same time as they extoll the functional need to "develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations." Analysis of MD activities should therefore also include consideration of these purposes. Both aspects may be present in any given activity, but one often predominates over another. For example, in "Operation Dragoon Ride" in early 2015, the US Army sent a convoy of 120 armored vehicles accompanied by 500 soldiers on a meandering journey of 1100 miles through six countries (NATO members) in Eastern Europe.³³ Described as "part public relations event, part training exercise, part shot across the Russian bow," the symbolic purpose of reassuring the publics in those states of US commitment to their defense in light of Russian aggression in Ukraine clearly outweighed any functional

³² Information Office of the State Council, 2001. *China's National Defense in 2000*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

³³ Rick Lyman, 2015. *An American Military Convoy in Europe Aims to Reassure Allies*. March 29. Accessed May 28, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/30/world/europe/an-american-military-convoy-in-europe-aims-to-reassure-allies.html?_r=0.

utility of conducting the exercise.³⁴ The soldiers could conceivably have gained the same experience of planning and conducting long-haul convoy operations in more traditional—and much less visible—ways. Indeed, the tactical and operational value of the exercise could have been higher without the repeated public relations stops in towns and villages along the way to increase the visibility of the US presence. However, the symbolic purpose of the activity was greater than the functional purpose and the trade-off was deemed necessary. One Polish woman’s statement exemplifies the symbolic usefulness of MD activity, “I am very worried and afraid about what Russia might do next...It gives us all comfort to see these American soldiers and to know they are here for us.”³⁵ As we shall see with Chinese military diplomacy, assessing the symbolic versus functional value of MD activities yields additional insights into the perceptions and strategies of states practicing the activity.

Finally, and related to the first premise, military diplomacy programs are not born fully formed. Rather, they evolve over time starting with small and simple activities and continue under constant evaluation for their effectiveness in achieving state objectives. Typically, interstate military-to-military relationships commence with dialogue between senior political figures who agree on the mutual benefit of expanding the relationship to security matters. Two states may begin with an agreement to open defense attaché offices in their respective embassies to facilitate the growth of the mil-mil relationship. Senior defense officials can begin meeting at various recurring security dialogue or conference fora to discuss common security issues and explore cooperative ways of addressing those issues including the expansion of their military ties to lower levels. For example, both sides may agree to a small-scale bilateral exercise focusing on a relatively benign capability like maritime search and rescue or disaster relief cooperation. If

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

both sides recognize these activities as having symbolic and functional utility in achieving their various political objectives, they may choose to increase the complexity, size, and frequency of subsequent engagements, including invitations to other states to participate in a multilateral activity. With each new round and type of engagement, relationships are formed and strengthened, additional areas for cooperation are discussed, and new types of activities can be planned and executed. Generally, the most significant indicator of a particular engagement's maturity is the institutionalization of the activity. Institutionalization means the activity becomes recurrent and states devote human and material resources to planning and conducting the activity. While MD activities may build their own level of momentum, there is no inevitable end state for military diplomacy. As states grow closer in their comprehensive relationships, united by shared interests, values, and common threat perceptions, military diplomacy activities may progress to the point of formalized security obligations, yielding new security alliances, reciprocal basing agreements and even integrated force structures.³⁶ Conversely, a state may choose to engage other states at only a superficial level of military diplomacy, limit its MD to a certain type or level of activity, or even disengage altogether if interests so dictate. In all of these actions, a state's perceptions of its relations with other states are once more revealed to observers.

Having defined military diplomacy and introduced basic premises regarding its purposes and practices, we are now prepared to introduce Chinese military diplomacy and establish its remarkable growth not only during the preceding two decades in general, but from 2002 to 2012 in particular.

³⁶ For more on the important role of threat perceptions in alliance formation, see Stephen M. Walt, 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Charting the Growth of China's Military Diplomacy

China's current military diplomacy practices are remarkable for their departure from the PLA's historical seclusion. To be sure, following 1949 the PLA did conduct various military diplomacy activities beyond its borders as manifest by its extensive cooperation with the Soviet Union prior to the Sino-Soviet split, assistance to North Korea during and following the end of the Korean War, materiel and other support to North Vietnam, as well as assistance to Laos and Cambodia.³⁷ Readers will note that these cases took place in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s and were primarily predicated upon Mao Zedong's larger political notions of supporting like-minded revolutionary regimes.³⁸ Furthermore, in addition to their political affinity, these states were geographic neighbors of China—for the most part, the PLA stayed relatively close to home in these MD activities. As Deng Xiaoping's political pragmatism replaced Mao's communist ideological fervor, the PLA generally remained within China through the 1980s and 1990s, with MD activity remaining limited in variety, partners, geographic distance, size, complexity, and frequency. As recently as 2000, David Shambaugh observed:

With few exceptions, members of the PLA leadership today have spent their careers largely in regional field commands deep in the interior of China, cut off from interaction with the outside world. They have not traveled extensively or studied abroad, and do not speak foreign languages... Their backgrounds as ground-force field commanders make them more comfortable discussing battlefield tactics than global security or political-military issues. Accordingly, they display a distinctly singular worldview. Their nationalism is fierce, sometimes bordering on xenophobia. Many senior PLA officers evince a deep suspicion of the United States and Japan in particular. They have also been socialized in a military institution and political culture that prizes discipline and secrecy—thus they do not appreciate the importance of defense transparency as a

³⁷ See, for example: Jonathan D. Spence, 1990. *The Search for Modern China*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 557-558; Steven P. Randolph, 2007. *Powerful and Brutal Weapons: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Easter Offensive*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 34 and 218-219; Xiaoming Zhang, 2002. *Red Wings Over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press; Xiao, Tianliang, Gang Ma, and Chunjiang Li, . 2011. *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao [Military Diplomacy of New China]*. Beijing: National Defense University Press, 66; Andrew Mertha, 2014. *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 80-83.

³⁸ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 627.

security-enhancing measure, and view foreign requests to improve it with suspicion. They refuse to join alliances or participate in joint military exercises with other nations, are reticent to institutionalize military cooperation beyond a superficial level, and are leery of multilateral security cooperation.³⁹

A mere twelve years later, Shambaugh needed four pages of his latest book to summarize the hundreds of MD events in which the PLA now participates annually, involving thousands of personnel and scores of international partners.⁴⁰

Parsing the growth of Chinese MD requires that we first understand what activities fall under the Chinese conception of military diplomacy. In their excellent chapter in the edited book, *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, Heidi Holz and Kenneth Allen identify at least eleven PLA MD activities.⁴¹ They are:

- Strategic security dialogues
- Exchange of military attaché offices
- Establishment and operation of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) Information Office and spokesman system
- High-level military exchanges
- Functional and educational military exchanges
- PLA Navy (PLAN) port calls
- Combined exercises and training with foreign militaries
- The opening of PLA exercises and units to foreign observers
- UN peacekeeping operations
- Anti-Piracy operations
- Humanitarian operations

Each of these activities are chronicled, to varying degrees, in the biennial defense white papers published on-line by the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. These white papers present China's official assessment of the international security environment and describe, in general terms, China's security policy and defense practices.

³⁹ David Shambaugh, 1999-2000, "China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security," *International Security* 24 (3), 55.

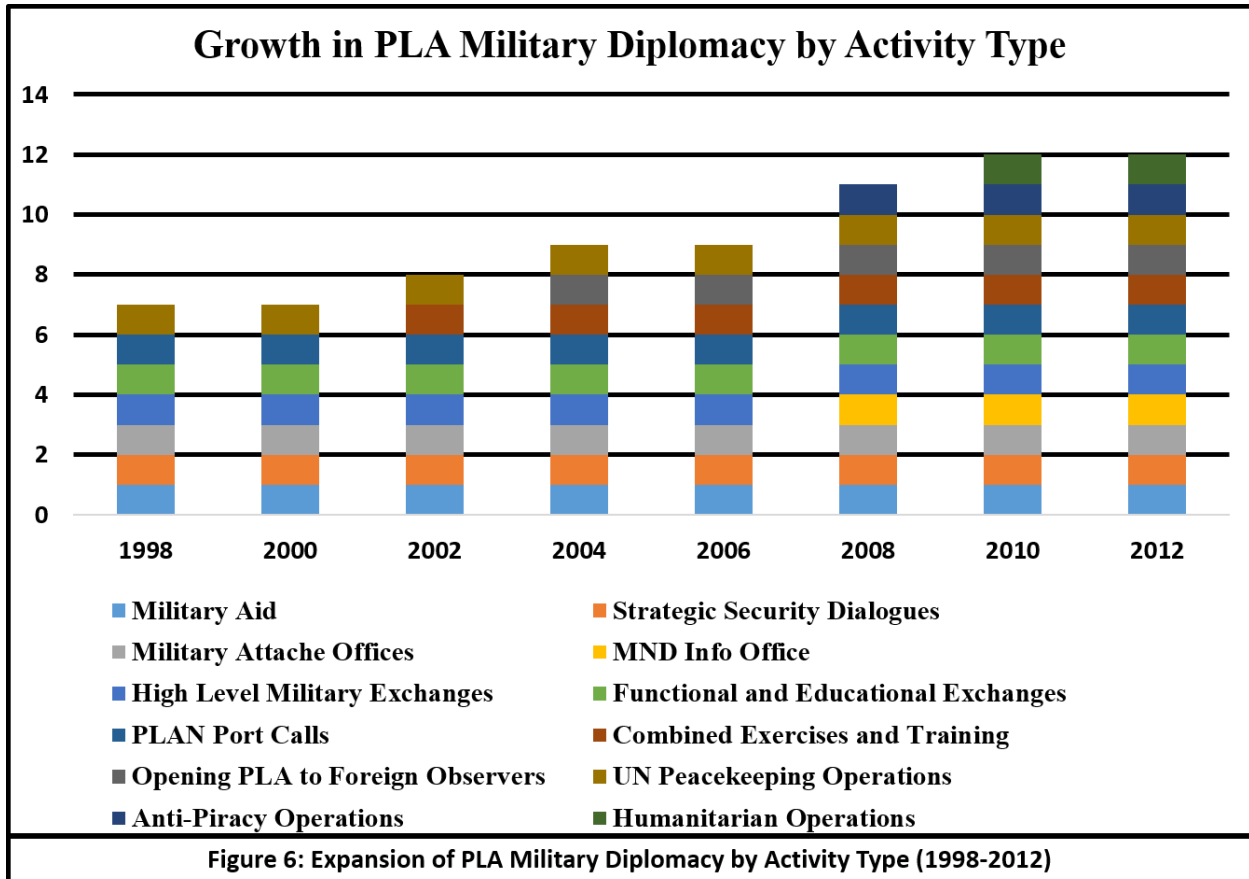
⁴⁰ Shambaugh, *China Goes Global*, 298-301.

⁴¹ Heidi Holz and Kenneth Allen, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics: The People's Liberation Army's Experience with Military Relations," In *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 434. Readers will observe that Holz and Allen did not include military aid (weapons sales or services) in their list of activities because of the PLA's limited role in this activity. I disagree with the omission and do include it in the discussion of MD activity that follows.

Beginning with the first paper in 1998, and continuing with each subsequent edition, the white papers have included major sections devoted to the PLA's international military engagement under the headings of "International Security Cooperation" (1998-2008 white papers), "Deployment of the Armed Forces" and "Military Confidence-Building" (2010 white paper), and "Safeguarding World Peace and Regional Stability" (2012 white paper). Beginning with the 2004 white paper, China began including multiple appendices listing the various MD activities in which China engaged during the preceding two-year period.

Reviewing the documents in chronological order reveals a consistent narrative regarding China's self-perception as an indispensable contributor to international security and a certain pride at each new milestone achievement in military diplomacy. As reported in the 1998 defense white paper, "The Chinese armed forces, which have gone among the international community, have presented themselves before the world as a civilized force and a force of peace, a force which has made its due contributions to keeping regional peace and peace throughout the world." The 2012 defense white paper (formally entitled *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*) similarly contends, "China's security and development are closely connected with the peace and prosperity of the world as a whole. China's armed forces have always been a staunch force upholding world peace and regional stability, and will continue to increase cooperation and mutual trust with the armed forces of other countries, participate in regional and international security affairs, and play an active role in international political and security fields." Each intervening document is likewise replete with similar assessments regarding the PLA's role in maintaining international peace and stability. China views its military diplomacy activities as contributing to these efforts and the addition of each new MD activity is couched in similar terms.

China's defense white papers allow observers to parse the development of its military diplomacy activities in a variety of ways, beginning with the growth in the variety of MD activities it practices. The variety of MD activities in which China engages remained fairly stable through most of the 1980s and 1990s.⁴² Military aid, security dialogues, defense attaché offices, high-level military officer exchanges, and functional/educational exchanges were the



primary military diplomacy efforts for much of these two decades. The first significant addition to the list of activities during this time came with the PLAN's first-ever foreign port calls to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh in 1985.⁴³ That addition was followed five years later by China's first tentative forays—limited initially to observers—into UN Peacekeeping Operations

⁴² Data in Figure 4 is derived exclusively from China's *Defense White Papers*, spanning the years from 1998-2012.

⁴³ Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 446.

(UNPKOs) in 1990.⁴⁴ Over the course of more than two decades, China added only two new MD activities to its repertoire.

The pace at which China added new MD activities increased significantly beginning in 2002 when the PLA Army (PLAA) conducted a bilateral counterterrorism exercise with forces from Kyrgyzstan under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).⁴⁵ Following 2002, the PLA added four new MD activities in comparatively quick succession. In 2003, for the first time ever, the PLAA opened one of its major joint exercises, “Northern Sword,” to foreign military observers.⁴⁶ In 2008, the PLAN deployed a three-ship “escort task force” to conduct China’s first ever anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden in conjunction with international efforts to protect Chinese and international shipping traffic from Somali pirates.⁴⁷ Also in 2008, the MND opened its information office and spokesman system, including an English language web portal.⁴⁸ Early defense white papers all contained sections devoted to the PLA’s role in conducting *domestic* humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. It was not until 2009, however, that the PLA conducted “Peace Angel 2009,” its first *international* humanitarian medical rescue mission, conducted jointly with Gabon in that country.⁴⁹ Since then, international HA/DR operations have become a growing part of China’s MD program. The list of MD activities has remained the same from 2009 until the present (2015), although further growth is possible in such areas as overseas basing arrangements and elevation of mutual security obligations to alliance status. Both of those activities would

⁴⁴ Ibid., 455-456.

⁴⁵ Information Office of the State Council, 2003. *China's National Defense in 2002*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁴⁶ Information Office of the State Council, 2005. *China's National Defense in 2004*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁴⁷ Information Office of the State Council, 2011. *China's National Defense in 2010*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

contravene China's long-standing policy declarations against such activity and China would need considerable creativity in how it proceeded in those efforts.

The growth in the variety of MD activity practiced by China is consistent with the third premise introduced in the preceding section of this chapter that MD programs are not born fully mature. China's MD program through the 1980s and 1990s were conducted primarily by high-ranking individuals and small groups before gradually expanding in the 2000s to activities characterized by larger units, more lower-ranking personnel, greater complexity, and higher international visibility. The growth in the variety of China's MD activities from seven to twelve over the course of the decade from 2002-2012, was accompanied by corresponding maturation in each activity type exemplified by various measurements including frequency, size, location, complexity, and numbers of states with which China engages in each activity. In other words, each activity type experienced its own subsequent broadening and deepening, requiring greater resources and more expertise. It is also important to note that as the PLA has commenced upon new military diplomacy activity types, it has maintained and expanded its previous MD activities. Thus far, at least, the list of activity types has grown and not shrunk. China's defense white papers also allow observers to chart some of the broadening and deepening within each activity type. The data in the white papers is not complete for each activity, with some papers accounting for activities types over the preceding period while subsequent papers do not. The last white paper iteration, *China's Military Strategy*, released in May 2015, no longer included appendices for any of the PLA's MD activity. Nevertheless, the cumulative image derived from the available data is one of steady growth. Although this dissertation will eventually focus its analysis on only two of China's MD activity types—combined exercises and disaster relief operations—it is worthwhile to survey the field of activities in slightly greater detail to better

understand each activity's purposes and practices. The intent is not to provide a deep analysis of each activity type, but merely to help establish the existence of a clear growth trend across China's military diplomacy activity in general.

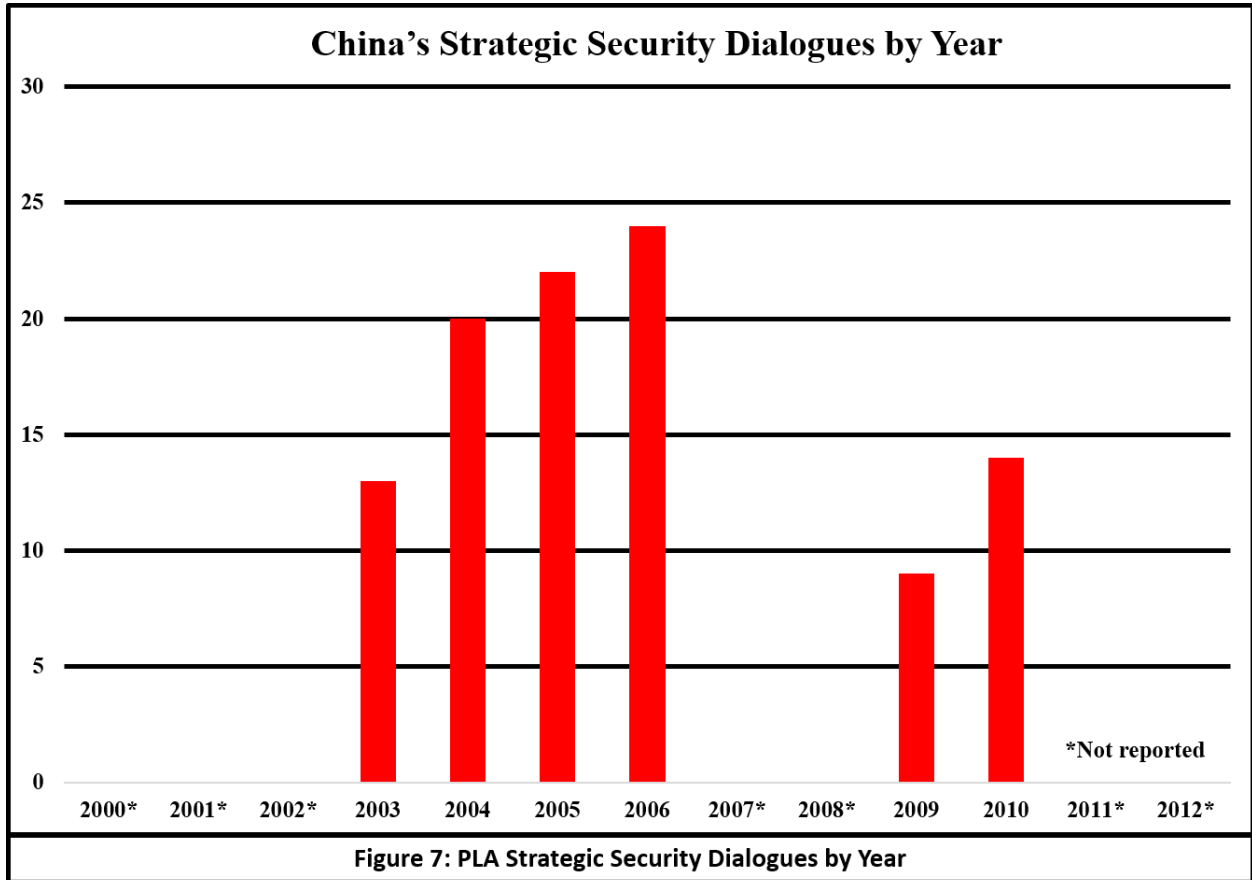
Strategic Security Dialogues. China has long employed strategic security dialogues and consultations as mechanisms to build confidence, improve trust, advance mutual security through cooperation, resolve mutual security issues, and promote international and regional peace and stability.⁵⁰ Bearing in mind the close relationship between the Party and the PLA, these dialogues have been conducted by both civilian leaders holding national security responsibilities as well as uniformed military officers.⁵¹ China participates in both bilateral and multilateral security dialogues. White papers devote significant space to China's participation in key security dialogue forums including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Council on Security Cooperation in Asia and Pacific Region (CSCAP), and the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD). The white paper SCO coverage is particularly useful as one can trace the security dialogue process through the resolution of border disputes to the formation of the SCO and subsequent expansion of SCO activities to include the institutionalization of multiple military diplomacy activities.⁵² This appears to support the utility of security dialogues in spawning an even broader range of MD activities. The white papers also discuss various important bilateral strategic security dialogues, with states like Russia, the US, India, Japan, and various European states receiving frequent mention. The 1998, 2000, 2002, 2008, and 2012

⁵⁰ Each *China Defense White Paper* devotes multiple paragraphs to the topic of strategic security dialogues. See also Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 434-435.

⁵¹ Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 434-435.

⁵² See, for example, Information Office of the State Council, 2003. *China's National Defense in 2002*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Section VI, under Regional Security Cooperation heading. See also Information Office of the State Council. 2005. *China's National Defense in 2004*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Section IX, under Regional Security Cooperation heading.

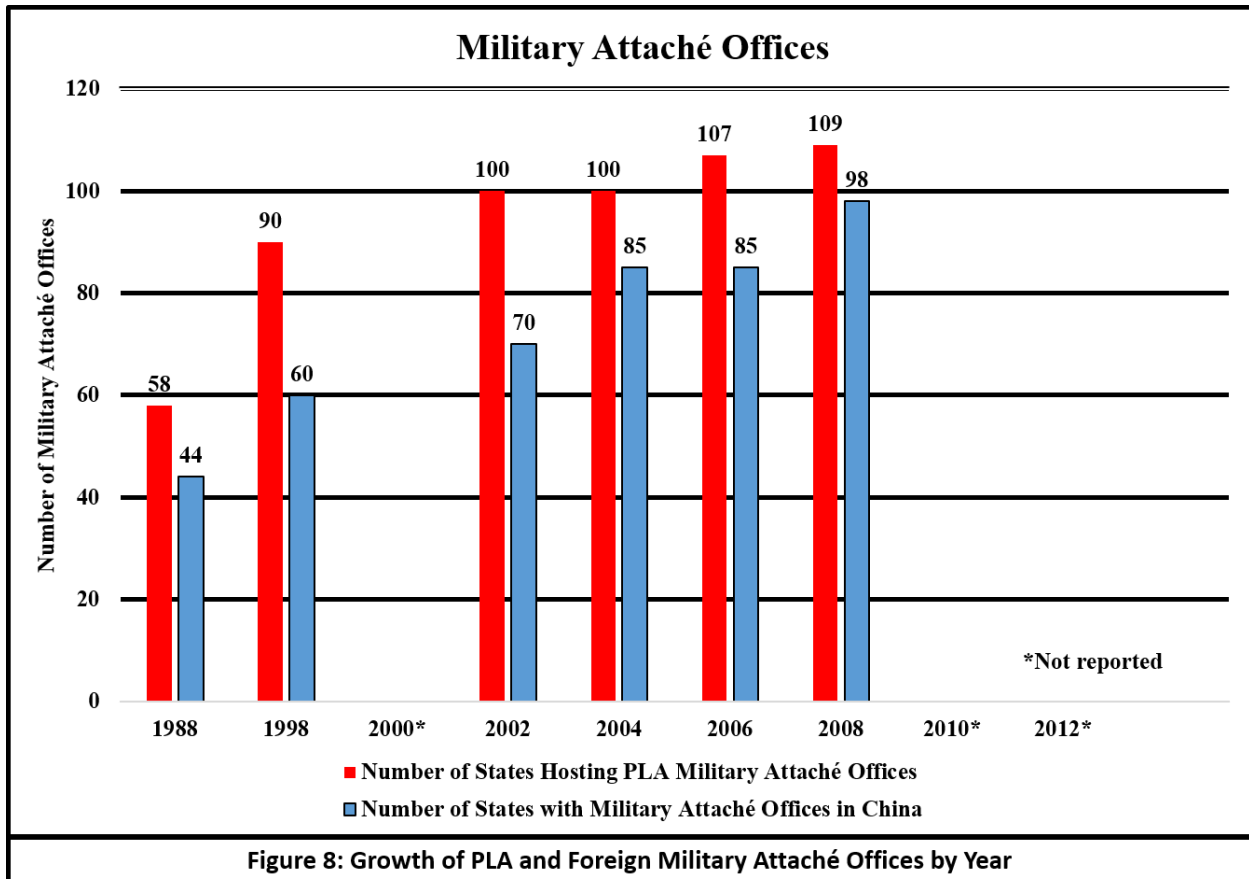
white papers do not provide indices listing China’s strategic security dialogue activity by events per year, but the 2004, 2006, and 2010 white papers do, revealing significant growth from 2003 to 2006 before declining to lower levels in 2009 and 2010 (see Figure 7).



Military Attaché Offices. Six out of nine of China’s white papers have included a basic accounting of the numbers of states hosting Chinese military attaché offices as well as the number of states with military attaché offices inside China (see Figure 8).⁵³ Defense attachés serve primarily as overt collectors of political-military information, as representatives of their military branches to the host state, and as advisors to their ambassador on the political-military

⁵³ Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 436.

affairs of the host state.⁵⁴ As such, defense attaché offices are a primary node for facilitating mil-mil engagements between their home states and the host state. Allen and Holz note that PLA attaché offices are staffed primarily by PLAA career intelligence officers who, in addition to the



attaché roles already mentioned, use their offices to highlight military diplomacy engagements between China and their host state through their embassy websites.⁵⁵ Indeed, as described in premise three regarding the maturation process of military diplomacy activities, establishment of attaché offices are practically prerequisite to states engaging in more significant military diplomacy activity. As expected, the expansion of attaché offices in China's case generally preceded the subsequent growth in other types of military diplomacy activity. Comparison of

⁵⁴ Douglas S. Thornblom, and James J. Grzella, 1989. "Selection for the Defense Attache System." *DISAM Journal* (Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management) 11 (4): 105-108. Accessed July 24, 2015. <http://www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%2011-4/Thornblom%20&%20Grzella.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 437.

figures released in the 1998 defense white paper with figures from the 2008 defense white paper show that in the two decades between 1988 and 2008, the number of states hosting Chinese defense attaché offices nearly doubled, growing in number from 58 to 109. However, the bulk of that growth occurred between 1988 and 2002. The number of states with military attaché offices in China during the 1988-2008 period more than doubled, growing from 44 to 98. The 2010 and 2012 white papers did not include data on defense attaché offices, perhaps because China was already approaching the upper limits of growth potential and there was no new information to report. Reporting from 2015 indicates the numbers of military attaché offices has remained roughly the same as they were in 2008.⁵⁶ Finally, it is interesting to note that China has opened and maintained defense attaché offices in more states than states have opened attaché offices in China. This is an indication of China's on-going interest in the political military affairs of a wide segment of foreign states as well as in keeping with China's statements regarding the omnidirectional nature of its MD activity.

High-Level Military Exchanges. With the exception of the 2012 report, every Chinese defense white paper has reported basic information regarding high-level military exchanges conducted by the PLA every year, including specific listings of all “major international exchanges” in appendices to the 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 white papers. As noted by Holz and Allen, China defines foreign high-ranking delegations as those delegations “headed by defense ministers, commanders-in-chief of the armed forces or chiefs of the general staff.”⁵⁷ A perusal of the available defense white paper appendices shows that PLA officers of similar rank

⁵⁶ Kenneth Allen, 2015. *The Top Trends in China's Military Diplomacy*. May 1. Accessed June 1, 2015. http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=43866&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=a973cc0463b865291303e0e101de3e9e#.VXpsBflVhBe.

⁵⁷ Holz and Allen, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 439. See also Information Office of the State Council. 1998. *China's National Defense in 1998*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Section IV under Foreign Military Contacts.

and responsibility typically lead PLA high-level delegations on trips abroad, with the addition of leaders representing major PLA educational institutions. For example, the 2004 defense white paper lists the Chinese Minister of National Defense, members of the Party's Central Military Commission (in their roles as chiefs of the general staff departments or as commanders of service branches), commanders and political commissars from China's various military regions, and senior leaders from the PLA's National Defense University as traveling abroad during the preceding two year period. The PLA views high-level military exchanges as important efforts intended to enhance "mutual trust, friendship and cooperation with armed forces of other countries, and for regional and world peace, stability and development."⁵⁸ Analysis of the data in China's defense white papers also reveals that, similar to the military diplomacy functions of defense attaché offices, China's high-level exchanges are prerequisite to states engaging in more significant military diplomacy activity. No naval port calls, combined exercises or training, or humanitarian assistance activities have taken place with states that did not first engage in high-level exchanges with China.

The data reported in China's defense white papers makes it somewhat difficult to gauge certain aspects of the growth of China's high-level exchange activity. For example, the first three white papers (1998, 2000, and 2002) only report total numbers of high-level delegations exchanged with total numbers of states—specific states and specific visitors are not listed. This makes it difficult to know things like which states China chose to engage first, how they chose to engage (judging by the composition of delegation members and services represented), and how often. Nevertheless, the available data does provide interesting fodder for analysis of the growth of this activity through the 2000s. Figure 9 shows that the number of PLA delegations traveling

⁵⁸ Information Office of the State Council, 2001. *China's National Defense in 2000*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Section V, under Military Exchanges heading.

abroad held steady between 1996 and 2008, ranging between 30 and 37 PLA delegations traveling each year, before dropping to a low of 26 in 1997 and then steadily climbing to a high of 54 in 2010. As far as hosting foreign high-level delegations, these visits to China spiked in

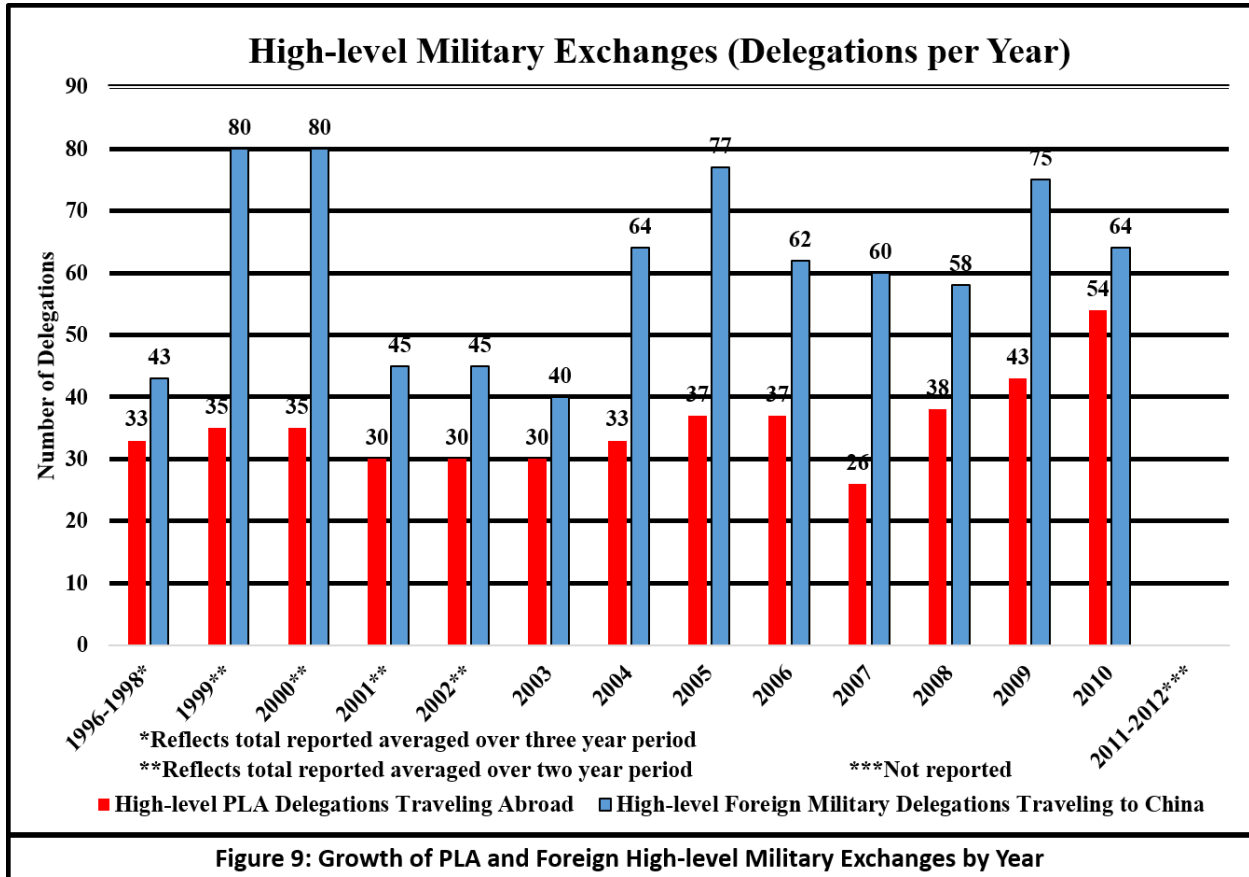
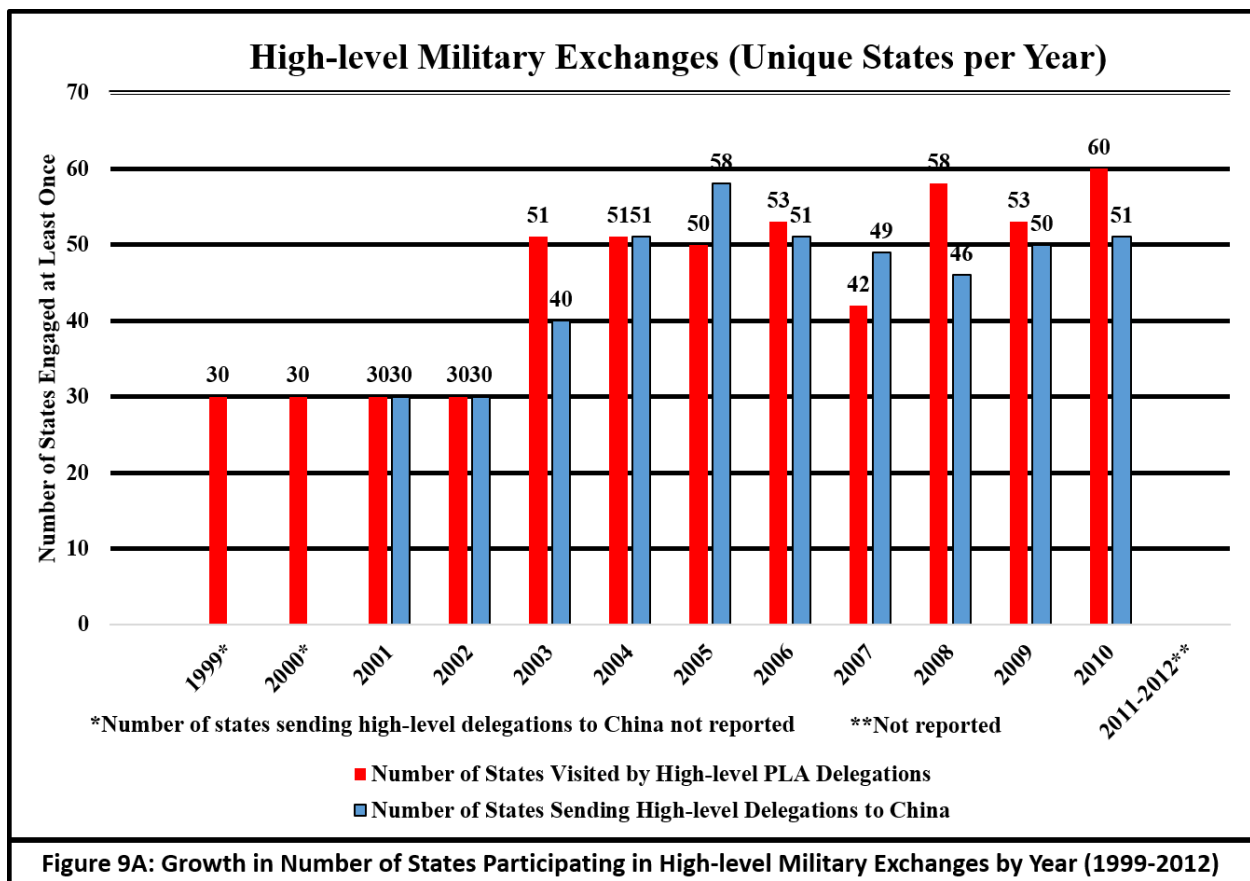


Figure 9: Growth of PLA and Foreign High-level Military Exchanges by Year

1999 and 2000 (years for which detailed data is unavailable in the white papers), dropped back to the normal range of 40-45 per year but then remained consistently higher from 2004 and on, ranging between 58 and 77. Given the limited pool of senior PLA officers meeting the “high-level” rank criterion, their reciprocal foreign delegation hosting responsibilities, and their primary organizational leadership responsibilities, one should not expect drastic changes in numbers of high-level delegation exchanges in either direction. Indeed, the numbers of both

PLA and foreign delegations have remained consistent from 2010 through 2014, with no further growth in the annual numbers of delegations noted.⁵⁹

Although the high-level delegation data in Figure 9 demonstrates an observable growth trend in the number of high-level delegation exchanges during this period, the more obvious growth has occurred in the number of unique state visits PLA delegations have made annually (Figure 9A). Unique state visits mean counting states only once even if they were visited by multiple PLA delegations in a year. Holz and Allen note that among senior military officials,



only the Minister of National Defense and the Chief of General Staff average more than one trip abroad per year, with the other CMC members, military region commanders, and various

⁵⁹ Allen, Kenneth, 2015. *The Top Trends in China's Military Diplomacy*. May 1. Accessed June 1, 2015. http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=43866&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=25&cHash=a973cc0463b865291303e0e101de3e9e#.VXpsBfVhBe.

political commissars, traveling only once or not at all.⁶⁰ However, these senior PLA leaders typically visit multiple states during each trip abroad, meaning the number of states visited each year is always larger than the number of delegations sent abroad. Bearing in mind that high-level PLA delegations occasionally visit the same states as other PLA delegations in any given year, the growth in the total number of visits to or from unique states shows a clear increase beginning in 2003. To be sure, multiple visits to a single state in any year may serve to illustrate the intensity of the relationship between China and that state, but for the purposes of simply measuring growth in the activity, the focus here is on measuring the number of different states visited. Further growth in this military diplomacy activity is manifest in the number of new states added to the total litany of states with whom China has engaged. It is in these visits that China's declarations regarding its practice of "omnidirectional" military diplomacy is most clearly manifest. In the eight years (2003-2010) for which the white papers provide detailed data, China exchanged high-level delegations with a total of 146 states, adding new states each year from Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia/Oceania, and both North and South America. The total number of states is likely even higher if one considers the years for which China did not provide data on its high-level military exchange activities.

Functional and Educational Military Exchanges. As China's military diplomacy activities matured, the level of engagement has shown a clear growth trend in terms of the numbers of lower ranking military personnel participating in functional and educational military exchanges. The 1998 white paper reports, "Chinese armed forces stress technological exchanges in specialized fields. They have developed extensive exchanges and cooperation with armed forces in other parts of the world in the fields of scientific research, academic studies, military

⁶⁰ Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 441.

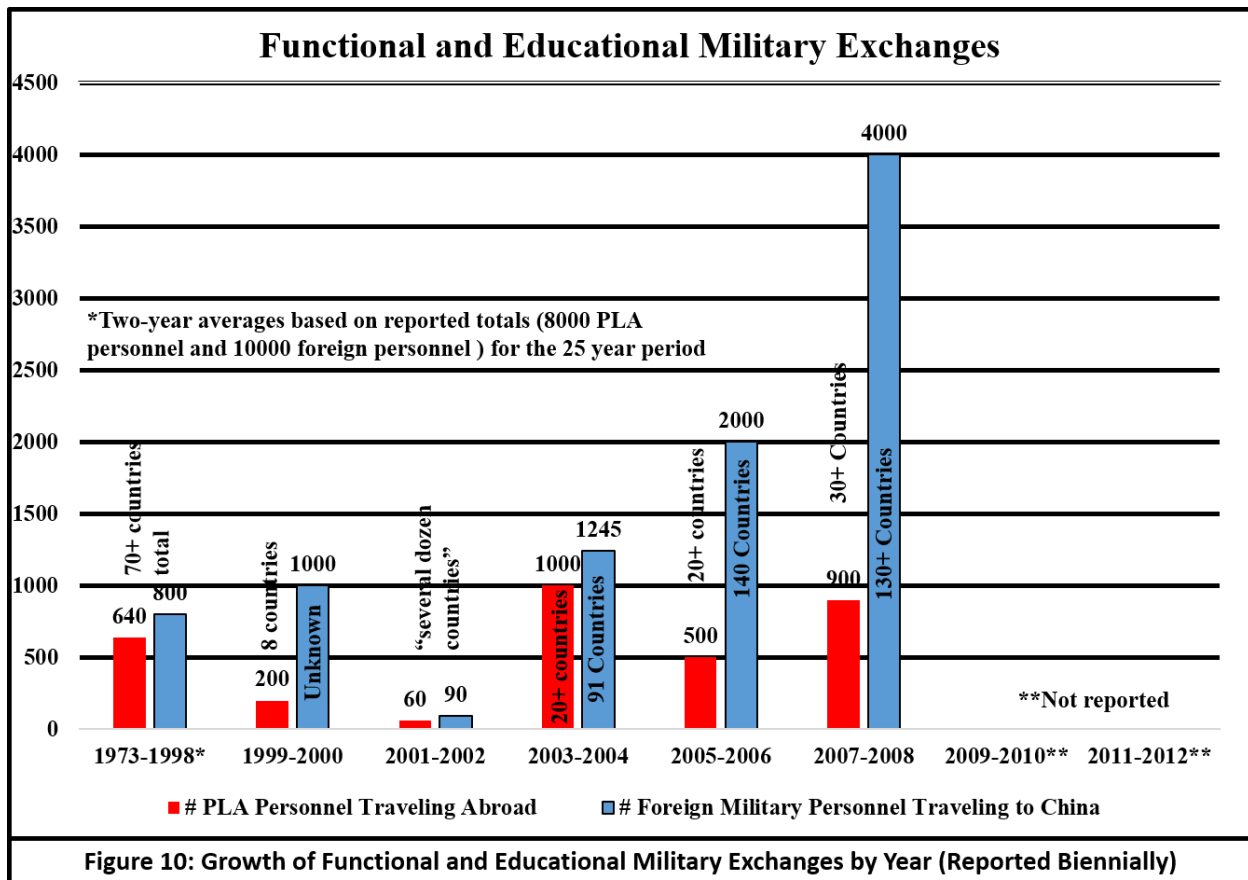
education, armed forces administration, culture, sports, and medical and hygiene work.”⁶¹ PLA members use these exchanges, as always, to “build friendly relationships and deepen cooperation, mutual understanding and mutual trust,” but they also use them to glean information useful for PLA modernization efforts.⁶² The biennial defense white papers provide only general and inconsistent information on these exchanges making detailed analysis difficult. Unlike other higher profile military diplomacy activities, the white papers do not include appendices for functional and educational military exchanges, preferring instead to provide narrative sentences within the body of the papers. For example, the 2000 defense white paper simply reports, “New progress has been made in cooperation between the PLA and foreign armed forces in military education and training. In the past two years, more than 200 Chinese military personnel have been sent to study in Russia, Germany, France, Britain, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand and Kuwait, while nearly 1,000 military personnel from Africa, Latin America and Europe and other Asian countries have come to study in China.” Nevertheless, the information provided by the white papers shows a clear growth trend in terms of the numbers of personnel participating in these types of exchanges (Figure 10).

According to the 1998 defense white paper, in the 25-year period from 1973 to 1998, the PLA sent an average of 640 personnel overseas and hosted some 800 foreign personnel every two years as part of these functional and educational military exchanges with more than 70 countries. From 1999 to 2002, the numbers of PLA personnel going abroad dropped precipitously, with only 60 in the two-year period from 2001-2002. From 2003 to 2008, however, the average number of PLA personnel going abroad jumped to roughly 800 during every two-year reporting period. The most marked increase came in the number of foreign

⁶¹ Information Office of the State Council, 1998. *China's National Defense in 1998*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁶² Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 442.

personnel coming to China for training and education, jumping from an average of 800 in 1997-1998 to more than 4000 in the 2007-2008 reporting period—a 500% increase in ten years. The



2008 defense white paper notes that much of this increase is due to the expansion of relations between academic institutional relations, reporting, “Twenty military educational institutions in China have established and maintained inter-collegiate exchange relations with their counterparts in over 20 countries, including the United States, Russia, Japan and Pakistan. Meanwhile, some 4,000 military personnel from more than 130 countries have come to China to study at Chinese military educational institutions.”⁶³ The chart also makes clear that foreign military personnel traveling to China have consistently and significantly—especially in later years—outnumbered PLA personnel traveling abroad on this type of activity. Subsequent white papers have ceased

⁶³ Information Office of the State Council, 2009. *China's National Defense in 2008*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

reporting even basic information on China's functional and educational military exchanges, but other sources indicate the numbers of both PLA and foreign personnel remain high and that PLA academic institutions are now even offering graduate degree programs to foreign officers.⁶⁴

PLA Navy (PLAN) Port Calls. Due to the inherent maritime nature of the activity, the PLAN is the exclusive practitioner of the military diplomacy activity of port calls. China's defense white papers from 1998 to 2010 all include sentences on the PLAN's port call activity, with the 2004-2010 white paper appendices including complete listings of China's port calls during that eight year period. The 1998 white paper describes port calls as "friendly visits" that serve the purpose of enhancing "the friendship between the armed forces of China and the armed forces and people" of the countries visited.⁶⁵ Indeed, PLAN port calls often serve symbolic purposes that may outweigh their functional utility. One US report on PLAN port call activity notes that China's port calls in 1997—the first time PLAN ships visited states outside of the Asia-Pacific region—were conducted at the expense of PLAN readiness for contingencies closer to home.⁶⁶ PLAN port calls to the US (San Diego), Mexico, Peru, and Chile in that year had the "overriding goal" of "illustrating to the people in those countries, including overseas Chinese who visited the ships in huge numbers during port calls, that China and the PLAN were both open to the outside world and [the PLAN was] no longer just a backward coastal navy."⁶⁷ Along these lines, China's most significant port call mission so far was the PLAN's first-ever round the world voyage, with two vessels visiting 10 ports in 10 countries on five continents over the

⁶⁴ Renjie Guo, ed. 2014. *National Defense University of PLA Awards Master Degree to Foreign Senior Officers*. September 9. Accessed August 31, 2015. http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2014-09/09/content_6129447.htm. Also, author's discussions with US military personnel having direct knowledge of the subject.

⁶⁵ Information Office of the State Council, 1998. *China's National Defense in 1998*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁶⁶ Office of Naval Intelligence, 2007. *China's Navy 2007*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Naval Intelligence, 116.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

course of the 33,000 nautical mile cruise.⁶⁸ Despite the symbolic weight of these activities, port calls do also serve important functional purposes in training ship crews on skills ranging from long-distance navigation and logistics to global command and control and foreign port operations, lessons that also have bearing on the PLAN's modernization efforts.⁶⁹ The training ship *Zheng He*—aptly named for the famous Ming Dynasty admiral—conducted three of the PLAN's first four overseas port visits in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Most subsequent port calls have been made by small “task forces,” consisting of one or two of the PLAN's more advanced combatant vessels—usually two destroyers or a single destroyer and a frigate—and a supporting replenishment vessel.⁷⁰

China's defense white papers reveal that growth in the PLAN's port call military diplomacy has occurred along a few measurable dimensions. First, as Figure 11 illustrates, the number of average yearly PLAN port calls has increased from a low of .4 in the 1980s, to 2 in the 1990s, and then tripling to nearly 6 through the 2000s. Second, the number of average yearly port calls by foreign navy vessels to Chinese ports has similarly increased; with naval vessels from 24 different states visiting Chinese ports at least once by the end of 2010. Third, the number of states hosting PLAN port calls reached 35 by the end of 2010, with roughly one-third of those countries hosting multiple visits over the years. Finally, as PLAN capabilities have developed, it is important to note that port visits after 2008—when China began conducting its first anti-piracy patrols—served a broader range of military diplomacy functions. The number of port calls conducted as stand-alone missions remains high, but they are now supplemented by

⁶⁸ Information Office of the Ministry of National Defense of the PRC, 2012. "Top Ten Firsts of Chinese Military Diplomacy from 2002 to 2012." *People's Daily Online*. Edited by Meng Yan and Jun Liang. September 26. Accessed December 5, 2013. <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/7960693.html>.

⁶⁹ Office of Naval Intelligence, 2007. *China's Navy 2007*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Naval Intelligence, 113 and 116. See also, Allen and Holz, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 446-447.

⁷⁰ Office of Naval Intelligence, *China's Navy 2007*, 114.

operational port visits conducted as part of combined maritime exercises with other states, enroute to PLAN participation in anti-piracy operations, or as humanitarian and disaster relief missions, thus making them difficult to categorize under a single military diplomacy activity.

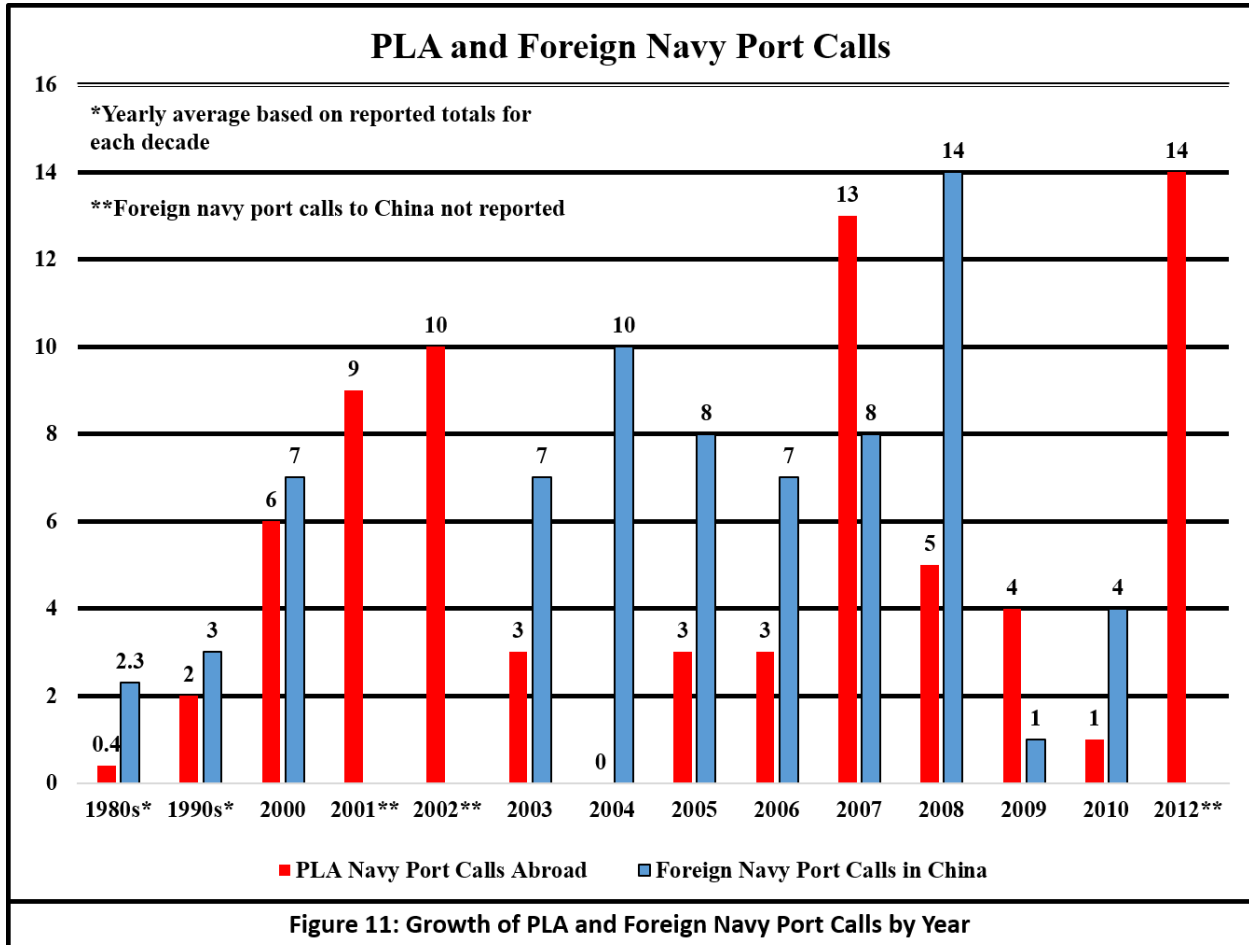


Figure 11 includes only those visits specifically designated as port calls by the PLAN. The 14 PLAN port calls in 2012 were all conducted by the training ship *Zhenghe* and the figure does not include port visits conducted that year as part of other military diplomacy activities.⁷¹

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs). China's UNPKOs feature prominently in the defense white papers, with this activity receiving its own chapter subheading in each of the eight papers issued through 2012. Appendices detailing PLA UNPKO

⁷¹ Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

participation are included in the 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 papers. Despite this prominence, the papers offer little explanation for the purposes of this growing activity. *China's National Defense in 2000* declares simply, "As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has been committed to the maintenance of international peace and security. It attaches great importance to the United Nations and supports it in playing its due role in maintaining international peace and security under the guidance of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter." Subsequent white papers reiterate China's principled support for UNPKOs and detail PLA deployments to various UNPKO missions, but without further elaboration regarding the reasons for the growth of the activity. In addition to supporting the UN's role in maintaining international peace, other sources describe at least two additional purposes for the PLA's UNPKO participation. First, China's support of UNPKOs presents an image of China as a responsible member of the international community and seeks to allay "China threat" concerns.⁷² Second, UNPKO deployments provide the PLA with training, skills, and experiences beneficial to overall PLA modernization.⁷³

This military diplomacy activity differs from China's other activities in several ways. First, UNPKOs require the operational deployment of PLA personnel to potentially dangerous areas under the aegis of the United Nations. Indeed, the white papers invariably mention the cumulative numbers of PLA peacekeepers killed in service to the UN. As of 2012, nine PLA troops—three officers and nine enlisted members—have been killed during the course of peacekeeping duty since China first commenced its participation in 1990.⁷⁴ Second, the conduct

⁷² Yin He, 2007. *China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations*. Occasional Paper, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 48-50.

⁷³ Drew Thompson, 2005. "Beijing's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations." *China Brief* V (11): 7-8. See also, Yin He. 2007. *China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 55.

⁷⁴ Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

of this activity under UN authorization also restricts Beijing's agency in selecting where it deploys its forces—making UNPKOs possible in only a small subset of states, as opposed to the greater freedom of engagement afforded by the other types of MD activity. Furthermore, PLA MD engagement with these states are not state-to-state in the same way the other types are because of their requiring UN intervention in the first place. Any interaction with military forces from the host state occurs under the auspices of UN chains of command and oversight. To be sure, China maintains the right of selection in its UNPKO engagements, but its choices remain constrained to the subset of states authorized for PKOs by the UN.⁷⁵ Third, this MD activity requires comparatively large numbers of enlisted troops in contrast to the smaller, more officer-centric nature of the activities previously discussed. This is significant because it indicates a certain maturation of China's perceptions regarding the PLA's confidence and competence in conducting MD activities that extend below the officer corps to rank and file soldiers. Consistent with the premises of MD introduced in the preceding section, opportunities for international exposure are gradually being extended to a deeper and broader cross section of PLA personnel. From their commencement in 1990 through 2012, Chinese UNPKO deployments broadened beyond officer-only observers and staff members to include entire engineering, transportation, communications, and medical units as well.⁷⁶

The PLA commenced participation in UN peacekeeping operations in 1990 when it deployed five PLAA officers to serve as observers for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) charged with monitoring compliance with various armistice agreements

⁷⁵ Andrew Ludwig, 2014. *Profit in Peacekeeping--China's Strategic Gain*. May 27. Accessed September 17, 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/profit-in-peacekeeping-chinas-strategic-gain/>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.⁷⁷ China has been a regular contributor of observers to this mission ever since, sending between 2-5 observers annually. Remarkably, these initial, limited, forays into UNPKOs were soon followed in late 1992 and early 1993 with the first-ever rotational deployment of two 400-member PLA engineering units to Cambodia in support of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).⁷⁸ These engineering troops engaged in the repair and maintenance of airports, highways, and bridges as part of the UN effort to provide basic infrastructure assistance to Cambodia.⁷⁹ Following conclusion of the UNTAC mission in September 1993, PLA participation in UNPKOs was limited to military observers, liaison officers, and advisors sent to support a total of six UN peacekeeping missions through the rest of the decade, averaging between 40-50 total personnel each year spread across these missions.⁸⁰

China's participation in UNPKOs took off in earnest through the following decade in terms of both numbers of missions supported as well as in numbers of PLA personnel deployed. Figure 12 captures the annual growth in these two metrics. China's support to UN peacekeeping missions tripled from four missions in 2000 to an all-time high of 12 mission in 2007. Since 2007, the number of missions supported has remained high, ranging from 9-11 missions each year. Due to the nature of states requiring UNPKOs, all of these missions are in poverty and conflict-prone states or regions. For example, in 2007 PLA troops supported UNPKOs in Africa (Western Sahara, Liberia, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Sudan,

⁷⁷ United Nations, 1990. *Troop and Police Contributors Archive (1990-2014)*. November. Accessed September 18, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors_archive.shtml.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

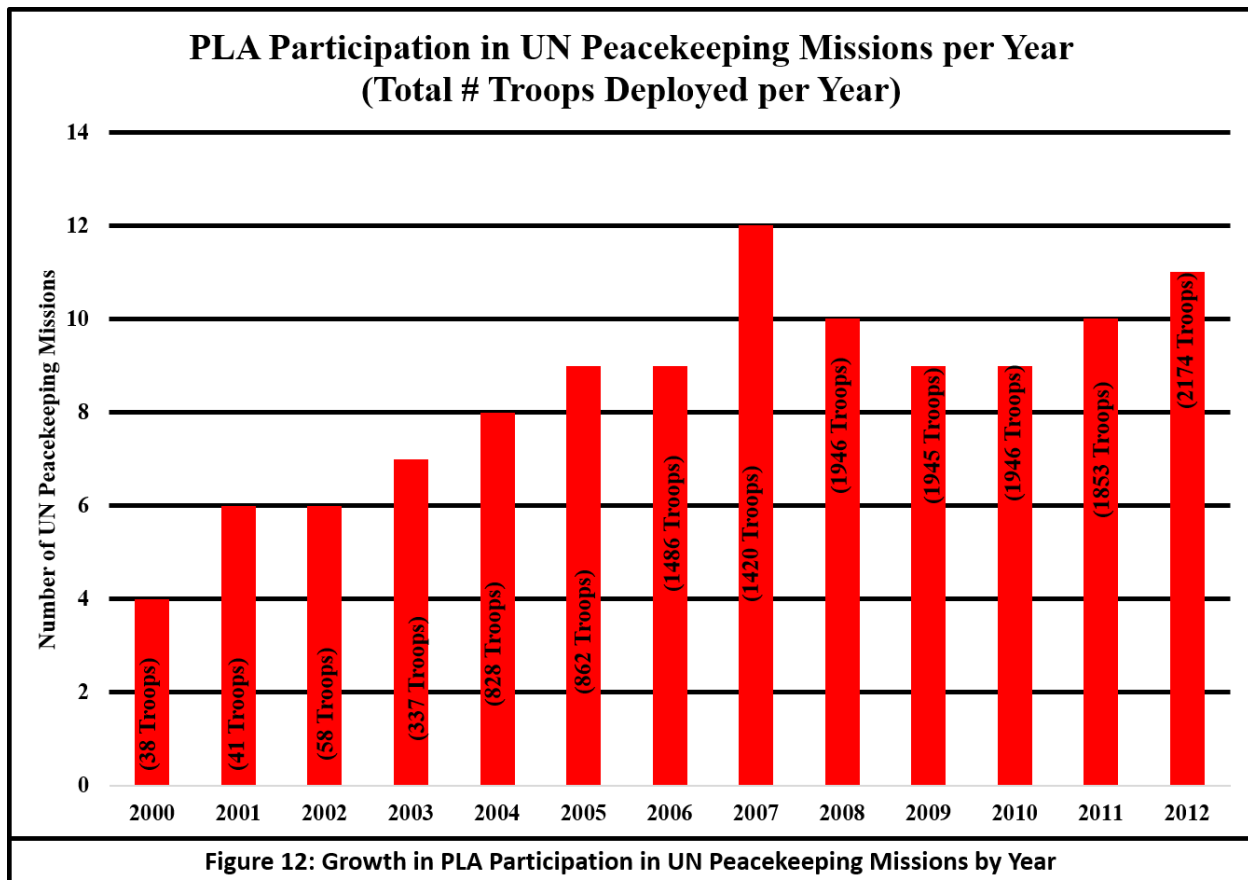
⁷⁹ United Nations, 2003. *United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia*. Accessed September 18, 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untac.htm>.

⁸⁰ Information Office of the State Council, 2001. *China's National Defense in 2000*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Darfur, and Sierra Leone), the Middle East (Lebanon), and Southeast Asia (Timor-Leste).⁸¹

Increases in the number of missions as well as broadening of the type of peacekeeping activities the PLA was willing to perform, required an appropriate increase in the number of personnel.

The number of troops deployed annually exploded from 38 troops in 2000 to 2178 troops in 2012. Further growth in this military diplomacy activity is somewhat limited by the number of peacekeeping missions authorized by the United Nations in any given year. Nevertheless, the



growth in the average number of PLA troops deployed per mission indicates the possibility that even if the number of missions does not increase, it is still possible for the number of PLA troops to increase. Of further note, the 2010 and 2012 defense white papers proudly point out that

China has now become the largest contributor of peacekeepers of any of the permanent members

⁸¹ Information Office of the State Council, 2009. *China's National Defense in 2008*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

of the UN Security Council and China contributes the largest share of peacekeeping costs of any developing country.⁸²

Combined Exercises and Training. China’s participation in combined exercises shares a key similarity with its participation in UNPKOs in terms of who the PLA deploys to participate in this military diplomacy activity. One observes that as the PLA gains experience in its growing portfolio of military diplomacy activities, it gradually introduces activities that allow for the deployment of ever-larger numbers of enlisted troops, providing them with greater opportunities for travel abroad and for contact with foreign counterparts. However, unlike PLAN port calls that require no significant display of operational skills beyond the ability to navigate a vessel to a foreign port, combined exercises now require demonstrations of PLA tactical and operational prowess in front of keenly observant foreign counterparts. Furthermore, unlike the selection constraints of PLA participation in UNPKOs, China is not limited to a small subset of states when it comes to selecting partners for its combined exercises and training events. This freedom of selection is also useful because it again provides insights into Chinese perceptions regarding its relations with other states. The assumption here is that the greater the complexity, size, cooperation, and exposure involved in the exercise, the greater the perceived intensity of the relationship between the two states.

The first mention of PLA “joint exercises”—or exercises with the militaries of other states—is a negative reference in the 2000 defense white paper.⁸³ In a paragraph lamenting a

⁸² Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁸³ Readers should note Chinese government and media sources use the term “joint exercises” or “*lianhe yanxi*” to describe not only China’s participation in military exercises with other nations, but also exercises between PLA service branches. In the US military lexicon, the term for exercises with other countries is “combined exercises,” whereas “joint exercises” refer to exercises involving more than one service branch from the same country. For example, in the US lexicon PLA Army and PLA Navy forces exercising together would be called “joint exercises.” Chinese Navy and Pakistani Navy forces exercising together would be called “combined exercises.” Chinese Army, Navy, and Air Forces participating in exercises with Russian Army, Navy and Air Forces would be called

downturn in security developments in the Asia-Pacific Region, the authors referred obliquely to US military diplomacy actions when they wrote, “Joint military exercises have increased in the region, to the detriment of trust between countries.”⁸⁴ Two years later, the 2002 defense white paper reflected a significant change in Chinese perspectives regarding combined exercises. After dispatching PLA members to observe combined exercises sponsored by Singapore, Japan, the US, and Thailand, the white paper noted, “China intends to selectively and gradually participate in more multilateral joint military exercises in the non-traditional fields of security in the future.”⁸⁵ The same white paper, in the section devoted to discussing the PLA’s anti-terrorism activities, announced the PLA had held its first combined exercise ever, conducted bilaterally with ground forces from Kyrgyzstan in October, 2002. Dennis Blasko, a leading expert on the PLA, reports the exercise consisted of several hundred ground troops from both sides employing armored vehicles and helicopters to surround and defeat a force of 100 “terrorists” in the Pamir-Alay Mountains on the border between the two countries.⁸⁶ Blasko admits that little is known regarding Beijing’s about-face on participation in combined exercises, but he advances at least two reasons for China’s new willingness to engage in this military diplomacy activity.⁸⁷ First, terrorism had been a long-shared regional concern among the SCO member states and this concern only grew stronger in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Indeed, the fact that a majority of China’s combined exercises have stated anti/counter-terrorism purposes supports this

“combined, joint exercises.” Most Chinese sources do not make this distinction, which occasionally causes confusion in the minds of readers. For the sake of clarity, this dissertation will use the more precise US lexicon whenever possible.

⁸⁴ Information Office of the State Council, 2001. *China's National Defense in 2000*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁸⁵ Information Office of the State Council, 2003. *China's National Defense in 2002*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁸⁶ Dennis J. Blasko, 2010. "People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police Ground Exercises with Foreign Forces: 2002-2009." In *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, edited by Roy Kamphausen, David Lai and Andrew Scobell, 377-428. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 381-383.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 382-383.

idea. Second, he writes, “In the course of these exercises, Chinese forces have gained valuable experience in operating with foreign forces, command and control, staff planning procedures, long-distance rail or air deployment, logistics, and to a lesser extent actual battlefield tactics and combat methods.”⁸⁸ The 2010 defense white paper confirmed the modernization utility of the exercises when it declared that joint military and training exercises were “conducive to promoting mutual trust and cooperation, drawing on useful lessons, and accelerating the PLA's modernization.”⁸⁹

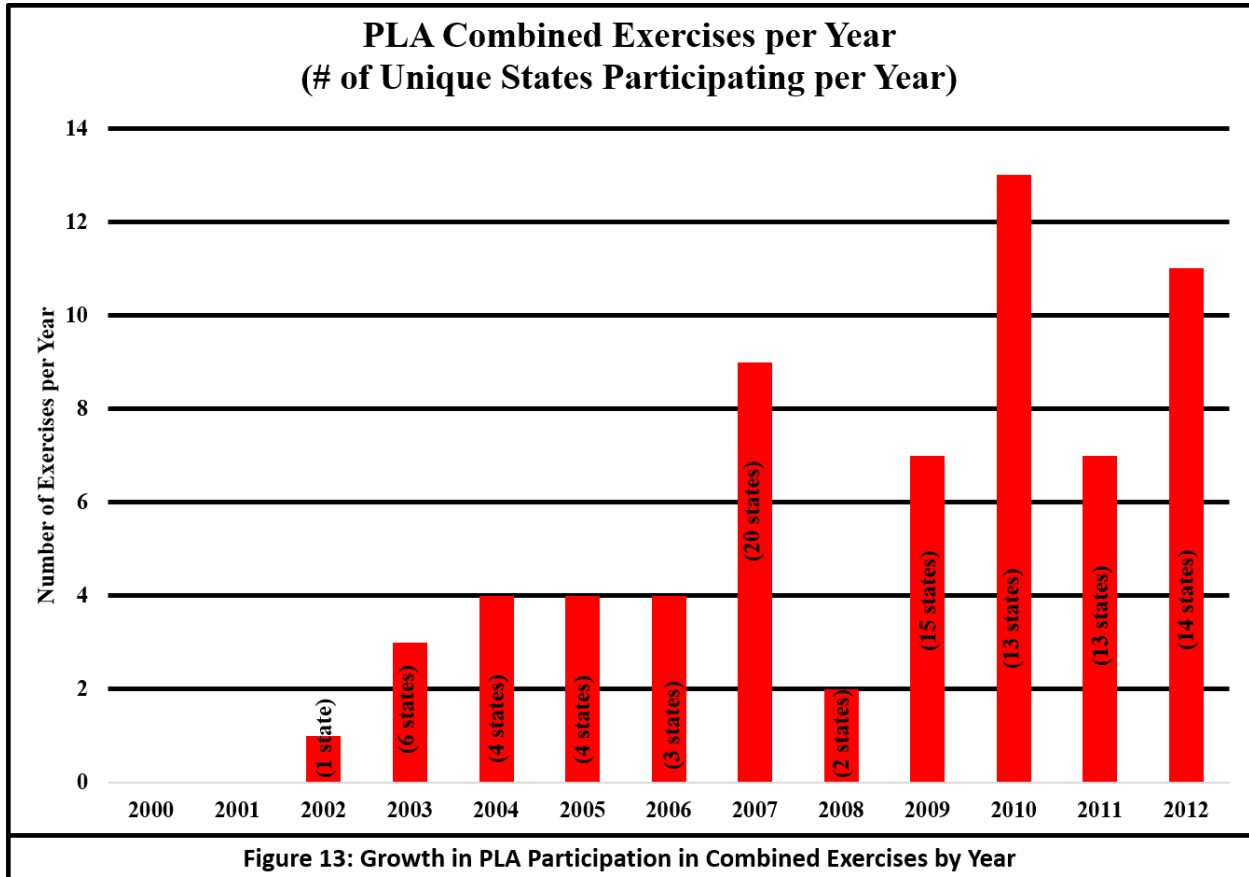
Consistent with the third premise regarding the maturation process of military diplomacy activity, and as chronicled by the defense white papers and their joint exercise appendices over the course of the next decade, China's combined exercise program developed rapidly, deepening and broadening significantly along several dimensions. Following the lead of the PLAA, the PLAN and PLAAF soon began participating in their own combined exercises with foreign counterparts. China's participation extended to multilateral as well as bilateral exercises. Exercise locations gradually shifted from taking place in and around China (2002-2003 exercises) to taking place in host countries further abroad (2004 to 2012). Exercises employed increasingly complicated scenarios, larger numbers of participants, and—in the case of the “Peace Mission” series of exercises with Russia and the other SCO states—included both combined and combined joint force conventional capabilities.⁹⁰ Beyond anti/counter-terrorism themes, stated combined exercise purposes soon included maritime search and rescue, special operations training, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, maritime anti-piracy, and unspecified “joint air force” exercises by the PLAAF.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 378, 382-383.

⁸⁹ Information Office of the State Council, 2011. *China's National Defense in 2010*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁹⁰ Blasko, "People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police Ground Exercises with Foreign Forces: 2002-2009," 388-389.

Figure 13 reflects two dimensions of the growth of combined exercises from 2002 to 2012. First, the overall increase in the number of annual combined exercise and training events is immediately evident. Following the single combined exercise in 2002, the number of annual



events grew steadily to a high of 13 events in 2010 and then dropping slightly to 11 events in 2012. Blasko attributes the anomalously low number of two combined exercise events in 2008 to the fact that Beijing was hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics and the PLA was more focused on domestic issues.⁹¹ To be sure, Beijing deployed hundreds of thousands of PLA troops domestically in response to a series of domestic crises even before the Olympics began, including severely disruptive snowstorms during the Chinese New Year holidays, the devastating Wenchuan Earthquake in Sichuan Province, and by rioting in ethnically Tibetan areas of the

⁹¹ Ibid., 377

country.⁹² As of the end of 2012, China had hosted or participated in a total of 65 combined exercise events. Second, the number of states China engaged in combined exercises also grew rapidly from one in 2002 to a total of 33 by the end of 2012. The numbers in parentheses in Figure 13 indicate the total number of unique states China engaged in each year—counting states only once even if they participated in more than one exercise with China in that year. In each succeeding year, China has engaged new states in its combined exercises while continuing to engage most of its previous exercise partners in either bilateral or multilateral events. Chinese media reporting and the author’s discussions with Kenneth Allen and US military officials having direct knowledge of the subject indicate that the growth trends have continued apace in the years since 2012, although China no longer reports the annual totals in its defense white papers. This decade-plus trend leads one to conclude that China’s embrace of combined exercises is here to stay.

Opening of PLA Exercises to Foreign Observers. Prior to participation in high profile military diplomacy activities like UNPKOs and combined exercises, the PLA first sent observers to evaluate the same types of activity conducted by other states. At the 2001 ASEAN Regional Forum Foreign Minister’s Conference, China declared its intent to gradually increase participation in various non-traditional security cooperation efforts by sending observers to attend regional multilateral military exercises.⁹³ As reported in the 2002 defense white paper, “In January 2002, Chinese officers observed the naval mine clearance exercise sponsored by Singapore in the West Pacific region. In April 2002, Chinese officers observed the submarine search and rescue exercise sponsored by Japan in the West Pacific region. In May 2002, China sent officers to observe the ‘Cobra Gold’ joint military exercises staged by the United States,

⁹² Information Office of the State Council, 2009. *China's National Defense in 2008*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

⁹³ Information Office of the State Council, *China's National Defense in 2002*.

Thailand and Singapore.” These observation missions allowed the PLA to gain understanding of not only the operational and tactical lessons of these exercises but also of how observation of exercises could be a useful military diplomacy tool for China. Allowing foreign military personnel to observe PLA exercises could allow the PLA to convey messages of both reassurance as well as deterrence to international audiences.⁹⁴

With the observation experiences of 2002 in hand, in October 2003 the PLA opened the Beijing Military Region’s major exercise, “Northern Sword” to observers from 15 foreign militaries for the first time.⁹⁵ This was followed in 2004 with invitations to even larger groups of observers—including foreign military attachés stationed in Beijing—to additional exercises conducted by the PLAN, another joint exercise conducted by Jinan Military Region, and a bilateral combined exercise between the PLAN and the Royal British Navy.⁹⁶ Since these early events, China has continued to both invite observers to PLA events and to send PLA observers to foreign-hosted events. Unfortunately, the defense white papers do not include appendices listing the exercises opened to foreign observation and white papers after 2004 no longer mention which exercises the PLA opened to foreign observation. PLA sources do occasionally report the presence of foreign observers at exercises but any attempt to compile a list of these exercises and the foreign observers present suffers from significant gaps caused by inconsistent reporting. To be sure, this information is tracked locally by foreign defense attaché offices who maintain not only contacts with the PLA but also compare notes with other foreign attaché personnel who may have received invitations to observe PLA exercises. Analysis of which states China invites to observe which exercises would provide interesting insights into the manner by which China uses exercise observation opportunities to either reassure or deter foreign states. For example,

⁹⁴ Allen and Holz, 2010, “Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics,” 453.

⁹⁵ Information Office of the State Council, *China's National Defense in 2004*.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

China invited military observers from SCO member states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and SCO observer states (Iran, India, and Pakistan) to observe the PLA and Russian combined joint exercise “Peace Mission 2005.”⁹⁷ Given the unprecedented size and complexity of this exercise, it was of high interest to the international community, most of whom were excluded from observing the event. This is not unusual, of course, when it comes to military exercises. Presumably, the inclusion of SCO-affiliated observers in the exercise served to reassure these states about their standing in the organization and the impressive military capabilities of their fellow SCO members. The point here is that Chinese perceptions regarding various members of the international community are partially revealed by the invitations or exclusions to observing China’s military exercises. Unfortunately, given the dearth of comprehensive data, such an analysis is not possible at this time.

Ministry of National Defense (MND) Information Office. China established the MND Information Office in May 2008 with the intent to “further military exchanges and cooperation, and enhance mutual military confidence.”⁹⁸ The establishment of this office included the appointment of a PLA spokesperson who would provide Chinese and international audiences “with important military information through regular or irregular press conferences and written statements.”⁹⁹ The spokesperson, Senior Colonel Hu Changming, made his press conference debut the same month to describe the PLA’s disaster relief efforts in response to the massive Wenchuan Earthquake that devastated large areas of Sichuan and neighboring provinces.¹⁰⁰ In August of 2009, the MND established its official website with the express purpose of improving

⁹⁷ Andrew Martin, 2005. *Power politics: China, Russia, and Peace Mission 2005*. October 27. Accessed October 25, 2015. <http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/2747.html>.

⁹⁸ Information Office of the State Council, 2009. *China's National Defense in 2008*, Chapter XIII, Subheading “Military Exchanges and Cooperation with Other Countries.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Allen and Holz, 2010, “Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics,” 438.

PLA transparency in the areas of “defense policy and army building.”¹⁰¹ According to Chinese media reporting, “The founding of the website is designed to let the outside world have a better perception of China's national defense policy, and help enhance foreign exchanges and cooperation...It will also display the fine image of the PLA as a mighty, civilized, and peaceful force and better promote the national defense and army modernization drive.”¹⁰² The website sports English and Chinese versions to reach both domestic and international audiences, although the content on each site varies in volume and detail with the Chinese site offering significantly more robust content.¹⁰³

Establishment of the MND Information Office with its accompanying web presence differs significantly from the other military diplomacy activities in that it is a unilateral endeavor by the PLA to promulgate messages of its own choosing. The process of formulating and framing these messages is internal to the PLA. This activity does increase transparency to a certain degree by providing access to a range of information on Chinese defense policy and security activity including an archive of Chinese defense policy reports and documents (the defense white papers cited in this dissertation), as well as accounts of unilateral and combined military exercises, military visits and exchanges, and security conference proceedings. Similar to most government-sponsored media entities, these messages portray Chinese security policy and PLA activity in a uniformly positive light. Furthermore, unlike other MD activities, this activity does not provide ready measurement of growth in new dimensions. The 2010 defense white paper simply observes, “Since the establishment of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) spokesperson system in 2008, seven press conferences have been held on such themes as

¹⁰¹ Xinhua, 2009. *China's Defense Ministry Launches Official Website*. August 20. Accessed October 20, 2015. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-08/20/content_8592527.htm.

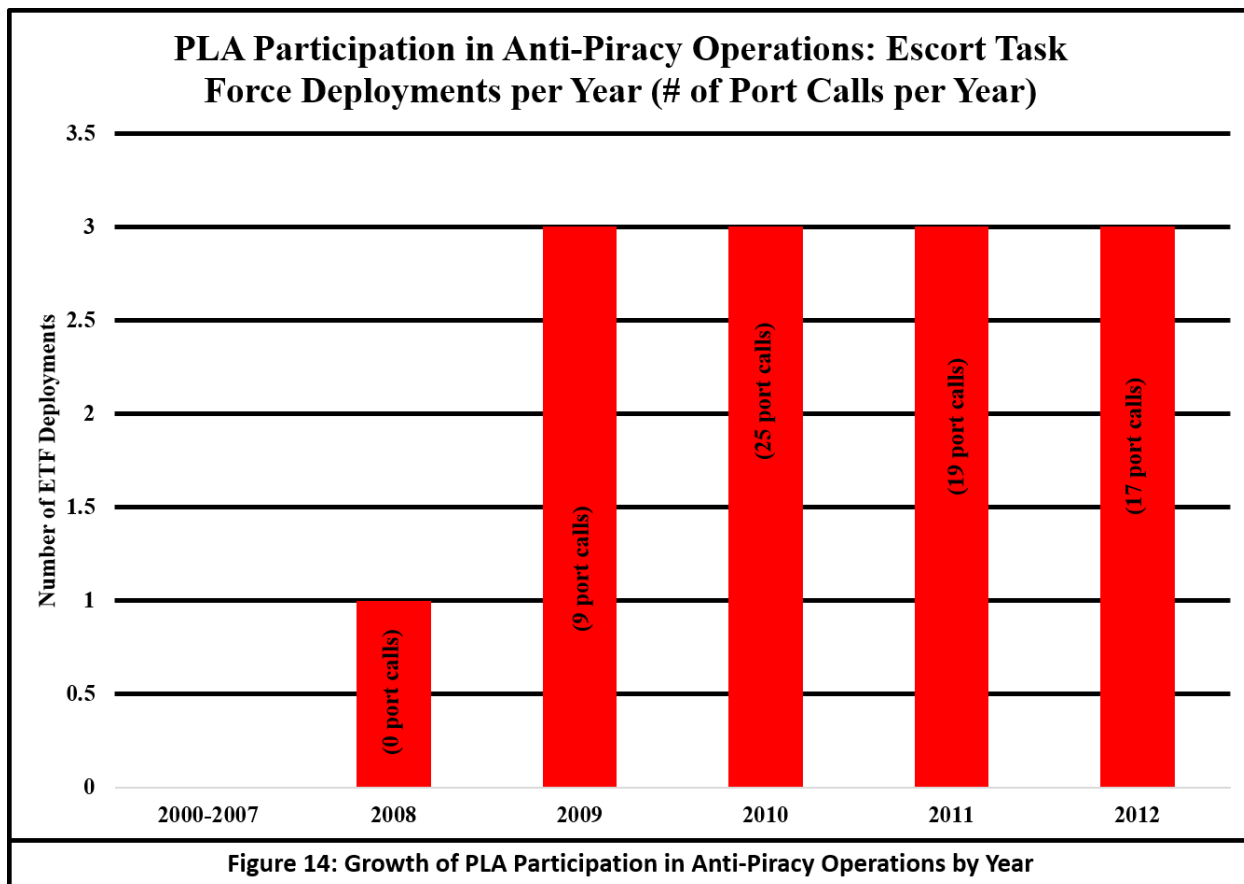
¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ The English version can be found at <http://eng.mod.gov.cn> and the Chinese version can be accessed at <http://www.mod.gov.cn>.

earthquake rescue and disaster relief, maritime escort and international humanitarian rescue, and important information has been released in a timely manner...The PLA provides timely information on the building of national defense and armed forces via such platforms as the MND website.” Seven press conferences in two and a half years does leave the impression that there is yet considerable room for growth in this activity. Indeed, questions of transparency continue to be a significant issue for outside individuals and states alike seeking to understand Chinese foreign and defense policy.¹⁰⁴ As we shall see in the research design section of the next chapter, lack of transparency into PLA military diplomacy decision-making will shape much of the research methodology of this dissertation.

Anti-Piracy Operations. China’s anti-piracy operations, conducted exclusively by the PLAN, are a logical extension of its port call MD activities. Having incorporated the lessons of long-distance maritime operations inherent in making international port calls, the PLAN was now ready to add a distinct operational purpose to its long-distance voyages. The symbolic component of the activity remains, but it is now matched more closely by the functional component. China dispatched its first-ever anti-piracy escort task force (ETF), consisting of three PLAN vessels, to conduct anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden on December 26, 2008. As Figure 14 indicates, from 2008 thru the end of 2012, 13 separate ETFs consisting of three ships each contributed to maritime escort and anti-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia. Each of these 13 ETFs have been “charged with safeguarding the security of Chinese ships and personnel passing through the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters, and the security of ships delivering humanitarian supplies for the World Food Program and other international

¹⁰⁴ Isaac Stone Fish, 2014. *The Black Box of China's Military*. March 8. Accessed October 20, 2015. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/08/the-black-box-of-chinas-military/>.



organizations, and shelter pass-by [sic] foreign vessels as much as possible.”¹⁰⁵ The 2012 defense white paper further asserts that such deployments are part of China’s international obligations to uphold international peace and security and the safety of sea lines of communication (SLOCs).¹⁰⁶ Similar to the PLA’s earlier port calls, these anti-piracy operations also provide invaluable experience for the PLAN in many aspects of maritime operations including navigation, logistics, command and control, multinational cooperation, etc..¹⁰⁷ However, as Andrew Erickson and Austin Strange of the US Naval War College observe,

¹⁰⁵ Information Office of the State Council, 2011. *China’s National Defense in 2010*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China.

¹⁰⁶ Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China.

¹⁰⁷ Andrew S. Erickson and Austin M. Strange, 2013. *No Substitute for Experience: Chinese Antipiracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden*. China Maritime Study, China Maritime Studies Institute, Newport: US Naval War College, 23-24.

“Perhaps the missions’ greatest operational value is forcing personnel to face unscripted, unpredictable situations—the most intense operational experience presently available to China’s Navy.”¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that every ETF is sourced from each of the PLAN’s three major fleets in rotation, allowing the lessons of these deployments to be distributed not only among each of the major fleets, but also the crews of the 34 ships participating in these operations.¹⁰⁹

PLAN anti-piracy operations are similar to UNPKOs in that they allow China to operate internationally under UN sanction in response to a shared international security threat. The 2010 defense white paper was careful to note that China’s ETF missions were being conducted “in line with relevant UN resolutions.” These resolutions authorized UN member states to form an anti-piracy task force in response to a surge of high profile and costly acts of piracy by armed Somali sea-faring militias. The term “in line” used in the white paper appears to have been chosen specifically because the PLAN ETFs operate independently of the combined task force formed by the US and other participating states.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the defense white papers are quick to point out that the ETFs have conducted joint escorts with ships from other participating navies, participated in information sharing initiatives, held joint anti-piracy drills, and exchanged shipboard observers and other visitors with foreign naval forces.¹¹¹ Indeed, despite their independence, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has praised China’s anti-piracy ETF operations, welcoming them as a reflection of “China’s important role in international affairs.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Erickson and Strange, 2013. *No Substitute for Experience*, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 27. See also, Information Office of the State Council. 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*, section IV, subheading “Protecting Overseas Interests.”

¹¹⁰ Christopher D. Yung, Ross Rustici, Isaac Kardon, and Joshua Wiseman. 2010. *China's Out of Area Naval Operations: Case Studies, Trajectories, Obstacles, and Potential Solutions*. China Strategic Perspectives, Institute for National Strategic Studies, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 5.

¹¹¹ Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

¹¹² Jinping Cao and Xiaoliang Mo, 2012. *Review of Chinese Navy's escort missions in Gulf of Aden in past 4 years*. December 27. Accessed October 7, 2015. <http://en.people.cn/90786/8072251.html>.

The deployments of China's anti-piracy ETFs—each lasting 4-6 months in duration—have overlapped to ensure that PLAN vessels maintain a continuous presence in the Gulf of Aden area of operations. Nevertheless, in an indication of the further maturation of Beijing's perspectives regarding the usefulness of military diplomacy, arriving and departing ETF's conduct port calls enroute to their anti-piracy escort stations or on the way back to their homeports. These port calls typically serve one or more of three purposes; "friendly visits," "joint drills," and "replenish/overhaul" requirements.¹¹³ This means that each ETF is able to enhance the MD utility of its respective deployment, not only fulfilling its obligations to supporting international security in general, but also building relationships with specific states. For their work, Erickson and Strange surveyed an extensive range of Chinese media reporting to compile a listing of ETF port calls not chronicled in the defense white papers. Their compilation reveals that ETF vessels visited ports in no less than 29 states between 2008 and 2012.¹¹⁴ Ports in Djibouti, Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka served as the locations for all ETF replenish/overhaul operations. Friendly visits were made to 27 states including states as far afield as Bulgaria, Ukraine, Italy, Israel, and South Africa. Joint drills (combined exercises) were conducted in conjunction with friendly visits to Italy, Pakistan, Singapore, Tanzania, and Thailand. As far as the results of their primary anti-piracy mission, by the end of 2012 China reports that since commencement of operations in 2008, the PLAN has been responsible for "escorting 4,984 ships in 532 batches. Among them, 1,510 were Chinese mainland ships, 940 Hong Kong ships, 74 Taiwan ships and one Macao ship. The task forces also rescued two Chinese ships from pirates who had boarded them and 22 which were being chased by

¹¹³ Andrew S. Erickson and Austin M. Strange, 2013. *No Substitute for Experience: Chinese Antipiracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden*. China Maritime Study, China Maritime Studies Institute, Newport: US Naval War College.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

pirates.”¹¹⁵ China’s anti-piracy operations through the present have continued at the same pace depicted in Figure 12.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations. The newest addition to China’s military diplomacy activities are HA/DR operations, born of the PLA’s long-standing role in responding to China’s domestic natural disasters. These operations consist of a range of actions including delivery of aid supplies and disaster relief personnel following natural disasters, search and rescue operations, participation in combined training with local military medical personnel, and goodwill medical assistance visits in which PLA medical teams provide treatment to underserved host nation populations. The 1998 defense white paper states, “China has a vast territory, and local natural disasters are frequent. Whenever a natural disaster occurs, the armed forces are always in the forefront of efforts to protect the people’s lives and save the state and people’s property. Over the past two decades they have participated in emergency rescues and disaster reliefs on more than 100,000 occasions.”¹¹⁶ In mobilizing for domestic disaster relief, the PLA works in partnership with the People’s Armed Police (PAP), the primary paramilitary organization charged with maintaining China’s domestic security and social stability. However, because of the PLA’s readily accessible manpower and materiel resources, and because of its enduring role as a guarantor of the CCP’s ruling authority, it too has been frequently deployed in response to domestic natural disaster crises. Indeed, scholar Taylor Fravel of MIT suggests PLA deployments for domestic disaster relief are a key component of the CCP’s strategy for promoting social stability and addressing discontent that might otherwise

¹¹⁵ Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*.

¹¹⁶ Information Office of the State Council, 1998. *China's National Defense in 1998*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

threaten its ruling authority.¹¹⁷ Deployments of PLA troops in response to natural disasters such as the afore-mentioned Chinese New Year snowstorm and the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008 received extensive positive coverage in state media, ostensibly bolstering public perceptions of CCP competence and concern for public welfare.¹¹⁸

The PLA's experience in responding to domestic natural disasters has also yielded lessons and capabilities pertinent to its primary mission of national defense. Professor Harold Tanner from North Texas University writes, "...Emergency response and disaster relief operations involve sudden deployment in challenging environmental conditions (flood, extreme cold, earthquake zones, fire zones, and scenes of chemical spills, for example). Response often requires rapid decision-making under difficult circumstances. Psychological pressure can be intense for officers and, perhaps more so, for young soldiers dealing with civilian casualties during disaster rescue operations."¹¹⁹ Tanner cites multiple Chinese sources who observe that domestic DR operations provide useful lessons for the PLA in rapid mobility and long-distance logistical operations, transportation infrastructure repair, civil-military coordination, unit organization, joint operations, and likely PLA emergency response scenarios in case of war.¹²⁰

The lessons gleaned by the PLA from its domestic HA/DR operations were readily, if somewhat hesitantly, exportable to states in the region and beyond that share many of China's geologic and climatic challenges. The first mention in the defense white papers of disaster relief as a military diplomacy activity is made in 1998 in reference to topics discussed at various ASEAN Regional Forum discussions between foreign ministers and between other high-ranking

¹¹⁷ Taylor M. Fravel, 2011. "Economic Growth, Regime Insecurity, and Military Strategy: Explaining the Rise of Non-Combat Operations in China." *Asian Security* 7 (3): 177-200.

¹¹⁸ Harold M. Tanner, 2010. "The People's Liberation Army and China's Internal Security Challenges." In *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of the PLA*, edited by Roy Kamphausen, David Lai and Andrew Scobell, 237-294. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 246-247.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 237-238.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 248-250.

defense officials—part of the strategic dialogue MD activity discussed earlier in this section.¹²¹ These officials were discussing disaster relief in the context of military confidence-building measures and ways to promote interstate relations between ARF members. This is consistent with the third premise regarding the evolutionary nature of military diplomacy—the universally lauded application of military capabilities to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief makes this MD activity a noncontroversial, and therefore relatively easy, starting point for discussants seeking ways to improve security cooperation.

In 2002, the PLAAF made its first-ever air delivery of relief supplies to neighboring Afghanistan following a serious earthquake, but this operation did not extend past the airport, leaving distribution of the delivered supplies to host nation authorities and other aid organizations. The 2006 defense white paper mentions PLA participation in international HA/DR operations but provides very little detail beyond saying that the PLA “sent personnel to join specialized rescue teams, provided equipment, and assisted in mission-oriented training.” Holz and Allen indicate that PLA participation in international HA/DR operations at that time remained modest, noting, “The PLA was largely an observer to the tsunami response in Southeast Asia in 2004, choosing not to deploy abroad, delivering donated supplies by civilian charter aircraft, and sending only a handful of military and civilian personnel to aid in relief efforts.”¹²² The 2008 defense white paper makes more mention of disaster relief than any previous paper, citing natural disasters as a significant non-traditional security threat facing all nations, but focusing reporting on the massive deployment of PLA and PAP personnel in response to domestic natural disasters that year. One does get a sense from the frequent mention

¹²¹ Information Office of the State Council, 1998. *China's National Defense in 1998*.

¹²² Holz and Allen, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 456.

of disaster relief as a major mission of the PLA that more robust international assistance would soon be forthcoming.

Sure enough, the 2010 defense white paper provided the first accounting of international PLA HA/DR operations with its own dedicated appendix of international disaster relief activities. In this paper, Beijing declared, “China's armed forces consider it an obligation to take part in international disaster relief operations organized by the government, and to fulfill international humanitarian obligations.”¹²³ As Figure 15 captures, China participated in four HA/DR operations in 2009 with four different countries.¹²⁴ The joint humanitarian medical rescue mission to Gabon that year was a first in that it was not in response to a natural disaster. Instead, some 63 PLA medical and health personnel first participated in a combined disaster relief exercise with their Gabon military counterparts, but then concluded the engagement with a humanitarian assistance mission that provided a range of medical treatment—including some 300 surgical procedures—to more than 18,000 local Gabonese.¹²⁵ In 2010, the purpose-built PLAN hospital ship *Peace Ark* [*Heping Fangzhou*] embarked on the first-ever PLAN humanitarian assistance mission, sailing to five countries in Africa and South Asia, and treating more than 15,500 people during the course of these port-calls.¹²⁶ This mission was followed in 2011 with a three-month deployment of the *Peace Ark* to the Caribbean—visiting Cuba, Jamaica,

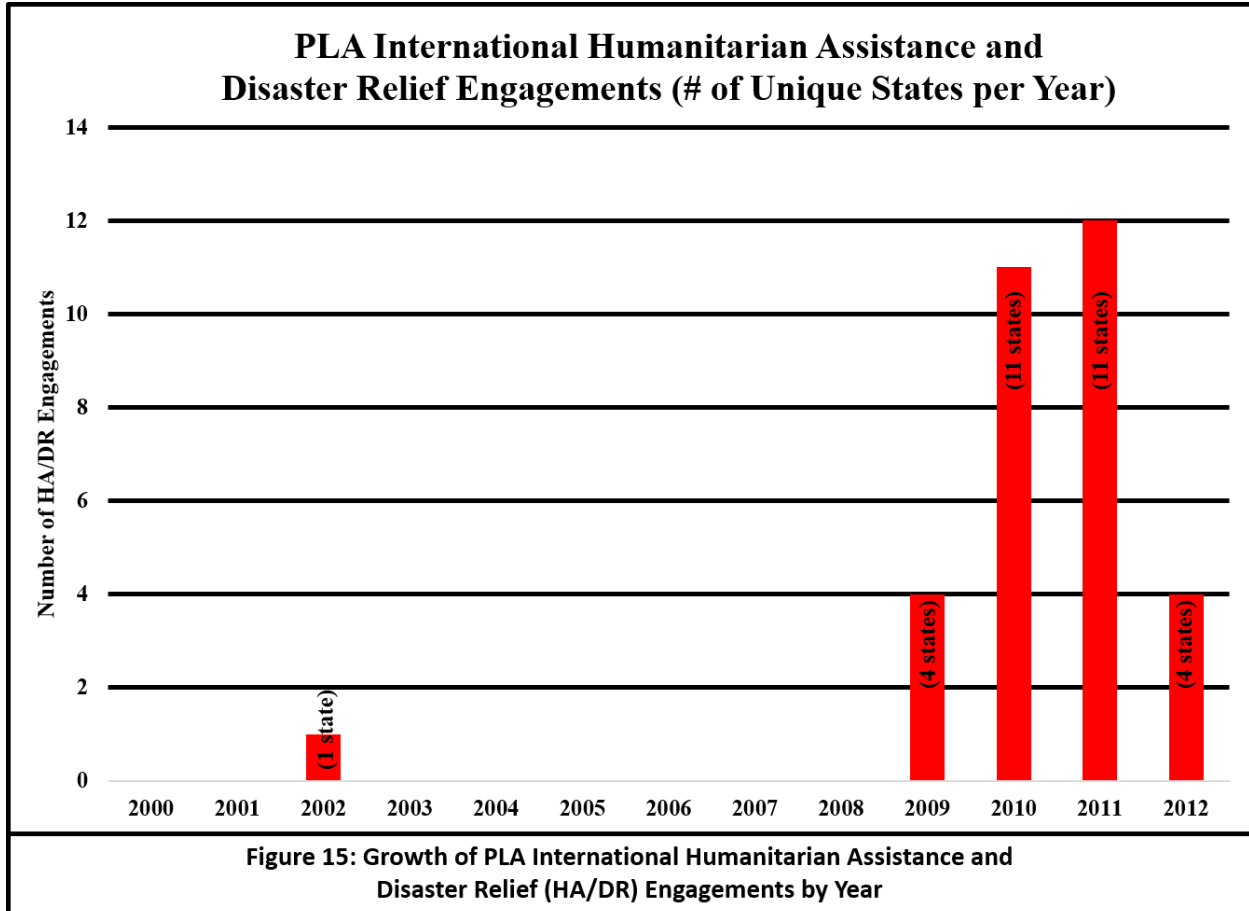
¹²³ Information Office of the State Council, 2011. *China's National Defense in 2010*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

¹²⁴ One should note that the accounting of PLA HA/DR activity is somewhat lacking in the 2010 and 2012 white paper appendices because those appendices only include disaster relief operations, not humanitarian assistance operations conducted on their own accord or as part of combined exercises. Thus, the HA/DR exercise with Gabon in 2009 was actually listed under the combined exercise appendix of the 2010 defense white paper and the *Peace Ark* humanitarian missions are not included in the appendices at all.

¹²⁵ Blasko, "People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police Ground Exercises with Foreign Forces: 2002-2009," 400.

¹²⁶ Andrew Erickson, 2011, "PLAN Hospital Ship 'Peace Ark' Embarks on 3-month Medical Service Mission in Caribbean," *AndrewErickson.com*, September 16, Accessed October 13, 2013, <http://www.andrewerickson.com/2011/09/plan-hospital-ship-peace-ark-embarks-on-3-month-navy-medical-service-mission-in-caribbean/>. For the purposes of Figure 13, each port call is counted as a separate HA operation even though the visits took place over the course of a single *Peace Ark* cruise.

Trinidad and Tobago, and Costa Rica—demonstrating the expanding reach of the PLA’s military



diplomacy into an area still deemed to be the US’ backyard.¹²⁷ By the end of 2012, every major service branch of the PLA had participated in multiple HA/DR operations to a total of 27 unique states on four continents. Of the states China engaged more than once, the PLA conducted HA/DR operations in Pakistan four times, Cuba and Thailand twice each, while it has participated in HA/DR-focused exercises with Australia twice.

Given the benign—even laudable—nature of this type of military diplomacy activity, combined with the constant supply of natural disasters and disaster-prone developing nations requiring assistance, this activity maintains significant growth potential. HA/DR operations provide the PLA with a justifiable rationale for its growing international presence while at the

¹²⁷ Ibid.

same time supporting the specific bilateral relationship with the states it so engages. Beyond the functional purposes of providing humanitarian assistance, the symbolic value of the PLA responding to international natural disasters has positive ramifications for both international and domestic audiences. International audiences may feel reassured that the PLA is a welcome presence on the international security scene. Domestic audiences may feel pride that China is playing an important role as a net contributor of aid and is no longer a backward and poor nation. Finally, although HA/DR operations are typically limited to a subset of states with socio-economic circumstances requiring outside assistance when disaster strikes, in the form of HA/DR combined exercises, it is a viable manner of engaging more developed states as well. The PLA has engaged both the US and Australian armed forces in this way.

“Military Assistance,” “Military Trade” and “Military Technology Cooperation.”

“Military assistance,” “military trade,” and “military technology cooperation” all pertain to the sale or grant of weapons, military materiel, or military services including training as well as military technology cooperation programs with other states.¹²⁸ This military diplomacy activity will be the last activity discussed in this section. Examination of weapon sales as a Chinese MD activity is made more complicated by its dynamic history and opaque practices, which results in some question regarding its place on the list of Chinese MD activities.¹²⁹

Major General Xiao Tianliang of the PLA’s National Defense University chronicles China’s history of weapons sales as part of military diplomacy in his edited book, *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao [Military Diplomacy of New China]*. During the 1950’s, China was almost wholly dependent upon the Soviet Union for the acquisition of advanced weaponry including

¹²⁸ Xiao, Ma, and Li, 2011. *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao [Military Diplomacy of New China]*. 201-212.

¹²⁹ “Weapons sales” will be used as shorthand to represent all three of these activities because they all revolve around similar activity—the development and proliferation of weapons and training on their use.

aircraft and navy vessels.¹³⁰ This reliance upon the Soviet Union led to a robust exchange of military personnel to not only facilitate sales, but also to establish and conduct training programs on the newly acquired weaponry, as well as to facilitate the development of China's own military industrial capabilities. Following the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960's, Chinese policy was to support revolutionary and newly independent countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America with grants of military weapons, equipment, and training with the added economic and security purpose of supporting China's own weapons production industries.¹³¹ Recipients of this aid included Vietnam, Laos, Albania, North Korea, Pakistan, Algeria, and Tanzania among others.¹³² During the same decade, roughly 1500 PLA experts took part in training missions to more than 25 countries while those countries sent more than 5000 of their personnel to train in China.¹³³ During the 1970s, China continued to provide military aid to other third world states, but this aid became less ideologically driven and more pragmatic. Breakthroughs in relationships with the US and other western countries gradually led to small-scale purchases of western military equipment—including military helicopters—and training in the 1980s.¹³⁴ Repaired relations with Russia and the post-Tiananmen US-led arms embargo led China to return to Russia for advanced weaponry in the 1990s, a relationship that continues to the present even as Chinese defense industries work to improve the technological quality of their own products.¹³⁵ The exchange of military experts with foreign states to conduct and to receive training continues at present under the MD activity of “functional and educational military exchanges” with little more detailed information on the specifics of the activity.

¹³⁰ Xiao, Ma, and Li, 2011. *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao [Military Diplomacy of New China]*. 207.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 65-66. See also Mark Bromley, Mathieu Duchatel, and Paul Holtom, 2013. *China's Exports of Small Arms and Light Weapons*. SIPRI Policy Paper, Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 36-37.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 66.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 88-90, 207-208.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

The quest for advanced weaponry historically led China to enter into military technology cooperation agreements with a range of countries including the Soviet Union from 1949 through 1960, the US and other western countries during the 1980s, and then with Russia, Egypt, Pakistan and others since 1990.¹³⁶ As introduced in the previous section, the intensity of certain military diplomacy activity between states, weapons sales and military technology cooperation in this example, can reveal perceptions regarding the overall relations between them. In support of this premise, Major General Xiao observes, “In reality, high technology military cooperation can often only be conducted between states with a high degree of mutual strategic trust. Historically, New China conducted highly effective military technology cooperation with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, with the US in the 1980s, and with Russia in the 1990s and early twenty-first century. In general, the achievements of China’s military technology cooperation with the Soviet Union and Russia are far greater than those with the US, and this reflects the historically higher trust between China and the Soviet Union or China and Russia than between China and the US.”¹³⁷

Each of the defense white papers makes significant mention of defense technology cooperation, but most of the narrative focus is on development of civilian and dual-use technologies and the national economic benefits thus derived. White paper reporting remains opaque when it comes to specific defense technologies and cooperative foreign partnerships. As a representative example, the 2004 white paper merely states, “China's defense-related science, technology and industry takes an active part in international exchanges and cooperation and opens wider to foreign countries...China attaches great importance to developing cooperation in defense technology with friendly countries, and promotes exchanges of and cooperation in defense technology in the international industrial community.”

¹³⁶ Ibid, 208-212.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 209. Author’s own translation.

Until the late 1990s, the PLA operated their own weapons export business ventures authorized to market major weapons to overseas buyers. Jiang Zemin's defense reforms in the late 1990s required the PLA to divest itself of these business ventures, which the PLA dutifully did, maintaining only the arms export company Poly Technologies that continues to sell small arms and light weapons to foreign buyers.¹³⁸ Although China does not disclose export authorization or delivery information for its exports of small arms and light weapons, information from 2006 to 2010 indicates that Chinese enterprises (not necessarily the PLA) sold small arms and light weapons to some 46 states, the majority of them in Africa.¹³⁹ From 2002 to 2008, the Commission for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND) oversaw exports of major weapons systems by the eleven state-owned enterprises manufacturing them. In 2008, COSTIND was replaced by the State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND).¹⁴⁰ When adjudicating export licenses for major weapons sales by any of the defense enterprises, SASTIND consults the PLA—and occasionally the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—regarding the advisability of approving the export license.¹⁴¹ However, SASTIND's authority extends only to commercial sales of major weapons systems. The PLA maintains full discretion over gifts, leases, and loans of military equipment as part of its military assistance programs, but it does not release that information to the public.¹⁴²

Writing in 2010, Holz and Allen did not include weapons sales in their listing of PLA MD activities. They explain, "Based on the limited data available, the PLA is no longer directly involved in the sale of major weapon systems. The PLA's role in arms sales appears to be

¹³⁸ Holz and Allen, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 457-458. See also Jean-Pierre Cabestan, 2009. "China's Foreign- and Security-policy Decision-making Processes Under Hu Jintao." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 38 (3): 90.

¹³⁹ Mark Bromley, Mathieu Duchatel, and Paul Holtom, 2013. *China's Exports of Small Arms and Light Weapons*. SIPRI Policy Paper, Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, vii, 1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 25.

limited to training foreign militaries to use weapons once they have been purchased from Chinese defense conglomerates."¹⁴³ Presumably, any weapons training conducted by the PLA for foreign military personnel takes place under the auspices of “functional and educational military exchanges,” although that MD activity itself remains only vaguely described in China’s defense white papers, with no specific mention of weapons training for foreign military personnel. Indeed, none of the white papers explicitly mentions weapons sales, training on sold weapons, or military assistance in the form of weapons or other materiel grants at all until the 2008 and 2010 papers included appendices entitled “Imports and Exports of Seven Major Types of Conventional Arms of the PRC.”¹⁴⁴ The seven major types of weapons are battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers. In the three years covered by the appendices, the only major weapons not transferred by China to other states have been warships and attack helicopters. This indicates that the PLAA and the PLAAF are the service branches conducting the training of foreign personnel on weapons sold. One may reasonably conclude that when advanced Chinese naval vessels begin to be sold abroad, the PLAN will join this MD activity as well. As Chinese defense industries continue to improve the quality and quantity of their products, it is possible that MD activities related to weapons transfers and training will grow commensurate with the demand for these products. When that happens, it is also likely that these MD activities will mature to become a more formal aspect of China’s overall military diplomacy practices. It is also likely that China’s reliance on foreign suppliers of advanced weapons will decrease as well.

¹⁴³ Holz and Allen, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics," 457.

¹⁴⁴ Reporting on the sales of these seven major weapons types is a requirement for states complying with the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

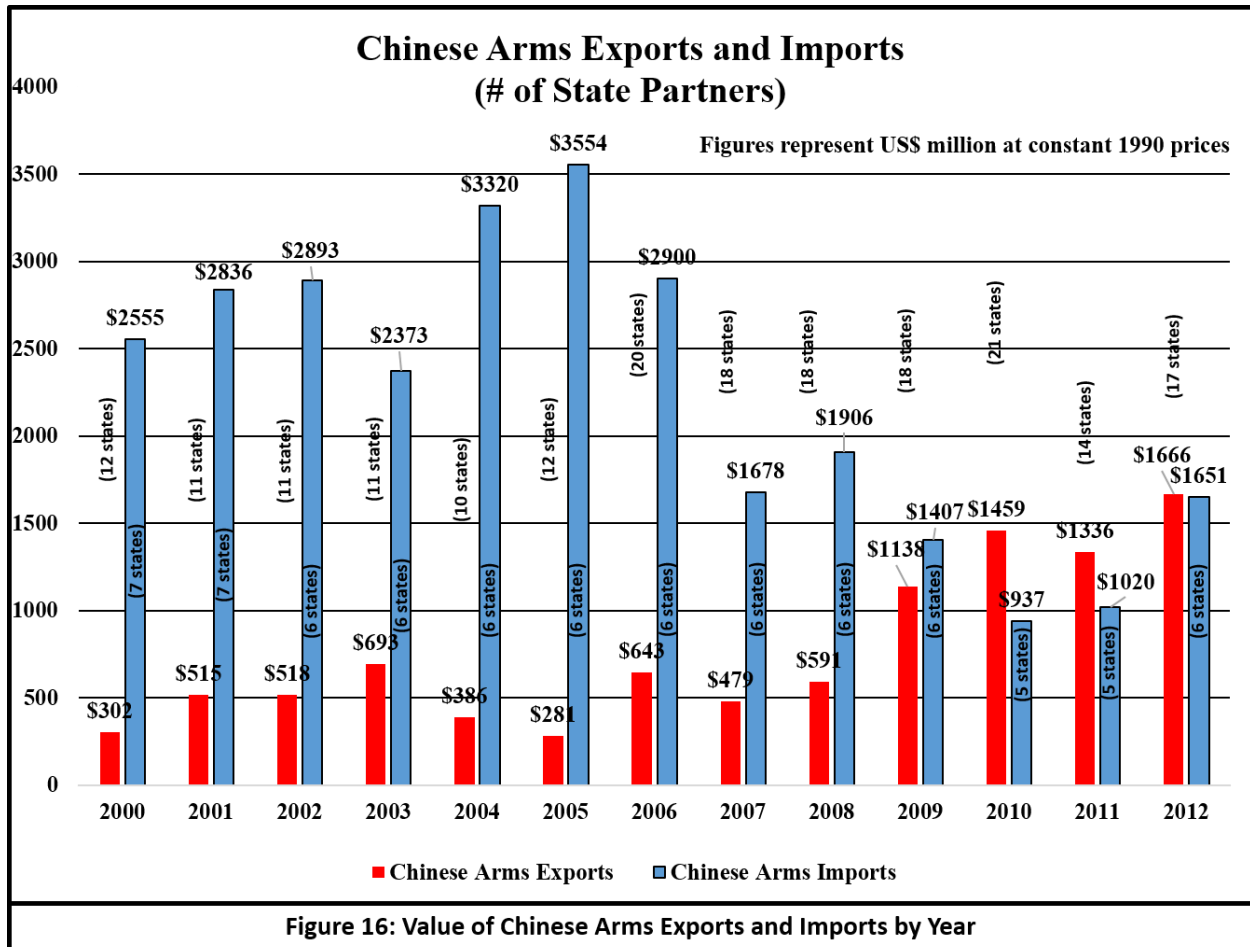
Although the specifics of Chinese weapons sales remain opaque, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has compiled enough information to provide a general outline of Chinese arms transfers, from which we can begin to surmise the nature of the military diplomacy activity that surely occurs to support such sales. The information in Figure 14 comes from SIPRI's Arms Transfers Database.¹⁴⁵ It clearly depicts that Chinese arms transfers to other states quintupled from the year 2000--when it transferred 302 million US\$ worth of arms to some twelve states--to the year 2012, when it transferred 1.66 billion US\$ worth of arms to 17 states. These transfers would have ostensibly included various levels of involvement by defense attaché offices, high-level visit discussions, or functional and educational military exchanges for training (depending on the technical level of the weapons involved). From 2000 to 2005, China transferred weapons to an average of eleven states each year, but in the period from 2006 to 2012, that average increased to some 18 states each year. Of the 50 states to which China transferred weapons during the 2000-2012 period, the most consistent state recipients of weapons included Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Venezuela.¹⁴⁶

Figure 14 not only illustrates the growth of exports from 2000 to 2012, but also the decline of arms imports during the same period. Indeed, this illustrates that the phenomenon described two paragraphs ago may already be starting to occur. As Chinese defense industries mature, China not only becomes less reliant on foreign suppliers but it can increasingly compete in the international arms market. China's crossover from being a net importer to being a net exporter of weapons took place in 2010 and has continued since that year. SIPRI data indicates that China was the third largest weapons exporter in 2012, up from eighth place in 2000,

¹⁴⁵ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015. *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database*. November 5. Accessed November 5, 2015. <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

although it still lagged far behind the US and Russia, numbers one and two respectively.¹⁴⁷ As far as weapons imports, Russia is by far the largest supplier of weapons to China, but as Figure 16 indicates, the overall level of imports in 2012 is less than half of what it was in 2005. This



leads one to conclude that while the supporting military diplomacy for these sales remains robust, it occurs at a decreased activity level from earlier years.

This now concludes the overview of the growth of China’s military diplomacy. Our examination of these twelve practices demonstrates that during the decade from roughly 2002 to 2012, Chinese MD activity flourished as reflected by basic measurements of the variety of MD activities, the frequency of activity, the numbers of personnel engaged in MD, and the numbers of states China engages in military diplomacy. With this growth established, we now turn to

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Chapter Two for a review of the existing literature on Chinese military diplomacy to learn what explanations it offers for the phenomenon followed by presentation of the dissertation research design for use in chapters three and four of this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO:

Literature Review, Research Methodology, and Research Design

Literature Review

The sources of information cited in the preceding chapter have already introduced much of the existing literature on the topic of military diplomacy in general, and aspects of Chinese military diplomacy in particular. The subsequent chapters of this dissertation will introduce additional literature in support of the perspectives by which we will further analyze the reasons for the growth of Chinese military diplomacy. Because of this, the literature review here focuses primarily on the explanations found in official and scholarly sources that most directly answer aspects of the central question of this dissertation, namely, “how do we explain the growth of Chinese military diplomacy from 2002 to 2012?” In a common sense manner, it behooves us to begin by seeking the answers to this question from authoritative and scholarly sources originating from the state whose behavior this dissertation analyzes: what do Chinese sources say?

As introduced, the primary sources of information on Chinese military diplomacy activity are the biennial defense white papers issued by the Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China and published on-line at various Chinese government and media websites including the Ministry of National Defense website.¹⁴⁸ These white papers present China’s official assessment of the international security environment and describe, in general terms, China’s security policy. Beginning with the first paper in 1998, subsequent editions have

¹⁴⁸ China’s National Defense White Papers can be found on the Ministry of National Defense English language portal at <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/WhitePapers/index.htm> as well as on the English-language website belonging to the Information Office of the State Council at <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/index.htm>. The posting of these documents is somewhat haphazard in that the documents posted are sometimes incomplete versions, lacking some or all of the appendices for each document. Visitors to these sites will find the MND website hosts the most complete versions of the documents, including the various appendices to each paper.

maintained a consistent rhetoric describing how China's MD activity supports its overall foreign policy. As a representative sample of this rhetoric, *China's National Defense in 2010* declares:

China unswervingly pursues an independent foreign policy of peace and promotes friendly cooperation with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. China conducts military exchanges with other countries following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, develops cooperative military relations that are non-aligned, non-confrontational and not directed against any third party, and promotes the establishment of just and effective collective security mechanisms and military confidence-building mechanisms. China adheres to the concepts of openness, pragmatism and cooperation, expands its participation in international security cooperation, strengthens strategic coordination and consultation with major powers and neighboring countries, enhances military exchanges and cooperation with developing countries, and takes part in UN peace-keeping operations, maritime escort, international counter-terrorism cooperation, and disaster relief operations.¹⁴⁹

The idea of “friendly cooperation with all countries” and “military relations that are non-aligned, non-confrontational and not directed against any third party” are recurring themes in each of the white papers. In keeping with these statements of benign intent, the papers also downplay fears regarding China's strategic intent. For example, the 1998 defense white paper declared, “China does not seek hegemonism, nor does it seek military blocs or military expansion. China does not station any troops or set up any military bases in any foreign country.” All subsequent papers through the 2012 edition also include similar reassurances.

These recurring statements are consistent with the premises in Chapter One regarding the spectrum of purposes for military diplomacy (see Figure 2, page 12). Beijing recognizes the usefulness of military diplomacy for the purposes of cooperation in facing shared security concerns, reassuring other states of its benign intentions, and even attempts to promote perceptions of amity with partner states. Notably absent in the white papers is language that

¹⁴⁹ Information Office of the State Council, 2011. *China's National Defense in 2010*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

indicates the use of military diplomacy for deterrence purposes, although as we shall see, other sources indicate deterrence is also a purpose.

The most directly stated purposes for China's military diplomacy activity come in relation to China's military modernization efforts. The 1998 white paper states, "As an important component of China's overall diplomacy, China's foreign military contacts are subordinate to and serve the modernization of national defense and the armed forces." This relationship between modernization and military diplomacy is repeated again in the 2000 defense white paper that prescribes, "Military diplomacy should serve the state's overall diplomacy and the modernization of national defense and the armed forces." The 2004 defense white paper includes, for the first time, military exchanges and cooperation on the list of "China's basic goals and tasks in maintaining national security." It declares, "The PLA learns from and draws on the valuable experience of foreign armed forces, and introduces, on a selective basis, technologically advanced equipment and better management expertise from abroad to advance the modernization of the Chinese armed forces." The direct references to military diplomacy in support of military modernization end here, but modernization remains a core theme of all subsequent white papers. The 2010 defense white paper mentions escort operations in the Gulf of Aden, combined exercises, and HA/DR operations under the heading of "Building a Modern Logistics System" while escort missions, counter-terrorism exercises, and HA/DR operations are again mentioned under the heading of "Development of New and High-Tech Weaponry and Equipment." Given these references, the PLA clearly recognizes the utilitarian benefits of MD to its modernization efforts.

The defense white papers also include obliquely understood purposes of military diplomacy along the lines of the "friendship and cooperation" and "mutual benefit" rhetoric

described above. The foreword to the 2002 white paper identifies a core Chinese strategic objective when it notes, “A developing China needs a peaceful international environment and a favorable climate in [sic] its periphery.” Beijing recognizes that peace favors its economic development. At the same time, all white papers describe an uncertain security environment that includes both traditional and nontraditional security threats. Perhaps the most often repeated security concern revolves around US efforts to strengthen its regional alliances—although the white papers often coyly refrain from naming the US outright. According to the 1998 paper, “Hegemonism and power politics remain the main source of threats to world peace and stability; cold war mentality and its influence still have a certain currency, and the enlargement of military blocs and the strengthening of military alliances have added factors of instability to international security.” Fourteen years later, the 2012 paper again cites the same concern, “Some country has strengthened its Asia-Pacific military alliances, expanded its military presence in the region, and frequently makes the situation there tenuous.” In juxtaposition to Chinese perceptions of unhelpful US actions in the region:

China's armed forces are the initiator and facilitator of, and participant in international security cooperation. They uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, conduct all-round military exchanges with other countries, and develop cooperative military relations that are non-aligned, non-confrontational and not directed against any third party. They promote the establishment of just and effective collective security mechanisms and military confidence-building mechanisms. Bearing in mind the concept of openness, pragmatism and cooperation, China's armed forces increase their interactions and cooperation with other armed forces, and intensify cooperation on confidence-building measures (CBMs) in border areas. China's armed forces work to promote dialogue and cooperation on maritime security; participate in UN peacekeeping missions, international counter-terrorism cooperation, international merchant shipping protection and disaster relief operations; conduct joint exercises and training with foreign counterparts; conscientiously assume their due international responsibilities; and play an active role in maintaining world peace, security and stability.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Thus, China sees its military diplomacy fulfilling multiple purposes: providing regional states with an alternative approach to that of the US alliance system, one that contributes to regional cooperation and confidence-building, while still addressing common security issues.

Finally, the white papers—especially those from 2008 and onward—allow us to identify a relationship between military diplomacy and China’s growing overseas interests. The 2008 paper observes, “Struggles for strategic resources, strategic locations and strategic dominance have intensified.” For the first time, the 2012 white paper includes an entire subsection on the need for China to protect its overseas interests, declaring, “With the gradual integration of China's economy into the world economic system, overseas interests have become an integral component of China's national interests. Security issues are increasingly prominent, involving overseas energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs), and Chinese nationals and legal persons overseas. Vessel protection at sea, evacuation of Chinese nationals overseas, and emergency rescue have become important ways and means for the PLA to safeguard national interests and fulfill China's international obligations.” Beijing’s identification of its overseas interests as an integral component of its national interests elevates the requirement for the PLA to be prepared for and capable of distant international operations. With the mention of its international obligations, the white paper reflects an awareness of expectations regarding its role as a great power in the international community.

Despite these direct and indirect explanations for China’s military diplomacy, at least two significant gaps remain in this portion of the literature. Both gaps are related to the MD information included in the various appendices commencing in 2004. The first gap is in the lack of detail in the reported information. The information in the appendices includes only the general type of activity (strategic dialogue, major international exchange, port call, escort task

force, combined exercise and training, HA/DR operation, etc), the partner state, and perhaps the dates of the activity. The information does not include other important details such as the size of the activity—how many personnel participated, for example—information that provides useful measures of comparison to gauge the nature and intensity of the relationship between China and various states. Neither are the listings in the appendices complete. Research for this dissertation revealed several major military diplomacy activities that were not included in the appendices. For example, the September 2009 combined PLAAF-Turkish Air Force exercises in Turkey were strangely omitted although they marked significant milestones in PLAAF combined exercises for distance traveled by PLAAF fighter aircraft and exercises with a NATO member.¹⁵¹ To resolve these information gaps as much as possible, one must look also to Chinese and foreign media reporting to get a more complete accounting of the activity.

The second gap is in the failure of official Chinese sources to link these lists of MD activities to their strategic purposes. In effect, the white papers say, “these are China’s strategic objectives—peace and stability conducive to continued economic growth—and these are the growing lists of MD activities China is conducting every year,” leaving it up to observers to figure out how, or even if, they correspond with China’s strategic objectives. There is no effort to illustrate the relationship, for example, between China’s various combined exercises and safeguarding China’s overseas interests or how these exercises might contribute to reassurance of other states. As we shall see, the lack of linkages/relationships between China’s strategic objectives and its range of military diplomacy activities is replete not just in the white papers, but in all of the literature.

¹⁵¹ Burak Ege Bekdil and Umit Enginsoy, 2010. *Turkey, China in Exercises: NATO Blanches as Ankara Looks East*. October 10. Accessed November 10, 2015. <http://archive.defensenews.com/article/20101017/DEFBEAT04/10170302/Turkey-China-Exercises>.

Other Chinese sources echo the general military diplomacy refrains found in the defense white papers. In interview remarks published in the *PLA Daily*, Major General Qian Lihua, then director-general of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ministry of National Defense, identified five contributions of Chinese military diplomacy:

First, the Chinese military diplomacy actively coordinated with the political and military struggles and safeguarded China's state sovereignty, security and development interests. Second, through the [sic] military diplomacy the PLA learned from the advanced experience of foreign militaries to promote China's national defense and military modernization drive. Third, the Chinese military diplomacy actively enhanced military mutual trust with neighboring countries to promote regional security and stability. Fourth, the Chinese military diplomacy actively fulfilled the responsibilities and obligations of international security to promote the building of a harmonious world. Fifth, the Chinese military diplomacy actively publicized China's peaceful foreign policy and national defense policy defensive in nature to portray a good image of the country and the military.¹⁵²

Although labeled "contributions," one may perhaps better understand them as continuing purposes. Major General Qian reiterates the view of MD as a tool by which to safeguard Chinese sovereignty, security, and development interests. MD again plays a prominent role in supporting Chinese military modernization. And, as always, MD is a way for Beijing to "enhance mutual military trust," fulfill China's obligations towards maintaining international security, and emphasize China's peaceful intentions. Given the level of state media control in China and the corresponding tendency for media and other publications to repeat the official line, Qian's list of military diplomacy's "contributions" are found in much of the media reporting as well as in Chinese literature on the subject.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Jiquan Gao and Jingguo Wang, 2011, "Qian Lihua Talks about Contributions of China's Military Diplomacy," *PLA Daily*, February 28, Accessed December 5, 2013, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2011-02/28/content_4391939.htm.

¹⁵³ See, for example: Xiaozhuo Zhao, 2013. *Military Diplomacy Paying Off*. August 28. Accessed November 10, 2015. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2013-08/28/content_16925882.htm. See also: Qian, Lihua. 2009. "New China's Remarkable Achievements in Military Diplomacy." *Foreign Affairs Journal* (Chinese People's

Major General Xiao Tianliang of the PLA's National Defense University provides some interesting strategic insight into the reasons for the growth of Chinese military diplomacy by placing it into the context of China's overall development. In his edited book, the final chapter is entitled, "Advancing Strategic Thinking Regarding Military Diplomacy under [China's] New Circumstances."¹⁵⁴ The new circumstances to which Xiao refers are China's increased engagement with the world, something that commenced with Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening up directives, and that has resulted in China's prosperity and growing international interests. Xiao writes:

Through 60 years of building and accumulation, China's development has entered a new historical period wherein China's relationship with the world has also experienced a deep and grand transformation. At the moment, China has already merged into the process of economic globalization so that national interests and international responsibilities continuously expand, and China's international influence continues to rise. Under these new historical conditions, how to safeguard China's continuing development and ultimately realize the magnificent goal of the great revival of the Chinese nation is the basic starting point of all the work done by the party and the state. In forging ahead with the work of China's military diplomacy under these new circumstances, one must keep an eye on this goal along with the changes in China's domestic and foreign situation, and conduct careful consideration of how to plan and prepare. ...Walking the peaceful development road to realize the great revival of the Chinese nation is a fundamental strategic choice. It reflects China's scientific recognition of the nation's development and world history and conforms to China's fundamental national interests. Therefore, the strategy of peaceful development is China's fixed strategy. It is under this strategy that military diplomacy must accurately orient the effects of its missions, direction, and status.¹⁵⁵

Xiao clearly recognizes the interrelationship between China's domestic and foreign interests, as well as how Chinese military diplomacy activities must fit within the grand strategy of "walking the peaceful development road" so as to avoid upsetting China's continued development. Thus, reassurance regarding China's economic and military rise and its benign strategic intention is

Institute of Foreign Affairs) 93 (Autumn). Accessed August 20, 2015.
<http://www.cpfifa.org/en/q/listQuarterlyArticle.do?articleId=50>.

¹⁵⁴ Xiao, Ma, and Li, 2011. *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao [Military Diplomacy of New China]*. 274.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Author's own translation.

once more reaffirmed as a purpose of its MD programs. At the same time however, his statements regarding the role of military diplomacy in achieving the “great revival of the Chinese nation” hint at the broader ambitions that may be driving the PLA’s growing international presence.

Major General Xiao and his co-editors go on to describe the main purposes of Chinese MD. These purposes include 1) safeguarding national interests, 2) developing omnidirectional foreign interchange and cooperation, and 3) demonstrating China’s will to defend its national sovereignty, security, development and national capacity.¹⁵⁶ Readers are familiar with the first two of these purposes, but the third introduces something new from Chinese sources. Although it does not actually use the word “deterrence,” the third purpose on this list clearly identifies deterrence as a purpose of Chinese military diplomacy—something that had remained unstated in China’s defense white papers and been missing from much of the Chinese media reporting on the country’s MD activities. Xiao further explains, “Military diplomacy allows a state to better exhibit its ability and will to defend its sovereignty, security, and development, while also allowing it to issue unequivocal and firm messages concerning its core and major interests.”¹⁵⁷ After reciting how certain unnamed western and neighboring countries conspire to contain China, Xiao continues, “In order to ensure the continued progress of peaceful development, China, upon a foundation of even stronger mutual trust with outside militaries, must accordingly further strengthen its own hard power to counter the military expansion and deployments of countries having axes to grind, respond appropriately, accelerate the development of relative military power and capabilities, focus on strengthening military deterrence, ensure major regional and

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 275-279. Author’s own translation.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 278. Author’s own translation.

territory interests, and prevent the emergence of a major power imbalance.”¹⁵⁸ Xiao thus links the heretofore-bland purpose of “building mutual trust” with the purpose of deterrence, a link that is entirely consistent with the complex ambiguity of military diplomacy activities on the spectrum of military diplomacy’s political purposes as discussed in Chapter One. Similar to the gap in the white papers, *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao*, still makes no effort to explicitly link the range of China’s MD activities with its strategic purposes. For example, given the subject of this paragraph, one may ask, “which MD activities does China consider as having deterrent effects upon other states?” What makes these activities deterrent? Examining the patterns of China’s MD activities may help answer these questions.

Most US China scholars writing on Chinese security issues in the last decade have made mention of China’s growing international military activity. Although few have gone further than providing a brief summary of the MD activity chronicled in the defense white papers, this literature is important because of the understanding it provides regarding China’s foreign and national security policy. Writing in 2006, Bates Gill provides the historical and strategic context for the growth of military diplomacy observed in the first half of the 2000s. He recounts the evolution of Chinese security diplomacy, focusing on the development of China’s “new security concept” during the late 1990s and early 2000s, and shows how that concept shaped China’s international security behavior.¹⁵⁹ The “new security concept,” described in its own white paper issued by Beijing in 2002, views international security as a cooperative effort in which states work together to address common issues on the basis of “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation.”¹⁶⁰ China’s descriptions of its military diplomacy as conducted in accordance

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 279. Author’s own translation.

¹⁵⁹ Bates Gill, 2007, *Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 4-7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 5.

with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and “military relations that are non-aligned, non-confrontational and not directed against any third party” come directly from ideas embodied in the new security concept, which itself draws on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as they were originally introduced by Premier Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference in 1955. Consistent with this concept, China expanded its MD activity following an evolutionary path of engagement with both global and regional security institutions, namely the United Nations, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).¹⁶¹ Consistent with the premise that MD is not hatched fully formed, China’s MD began incrementally with conference attendance and observation of other states’ military diplomacy engagements. Gill reiterates the rationale found in the defense white papers for China’s new security diplomacy. First, Beijing sought a peaceful international environment so that it could focus on addressing domestic issues including continued economic development.¹⁶² Second, Beijing sought to reassure its neighbors of its “peaceful and mutually beneficial intent.”¹⁶³ Finally, Beijing sought to create a greater role for itself in regional security affairs without overtly challenging the United States.¹⁶⁴

Gill was writing at an early point in China’s forays into MD. While he captured the beginning of the growth trend and the strategic context thereof, he did not yet have the benefit of a full decade’s worth of activity by which to examine China’s MD. At the time, Beijing was focused on improving relations with its neighbors through its so-called “charm offensive,” China’s territorial disputes with its neighbors were still “shelved,” and China had not yet commenced the “assertive” behaviors beginning in roughly 2008 that have since alarmed some

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 116-124, 29-35, and 37-45.

¹⁶² Ibid., 10.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

members of the international community.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Gill's focus was on the strategic level of analysis. While he did summarize some of China's MD activities through 2005, he did not provide the kind of inductive approach proposed by this dissertation of examining the patterns of the activity and following where those lines of inquiry lead.

Deeper analysis of Chinese MD activity falls under the aegis of PLA studies and is the purview of relatively few scholars. These US scholars pay closer attention to the operational details of China's MD. Writing in 2010, Dennis Blasko—a former US Army attache with postings in Beijing and Hong Kong—focuses on the growth of PLA participation in combined ground force exercises from 2002 to 2009.¹⁶⁶ Blasko describes how PLA participation in combined exercises grew during the seven year period not only in frequency and in the number of partners it engages, but also in the complexity of the exercises as well. He notes that the vast majority of the PLA's combined exercises have focused on counterterrorism purposes with Russia and other SCO member states, and typically consist of short duration, highly-scripted events involving limited numbers of personnel.¹⁶⁷

Although his focus is on combined exercises conducted by PLA ground forces, Blasko nevertheless provides several useful insights into our understanding of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy in general. Regarding why Beijing expanded its participation in combined exercises, he writes,

Little also is known about the national level decision-making process that led to the reversal of the decades-old policy of not training with foreign militaries. Such a decision would likely have to be made within the Central Military Commission (CMC), probably with the consent of the Chinese Communist Party Politburo and/or the Foreign Affairs

¹⁶⁵ Andrew Scobell and Scott W. Harold, 2013, "An Assertive China? Insights from Interviews," *Asian Security* 9 (2): 111-131.

¹⁶⁶ Dennis J. Blasko, 2010, "People's Liberation Army and People's Armed Police Ground Exercises with Foreign Forces: 2002-2009," In *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, edited by Roy Kamphausen, David Lai and Andrew Scobell, 377-428. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 379.

Leading Small Group. While the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, probably added impetus to this decision, the Chinese government previously had been concerned about the threat of terrorism and other non-traditional security challenges.¹⁶⁸

Given China's restive province of Xinjiang and agitation among many of its Uyghur inhabitants, as well as its majority Muslim Central-Asian neighbors, including Afghanistan, China clearly must be mindful of cross-border security issues including terrorism. Blasko also notes that US basing in Central Asian states following 9/11, probably also spurred China to further engage its neighbors there to preclude a loss of influence.¹⁶⁹

Blasko also adds to our understanding of the functional utility of military diplomacy towards China's military modernization. His narrative describes a steady evolution of complexity in exercises through time. Combined exercises involving small numbers of troops and simple scenarios have grown over time to become combined, joint exercises with participating troops numbering in the thousands, and the integration of more sophisticated weapons systems including air and air defense weapons, fighters, bombers, helicopters, etc.¹⁷⁰ This evolution has yielded operational as well as tactical lessons for the PLA. The PLA gains a range of valuable experiences from this MD activity including "detailed staff planning, implementation of multinational command and control procedures, long distance air or rail deployment, and logistics support and sustainment of troops frequently in austere environments."¹⁷¹ At the same time, however, Blasko points out that the artificiality of the exercises, including their heavily scripted nature, place some limits on their functional utility. He does not mention the symbolic purposes of these exercises directly, but he does describe aspects of their conduct that would seem to indicate they do serve a highly symbolic purpose.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 382.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 383.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 402.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 409.

For example, the exercises are frequently staged in such a way that they may be viewed by dignitaries from reviewing stands set up along the edges of the exercise area.¹⁷² He also describes how media coverage of these events has sky-rocketed since they began in 2002, providing information to both internal and external audiences and shaping a narrative supportive of China's important role in international security affairs.¹⁷³

Blasko's work is very useful to this dissertation, but given its timeframe and focus, it provides only a partial explanation for the growth of China's military diplomacy activity from 2002 to 2012. Because of its focus on PLA ground force exercises, it makes only passing mention of PLAAF and PLAN participation in combined exercises, thereby excluding vital service branches and their own MD activities. Neither does it include the entire period of analysis. Concluding with exercises from 2009 as it does, it excludes a significant number of combined exercise events across a dynamic period of Chinese foreign policy—ranging in description from charm offensive to increasingly assertive and confrontational. Finally, it does not make the explicit correlations between the full range of MD activities and China's larger foreign policy strategies that this dissertation proposes to make.

Heidi Holz and Kenneth Allen, citing a variety of Chinese government and media sources, summarize a broad range of the PLA's military diplomacy activities through the end of 2009.¹⁷⁴ Although the bulk of their very useful work focuses on categorizing and chronicling China's various military diplomacy activities, they do make a brief effort to situate these activities within the context of China's larger foreign policy goals. Similar to Gill and Blasko,

¹⁷² Ibid., 410.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 412.

¹⁷⁴ Heidi Holz and Kenneth Allen, 2010, "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics: The People's Liberation Army Experience with Military Relations," In *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, edited by Roy Kamphausen, David Lai and Andrew Scobell, 429-473, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute.

they nest China's MD activity within its security policy, describing how China uses its military diplomacy to selectively reassure or deter neighboring states, enhance its international image, and gain access to advanced technology and expertise."¹⁷⁵ In contrast to the US experience, China's reassurance efforts are not targeted at allies who may be concerned about continuing US security commitments, but rather they are meant to assuage the concerns of states which view China's rapid rise with consternation, hence the rhetorical emphasis on "peaceful rise," "non-aligned", and "non-confrontational" in Chinese sources.¹⁷⁶

Three of the purposes of Chinese military diplomacy cited by Holz and Allen are familiar to readers who will recall deterrence and reassurance on the spectrum of political purposes for MD (Figure 2, page 12), and with gaining access to advanced technology and expertise for military modernization purposes. Military diplomacy for the express purpose of enhancing China's international image is noteworthy. Holz and Allen write, "China uses PLA military diplomacy to enhance China's image abroad by carrying out activities that make China look like a responsible member of the international community. Participation in peacekeeping and counter-piracy operations, as well as in other forms of security cooperation, fosters the perception among the international community that China is assuming responsibility for international security that is commensurate with its status as a rising power."¹⁷⁷ Holz and Allen link this purpose to China's grand strategic objectives of "preserving CCP rule in the face of the declining popularity of communist ideology" and of "establish[ing] China as a leading power in Asia" and the related desire to "build China's global influence and prestige."¹⁷⁸ Holz and Allen do not explore this purpose of Chinese MD any further—this was not their purpose in writing—

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 429-430.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 430-431, 459-460.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 459-460.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 430.

but the ideas of status and prestige are certainly worth further evaluation as explanatory factors for the growth of Chinese MD.

In their excellent 2010 book, *Red Star over the Pacific*, US Naval War College professors Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes examine the modernization of the PLA Navy and the expansion of its operations to new areas of the globe.¹⁷⁹ Although Yoshihara and Holmes do not focus on Chinese military diplomacy directly, their study is applicable to our understanding of the growth of the PLA's military diplomacy by making links between China's growing global economic interests, the geographic expansion of PLAN operations, and international relations theory. The authors identify China's apparent adoption of neo-Mahanian strategic thinking as the impetus for its sustained naval modernization efforts.¹⁸⁰ Alfred Thayer Mahan, sometimes referred to as the father of the modern US Navy, was a US naval officer and sea power theorist in the late 19th Century who advocated the need for great sea-faring commercial states to operate naval forces sufficient to protecting the state's maritime economic interests.¹⁸¹ Yoshihara and Holmes detected a marked increase in Chinese scholarly, doctrinal, and policy sources invoking Mahanian ideas in support of the idea of China as a great maritime nation with global interests requiring protection. The invocation of Mahanian ideas coincided roughly with the promulgation of Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening up policies in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a time when the PLAN remained primarily a coastal defense force with very limited force projection capabilities.¹⁸² China's increasingly global economic interests led Beijing's security strategists to consider the commensurate military capabilities required to protect them and

¹⁷⁹ Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, 2010, *Red Star Over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to US Maritime Strategy*, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸¹ Alfred Thayer Mahan, 1991. *Mahan on Naval Strategy: Selections from the Writings of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press.

¹⁸² Yoshihara and Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific*, 16-17 and 60.

Beijing found useful lessons in Mahan's writings regarding a similar period in US history.¹⁸³

These factors in turn have been key drivers of the PLAN's modernization over the last two decades and the subsequent increase in the geographic scope of PLAN operations.

Yoshihara and Holmes argue that in pursuing PLAN modernization, Chinese strategists are well aware of the security dilemma implications of their military modernization and have consequently made a concerted effort to portray China's maritime aspirations in a benign light. Beijing has evaluated the historical lessons from the competition between Great Britain and a rising Germany prior to World War 1 and is attempting to manage China's own maritime rise without evoking the ire of the US—the modern day equivalent of historical Britain.¹⁸⁴ To do this, China has consistently promulgated a modern rhetorical message of seeking peaceful development by adopting a historical and cultural narrative of peaceful maritime interchange by invoking figures like Zheng He, the famous Ming Dynasty admiral of China's great treasure fleets.¹⁸⁵ The modern strategic challenge for Beijing has revolved around how best to deploy the PLAN's new capabilities in a manner consistent with its peaceful development rhetoric. The answer, according to Yoshihara and Holmes, may be found in China's deployment of the PLAN to conduct counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.¹⁸⁶ They write:

China's naval operations in Somali waters were not conceived overnight or in a policy vacuum. For at least a decade, Chinese policymakers have anticipated the need to cope with nontraditional security threats, which encompass drug and human trafficking, piracy, terrorism, humanitarian disasters, arms smuggling, cybercrime, international economic and financial crime, and pandemics. Analysts contend that active efforts to combat such challenges not only fulfill China's responsibilities as a rising great power but also accrue soft power over time....The notion that contributing to international security burnishes Beijing's image on the

¹⁸³ Ibid., 31-35.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 44-45.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 165.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 168-169.

world stage and telegraphs China's peaceful rise clearly resonates with Chinese strategists.¹⁸⁷

In this analysis, the authors provide two additional ideas for consideration regarding the growth of Chinese military diplomacy. First, Beijing's awareness of the security dilemma dynamic caused by China's rapid economic development and sustained military modernization efforts led its security strategists to identify unobjectionable rationales for its growing international activity. These rationales—the non-traditional security threats mentioned above—provided ample grounds for expanding China's military diplomacy activities beyond the PLAN activity that is the focus of the book. They apply equally well to combined exercises, disaster relief operations, personnel exchanges, and military aid and assistance programs. Second, they hint at Chinese perceptions regarding a great power's responsibilities and how fulfillment of those responsibilities can improve the international image of the state. China's contributions to dealing with shared non-traditional security threats can help shape international perceptions of China and the PLA in a positive manner, contributing to reassurance regarding its strategic intentions, and acculturating the international audience to the PLA's presence.

Finally, writing in 2011, MIT's Taylor Fravel examines the reasons behind the PLA's quest to increase its non-combat capabilities despite the incomplete modernization of its conventional combat capabilities.¹⁸⁸ Fravel argues China is developing its non-combat military capabilities—activities designated as “Military Operations Other Than War” (*feizhanzheng junshi xingdong*)—because of the important role the PLA plays in preserving domestic stability in the face of destabilization fomented by China's rapid economic growth and social change. At the same time, the PLA also makes use of its non-combat capabilities—as they pertain to

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 169.

¹⁸⁸ Taylor M. Fravel, 2011, "Economic Growth, Regime Insecurity, and Military Strategy: Explaining the Rise of Non-Combat Operations in China," *Asian Security* 7 (3): 177-200.

specifically mentioned MD activities—to promote the stability of the international economic system upon which China depends for continued economic growth.¹⁸⁹ In Fravel’s words, “Concerns about domestic stability have created a new dimension of China’s defense policy...Leaders craft national policies to deal with the most pressing threats that they face, including not just external threats to the security of the state but also internal threats to a leader or a regime’s political survival. Survival at home is as important as survival abroad.”¹⁹⁰ This also adds a new dimension of understanding to Beijing’s statements regarding the “omni-directional” nature of its MD activity. Not only are they omni-directional in the sense of engaging a wide range of state partners, they are also omni-directional in the sense of serving both domestic and international purposes. In support of his observation regarding the primacy of domestic stability for China’s ruling party, Fravel notes that Beijing has deployed PLA forces within China in response to domestic crises ranging from earthquakes and snowstorms to civil unrest and border protection at greater frequency and in far greater numbers than they are deployed internationally.¹⁹¹

The need to consider both internal and external threats, and appreciation for their interrelationship, drives PLA strategists to develop and implement military strategies that maximize the utility of military operations on both domestic and international fronts.¹⁹² Thus, international employment of the PLA’s non-combat capabilities in the form of military diplomacy provides the military with the doctrine, training, and resources necessary for directly handling crises that may undermine domestic stability while simultaneously promoting a favorable international environment. For example, combined exercises focusing on

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 185-187.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 178.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 190-191.

¹⁹² Ibid., 180-181.

counterterrorism prepare elements of the PLA to deal with incidents of domestic terrorism. International disaster relief efforts likewise provide practical experience that the PLA may apply to domestic disaster response efforts. Coming full circle, a favorable international environment then allows China's economic development to continue unhindered, which in turn serves to forestall domestic instability. More specifically, Fravel identifies two key international security interests, which if disrupted, may negatively affect domestic stability. According to him, "The first is access to key inputs for future growth, especially natural resources. Countries that depend on world markets for these inputs may consider using their armed forces to help ensure their ability to access them. The second is the stability of the world trading system, including the security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and access to foreign markets."¹⁹³ These international interests, according to Fravel, help explain why China engages in UN peacekeeping operations, antipiracy operations, disaster relief operations, and joint [combined] exercises.¹⁹⁴

Fravel's hypotheses provide a richer understanding of the reasons for the growth of Chinese MD activities. While they echo the pronouncements encountered earlier in the literature review regarding China's strategic goals of promoting stability abroad in order to continue development at home, they are original in the way they delve deeper into the relationships between these strategic imperatives, the formulation of PLA military strategy, and how that strategy translates to development of the PLA's non-combat capabilities. Nevertheless, Fravel's hypotheses still do not fill the primary gap that continues to exist in the literature—an empirical demonstration of correlation between the patterns of Chinese military diplomacy and China's strategic interests. While compelling, without further empirical analysis, his assertions remain just that.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 181.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 192-193.

A brief summation of several of the key findings of the literature review are in order before we conclude this section. Figure 17 distills the literature review findings into the most frequently mentioned purposes/explanations for Chinese military diplomacy. To be sure, some authors were writing about specific MD activities and they did not necessarily intend for their explanations to apply to China’s overall MD program. Nevertheless, multiple mentions from multiple authors indicate that these explanations do pertain to China’s military diplomacy in general. The literature review thus provides the following findings. First, Chinese MD activity is consistent with the four main political purposes of military diplomacy identified in Chapter One regarding amity, reassurance, cooperation, and deterrence (see Figure 2). Chinese Government, media, and academic sources routinely cite amity as a purpose of MD as manifest by repetition of words like “friendship” and “trust.” Interestingly, US analyses of Chinese MD uniformly ignore amity-related purposes of the activity with none of the sources reviewed citing

Lit Review Sources	Purposes/Explanations for Growth of Chinese MD Activity						
	Amity	Reassurance	Cooperation (Non-Traditional Security Threats)	Deterrence	Military Modernization	Int'l Economic Development Interests	Status/Image
Defense White Papers	X	X	X		X	X	X
Chinese Media	X	X	X		X	X	X
PLA NDU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bates Gill		X				X	
Dennis Blasko			X		X		X
Holz and Allen		X		X	X		X
Yoshihara and Holmes		X	X		X	X	X
Taylor Fravel			X		X	X	

Figure 17: Summary of Literature Review Explanations for Growth of Chinese MD Activity

amity as a purpose of Chinese MD. Reassurance is cited frequently by both Chinese and western sources, but in China’s case this reassurance differs from the US conception. While the US seeks to reassure allies and partners of its international security commitments, Chinese reassurance efforts emphasize China’s benign strategic intent and attempt to allay concerns regarding China’s rapid economic growth and military modernization. This is manifest by the frequent rhetorical references to China’s “peaceful development” strategies. Cooperation with

other states in addressing non-traditional security threats is commonly cited by both Chinese and US sources as a major reason for China's growing international security presence, especially in such areas as anti-piracy and disaster relief operations. Finally, deterrence is cited as a purpose of MD by the Chinese-language NDU publication of *Xin Zhongguo Junshi Waijiao* [Military Diplomacy of New China], but not by the English-language defense white papers or MND web portals. From the US side, Holz and Allen also list deterrence as a purpose.

A second key finding from the literature review is the existence of additional purposes for Chinese military diplomacy activity beyond the original political purposes presented in the first chapter (see Figure 2). Chinese and western sources reviewed were nearly unanimous in citing military modernization as a primary purpose of PLA military diplomacy activities. MD for modernization purposes was directly stated in all Chinese sources reviewed and western sources devoted significant coverage to the potential modernization benefits derivative from a broad range of the PLA's MD activity including port calls, combined exercises, HA/DR operations, antipiracy operations, etc. The literature also commonly cites China's need to protect its growing economic development interests as well as Chinese concerns regarding China's image and the need to uphold its "international obligations." These three additional purposes are not only interrelated with each other, but also with the original purposes of amity, reassurance, cooperation, and deterrence. These purposes add important new dimensions to the theory and practice of military diplomacy in general and will provide useful insights into Chinese MD in particular, when combined with the empirical analysis this dissertation proposes to accomplish.

Finally, although the literature on China's MD activity provides useful explanations of its purposes and reasons for its growth, it remains incomplete in certain important respects. First, the analysis is exclusively qualitative. None of the authors have provided quantitative analysis to

either confirm or contradict the findings of their qualitative assertions. These assertions, although they may indeed be correct, can be further tested—strengthened or weakened—with some additional quantitative rigor in the form of correlation of activity with purpose. Second, none of the literature thus far tells the entire story of China’s MD during the period from 2002 to 2012—the reviewed sources either focus on a specific subsection of MD activity or a specific time period that does not account for the dynamic nature of Chinese foreign policy through the entire period. Third, although some of the literature nests China’s MD within its broader foreign policy, it does not directly link China’s MD activities to its specific economic and security interests nor does it relate it to broader international relations theories. Finally, despite the references to the importance of image as a reason for China’s MD, none of the literature examines how image building serves as an explanation for the growth of China’s MD. There remains plenty of room for additional analysis of the phenomenon of China’s growing MD. The next sections of this chapter are therefore devoted to discussion of the research methodology considerations and the research design that will provide the framework for this analysis.

Research Methodology and Design

Explaining the growth of Chinese military diplomacy requires careful consideration of the research methodologies by which to examine the phenomena, the scope of the activity to be examined, and an appropriate research design that will yield useful explanatory insights. These issues are challenging because of the volume of China’s MD activity, the variety of those activities, and the range of explanations found in the literature. This section necessarily begins with a brief discussion on methodology and the relationship between research methods and the research question. Once the methodological groundwork has been established, the section then describes the bounds that will be set on the scope of China’s MD activity along several

dimensions and the reasons for those bounds. Finally, with research methods and research scope delineated, we will be ready to present the research design by which to answer the question “how do we explain the growth of Chinese military diplomacy from 2002 to 2012?”¹⁹⁵

Taking on a subject as complex as Chinese MD requires careful consideration of research methodologies and methods, subjects with their own inherent complexity.¹⁹⁶ This dissertation is not a treatise on methodology, but in keeping with best social science research practices it will attempt to conform to methodological standards through careful and transparent selection of the research methods most suitable to addressing the research questions. As Professor John Gerring observes, “A discovery in sociology ought to be understandable, and appraisable, by those who are not sociologists; otherwise it cannot claim the status of truth, as that term is generally understood.”¹⁹⁷ Social science methodologies may be categorized broadly into descriptive and causal approaches.¹⁹⁸ Professor Gerring differentiates between the two when he writes, “Description [is] any empirical argument (hypothesis, theory, etc.) about the world that claims to answer a *what* question (e.g., *how*, *when*, *whom*, or *in what manner*). By contrast, wherever there is an implicit or explicit claim that a factor generates variation in an outcome the argument will be regarded as causal.”¹⁹⁹ Causation thus focuses on *why* questions.²⁰⁰ Gerring then notes that “*How* questions lie somewhere in between description and causation.”²⁰¹ Given the “*how*” research question of this dissertation, it is apparent that aspects of both description and causation will apply to the endeavor.

¹⁹⁵ John Gerring, 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 50-51.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Description of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy is a logical precursor to explaining why that growth occurred, hence the reason for the lengthy treatment of China's various MD activities in Chapter One. Description is important because it provides the foundation of data required to begin answering the *why* questions. As evident from the literature review, multiple answers for the *why*'s behind the growth of China's military diplomacy activities already exist. Also evident from the literature review is that each of the explanations offered suffers from multiple deficiencies in terms of scope of the explanation offered, covering only subsets of China's MD activity or subsets of the longitudinal period to be studied. More acutely, most of the authors assert their explanations—typically citing the explanations offered by Chinese or other sources—but then omit the all-important work of describing the causal relationships and causal mechanisms between their proffered explanations and the specific military diplomacy activities they are discussing. To be sure, this work is challenging to do when it comes to Chinese military diplomacy. The opacity of Chinese strategy formulation and decision-making processes make ascertaining the strength of various explanations very difficult. Furthermore, when it comes to military diplomacy, readers should be clear by now that any given MD activity most likely serves multiple purposes for each state participating in the activity. Determining causation in the matter of Chinese MD—or anything else for that matter—is incredibly challenging.²⁰² Nevertheless, the explanatory assertions in the literature deserve more rigorous analytical attention than simple *prima facie* acceptance by readers. For example, if it is true that China's MD has expanded because of the need to protect the state's growing economic development interests, there should at least exist some demonstrable correlation

²⁰² Despite the challenges of determining and analyzing causal relationships, this is fertile territory for future research on the theory and practice of military diplomacy. For more on the causal relationships that may be considered for future research, see Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 224-226.

between China's international economic interests and the patterns of its various MD activities.²⁰³ If it is true that China uses MD to improve its international image, then this should likewise be discernible from the patterns of its MD activities. Thus, one should be able to use the available empirical evidence of China's MD activities to either support or undermine the "robustness" of the explanation under examination, allowing us to get closer to the "truth" of causation in the growth of Chinese military diplomacy.²⁰⁴ Along these lines, Gerring further offers, "Broadly stated, the goal of science is to discover new things about the world and to appraise the truth-value of extant propositions about the world."²⁰⁵ This dissertation proposes to do both, but with an emphasis on the appraisal side of the effort. Certainly, discovery of new knowledge regarding Chinese MD occurs as this dissertation parses the activity in new ways and over an expanded period than covered in the existing literature. The primary emphasis of this dissertation, however, will be on its appraisal or testing of key explanations already existing in the literature.²⁰⁶

Appraising the extant explanations necessitates careful consideration of the methods by which to examine the phenomenon of China's growing military diplomacy. The universe of Chinese MD, in terms of activity types and basic measurements of growth in those activities, was presented in Chapter One. The main remaining task of this dissertation, therefore, is to determine the links between the explanations found in the literature review and the patterns of given Chinese MD activities. From a methodological standpoint, this means simultaneous employment of deductive and inductive approaches.²⁰⁷ On the deductive side are the proffered

²⁰³ Ibid., 153.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 319-320.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 27.

²⁰⁶ John Gerring, 2012. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 39.

²⁰⁷ Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 173.

explanations for the growth of Chinese MD along with the macro-level indicators one would expect to align with those explanations. These indicators include such things as state GDPs, data on China's commercial trade partnerships, or data on China's trade volume along certain trade routes. On the inductive side, stand the individual MD events and the patterns that emerge from those cumulative events. In between the two sides, we expect to find the correlations that will allow the formulation of a more complete, stronger, argument regarding explanations for the growth of Chinese military diplomacy.²⁰⁸

There are numerous research methods by which one can parse and analyze China's military diplomacy, but the relative nascence of the field of MD study and the hypothesis testing focus of this research suggests it would be wise to begin with a simple X_1/Y case study approach in which a particular cause is linked to a particular outcome.²⁰⁹ While this dissertation seeks to provide understanding of the growth of China's MD in general, the breadth of the available subject matter universe (a population of twelve specific activity types under the overall rubric of MD) further recommends a case study approach that focuses on representative MD activities examined through the lenses of proposed explanations from the literature.²¹⁰ Placing such bounds will help keep the scope of research manageable for a dissertation length treatment. My assumption is that careful selection of representative cases will yield explanatory conclusions that are then generalizable to explaining China's overall MD activity.²¹¹ Better yet, others may

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 58-59. Gerring writes, "A complete argument consists of a set of key concepts, testable hypotheses (aka) propositions, and perhaps a formal model or larger theoretical framework. A *causal* argument should also contain an explication of causal mechanisms. An argument is what we speculate might be true about the world; it engages the realm of theorizing."

²⁰⁹ Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 71.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

²¹¹ Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 411.

also subject these conclusions to further testing in future research. With this in mind, we now move to a discussion on the bounds of the research and selection of the case studies.²¹²

The first boundary is temporal. As illustrated in the previous chapter's discussion of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy, the decade-long period from 2002 to 2012 was dynamic when compared to the preceding decades. Not only did this period see the most demonstrable increases in terms of the variety and volume of Chinese military diplomacy activity, it also saw significant variations regarding China's overall foreign policy practices. As mentioned, Chinese foreign policy at the beginning of the period was typically characterized by such words as "charming," "win-win," "benevolent," and "benign." China sought—and was offered—greater cooperative integration into a wide range of international economic and political institutions. However, China's international behavior during the final four years of the period was increasingly noted for its assertiveness and seemed to bely the peaceful and cooperative rhetoric of the preceding period. Explanations for the growth of Chinese MD during the decade should be able to account for the larger contextual differences in Chinese foreign policy. A second reason for bounding the temporal scope to 2002-2012 is the availability of data. The Chinese defense white papers and their MD activity indices provide a ready and useful foundation of information upon which to begin analysis of the subject. Furthermore, the profusion of both Chinese and English-language internet portals sponsored by the PLA, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, the Information Office of the State Council, and Chinese media organizations all contribute to the availability of information on the subject. Finally, reporting from 2012 and later indicates that Chinese MD activity has reached a plateau for the time being in terms of the variety of activity.²¹³ Although there are reports that China's next expansion of MD activity may

²¹² Ibid., 64-66.

²¹³ Kenneth Allen, 2015. *The Top Trends in China's Military Diplomacy*.

come in the form of overseas basing agreements in places like Djibouti, the details of such plans remain limited and, at present, not yet operational.²¹⁴ For all of these reasons, the temporal scope of research will be bound to the period from 2002-2012.

A second boundary will be placed on the explanations for the growth of Chinese MD that will be tested. To be sure, an in depth examination of any of the seven common explanations found in the literature would be interesting and useful and they all deserve further treatment in future research. However, given the time and length constraints of this dissertation-length project, I have selected two of the explanations to serve as the focus of study. The first, as already alluded, is the explanation that China's military diplomacy activity has grown to keep pace with China's growing international economic development interests. This explanation is worthy of further study for many reasons, but I highlight four here. First, while it was commonly asserted in the literature as an explanation for the growth of China's MD, it commonly suffered from a glaring deficiency of empirical analysis demonstrating how this was so. Approaching this assertion from an inductive perspective will help fill the gap between the assertion and empirical practice. Second, this material explanation for military diplomacy provides rich ground for future empirical and theoretical analysis regarding how rising powers navigate the challenges of established international security systems. Understanding why China's military has begun moving further afield will provide a baseline for other historical case studies and perhaps add to the international relations theoretical discussions regarding why great powers behave the way they do. Third, from a methodology and research design standpoint, the material explanations lend themselves readily to examination by means of the empirical patterns of Chinese MD. In

²¹⁴ Jane Perlez and Chris Buckley, 2015. "China Retools its Military with a First Overseas Outpost in Djibouti." *New York Times*. November 26. Accessed December 15, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/world/asia/china-military-presence-djibouti-africa.html?_r=0.

other words, filling the gap is feasible. Finally, I simply find this line of inquiry to be interesting and believe that others will find it interesting as well.

Most of these reasons also apply to the selection of the second explanation to be studied: the growth of China's military diplomacy for the purpose of building its international image. This too was frequently asserted by the literature review sources, but the analysis gap in this case was even larger than the gap in the economic development explanations. How exactly does China's military diplomacy serve to build its international image? If image building does indeed drive or influence China's MD activity, how is this reflected in the patterns of that activity? Next, examining a state's "desire" for a positive international image as a driver of military diplomacy growth touches on the burgeoning field of psychology of international relations and will add a unique—and new—perspective on how status and prestige might influence the way a rising power pursues its international security interests. Finally, the intangible psychological aspect of this explanation stands in contrast to the material considerations of economic interests. Examining them separately here should provide useful insights applicable to future research on how they interact. The material and the psychological surely influence each other. With our focus bounded to these two macro explanations—the deductive portion of this project—we must now consider bounds on the inductive side: the large population of Chinese MD activities.

A third boundary must be placed on the universe of Chinese military diplomacy because that universe, with its associated variables, is so large and diverse as to be unwieldy and analysis quickly becomes difficult. The database of overall MD activity compiled for this dissertation includes more than 30,000 aggregated data points. Beyond the details of the PLA's military diplomacy activities, it includes dozens of additional variable data points ranging from annual state GDP and foreign direct investment (FDI) data, to trade partner rankings and state polity

indicators. These data points are important because they allow one to examine China's MD engagement patterns from multiple perspectives. For example, Polity IV data compiled by the Center for Systemic Peace, assesses the level of democracy or autocracy in state governments.²¹⁵ Correlation of this data to the states China engages in MD should reveal biases, if extant, towards the kind of regimes Beijing feels most comfortable engaging in military diplomacy. Data regarding state GDPs, trade relations with China, Chinese energy sources, and volume of Chinese commerce along trade routes can all serve similar functions in enabling analysis of Chinese MD patterns. Correlating this variable data with each military diplomacy activity would be a very useful project and would contribute greatly to our understanding of China's international military diplomacy activity. However, although such a project would provide significant nuances to our understanding of the growth of the activity, it would also require far more space and time than is available for this dissertation. For the purposes of this dissertation's research question, bounding our analysis to two representative cases of military diplomacy activity should be sufficient to begin answering the general research question as well as provide direction into further research of specific MD activities. Selection of the two most representative cases of MD activity then becomes the challenge.

For this dissertation, analysis of Chinese MD activity from 2002-2012 will be bound in scope to two representative cases: PLA combined exercises and PLA international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Combined exercises are representative of China's overall MD program in several important ways. First, they commenced in 2002 and demonstrated consistent growth in terms of annual frequency, states thus engaged, locations of events, and size of engagements through the entire period under investigation. Second, the

²¹⁵ Center for Systemic Peace, 2014. *The Polity Project*. Monty G. Marshall. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.

universe of 65 combined exercise events during the decade is large enough to provide plenty of fodder for analysis without being so large that it becomes overwhelming in terms of data.

Indeed, this manageable population size will allow for a census analysis with no need to take random samples in the way a larger population might require.²¹⁶ Furthermore, there is also sufficient information on these exercises to allow for fruitful analysis. Even though the defense white papers provide only basic information on these exercises, other Chinese and international media reporting helps us fill in many of the remaining information gaps on these events such as size, purpose, and evaluative comments from participants.

Third, combined exercises are a useful representative case of Chinese MD activity because, unlike many other MD activities, each major service branch of the PLA has now participated in these activities and participants include a wide cross-section of PLA personnel from both enlisted and officer ranks. Fourth, as an MD activity, combined exercises satisfy a broader spectrum of political purposes and key national interests than any other MD activity (see Figure 2). They can be used to build amity, reassure state partners, promote cooperation, and deter at the same time that they advance military modernization, contribute to protection of overseas economic interests, and influence perceptions of China's international image and status. Fifth, combined exercises demonstrate China's strategic engagement preferences and priorities because they are not constrained in the way some other MD activities are. For example, the PLA's combined exercises do not require UN authorization the same way China's UNPKOs or anti-piracy operations do. To be sure, China—or any state—is a sovereign actor and ultimately free to engage or not engage with other states as it pleases. Nevertheless, UNPKOs and anti-piracy operations are two of the most high profile PLA MD activities, and the fact that they take place only under the UN aegis restricts these Chinese MD engagement choices to a much smaller

²¹⁶ Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 75.

subset of states. With combined exercises, China has greater freedom of choice in which states it engages in this MD activity—the main limitation being the willingness of other states to engage China—and thus it is a better indicator of Chinese interests than these two high profile but constrained cases. Finally, combined exercises are representative because they indicate a sustained level of military diplomacy engagement. They are typically a culmination of extensive preparatory MD groundwork that has likely included multiple iterations of strategic security dialogues, exchanges of military attaché offices, reciprocal high-level defense official visits, and probably multiple rounds of preparatory planning visits by personnel from the units designated to participate in any given combined exercise. Thus, combined exercises literally represent multiple MD activity engagements.

The selection criteria for our second MD activity case study, the PLA's international HA/DR operations and training events, are both similar to and different than the selection criteria for combined exercises. Similar to combined exercises, at 32 HA/DR events, the population of this MD activity is manageable enough to allow for a census analysis. Next, official Chinese and other media reporting has covered these events well so that there is sufficient information to fill in the information gaps left in the defense white paper accounts of these activities. Furthermore, each major service branch of the PLA has now participated in HA/DR operations and training events and they too include a broad cross-section of PLA personnel. Finally, China maintains significant freedom to choose how and when it conducts its international HA/DR operations. True, many of the PLA's HA/DR events are in response to natural disasters or take place in poorer states that require significant outside assistance when disasters occur, but these engagements are not dependent upon political authorization from an outside governing body like the United Nations. What's more, the PLA conducts HA/DR training events with a wide range

of countries, not only those that are prone to natural disasters but also those states with experience in responding to such crises. Identifying patterns in which states China chooses to engage in this MD activity promises to be instructive.

The PLA's HA/DR operations differ from combined exercises, but these differences will help test the generalizability of the proffered explanations. First and foremost, HA/DR operations satisfy the soft power end of the spectrum of political purposes with amity, reassurance, cooperation, military modernization, and image building all common explanations for why the PLA engages in this activity. This is in contrast to combined exercises, which serve deterrent purposes to a higher degree than any other military diplomacy activity (refer again to Figure 3). An explanation that can account for both the hard and soft power ends of the spectrum will allow us to explore variation across the spectrum and will be more likely to contribute to our overall understanding of China's military diplomacy. Next, while China conducted combined exercises throughout our study period, the PLA's HA/DR activities were the last addition to China's repertoire of MD activities, commencing in the latter third of the period of interest. I anticipate explanations that account for the timing of both of these activities will likely be more generalizable than explanations that do not.

Figure 18 is a graphical representation of the bounds we have now established regarding the scope of the explanations this dissertation will examine and the case studies by which to do so. The blocks in the graphic convey a sense of how much room there is for research into the subject of China's—or any other state's—military diplomacy activities, with each remaining pink or empty block indicating a significant area for future research. The focus of the next two chapters will be the dark red boxes where the columns of literature review explanations intersect with the rows of military diplomacy activity types. Understanding the contents of each block—

the missing links in the literature between the deductive explanations and the inductive patterns

<u>MD Activity Type</u>	<u>Literature Review Explanations</u>							
	<i>Amity</i>	<i>Reassurance</i>	<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>Deterrence</i>	<i>Modernization</i>	<i>Military Development</i>	<i>Int'l Economic Interests</i>	<i>Status/Image</i>
Strategic Security Dialogues								
Military Attaché Offices								
High-level Military Exchanges								
Functional/Educational Military Exchanges								
PLA Navy (PLAN) Port Calls								
UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs)								
Combined Exercises/Training								
Opening PLA Exercises to Foreign Observers								
Ministry of National Defense (MND) Information Office								
Anti-Piracy Operations								
Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) Ops								
Military Aid/Arms Sales								

Figure 18: Research Bounds--Case Study and Research Question Intersection

of MD activity—will serve as the basis of the research design introduced in the remaining portion of this chapter.

Chapter Three focuses on the hypothesis that the growth of Chinese MD can be explained by China’s perceived need to protect the state’s international economic development interests. If this economic development interest argument is true, one would expect to see positive correlations between China’s combined exercises and HA/DR operations from 2002 to 2012 with China’s global economic interests. The operational indicators by which these correlations are established include the frequency, sizes, locations, and state partners of Chinese MD activity, along with economic and trade data about China’s trade partners, important providers of natural resources for Chinese markets, and data on the trade routes such commerce travels to reach those markets. Analysis of these indicators should demonstrate that China’s combined exercises and HA/DR engagements are higher in frequency, larger in size, or take place in locations with

obvious economic importance to China. The inability to determine such correlations would cast doubt on the strength of the arguments asserted in the literature regarding China's need to protect its international economic development interests. If this is the case, then it is possible the patterns of activity will strengthen one of the parallel explanations in the literature or reveal an entirely new explanation not yet considered.

Chapter Four analysis focuses on the hypothesis that the growth of Chinese military diplomacy can be explained by China's desire to build positive images of the state in the eyes of domestic and international audiences. The operational indicators for this argument again include the compiled military diplomacy and other variable data points in the research database. If this argument is true, one would expect to see patterns in China's MD wherein China engages states higher in various status measurements and where the symbolic values of various events appear to outweigh the functional utility of those events. One way to make such a determination is to identify cases wherein China engages states with advanced military capabilities, but only does so in a very simplistic manner. One would also expect to see positive media coverage of events that bely the relatively minor size of those events. Finally, one would expect to see outsized and consistent pronouncements regarding the contributions of such events to regional or even world peace. Making these judgments regarding the symbolic utility of the events will require additional inquiries into the timing of those events within the context of China's greater foreign policy behavior, as well as deeper qualitative examination of how Chinese media sources report on these events to domestic and international audiences. While correlating patterns of activity will be the foundational method, applying a qualitative technique like textual analysis will allow

for better triangulation of the research findings.²¹⁷ Figure 17 captures the analytical framework that will be used for the next two chapters.

Hypothesis	Operational Indicators	Hypothesized Relationship to MD
The growth of Chinese MD can be explained by China's perceived need to protect the state's international economic development interests in a constrained security environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types, frequency, sizes, locations, partners of PLA combined exercise/training and HA/DR events with interstate trade and commerce data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined exercises/training, and HA/DR operations higher with key trade partner states, states in resource-rich regions, or along key lines of communication (LOCs) Combined exercises/training focus on counter-terrorism, and HA/DR operations communicate benign strategic intentions
The growth of Chinese MD can be explained by the CCP's desire to build the state's image in the eyes of domestic and international audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic and political indicators of state status, types, sizes, locations, partners of PLA combined exercise/training and HA/DR events Timing of HA/DR events Chinese media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined exercises/training will be conducted with partner states possessing high status indicators Timing of HA/DR operations coincident with China's "assertive" foreign policy behaviors Analysis of MD engagements will reveal greater symbolic vs. functional value of the events Media coverage will highlight success and capability while obscuring less favorable information

Figure 19: Analytical Framework for Understanding Growth of Chinese Military Diplomacy from 2002-2012

Readers should be aware of some considerations regarding data and methods limitations as they pertain to Chapters Three and Four. First, the bulk of this research design depends upon compiling the data figures required for the correlations from reputable sources. As mentioned, data on Chinese MD activity has been gleaned from multiple sources including China's defense white papers, Chinese media reporting, and reporting by international media and scholarly sources. Despite this effort, it is possible that some MD events during the period remained unreported by the PLA or the Chinese government or that my review simply failed to find them. Having searched through these primary and secondary sources, we are left with the age-old issue of not knowing what we do not know. While this situation potentially falls short of the ideal of data completeness, I judge the influence of any such missing data on the research findings to be

²¹⁷ Jason Dittmer, 2010. "Textual and Discourse Analysis." In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, edited by Dydia DeLyser, Steve Herbert, Stuart Aitken, Mike Crang and Linda McDowell, 274-286. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

minimal given the sufficiency of the extant data. Second, there are very real limitations in qualitative research methods when studying sensitive Chinese security topics. Ideally, one would use additional qualitative research methods to support quantitative correlation methods as a way of triangulating the findings of the research.²¹⁸ For example, interviews with relevant Chinese political or military authorities would be invaluable to the research project, as would interviews with Chinese scholars interested in the subject. However, reflexive and positionality considerations of my identity as a known military officer with an intelligence and regional affairs background ruled out such interaction because of ethical and administrative concerns.²¹⁹ Fortunately, these limitations on research methods are not grave enough to affect significantly the core methods requirements of the project. The compiled database and basic cartography tools such as choropleth charting will allow for the detection of patterns while additional literature will help support the interpretations of those patterns.

In summation, the literature review here provides depth to our understanding of the existing explanations for China's growing military diplomacy activity and introduces the methodological and analytical framework by which to begin exploring the strength of two of those explanations. With this preparatory work now complete, we turn to an examination of how protecting China's international economic development interests explain the growth of Chinese military diplomacy.

²¹⁸ Meghan Cope, 2010. "A History of Qualitative Research in Geography." In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, edited by D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang and L. McDowell, 32. See also, Gill Valentine, 2001. "At the Drawing Board: Developing a Research Design." In *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers*, edited by Melanie Limb and Claire Dwyer. London: Arnold, 45.

²¹⁹ Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, 2011. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc, 121.

CHAPTER THREE:
**Protecting International Economic Interests
as Explanation for the Growth of China's Military Diplomacy**

The hypothesis of this chapter is that China's perceived need to protect its international economic interests contributes significantly to explaining the growth of Chinese military diplomacy. This explanation, discussed in the literature review in the previous chapter, remains unsupported in the literature by any substantive empirical analysis. It is, in Gerring's methodological conception, an incomplete argument because it has thus far lacked testable hypotheses or propositions as well as well-developed links to a larger theoretical framework.²²⁰ The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is the formation of a complete argument regarding the assertions that China's desires to protect its international economic interests drives the expansion of its military diplomacy activity. We begin with a brief theoretical discussion of why China feels the need to protect its international economic interests before moving to a review of what and where those interests are. Once this theoretical and contextual background has been established, the heart of the chapter consists of examinations of the patterns of two representative cases of Chinese MD activity: the PLA's participation in combined exercises and the PLA's participation in international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. If the hypothesis is correct, one expects to find distinct correlations between the patterns of China's MD activities and its international economic interests. Conversely, a lack of such correlation could indicate the hypothesis is weak and requires re-examination.

Theoretical Foundations of the Argument

International relations theory is not only readily applicable to the question of why China perceives the need to protect its international economic interests, but also how it goes about

²²⁰ Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 58-59.

doing so. This section draws on the major international relations schools of realism and liberalism to provide the theoretical context required for the formation of a complete argument. Although tenets from either school alone would be sufficient for the purposes of this chapter, I include arguments from both schools for the sake of completeness. Both theoretical perspectives emphasize the role of anarchy and its influence on state behavior in the international system and that is where we begin.

Both realism and liberalism—along with their various sub-strains—accept the premise of anarchy as an inherent feature of the international system.²²¹ Anarchy, of course, refers to the “the absence of a central authority that sits above states and can protect them from each other.”²²² Realists typically argue that among all possible state interests, survival is the prerequisite interest that makes pursuit of all other interests even possible.²²³ Because sovereign states can never be sure of the intentions of other sovereign states under conditions of anarchy, they must first do what they can to provide for their own security.²²⁴ As Kenneth Waltz noted, “To achieve their objectives and maintain their security, units in a condition of anarchy—be they people, corporations, states, or whatever—must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves. Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in anarchic orders.”²²⁵ Waltz goes on to observe that while all states share the same fundamental interest of seeking survival through security, their capacity to do so varies from state to state and it is this variation in capacity that provides some order to the anarchic system.²²⁶ Along these

²²¹ Michael W. Doyle, 1997. *Ways of War and Peace*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 211 and 429.

²²² John J. Mearsheimer, 2014. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 3.

²²³ Kenneth N. Waltz, 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 91-92.

²²⁴ James W. Forsyth, 2011. "The Past as Prologue: Realist Thought and the Future of American Security Policy." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* Fall, 105. See also, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 105.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

²²⁶ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 97.

lines, Robert Gilpin notes, “The relationships among states have a high degree of order and although the international system is one of anarchy, the system does exercise an element of control over the behavior of states.”²²⁷ Systemic control over state behavior, however, is different for each state depending on that state’s comprehensive power ranking relative to other states. Under conditions of anarchy, no state is powerful enough to do whatever it wants all of the time. However, certain powerful states do so dominate the international system that they are less susceptible to being controlled by it while at the same time are able to use their power to influence the international system in a manner conducive to their interests. This situation reflects the enduring validity of Thucydides’ blunt, realist observation that “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”²²⁸ Consistent with the discussion in Chapter One regarding the purposes of military diplomacy, as states grow in power and accumulate greater interests abroad, they will seek means of “shaping” the international environment through their diplomatic and military instruments of power supportive of their national interest objectives. Military diplomacy is the manner by which the military instrument of power contributes to shaping the international environment during peacetime.

Anarchy in the international system creates a perpetual environment of suspicion and mistrust between states that directly influences their behaviors towards each other. Waltz described the international environment and the behaviors this environment prompts when he wrote:

The state among states, it is often said, conducts its affairs in the brooding shadow of violence. Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so—or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbors. Among states, the state of nature is a state of war. This is meant not in the sense that war constantly occurs but in the sense that, with each state deciding for itself whether or not to use force,

²²⁷ Robert Gilpin, 1981. *War and Change in World Politics*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 28.

²²⁸ Robert B. Strassler, ed., 1996. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. New York, New York: Free Press, 352.

war may at any time break out... Among men as among states, anarchy, or the absence of government, is associated with the occurrence of violence.²²⁹

John Mearsheimer laments, “This situation, which no one consciously designed or intended, is genuinely tragic. Great powers that have no reason to fight each other—that are merely concerned with their own survival—nevertheless have little choice but to pursue power and to seek to dominate the other states in the system.”²³⁰ The self-help nature of the anarchic system does not mean that states do not cooperate with each other when their various economic, political, and security interests coincide. However, when states do cooperate, they do so warily, always mindful of the relative benefits of such cooperation to other states. As Waltz again noted, “When faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states that feel insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not ‘Will both of us gain?’ but ‘Who will gain more?’”²³¹ The possibility always exists that states who gain the most relative to other states may one day be tempted to use their disparate gains in a manner harmful to the states with whom they cooperated in the first place. Anarchy-engendered suspicion of other states has very real implications for a state like China that is so dependent upon the free flow of global commerce for its own economic well-being. Such a state, according to the realist paradigm, has even greater incentive to protect its international economic interests and is unlikely to remain reliant upon the international security provided by other powerful states alone. Indeed, as mentioned in the literature review, the 2012 defense white paper for the first time declared protection of the state’s overseas interests is now a primary mission of the PLA.²³² At the same time, awareness of this tragic situation means Beijing must consider carefully the

²²⁹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 102.

²³⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 3.

²³¹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 105.

²³² Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

military diplomacy activities in which it engages and the strategic messages those activities communicate. Thus, in a nod to more classically realist behavior, Beijing consistently couches Chinese MD activities in terms of “building friendships,” “win-win relationships,” or “building trust” with other states, as well as promulgating a narrative that PLA activities contribute to world peace and prosperity.²³³

The wariness with which states view relative power gains by other states leads directly to one of the fundamental issues in international relations: the security dilemma.²³⁴ When states seek to secure their own survival against the potential predations of other states, they naturally invest a portion of their economic power into building military power. Likewise, states may form security alliances with other states that share similar security concerns. Unfortunately, these actions are often viewed with suspicion by neighboring states who cannot know with certainty the motivations and intentions for such investments. Even if all states have purely defensive purposes for their military capabilities, the potential threat posed by these military capabilities forces other states to invest in their own militaries. The situation manifests itself as a spiral of security tensions, arms races, and, occasionally, even war. In China’s case, Beijing has sought to downplay the “China threat” aspects of its rise, even as it has made uninterrupted investments in military modernization for nearly three decades.²³⁵ Part of downplaying the China threat narrative includes attempting to communicate a strategic message that the PLA will be a benign, even positive, actor on the international stage. This message is communicated by MD activities that contribute to addressing common transnational security concerns such as

²³³ Ibid. However, such language is also found in every one of China’s defense white papers and is not unique to the 2012 defense white paper.

²³⁴ Forsyth, “The Past as Prologue: Realist Thought and the Future of American Security Policy,” 105.

²³⁵ China’s military modernization has been, and continues to be, a major topic of scholarly and political analysis. See for example, Richard D. Fisher, Jr., 2008. *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International. See also, Larry M. Wortzel, 2013. *The Dragon Extends Its Reach: China's Military Power Goes Global*. Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books.

terrorism, piracy, and protection of the global commons. Thus, Beijing's realist approach assumes a certain human agency wherein leaders of other states can be persuaded that the PLA's international presence is not a threat.²³⁶

One final observation from the realist camp has direct bearing on China's military diplomacy practices within an international security environment dominated by the United States. Anarchy-fostered suspicion, power competition, and security dilemmas are problematic enough as they occur between small and medium powers but when these dynamics occur between great powers, the consequences can be devastating. Realist theory regarding power transition describes the likely turbulence the international system experiences when a rising power overtakes an established power.²³⁷ History—from ancient to modern—is replete with examples of the destabilizing effects of power competition between rising and established powers and the hegemonic wars that often follow. Thucydides credited Spartan fears of growing Athenian power for the start of the Peloponnesian War.²³⁸ Germany before World War I, and both Japan and Germany prior to World War II, are the most frequently cited modern cases.

Aaron Friedberg, in an article about the growing competition between the US and China written in 2005, describes how a state's growing power causes tensions in an established international system:

As a state's capabilities grow, its leaders tend to define their interests more expansively and to seek a greater degree of influence over what is going on around them. Rising powers seek not only to secure their frontiers but to reach out beyond them, taking steps to ensure access to markets, materials, and transportation routes; to protect their citizens far from home, defend their foreign friends and allies, and promulgate their values; and, in general, to have what they

²³⁶ David Bachman, personal communication, 3 February 2016.

²³⁷ For more on the origins of realist power transition theory, see A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1968).

²³⁸ Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 16.

consider to be their legitimate say in the affairs of their region and of the wider world.²³⁹

Furthermore, a hegemon's perceived decline is a rising power's opportunity to exert greater influence over world affairs. The trouble is that hegemons are typically reluctant to give away the benefits of their power status and nearly always fight to retain them.²⁴⁰ Thus, if the risk of major armed conflict is to be mitigated, circumspection is required of both the challenger and the hegemon in their respective international behaviors as they relate to the other. A rising power may be reluctant to continue placing its international commercial and other interests at the mercy of the hegemon. Yet moving too aggressively to protect those interests may arouse the suspicious attention of the hegemon and aggravate the security dilemma further. Furthermore, the manner in which both the hegemon and the challenger interact with third-party states—through military diplomacy, for example—will be a matter of mutual interest and the subject of continuous appraisal. Therefore, military diplomacy activities that seek to engage the hegemon as well as many other states in the system, may allow the rising challenger to navigate the fine line between securing its interests abroad and raising the ire of the militarily dominant state. With these realist tenets in mind, we now transition to an introduction of the contributions of liberal international relations theory to the argument of this chapter.

As mentioned, liberalism likewise accepts the anarchic nature of the international system, but views it somewhat differently than does realism. Michael Doyle explains the difference in liberal perceptions of anarchy when he writes, "Although states live under international anarchy, meaning the absence of a global government, they do not experience a general, state of war... The aims of the state, as do the aims of the individual, go beyond security to the protection

²³⁹ Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Future of US-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?" *International Security* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 19.

²⁴⁰ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 189-191, 197-198, 208-209.

and promotion of individual rights.”²⁴¹ Doyle continues, “Liberal states exist under anarchy, but their anarchy is different. Rather than being overwhelmingly a relative contest, a zero-sum game, their contest is a positive- or negative-sum game. They can win or lose together.”²⁴² The self-help nature of the realist paradigm gives way to acceptance of the premise that states can profitably cooperate in pursuit of common interests, and that they may even do so without the constant wariness of relative gains inherent in the realist view. One reason this is possible is because states are differentiated by more than their capacity for self-help. States also differentiate themselves by their levels of domestic economic and political liberality, with similarly liberal states finding cooperation much easier with each other than with illiberal states.²⁴³ Doyle summarizes:

If two or more liberal societies coexist in the international system, then rather than have a security rationale governing all interaction—as it must for rational states in a state of war—other criteria of policy come into play. Liberal societies compete to become rich, glorious, healthy, cultured, all without expecting to have to resolve their competition through war. Formal and informal institutions such as international organization and law then take on a greater role in competition with the warriors and diplomats who dominate the Realist stage.²⁴⁴

In other words, states can work together in ways that mitigate the security dilemma-causing effects of anarchy, allowing them to pursue other mutual interests including economic growth through international commerce. Pursuit of economic growth through commerce leads to increasing economic interdependence between states. In theory, economic interdependence has a pacifying effect on the international system.²⁴⁵ In practice however, economic interdependence is still subject to buffeting from multiple forces stemming from on-going competition between

²⁴¹ Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, 211.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 210.

²⁴⁵ For further extended analysis of this topic, see Bruce Russett and John Oneal, 2001. *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

states. Scholars commonly cite the tremendous economic interdependence that existed between states prior to World War I to exemplify how interdependence does not necessarily preclude conflict.²⁴⁶ Modern liberal theory concedes that economic interdependence is necessary but not always sufficient to achieve the pacifying and liberalizing effects described here.²⁴⁷

To bolster the benefits of economic interdependence, states—especially since the end of World War II—build international institutions or regimes. International regimes are “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations.”²⁴⁸ In the absence of an overarching enforcement authority in the international system, international institutions and regimes make it possible for states to mitigate the danger and uncertainty inherent in the international system and to cooperate in mutually beneficial ways. Robert Keohane writes:

Thus international regimes are useful to governments. Far from being threats to governments, they permit governments to attain objectives that would otherwise be unattainable. They do so in part by facilitating intergovernmental agreements. Regimes facilitate agreements by raising the anticipated costs of violating others’ property rights, by altering transaction costs through the clustering of issues, and by providing reliable information to members. Regimes are relatively efficient institutions, compared with the alternative of having a myriad of unrelated agreements, since their principles, rules and institutions create linkages among issues that give actors incentives to achieve mutually beneficial agreements. They thrive in situations where states have common as well as conflicting issues on multiple, overlapping issues and where externalities are difficult but not impossible to deal with through bargaining. Where these conditions exist, international regimes can be of value to states.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, 241.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 284.

²⁴⁸ Robert O. Keohane, 2005. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 57.

²⁴⁹ Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 97.

States enter into international institutions and regimes out of rational self-interest and they stay because the benefits thus derived outweigh the combined material and reputational costs of operating outside the institutions.²⁵⁰

The US played the major role in establishing many of the international institutions and regimes born in the wake of World War II. These include the United Nations and the Bretton Woods economic agreements that spawned the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that later became the World Trade Organization (WTO). As Russett and Oneal note, “These global institutions deserve much credit for the enormous growth in international commerce and interdependence in the second half of the twentieth century.”²⁵¹ The US was also instrumental in the formation of regional institutions and regimes. For example, the US supported the economic integration of Western Europe by the manner in which it administered Marshall Plan assistance through the Organization for European Economic Cooperation.²⁵² At the same time, the US-led security institution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) served to foster a security environment conducive to further European economic interdependence. Ultimately, the combination of economic interdependence and international institutions formed a “virtuous cycle” that led to the creation, and expansion, of the European Union.²⁵³ A continent that spawned two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century has become a model for the pacifying effects of economic interdependence and international institutions.

Although East Asia has not seen the formation of multilateral security institutions similar to NATO in Europe, the US security presence in the form of bilateral alliances and regional

²⁵⁰ Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 106-107.

²⁵¹ Russett and Oneal, 2001. *Triangulating Peace*, 21-22.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 24-28.

presence have helped maintain a security environment conducive to the formation of regional institutions and regimes facilitating commerce, diplomacy, and a wide range of other interstate cooperation. After some initial caution, China has embraced participation in international institutions and regimes ranging from the United Nations to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) regime, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the World Trade Organization.²⁵⁴ By 2006, China held membership in more than 130 inter-governmental international organizations and was a signatory to more than 250 international multilateral treaties.²⁵⁵ The US-led liberal environment fostered the storied economic growth of many Asian states, including—perhaps, especially—China’s.²⁵⁶ Relative regional stability allowed China to pursue an export-oriented growth model similar to those followed by Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and other Asian states. The results, as generally acknowledged, have been spectacular. China’s GDP increased more than tenfold since 1978, allowing it to claim the title of world’s largest exporter in 2010, and to surpass the US’ GDP, on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis, to become the world’s largest economy in 2014.²⁵⁷ What’s more, membership in regional institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum later facilitated China’s growing participation in early military diplomacy activities, first through security dialogues, then military exercise observations, and then military exercise participation. Therefore, the value of these institutions and regimes for China has been manifest in both economic and cooperative security terms.

²⁵⁴ G. John Ikenberry, 2001. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 242-244.

²⁵⁵ Fred C. Bergsten, Bates Gill, Nicholas R. Lardy, and Derek Mitchell, 2006. *China: The Balance Sheet*. New York, New York: Public Affairs. 140.

²⁵⁶ Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell, "How China Sees America: The Sum of Beijing's Fears," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 5 (2012): 34.

²⁵⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, 2016. *The World Factbook: China*. January 11. Accessed January 30, 2016. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>.

One indicator of liberalism's influence on China's foreign policy conceptions was the formulation of the "New Security Concept" at the end of the 1990s which envisioned a move away from the self-help realist approach to security towards a more comprehensive and cooperative conception. Elements of this concept were floated in various white papers and leadership speeches as early as 1997, but in July 2002, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a position paper on the subject that more fully introduced the approach:

The new security concept is, in essence, to rise above one-sided security and seek common security through mutually beneficial cooperation. It is a concept established on the basis of common interests and is conducive to social progress... Under the new historical conditions [the end of the Cold War], the meaning of the security concept has evolved to be multifold with its contents extending from military and political to economic, science and technology, environment, culture and many other areas. The means to seek security are being diversified. Strengthening dialogue and cooperation is regarded as the fundamental approach to common security. The September 11 incident has glaringly demonstrated that security threats in today's world tend to be multi-faceted and global in scope. Countries share greater common security interests and are more interdependent on one another for security.²⁵⁸

The position paper goes on to cite the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as successful examples of institutions that enable members to address shared security challenges including territorial disputes, terrorism, and non-traditional security issues.²⁵⁹ As we shall see, individual ASEAN and SCO states have been important participants in Chinese military diplomacy as well.

One final, but important, tenet of liberalism deserves further attention before moving on because it has particular contextual bearing on China's practice of military diplomacy. As alluded to in the observation that liberal states more easily cooperate with other liberal states, democracy plays a significant role in interstate relations. Throughout much of history, states were generally monarchic, autocratic, or otherwise authoritarian and enjoyed relatively limited

²⁵⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2002. *China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept*. July 31. Accessed January 30, 2016. <http://www.china-un.org/eng/xw/t27742.htm>.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

social, economic and political liberality. However, over a period of roughly two centuries, states began to differentiate themselves according to their perceived levels of liberalism. Liberalism in this case means the extent to which a society has a say in its own governance—its level of democratic participation. These perceptions of state liberalism began to influence how states related to each other in the international system.²⁶⁰ Thus, from about 1945 onward, liberal democratic states following free market capitalist policies found themselves on one side of an international bifurcation in contrast to autocratic states following various forms of command economic policies.²⁶¹

The most important feature of this liberal versus illiberal bifurcation is the observation that, thus far at least, liberal states do not use force to resolve disputes with other liberal states.²⁶² However, the same does not appear to be true when it comes to the use of force between liberal and illiberal states. The open nature of participative governance in liberal democracies contrasts sharply with the opaque, closed governance in illiberal states. These governance differences create “presumptions of amity” between liberal states but “presumptions of enmity” between liberal and illiberal states.²⁶³ The presumption of amity has allowed liberal states to form a “zone of peace,” membership in which is open to states transitioning to liberal governance models.²⁶⁴ The presumption of enmity explains continuing tensions between liberal states and those states deemed illiberal. Doyle writes, “The very constitutional restraint, international respect for individual rights, and shared commercial interests that establish grounds for peace among Liberal states establish grounds for additional conflict irrespective of actual threats to

²⁶⁰ Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, 211.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 210-211. See also Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 226-227.

²⁶³ Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, 282-283.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 260.

national security in relations between Liberal and non-Liberal societies.”²⁶⁵ For authoritarian China this means that although the country experiences tremendous economic benefits from the liberal system, politically-speaking, it can never be a full-fledged member of that system, enjoying membership in the zone of peace, until such time that the authoritarian Chinese Communist Party starts down a path towards domestic political liberalization.²⁶⁶ The presumption of enmity thus endures, or at the very least confounds a presumption of amity, and China will therefore continue to feel a need to protect its international interests in a system not of its creation nor under its ideologically derived protection.

In sum, tenets from both realist and liberal theoretical schools help explain both the context and motivations for China’s military diplomacy activity, especially as they pertain to why China might wish to protect its overseas interests. Anarchy is the core factor motivating China’s protection of its overseas economic interests in both schools, while other school-unique precepts help explain China’s precarious position in the current international system. Realism predicts tensions in China’s international relations because of zero-sum security dilemma dynamics and because of China’s status as a rising power in a US-led international order. Liberalism predicts tensions in China’s international relations because even though China has benefitted economically from the liberal international order, its authoritarian political system and lack of political liberalization means it cannot fully benefit from accepted membership in the liberal “zone of peace.” Both theories provide insights into why and how China might employ military diplomacy to protect its overseas interests. With the theoretical context now set, the dissertation now turns to a brief overview of the overseas interests China might want to protect.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 284.

²⁶⁶ Yong Deng, 2008. *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 29.

China's Overseas Interests

The period of this dissertation's analysis—2002 to 2012—saw several milestone developments in China's economic relationship with the world. However, in order to understand the historical context of these milestones and their relationship with the expansion of China's military diplomacy, a brief review of China's economic opening to the world is useful. Deng Xiaoping's introduction of the "Reform and Opening Up" [*Gaige Kaifang*] concepts, presented at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in December of 1978, kicked off China's return to the world economic stage. Deng and his reform-minded political allies, implemented a series of domestic market reforms designed to stimulate economic growth and also began promoting the value of foreign trade as a means of securing advanced technology and foreign expertise across a broad range of endeavors.²⁶⁷ In August of 1980, Beijing authorized the establishment of the first four Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the cities of Zhuhai, Xiamen, Shenzhen, and Shantou in an effort to leverage Foreign Direct Investment capital in the economic development of the country.²⁶⁸ Despite somewhat rocky starts, these special economic zones eventually succeeded in attracting significant foreign investment and, in 1984, 14 other coastal cities and three regions were also declared SEZs.²⁶⁹ Through the economic and political turbulence during the remainder of the 1980s, these SEZs succeeded in attracting ever-growing inflows of FDI capital, allowing them to serve as domestic economic engines that transformed their cities and their regions into major manufacturing and export hubs. As China's export-fueled economy grew through the 1990s, it soon became apparent that the state's continued

²⁶⁷ June Teufel Dreyer, 2004. *China's Political System: Modernization and Tradition*. Fourth. New York, New York: Pearson Longman, 110-111.

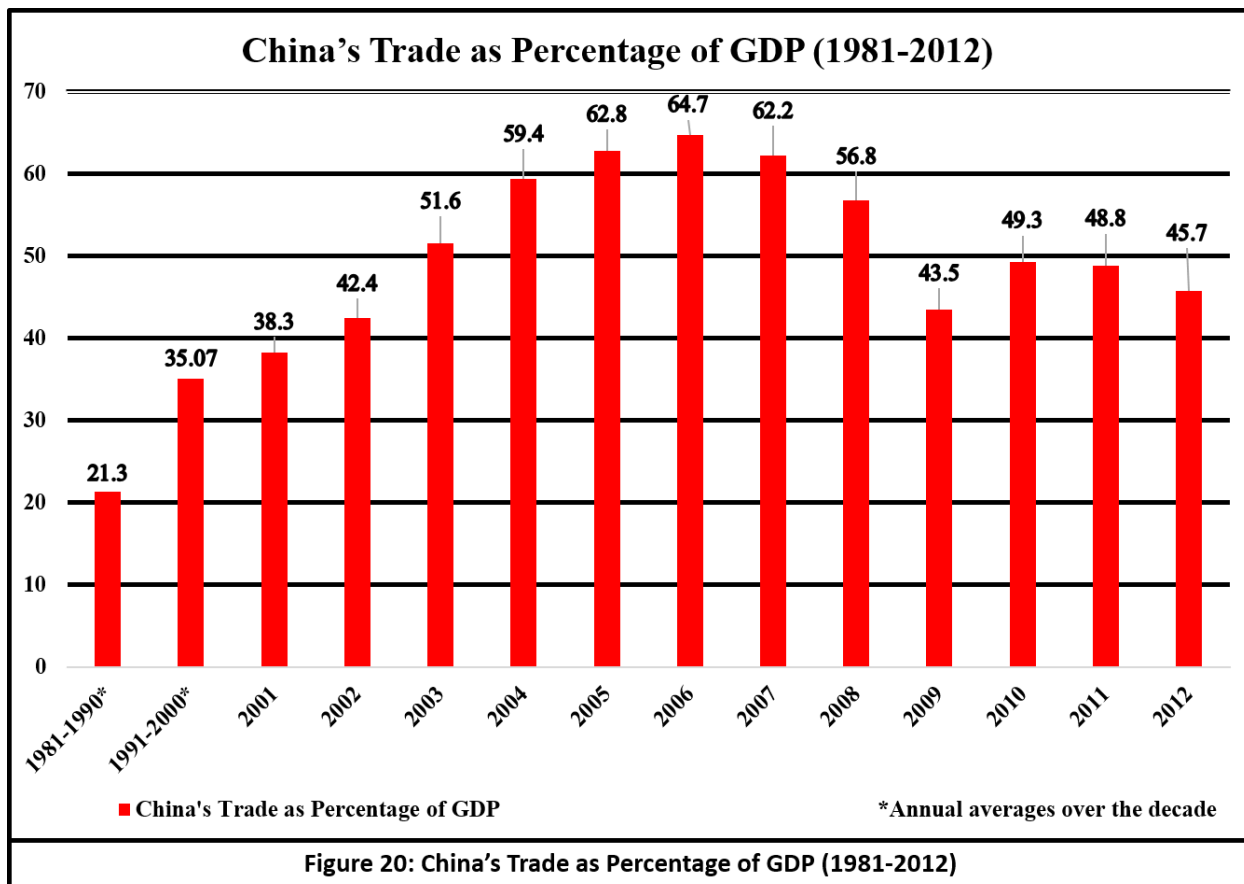
²⁶⁸ Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016. *China Economic Reform Timeline*. February 6. Accessed February 6, 2016. <http://csis.org/blog/china-economic-reform-timeline>.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. See also, Jonathan D. Spence, 1990. *The Search for Modern China*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

economic growth required reliable access to global markets and willingness for its own markets to be more reliably open to the rest of the globe. To this end, China pursued membership in the World Trade Organization over a period of several years, successfully acceding to membership on December 11, 2001. This accession punctuated a 22-year whirlwind of political, economic, and social reforms that literally transformed the country, moving it from economic backwater to economic miracle and positioning the country to become a global economic engine in the coming decade.

At this point, it is useful to consider the strategic effects of the nature of China's economic growth. China's macroeconomic policies emphasizing export-oriented growth succeeded in fostering China's well-noted, sustained, economic boom with annual GDP growth averaging close to 10%. From the beginning of Deng's reforms, China's GDP growth has been tied directly—and increasingly—to the growth of its international trade. Figure 20 provides readers an overview of the importance of international trade to China's economy by charting World Bank data on China's trade as a percentage of its GDP.²⁷⁰ As Deng's Reform and Opening policies commenced in earnest, the decade from 1981 to 1990 saw year over year increases in trade as percentage of GDP, with an average for the decade of 21.3%. The same annual growth patterns continued during the period from 1991 to 2000 with the decade average rising to 35%. During the focus decade of this dissertation, China's trade to GDP percentage surged to the highest levels in its modern history, reaching an astounding 64.7% in 2006, and averaging 53.1% over the decade. With international commerce playing such an oversized role in China's economic well-being, it is no wonder that Beijing's consciousness regarding potentially disruptive threats to that commerce increased accordingly. The economic well-being

²⁷⁰ The World Bank, 2016. *World DataBank*. January 8. Accessed January 8, 2016. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>.



of the state required Chinese strategists to assess a wider range of security conditions outside of China's borders to a new degree. These security considerations now included the stability of the source states of raw materials headed to Chinese factories, the market states that were the destinations for finished Chinese products, as well as the shipping routes between China and these states.²⁷¹ Furthermore, China also needed to be cognizant of the security of the hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens now traveling and living abroad who facilitated all of this commerce.²⁷²

These security considerations were further influenced by another key policy development that took place in 2002, the first full year after China's entry into the WTO regime. This factor has significant causal implications for both the surge in trade through the middle of the 2000s

²⁷¹ Jonas Parello-Plesner and Mathieu Duchatel, 2015. *China's Strong Arm: Protecting Citizens and Assets Abroad*. New York, New York: Routledge, 10.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 24.

and for the corresponding growth in the PLA's military diplomacy activity. Prior to 2002, China was attracting huge sums of inbound Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from foreign corporate entities eager to benefit from China's low labor costs and from access to Chinese markets that were anticipated to grow in concert with the overall economy. However, outflows of Chinese FDI abroad remained comparatively limited through 2002 (see Figure 19).²⁷³ Chinese state and private enterprises typically stayed home, acquiring only very limited stakes in foreign corporations, manufacturing enterprises, or natural and energy resource enterprises through the 1980s and 1990s. This domestic orientation changed during the late 1990s and early 2000s when Chinese leaders began advocating a new "going out" policy encouraging Chinese enterprises to expand their business ventures overseas.²⁷⁴ Jiang Zemin's report to the 16th Communist Party Congress in 2002—Jiang's final report before ceding power to Hu Jintao at that same congress—officially introduced the "going out" policy:

In response to the new situation of economic globalization and China's entry into the WTO, we should take part in international economic and technological cooperation and competition on a broader scale, in more spheres and on a higher level, make the best use of both international and domestic markets, optimize the allocation of resources, expand the space for development and accelerate reform and development by opening up...

...Implementation of the strategy of "going out" is an important measure taken in the new stage of opening up. We should encourage and help relatively competitive enterprises with various forms of ownership to invest abroad in order to increase export of goods and labor services and bring about a number of strong multinational enterprises and brand names. We should take an active part in regional economic exchanges and cooperation. In opening wider to the outside world, we must pay great attention to safeguarding our national economic security.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Outbound FDI is also called Overseas Direct Investment (ODI) in various sources. UNCTAD documents use the terms 'FDI outflows' and 'FDI inflows.'

²⁷⁴ David Shambaugh, 2013. *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 174-177.

²⁷⁵ Zemin Jiang, 2002. "16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 2002." *Full Text of Jiang Zemin's Report at 16th Party Congress*. November 14. Accessed February 10, 2016. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/49007.htm>.

Readers will note that in the same paragraph encouraging “competitive enterprises” to invest abroad, Jiang also explicitly declares the importance of paying “great attention to safeguarding [China’s] national economic security.”

With Beijing’s declaration of the “going out” policy in late 2002, there was a galvanizing effect on China’s FDI outflows through the remainder of the decade. Figure 21 uses data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to chart the growth of China’s FDI

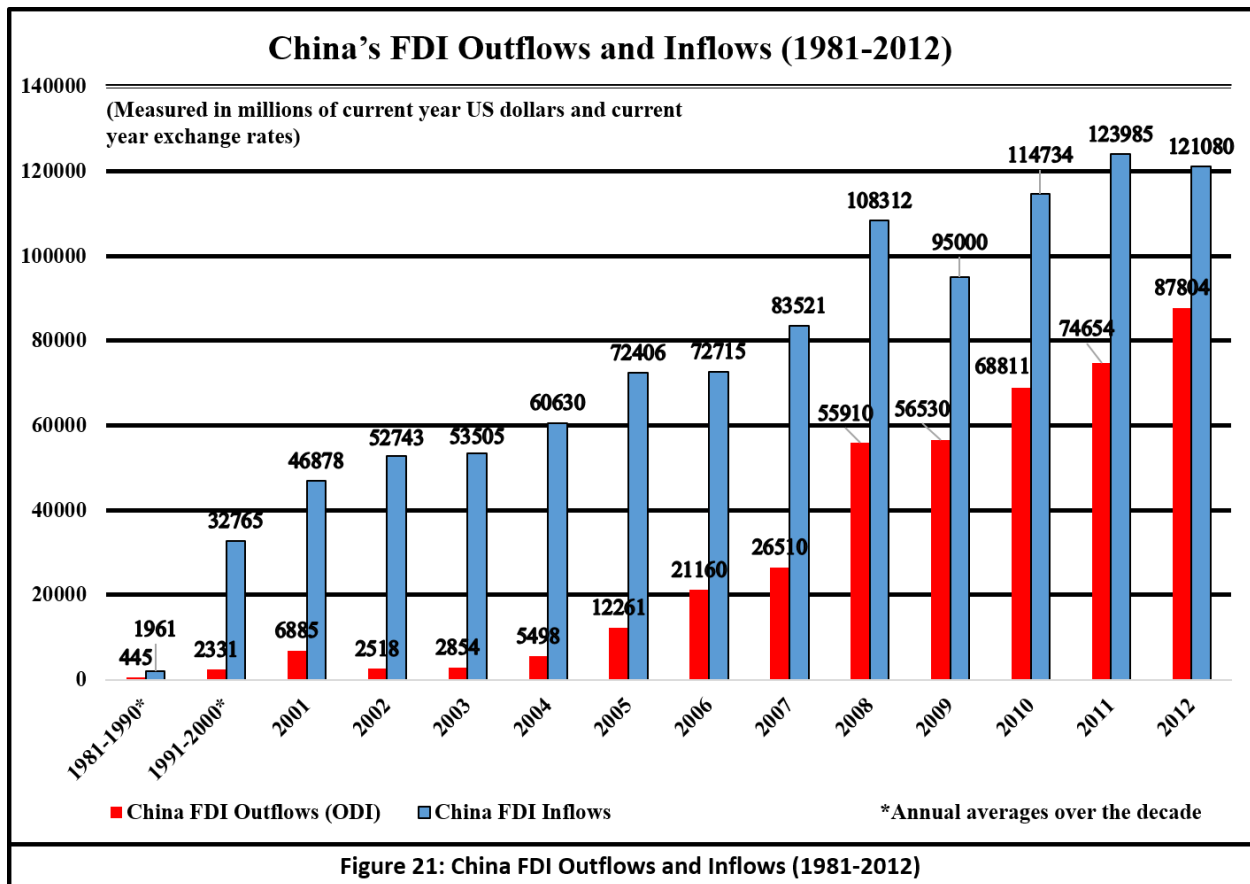


Figure 21: China FDI Outflows and Inflows (1981-2012)

outflows and inflows from 1981 to 2012.²⁷⁶ While China’s annual FDI outflows for the decade of 1981-1990 averaged a mere \$445 million, and averaged \$2.3 billion annually for the decade from 1991-2000, the average for the decade from 2002 to 2012 jumped roughly 15 times to \$32.67 billion per year. Acquisition of foreign assets between 2007 and 2008 alone jumped

²⁷⁶ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2016. *UNCTAD Statistics*. January 15. Accessed January 15, 2016. <http://unctad.org/en/Pages/Statistics.aspx>.

\$29.4 billion in a single year, more than the total FDI outflows for the entire decade from 1991-2000. By the end of 2012, China's international economic interests now included full or partial ownership of foreign interests valued in the hundreds of billions of dollars. David Shambaugh reports that in 2010, the top four destinations of China's FDI outflows were "pass through" locales (Hong Kong, British Virgin Islands, Grand Cayman Islands, and Luxemburg) from which these funds were further dispersed with very little subsequent transparency.²⁷⁷ However, Destinations five through ten were Australia, Sweden, the United States, Canada, Singapore, and Russia, states in which Chinese FDI outflows went to purchasing significant stakes in businesses, natural resources, property, expanded business operations and other real assets.²⁷⁸ The security of China's interests in these states and many others, already a concern in Beijing, soon received even greater attention from senior leadership.

With China's rapidly growing international interests in mind, President Hu Jintao gave a speech to the members of the Central Military Commission (CMC) in December of 2004, in which he declared the need for the PLA to be prepared to conduct four "New Historic Missions."²⁷⁹ As outlined by Nathan and Scobell, the four missions were:

First, 'providing an important guarantee of strength for the party to consolidate its ruling position'; second, 'providing a strong security guarantee for safeguarding the period of important strategic opportunity for national development'; third, 'providing powerful strategic support for safeguarding national interests'; and fourth, 'playing an important role in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development.'

These new historic missions provided the PLA with a new "strategic guiding theory" that were to provide the general direction of subsequent force structure and modernization efforts.²⁸⁰ As the Hoover Institution's James Mulvenon wrote of the new historic missions, "PLA planners now

²⁷⁷ Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*, 181.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Nathan and Scobell, *China's Search for Security*, 282.

²⁸⁰ James Mulvenon, 2009. "Chairman Hu and the PLA's "New Historic Missions"." *China Leadership Monitor* (Hoover Institution) Winter (27): 9.

have a conceptual framework for broad requirements, ranging from defense of sea lines of communication for energy security to international peacekeeping operations.”²⁸¹ In particular, the fourth of these missions had direct, albeit underspecified, applicability to securing China’s international economic interests. Subsequent parsing of this mission introduced Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) as components of the fourth historic mission. The 2008 defense white paper for example, associated several military diplomacy activities with MOOTW including international security cooperation, counterterrorism training, peacekeeping, combined exercises, and disaster relief.

China’s defense white papers continued to incorporate language regarding these new historic missions over the next three iterations, culminating in the 2012 defense white paper that, readers will recall, was now officially entitled “The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces.” The “diversified employment” referring in large part to the growing list of international activities now being conducted by the PLA. It is useful to highlight again the subsection devoted to protection of overseas interests in the 2012 defense white paper because it clearly identifies the overseas interests of most concern to the PLA. The paper declares:

With the gradual integration of China's economy into the world economic system, overseas interests have become an integral component of China's national interests. Security issues are increasingly prominent, involving *overseas energy and resources*, *strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs)*, and *Chinese nationals and legal persons overseas*. Vessel protection at sea, evacuation of Chinese nationals overseas, and emergency rescue have become important ways and means for the PLA to safeguard national interests and fulfill China's international obligations (italics added).²⁸²

A review of each of these overseas interests will allow us to begin mapping them, the first step towards correlating these concerns with the activities in our two case studies.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Information Office of the State Council, 2013. *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

China's energy needs have surged commensurate with its economic growth. Although roughly two-thirds of China's energy continues to come from coal, an energy resource that China possesses in abundance, its dependence upon oil and petroleum products has grown rapidly over the last 30 years, outpacing its domestic production capabilities since 1993 when China became a net importer of oil.²⁸³ By 2009, China had become the second largest petroleum importer in the world after the US, importing some 56% of its oil.²⁸⁴ By 2012, crude oil and other energy-related fossil fuels accounted for nearly 18% of China's total imports—making fossil fuels China's largest import category by far—more than double the next largest import category of integrated circuits which stands at 7.6% of total imports.²⁸⁵ In 2012, oil accounted for 20% of China's total energy consumption and, despite government efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in favor of cleaner alternatives, China's oil consumption is forecast to continue growing well into the future.²⁸⁶ In 2013, China surpassed the US to become the largest global importer of oil and petroleum products.²⁸⁷ China's use of natural gas has likewise burgeoned. China became a net importer of natural gas in 2007 with imports in 2010 accounting for 16% of total gas consumption in China.²⁸⁸ Although natural gas accounted for only 5% of total energy consumption in 2012, use of this resource was already growing at an annual compounded rate of 14% and analysts expect natural gas to surpass 10% of the state's total energy consumption by

²⁸³ Nathan and Scobell, *China's Search for Security*, 172. See also: Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*, 162-164.

²⁸⁴ US Energy Information Administration, 2015. *China: International Energy Data and Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Energy, 1.

²⁸⁵ The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2016. *China*. February 16. Accessed February 10, 2016. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/chn/>.

²⁸⁶ US Energy Information Administration, 2015. *China: International Energy Data and Analysis*, 2-3.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

2020.²⁸⁹ Figure 22 draws on data from MIT's Observatory of Economic Complexity database to depict China's top import origin states for both oil and liquefied natural gas respectively.

China's importation of energy resources is followed by its importation of a broad range of metal and mineral resources that feed the nation's steel mills and factories, which then turn them into finished goods. Iron ore is the most significant of these resources, accounting for 5.2% of China's \$1.42 trillion in imports for the year 2012, placing it third on the total list of imports by value behind petroleum and integrated circuits.²⁹⁰ Iron ore imports have been crucial for feeding the steel mills that provide the steel used in everything from transforming China's urban skyscraper landscapes, to building the merchant marine fleets that transport China's exports abroad, and to the automobiles now being purchased by the country's growing middle class. Gold is the second most imported metal resource, and fourth on the total list of all imports by value, accounting for 3.6% of all Chinese imports in 2012.²⁹¹ Refined copper and copper ore are the third and fourth most imported metal resources, accounting for 1.8% and 1.2% of all Chinese imports in 2012 respectively.²⁹² Because it will not be possible to include all of China's metal imports in this analysis of China's military diplomacy, I have chosen two of the most significant: iron ore and refined copper. Gold was considered based on its ranking as the second most valuable natural resource import, but ultimately rejected because its import sources are not as clear-cut as they are for iron ore and refined copper. For example, Hong Kong is by far the largest origin of China's gold imports, but China in turn is one of the largest origins of Hong

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 15. See also International Energy Agency, 2012. *Oil and Gas Security: People's Republic of China*. Paris: International Energy Agency, 14.

²⁹⁰ The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2016. *China*. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/chn/>.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

Kong's gold imports.²⁹³ Figure 23 depicts the top ten sources of China's iron ore and refined copper imports for the year 2012.

Beyond examination of select energy and natural resource trading relationships, and given China's high trade as percentage of GDP ratios through the decade of 2002 to 2012, this analysis will also benefit from consideration of China's major trading partners. Not only will this allow for another level of correlation between China's combined exercises and its international economic interests, it will also set the stage for better visualizing the global transportation routes that support this commerce. In 2012, China exported some \$2.12 trillion in goods, with computers, broadcasting equipment, and telephones ranked first, second, and third, respectively, by value of items exported in that year and accounting for a combined 19.6% of all Chinese exports.²⁹⁴ Bearing in mind the major imports previously mentioned—petroleum and fossil fuels, integrated circuits, and iron ore—by 2012, China had become the world's largest trading state, with an tremendous variety of Chinese products making their way to every state on earth and many of those states, in turn, exporting to China. Figure 24 depicts China's top ten export destinations and top ten import origins by percentage share of each.²⁹⁵

When considering China's overseas economic interests, one must also include China's interest in the modes of transportation and the global routes by which China's trade takes place.

Elizabeth Economy and Michael Levi write:

Popular discussion of how China's natural resource challenges collide with international security typically focuses on the countries in which its companies do business. But the more fundamental challenge facing China's resource security may have less to do with whether those companies control overseas resources and more to do with whether they can get those resources back to China. Today we take it for granted that resources produced in one part of the world can easily be shipped to any other that wants them. But

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

this is far from a given, and it is certainly not something Chinese strategists take for granted over the long haul.²⁹⁶

China depends upon maritime transportation for roughly 90% of all its trade goods and 80% of all oil imports are delivered by sea and must transit both the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea.²⁹⁷ Indeed, China's reliance on the Malacca straits for its energy and trade flows has led President Hu Jintao to describe the strategic situation as China's "Malacca dilemma."²⁹⁸ In actuality, although the Malacca Strait garners most of the attention, China also has an Indian Ocean dilemma, since the majority of its Middle East (energy) and Europe (commerce) traffic must transit that maritime space even before it reaches the Malacca Strait.²⁹⁹ One notes that India and the US are the states that currently operate the most capable naval forces in the Indian Ocean. One also notes that since World War II, the United States has been the major provider of sea-lane security around the world, but this arrangement is dependent upon the continuing political will of the US to bear this cost.³⁰⁰ China must consider its exposure to its various chokepoint dilemmas in two ways: first, in case of conflict with the US (or Japan, India, etc) the US or its allies could effectively shut down China's maritime commerce from Europe, Africa, and the Middle East transiting through these various straits. Second, in case the US no longer wishes to unilaterally bear the cost of securing the sea lanes, China, if unprepared, may be ill-equipped to provide security for its own maritime commerce passing through these vulnerable regions.³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ Elizabeth C. Economy and Michael Levi, 2014. *By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 166

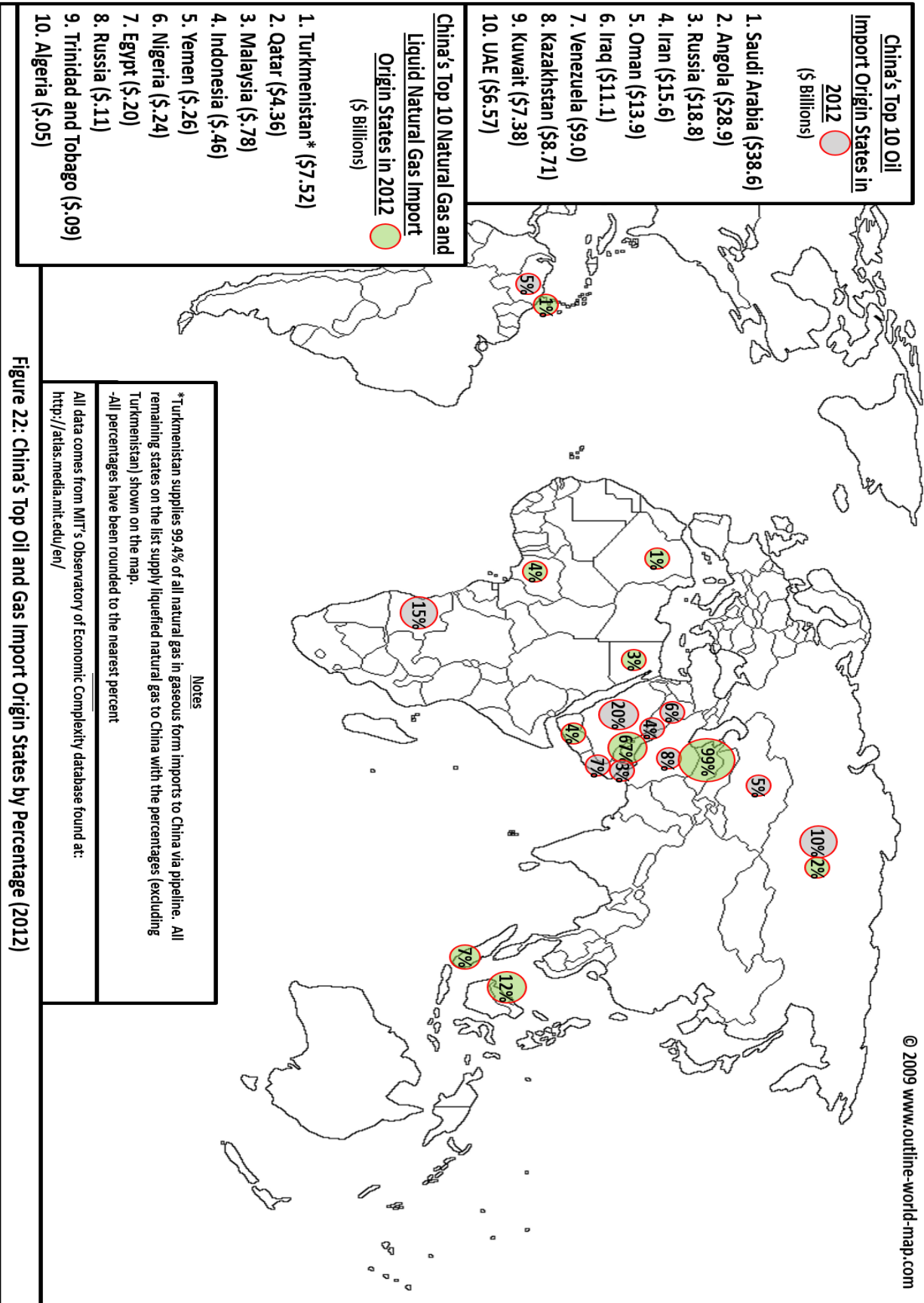
²⁹⁷ Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*, 291. See also: US Department of Defense, 2011. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*. Annual Report to Congress, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 57.

²⁹⁸ Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*, 163.

²⁹⁹ David Bachman, personal communication, 3 February 2016.

³⁰⁰ Economy and Levi, 2014. *By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World*, 167.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*



Notes

*Turkmenistan supplies 99.4% of all natural gas in gaseous form imports to China via pipeline. All remaining states on the list supply liquefied natural gas to China with the percentages (excluding Turkmenistan) shown on the map.

-All percentages have been rounded to the nearest percent

All data comes from MIT's Observatory of Economic Complexity database found at: <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/>

Figure 22: China's Top Oil and Gas Import Origin States by Percentage (2012)

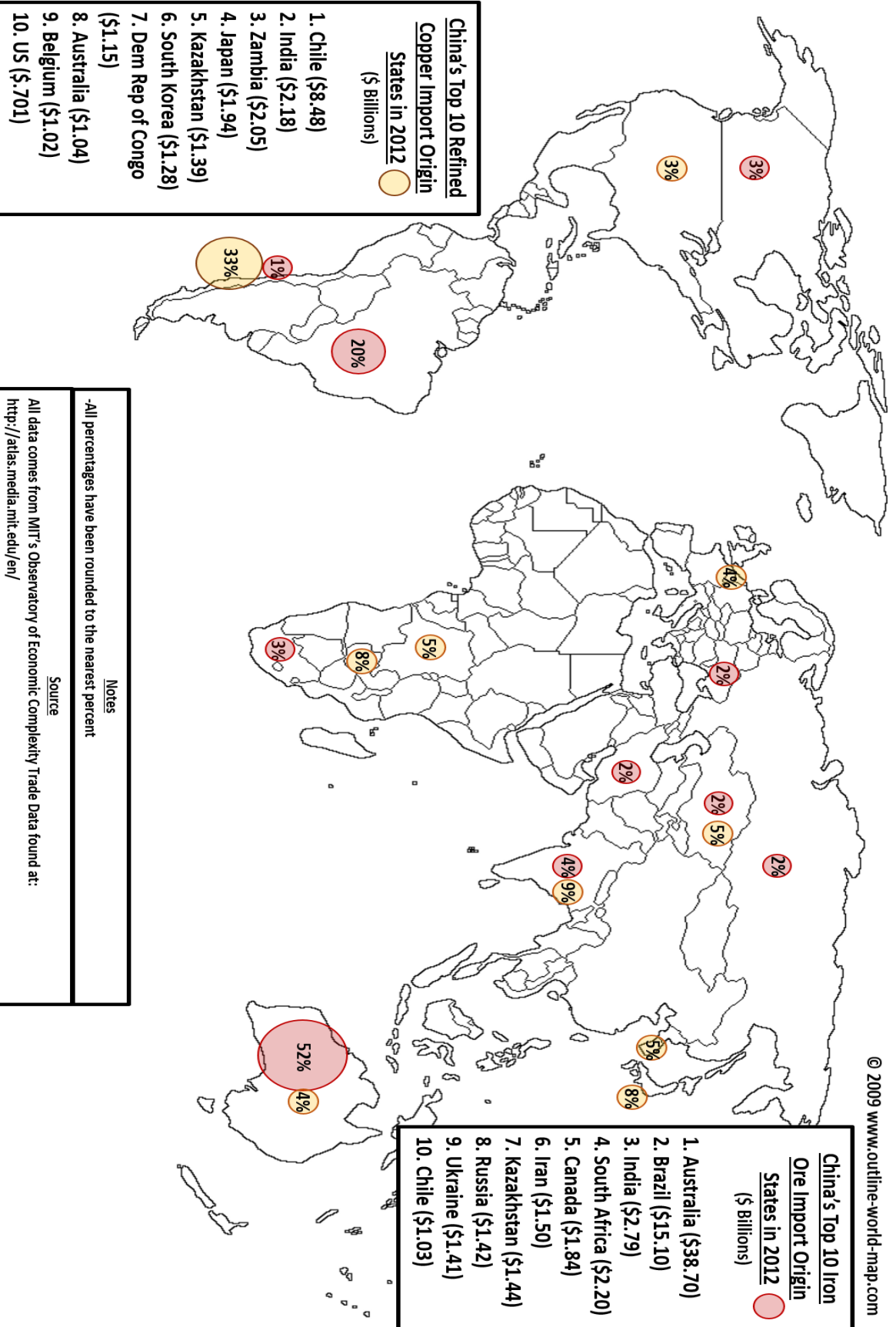


Figure 23: China's Top Iron Ore and Refined Copper Import Origin States by Percentage (2012)

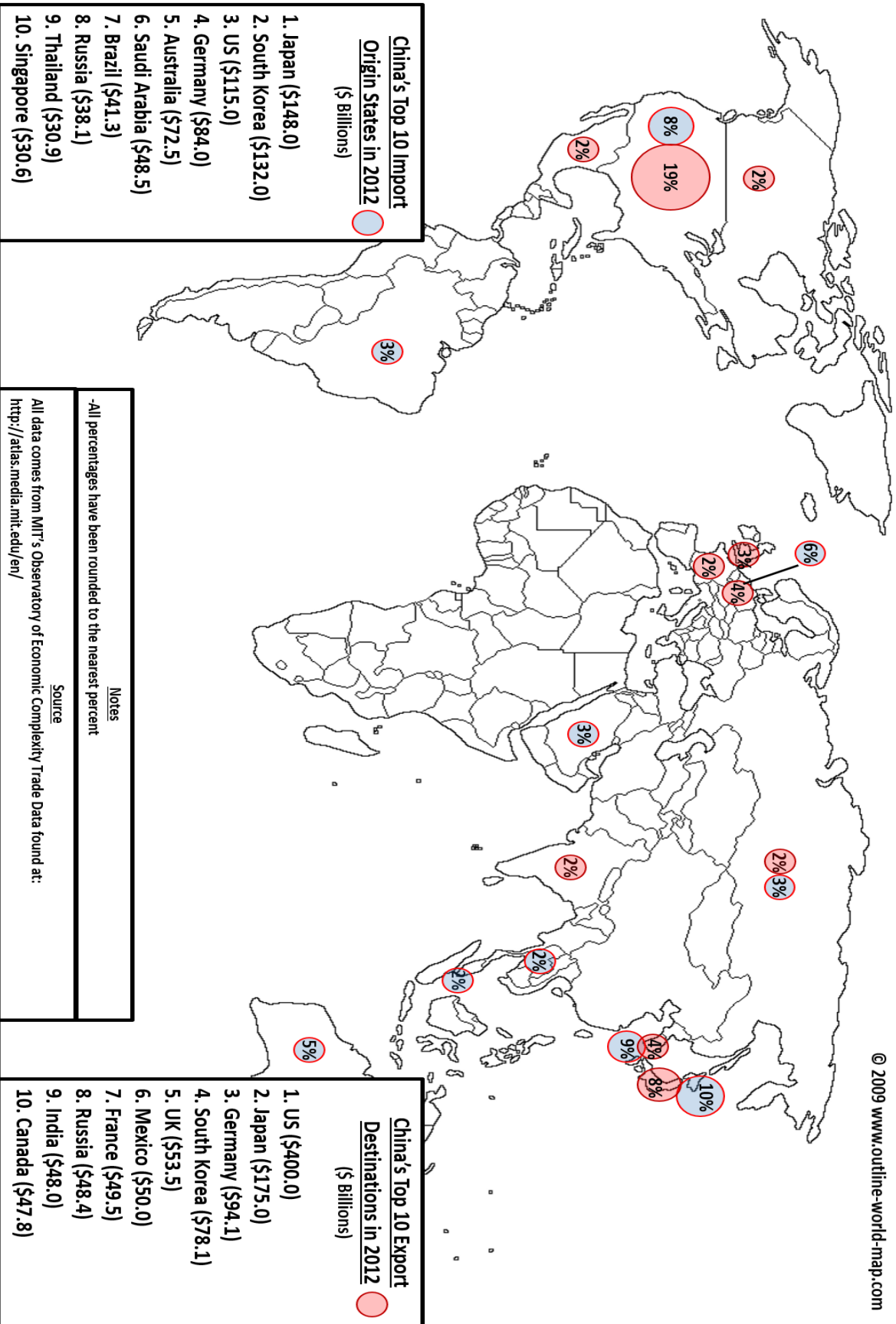


Figure 24: China's Top Export Destinations and Import Origins by Percentage (2012)

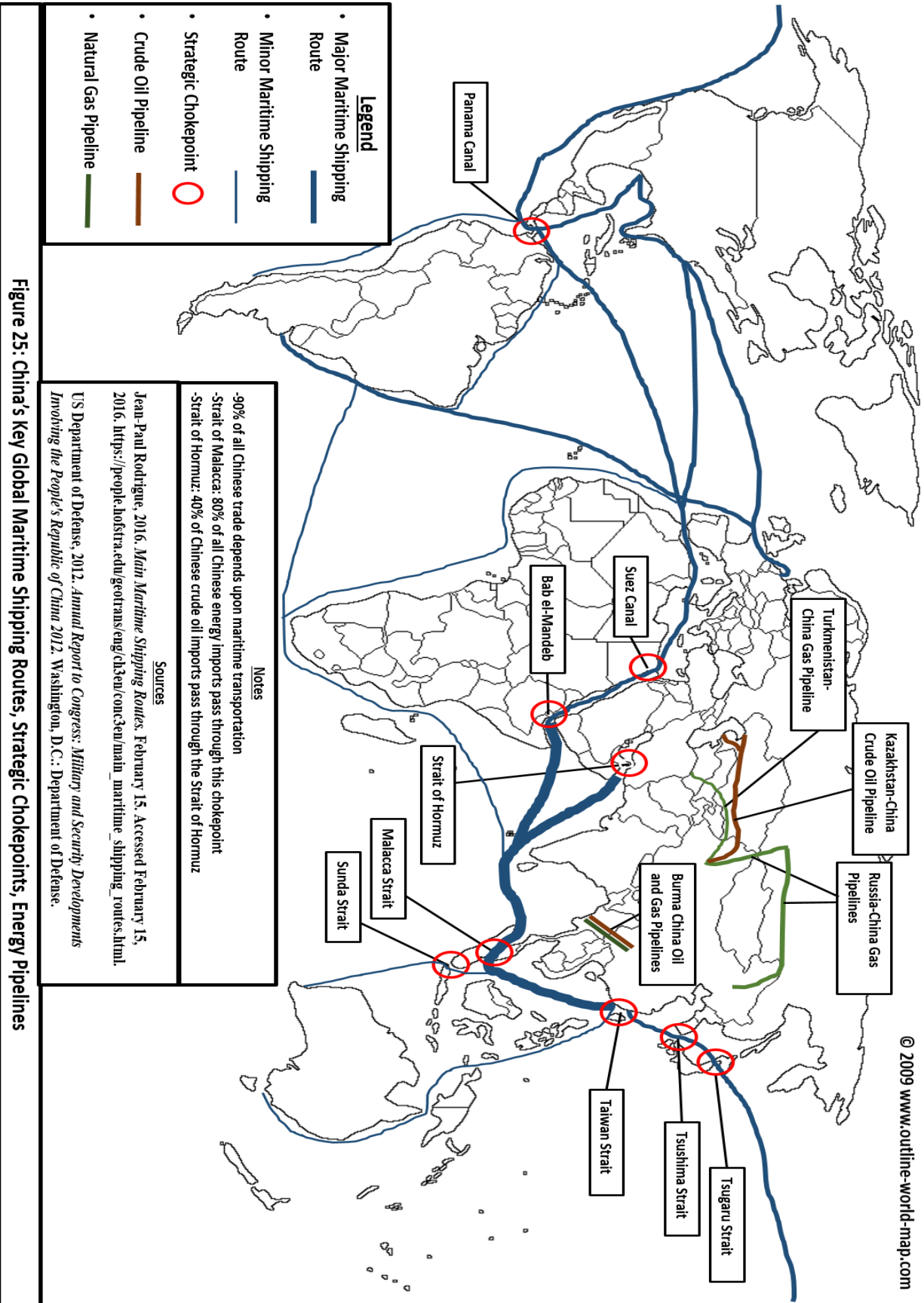


Figure 25: China's Key Global Maritime Shipping Routes, Strategic Chokepoints, Energy Pipelines

Because of the Malacca dilemma, China has worked to both diversify its energy sources and find ways to bypass the Malacca Strait and other strategic chokepoints.³⁰² To this end, Chinese national oil companies collaborated with partners in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia to build pipelines from oil and gas fields in those countries directly to China, pipelines that were all operational by 2012.³⁰³ China had also begun construction on oil and gas pipelines stretching from the newly constructed deep-water port of Mada'ya Island in Myanmar to Kunming in China that would allow a portion of China's energy imports to bypass the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea altogether.³⁰⁴ The gas pipeline began operations in October, 2014, followed by the oil pipeline four months later in January, 2015.³⁰⁵ While these pipelines from Central and Southeast Asia to China help alleviate the Malacca dilemma to a limited degree, China nevertheless remains dependent on the Indian Ocean and Malacca Straits for the majority of its energy imports as well as its trade commerce.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, in building pipelines that bypass strategic chokepoints like Malacca or Hormuz, China still remains dependent upon good relations with the states from which the oil and gas originate as well as the states through which the pipelines pass. Figure 25 illustrates the major and minor global maritime shipping routes as well as the energy pipelines upon which China's globalized economy depends. It also depicts the multitude of chokepoints through which China's maritime commerce must transit.

Finally, Beijing is also cognizant of the security of the tens of millions of Chinese citizens now travelling, living, and working abroad in any given year. Unlike China's trade and

³⁰² US Department of Defense, 2011. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*. Annual Report to Congress, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 57.

³⁰³ US Department of Defense, 2012. *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2012*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 41.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Eric Meyer, 2015. "With Oil And Gas Pipelines, China Takes A Shortcut Through Myanmar." *Forbes*. February 9. Accessed February 10, 2016. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ericmeyer/2015/02/09/oil-and-gas-china-takes-a-shortcut/#2651fe8c2d40>.

³⁰⁶ US Department of Defense, 2012. *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2012*, 21.

economic data, authoritative numbers of Chinese nationals working overseas are very uncertain and thus difficult to capture in a map figure similar to the economic and trade data presented thus far.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, certain reported figures do provide a general understanding of the growing numbers of Chinese abroad. For example, various reporting places the number of Chinese tourists traveling overseas in 2002 at around 16.6 million.³⁰⁸ By 2012, this number reached 83.2 million.³⁰⁹ A large number of Chinese—estimated to number approximately 875,000 in 2013--also live abroad as employees of Chinese corporations engaged in investment or international contract projects including a large number working on infrastructure and other construction projects.³¹⁰ Many of these Chinese nationals live in states with significantly higher political and social stability risks and, consequently, there has been an uptick in the number of attacks on Chinese nationals in these states.³¹¹ In recent years, the PLA has been dispatched to evacuate Chinese nationals from states experiencing political and social turmoil. The PLA's evacuation of nearly 36,000 citizens from Libya in 2011 and some 900 Chinese and other foreign nationals from Yemen in 2015 are two examples.³¹² Although protection of these citizens has been explicitly identified as a component of the PLA's new historic missions, because of the uncertainty of the numbers and locations of these workers, they shall not be the subject of further analysis in this chapter.

This section has introduced year 2012 snapshots of examples of the international economic interests Beijing is most likely concerned about securing to a higher degree. The data focuses on 2012 because it marks the maturity of Chinese trade and commercial interests through

³⁰⁷ Parello-Plesner and Duchatel, 2015. *China's Strong Arm: Protecting Citizens and Assets Abroad*, 24-31.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

³¹¹ Economy and Levi, 2014. *By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World*, 114-115. See also: Parello-Plesner and Duchatel. 2015. *China's Strong Arm: Protecting Citizens and Assets Abroad*, 28-29.

³¹² Parello-Plesner and Duchatel, 2015. *China's Strong Arm: Protecting Citizens and Assets Abroad*, 28-29.

the decade of interest for China's military diplomacy. To be sure, China's energy and metals trade patterns evolved through the decade with the volumes of trade in these items between China and various partners rising and falling through the decade. Nevertheless, the 2012 data reflects the growing diversity of trading relationships with other states in terms of export destinations, import origins, quantities of select imports and exports, and major trade partner relationships that developed through the course of 2002-2012. The data also provides an excellent point from which to correlate the decade-long patterns of our two military diplomacy case studies: combined exercises and disaster relief engagements.

Case Study One: The PLA's Combined Exercises

The purpose of this section is to test the frequent assertions that China's military diplomacy activity has grown in a manner consistent with the state's desire to protect its expanding international economic interests. If this is indeed true, one should find clear patterns of correlation between China's major economic interests as introduced in the previous section and the test case of China's combined exercises and training engagements. As unsatisfying as it may be, lack of correlation will not prompt a regression search for alternative, non-economic, explanations in this dissertation. I reiterate the stipulation that many factors influence which states China engages in combined exercises. However, this section must remain focused on testing the asserted role of China's economic interests. There are many ways by which to parse the patterns of the PLA's combined exercises and then correlate those patterns with China's international economic interests. This section focuses on three key elements of those patterns through 2012; the states China engaged in combined exercises and training events, the locations of those engagements, and the frequency of those engagements. These elements were chosen specifically to test the assertions made in the literature that China's military diplomacy activity is

driven by China's need to protect its international economic interests. The states China engages in combined exercises are important because they ostensibly link China's economic interests with its security concerns. Where the engagements take place are useful to note because they again point to China's international economic interests and Beijing's purposeful deployment of the PLA abroad to gain operational familiarity with specifically chosen partners in geographic locales relevant to its interests. Finally, the frequency of combined exercises with other states also presumably indicates the level of security interests in that state, or possibly the regional geography around that state, with higher frequency indicating higher security interests.

This section therefore begins with an overview of these three elements as illustrated by Figures 26 and 27 below. Figure 26 chronicles the pertinent elements of the PLA's combined exercise and training activity from 2002 to the end of 2012, including state partners, locations of engagements, and stated purposes of those activities.³¹³ Readers will note that China typically reciprocates on the locations of bilateral combined exercises, with exercises often held in the partner state one year and then held in China the next year. Occasionally, China engages a partner state abroad in a location not belonging to either state's territory. Such is the case with states participating in multilateral exercises with China such as the *Peace Mission* series of exercises with various SCO member states, the *Aman* series of maritime exercises hosted biennially by Pakistan in the Arabian Sea, as well as the bilateral anti-piracy drills held in the Gulf of Aden with the US, Russia, and South Korea. The five highlighted events reflect HA/DR engagements that are counted on both the combined exercise and HA/DR tallies. This is because

³¹³ There is a difference between combined exercises and combined training, but they are conceptually similar enough to still include them in the same category of military diplomacy activity. Simply put, all exercises are training, but not all training takes place in the form of an exercise. Training events may be limited to specific technical or tactical skills that personnel from participating states give or receive instruction on together without the additional planning and preparation required for a combined exercise. For the sake of simplicity, unless specified, use of the term "combined exercises" will include combined training.

two of these engagements—with Gabon and Peru—included exercise/training phases as well as follow-on humanitarian missions. The other three engagements—with the US and with Australia/New Zealand—were training events only, but the ambiguity of the activities as both

Year	Combined Exercise/Training Engagement Name	Engagement Description	Participant States	Engagement Location
2002	<i>China-Kyrgyzstan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan
2003	<i>Multilateral Joint Counter-terrorism Exercise of the armed Forces of the SCO Member States</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Kazakhstan-China Border
	<i>Sino-Pakistani Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Pakistan	China (Shanghai)
	<i>Sino-Indian Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	India	China (Shanghai)
2004	<i>Sino-French Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	France	China (Qingdao)
	<i>Sino-U.K. Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Britain	China (Qingdao)
	<i>Sino-Pakistani Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Pakistan	China (Xinjiang)
	<i>Sino-Australian Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia	China (Qingdao)
2005	<i>China-Russia Joint Military Exercise</i>	Combined Exercise	Russia	China (Shandong), Russia (Vladivostok)
	<i>China-Pakistan Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	Pakistan	Pakistan (Waters off Karachi)
	<i>China-India Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	India	India (Waters off Cochin)
	<i>China-Thailand Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	Thailand	Thailand (Waters off Sattahip)
2006	<i>China-US Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	US	US (Waters off San Diego)
	<i>China-Tajikistan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Tajikistan	Tajikistan (Hatlon Prefecture)
	<i>China-US Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	US	China (South China Sea)
	<i>China-Pakistan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Pakistan	Pakistan (Abbottabad)
2007	<i>Peace-07 (Aman 2007)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Britain, US, France, Italy, Turkey	Arabian Gulf
	<i>China-India Joint Maritime Exercise</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	India	Qingdao
	<i>Second Multilateral Maritime Exercise of Weapons (Western Pacific Naval Symposium)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Singapore, US, France, Australia	Singapore
	<i>Strike 2007</i>	Special Forces Training	Thailand	China (Guangzhou)
	<i>Peace Mission-2007</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	China (Xinjiang), Russia (Chelyabinsk)
	<i>China-Spain Friendship 2007</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Spain	Atlantic Ocean
	<i>China-France Friendship 2007</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	France	Mediterranean
	<i>China-Australia-New Zealand Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia, New Zealand	Australia (Tasman Sea)
	<i>Hand-in-Hand 2007</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	India	China (Kunming, Yunnan)
2008	<i>Strike 2008</i>	Special Operations Training	Thailand	Thailand (Chiang Mai)
	<i>Hand-in-Hand 2008</i>	Counter-Terrorism Training	India	India (Belgaum)
2009	<i>Peace-09 (Aman 2009)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Pakistan, US, Britain, Japan, Australia, France, Bangladesh, Turkey, Nigeria, Malaysia	Arabian Sea
	<i>Peace Angel-2009</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Gabon	Gabon (Ogooue-Ivindo Province)
	<i>Cooperation-2009</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Singapore	China (Guilin, Guangxi)
	<i>Peacekeeping Mission-2009</i>	Peacekeeping Exercise	Mongolia	China (Beijing)
	<i>Peace Mission-2009</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Russia	Russia (Khabarovsk), China (Taonan, Jilin)
	<i>Blue Peace Shield 2009</i>	Counter-Piracy	Russia	Somali Coast
	<i>Friendship Operation-2009</i>	Mountain Troop Training	Romania	Romania (Brad)

Figure 26: China's Combined Exercises with Other States (2002-2012)

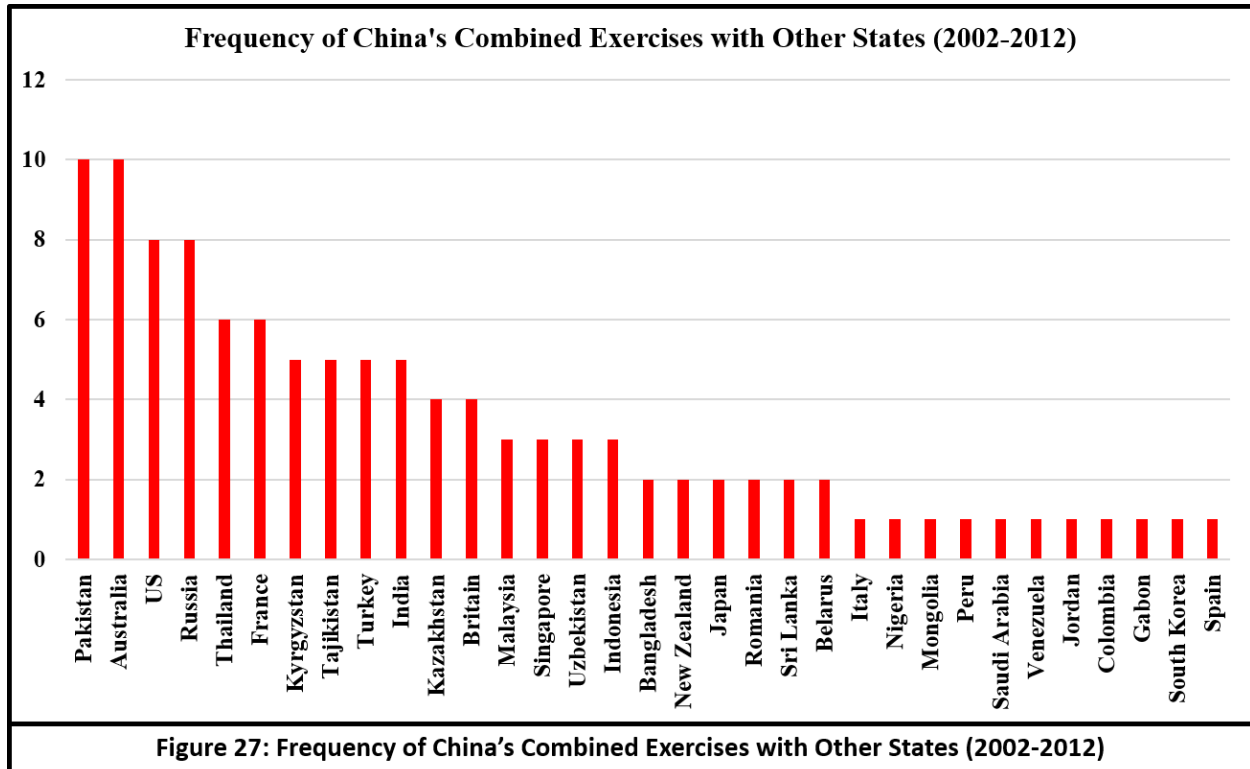
2010	<i>Friendship-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Pakistan	China (Qingtongxia, Ningxia)	
	<i>Peace Mission-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	Kazakhstan (Matybulak)	
	<i>China-Turkey Joint Air Force Exercise</i>	Air Force	Turkey	Turkey	
	<i>China-Australia Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise and Joint Training of Marines on Basic Tasks</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia	China (Qingdao and Guangdong)	
	<i>Joint Maritime Maneuver Exercise</i>	Passing Exercise	Australia	Australia (Waters off Sydney)	
	<i>Strike-2010</i>	Anti-Terrorism Special Forces Training	Thailand	China (Guilin, Guangxi)	
	<i>China-Australia Joint Maritime Exercise and Training</i>	Military Maritime Training	Australia	Australia (Waters off Darwin)	
	<i>Blue Strike-2010</i>	Marine Training	Thailand	Thailand (Sattahip)	
	<i>Friendship Operation-2010</i>	Mountain Troop Training	Romania	China (Kunming, Yunnan)	
	<i>1st China-Turkey Joint Army SOF Unit Training</i>	Special Forces Training	Turkey	Turkey	
	<i>Cooperation-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Singapore	Singapore	
	<i>Peace Angel-2010</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Peru	Peru	
	<i>China-South Korea Counter-Piracy Exercise</i>	Counter-piracy	South Korea	Gulf of Aden	
	2011	<i>Shaheen-1</i>	Air Force Joint Training	Pakistan	Pakistan
		<i>Peace-11 (Aman 2011)</i>	Naval Exercise	Pakistan, US, Australia, France, Britain, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sri Lanka	Pakistan (Waters off Karachi)
<i>Sharp Knife-2011</i>		Special Forces Training	Indonesia	Indonesia (Bandung)	
<i>Divine Eagle-2011</i>		Airborne Troops Training	Belarus	Belarus (Baranovichi)	
<i>Cooperation-2011</i>		Special Forces Training	Venezuela	Venezuela	
<i>Friendship-2011</i>		Anti-terrorism Training	Pakistan	Pakistan	
<i>Cooperation Spirit-2011</i>		Combined HA/DR Exercise	Australia	China (Dujiangyan, Sichuan)	
2012		<i>Maritime Cooperation-2012</i>	Maritime Exercise	Russia	China (Yellow Sea off Qingdao, Shandong)
	<i>Blue Strike-2012</i>	Marine Training	Thailand	China (Zhanjiang and Shanwei, Guangdong)	
	<i>Peace Mission-2012</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	Tajikistan (Khujand)	
	<i>Sharp Knife-2012</i>	Special Forces Training	Indonesia	China (Jinan, Shandong)	
	<i>China-US Joint Anti-Piracy Drill</i>	Anti-Piracy Drill	US	Gulf of Aden	
	<i>Cormorant Strike-2012</i>	Special Forces Exercise	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	
	<i>Cooperation Spirit-2012</i>	HA/DR Exercise	Australia, New Zealand	Australia (Brisbane)	
	<i>China-Jordan Anti-Terrorism Training of Special Forces</i>	Special Forces Anti-Terrorism Training	Jordan	Jordan (Amman)	
	<i>Divine Eagle-2012</i>	Airborne Troops Training	Belarus	China (Xiaogan, Hubei)	
	<i>China-Colombia Training of Special Forces</i>	Special Forces Training	Colombia	Colombia (Bogota)	
	<i>China-US Joint Humanitarian-Assistance and Disaster-Relief Tabletop Exercise</i>	HA/DR Exercise	US	China (Chengdu, Sichuan)	

Figure 26 Continued: China's Combined Exercises with Other States (2002-2012)

combined training and HA/DR events made it reasonable to include them in both tallies.

Although readers can determine the frequency of China's combined exercises with various partners from Figure 26 alone, this information is more clearly distilled in Figure 27 for

convenience.



Before commencing the correlation analysis of this section, one final observation regarding China's combined exercise partners is in order. The PLA has participated in both bilateral and multilateral combined exercises, but of the two, bilateral exercises are better indicators of China's interests and of the intensity of the security relationship with any given state. Multilateral exercises are notable for the wider international audience they provide for the PLA's operations and for the larger numbers of foreign partners with which the PLA interacts at such venues. The Pakistan-hosted *Aman* series of exercises have provided the largest third-party venue for China's combined exercises, bringing PLAN personnel into contact with naval forces from more than three dozen states, including four with which China had not yet engaged in bilateral combined exercises by 2012; Japan (twice), Bangladesh (twice), Nigeria (once), and

Saudi Arabia (once).³¹⁴ Despite common participation in this combined exercise, the large number of participants means the amount of interaction between PLAN forces and the naval forces from other countries is diluted accordingly. For example, Japan's contributions to the *Aman 2009* and *Aman 2011* exercises were "two helicopter units."³¹⁵ The operational interactions between the PLAN's ship-based personnel and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force helicopter personnel would have been superficial, limited mostly to the ceremonial and social aspects of the exercise. Because of the dilution of interaction at large multilateral exercises like this, one should be aware that although the PLA technically participated in combined exercises with the military forces from Japan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia, the implications of such participation are diminished when compared to interactions at bilateral combined exercises. With this information in mind, we now move to the heart of this chapter: testing the assertions regarding the relationship between China's combined exercises and its international economic interests.

The most reasonable starting point is with a correlation of the growth of the PLA's combined exercise activity with the basic measurements of Chinese economic growth. Having introduced the dependence of China's economic growth on foreign trade, we look at three key economic data sets from 2000 to 2012; China's annual GDP figures, China's annual trade volume figures, and China's annual FDI outflows. Unsurprisingly, given the well-documented

³¹⁴ For Figures 24 and 25, state participants in exercises are only listed if they were active participants in the exercise and deployed vessels, aircraft, and other materiel along with personnel to the exercises. Observer states are not included in the tally of participants.

³¹⁵ Malaysia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016. "Multinational Naval Exercise 'Aman 2009' in Karachi ." *Official Website of High Commission of Malaysia, Islamabad*. February 29. Accessed February 29, 2016. http://www.kln.gov.my/web/pak_islamabad/n2009/-/asset_publisher/ME2g/blog/multinational-naval-exercise-%60aman-2009%60-in-karachi?redirect=%2Fweb%2Fpak_islamabad%2Fn2009%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_ME2g%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26_101_INSTANCE_ME2g_delta%3D30%26_. See also: China Daily, 2011. "AMAN-2011 Joint Naval Exercise in Karachi, Pakistan." *ChinaDaily.com.cn*. March 16. Accessed February 29, 2016. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-03/16/content_12181518.htm.

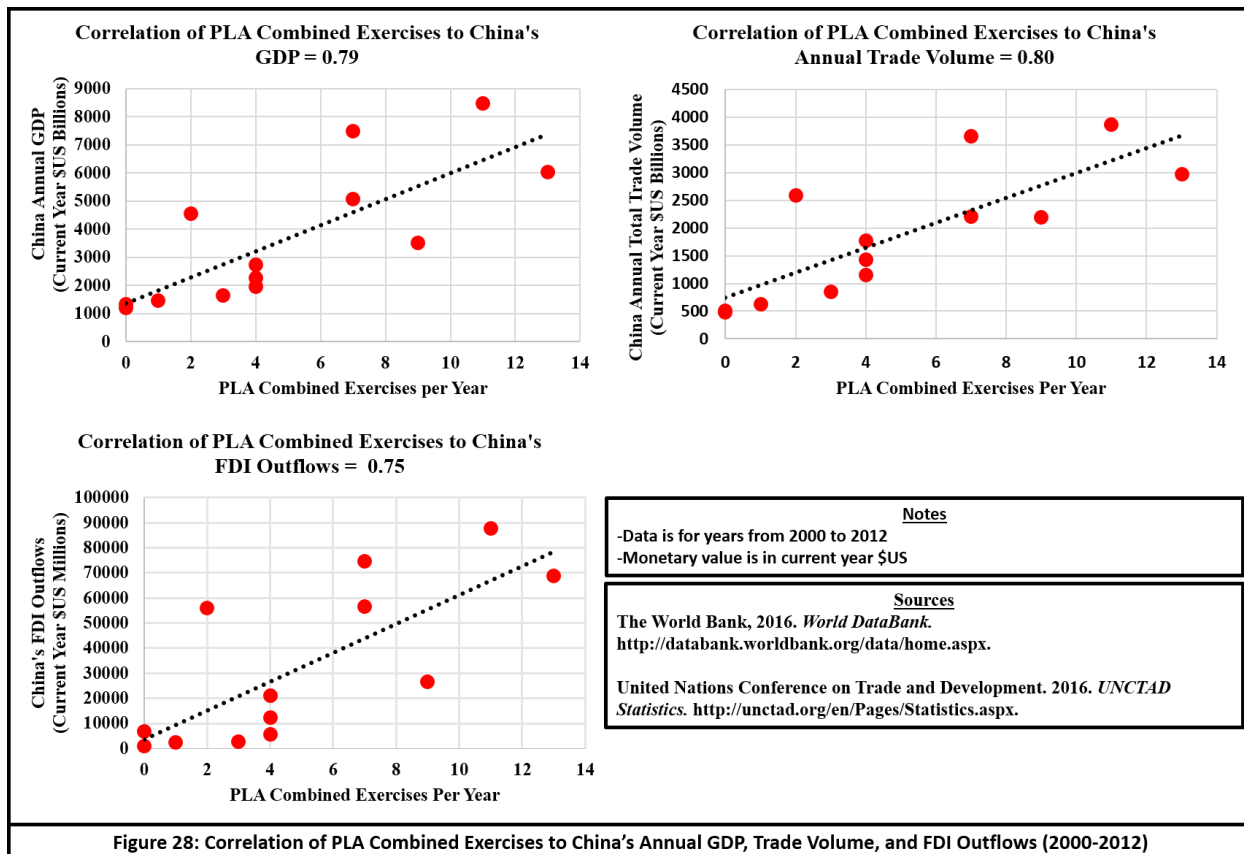


Figure 28: Correlation of PLA Combined Exercises to China's Annual GDP, Trade Volume, and FDI Outflows (2000-2012)

growth of each of those three areas, the correlation with the growth of the PLA's combined exercises is significant as the trend lines and correlation results in Figure 28 indicate. The strongest correlation, by a single percentage point over the correlation with China's GDP, is that between combined exercises and China's annual trade volume at 0.80. Although the relationship with combined exercises and China's FDI outflows is slightly weaker at 0.75, it is perhaps the most interesting because 2002 marked the year of not only China's first combined exercise, but also the official pronouncement by Jiang Zemin of the "going out" policy encouraging Chinese enterprises to expand operations abroad. This policy is what kicked off the dramatic rise in China's FDI outflows commencing, after a short lag, in roughly 2004. What's more, the sustained growth in China's GDP, trade volume, and FDI inflows all preceded the PLA's combined exercises by more than a decade (see Figures 20 and 21) without setting the PLA on a program of combined exercises. To be sure, other military diplomacy activities commenced

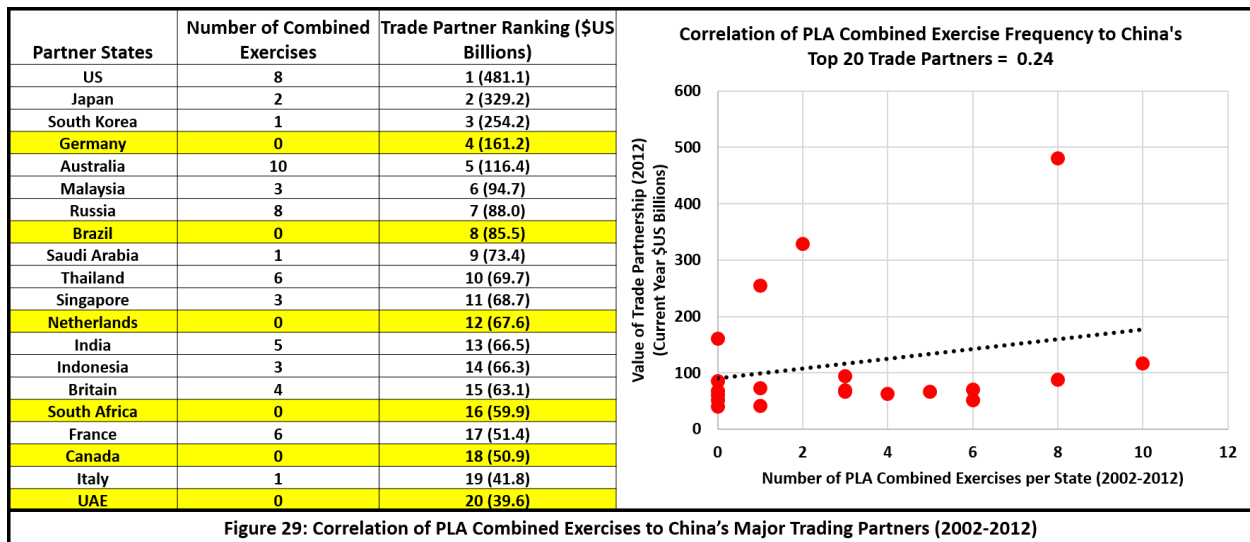
during this period, but based on the timing of the “going out” policy and the correlation with FDI outflows, it seems very likely then that China’s combined exercises have a strong relationship with the growing overseas investments being made by Chinese enterprises. It also appears that in encouraging Chinese enterprises to invest abroad, Beijing anticipated the need for the PLA to increase its international presence. The CCP apparently gave the green light for an accompanying expansion of Chinese military diplomacy in the form of combined exercises with other states. In other words, despite observers’ descriptions of the “going out” policy as primarily an economic phenomenon, it clearly has had a security/military aspect as well. Having established a reasonably significant correlation at this macro level, it behooves us to see if the correlation continues at lower levels of analysis. Given that the greatest portion of Chinese FDI outflows are going to purchase stakes in international energy and metals enterprises in order to secure a steady flow of these resources to China, this section proceeds in that direction by next examining China’s overall trading partner relationships, followed by China’s international energy and metals interests.³¹⁶

The information for China’s major trading partners in 2012 comes from adding the value of China’s exports to, plus imports from, individual states as reported by the International Monetary Fund’s Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS) database.³¹⁷ The information from the DOTS database identified China’s top 20 trading partner states and this then enabled a two-layer correlation analysis of China’s combined exercises and the state partners it chooses to engage in these exercises. The going in assumptions were twofold: first, there would be an obviously

³¹⁶ American Enterprise Institute and The Heritage Foundation, 2016. "China Global Investment Tracker." *The Heritage Foundation*. Accessed February 29, 2016. <http://www.heritage.org/research/projects/china-global-investment-tracker-interactive-map/china-global-investment-tracker-interactive-map>.

³¹⁷ International Monetary Fund, 2016. "Direction of Trade Statistics." *International Monetary Fund*. February 24. Accessed February 22, 2016. <http://data.imf.org/?sk=9d6028d4-f14a-464c-a2f2-59b2cd424b85&sid=1454703973993>.

strong relationship between China’s major trading partners and its exercise partners. That is, the more China trades with a given state, the more likely it is to also have engaged that state at least once in combined exercises. The second assumption was that the larger the trading partner, the more often China would engage that partner in combined exercises. Figure 29 captures the results of the two correlations. The first assumption regarding the strong relationship between China’s major trading partners and combined exercises appears confirmed by the data. The



yellow highlighted lines on the left half of Figure 29 indicate top 20 trading partners not engaged by the PLA in combined exercises. Significantly, the PLA engaged eight out of ten of China’s top trade partners, 12 of the top 15, and 14 of the top 20 in combined exercises. These states ranged across Asia, Europe, and North America demonstrating that geographic distance was not an apparently strong factor—either limiting or enabling—in Beijing’s decision-making process regarding which states to engage. Moreover, these engagement rates—80% of the top ten and top 15, and 70% of the top 20 trade partners—when compared to the PLA’s global combined exercise engagement rate of 17%, strongly suggest China makes an effort to engage major trading partners in the military diplomacy activity of combined exercises.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Beijing’s global combined exercise engagement percentage comes from the number of states it has engaged in

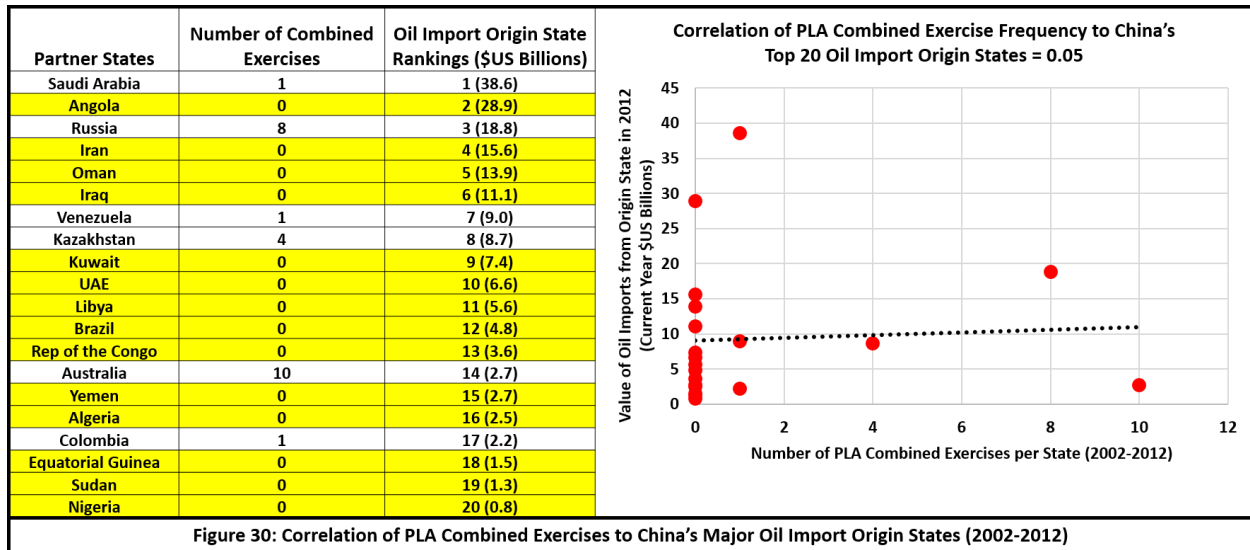
However, the verity of the second assumption—that the larger the trading partner, the more often China engages that partner—is less clear. The right half of Figure 29 shows there is a positive, but weak, correlation between the value of a state’s trade relationship with China and the number of exercises they have participated in with China, with a correlation of just 0.24. The correlation would be even weaker if one were to remove Japan and Saudi Arabia from the calculation because their combined exercises with China occurred at a multilateral venue that qualitatively limited the interactions between their participating forces and the PLA. Looking at the data from the perspective of China’s top exercise partners (Figure 27), we see that the second assumption does hold true for Australia, Russia, the US, Thailand, France, and India which are all among China’s top ten exercise partners as well as China’s top 20 trading partners. However, the size of the trade relationship does not appear to play a role for a state like Pakistan, tied with Australia for the most combined exercise engagements with China, but ranked only as the 32nd largest Chinese export market and the 66th largest import source of goods to China.³¹⁹ The same observation applies to the second tier of states China most frequently engages in combined exercises. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Kazakhstan, round out the list of China’s top ten exercise partners, but they are all similarly low on the list of China’s overall trade partnerships.³²⁰ One must look for other economic interest rationales beyond the size of the trade relationship for why China has engaged Pakistan and these other states so frequently in combined exercises. With this cumulative analysis complete, we now disaggregate China’s economic interests and look at the economic interests that dominate China’s FDI outflows and form the bulk of China’s natural resource imports from abroad: energy and metals.

combined exercises (33) divided by the total number of states in the world (193).

³¹⁹ International Monetary Fund, 2016. "Direction of Trade Statistics." *International Monetary Fund*. February 24. Accessed February 22, 2016. <http://data.imf.org/?sk=9d6028d4-f14a-464c-a2f2-59b2cd424b85&sId=1454703973993>.

³²⁰ Ibid.

In 2012, China imported petroleum oil valued at \$195 billion from an increasingly diverse range of sources.³²¹ Again, the first assumption prior to the analysis was that given China’s large FDI outflows to overseas energy enterprises, and China’s increasing dependence upon energy imports, China would be keenly interested in enhancing its security relationships with these states by engaging them in combined exercises. As Figure 30 depicts, by 2012 the PLA had exercised at least once with four of China’s top ten crude oil suppliers and with six of

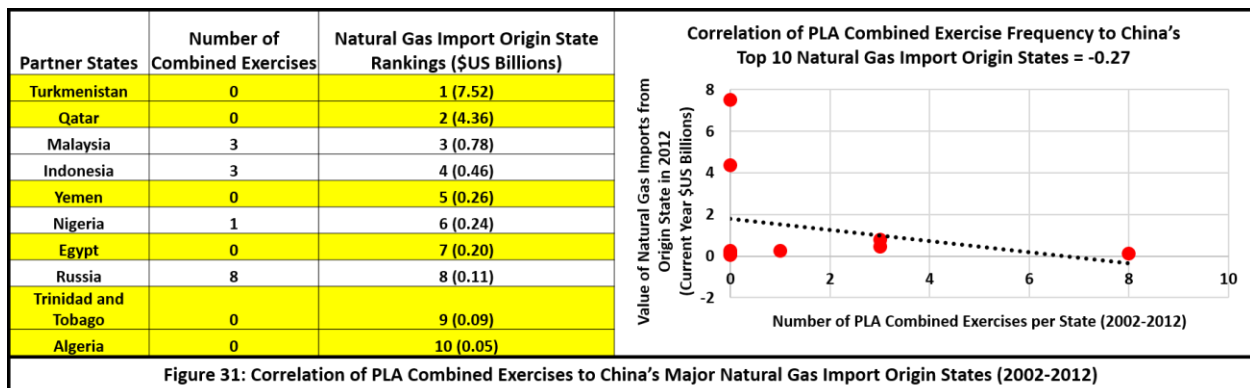


the top 20. This 40% engagement rate with the top 10 oil suppliers, and 30% engagement rate with the top 20, is again larger than the PLA’s 17% engagement rate globally from 2002 to 2012, indicating that Beijing does have a marked preference for engaging its oil suppliers. Testing of the second assumption yielded a barely positive correlation of 0.05 suggesting there was practically no relationship between the frequency of China’s combined exercises and the ranking of its oil suppliers. Indeed, readers will note these figures include the PLA’s single exercise with China’s largest oil supplier—Saudi Arabia—at the multilateral *Aman-2011* exercise where the interaction was marginal compared to that experienced in bilateral exercises. Furthermore, Australia is tied for first with Pakistan in the number of combined exercises held with China, but

³²¹ The Observatory of Economic Complexity, 2016. *China*. February 16. Accessed February 10, 2016. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/chn/>.

only ranked 14th on China’s list of oil suppliers. Of the six oil import origin states with which China has held combined exercises, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Colombia conformed to expectations of how frequently they engaged in combined exercises based on their oil supply rankings, but the other three states did not. Notably, Pakistan as China’s number one exercise partner through the period, still does not appear to have an economic rationale for the frequency of its exercises with China. This suggests something else is driving the propensity for the frequent combined exercises in this case.

In 2012, China imported just over \$US 14 billion in natural gas from a total of ten states according to MIT’s Observatory of Economic Complexity database as depicted in Figure 31. In



a result that mirrors the results of the PLA’s combined exercise engagements with China’s foreign petroleum suppliers, China conducted combined exercises with four of these states during the decade from 2002 to 2012. This again indicates China was more likely to engage an energy supplying state than non-energy supplying states. Interestingly, testing of the second assumption yielded a negative correlation of -0.27, meaning that the more natural gas China imported from a state, the less likely China was to have engaged it in combined exercises. This negative correlation may be somewhat deceiving, however, because of differences during the decade in China’s natural gas import origins states. Indeed, through the first half of the decade, when China’s natural gas imports were relatively small, Australia dominated as China’s largest

natural gas supplier, supplying as much as 35% of China's natural gas deliveries as late as 2009.³²² This Australian dominance over China's natural gas market did not last long, however. As China's natural gas demand grew, it diversified not only its foreign suppliers of natural gas, but also the delivery methods for its natural gas imports with pipelines from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan becoming operational and complementing the growing maritime deliveries of liquefied natural gas. The net result was that Australia no longer placed in the top ten suppliers just three years later in 2012. Likewise, Indonesia and Malaysia were China's second and third largest suppliers of natural gas in 2009.³²³ However, by 2012 they had switched places with each other in the rankings and both had fallen far behind Turkmenistan and Qatar. Consequently, if one were to run the correlation using the 2009 rankings of China's natural gas suppliers, the correlation with combined exercises would be positive and strong.

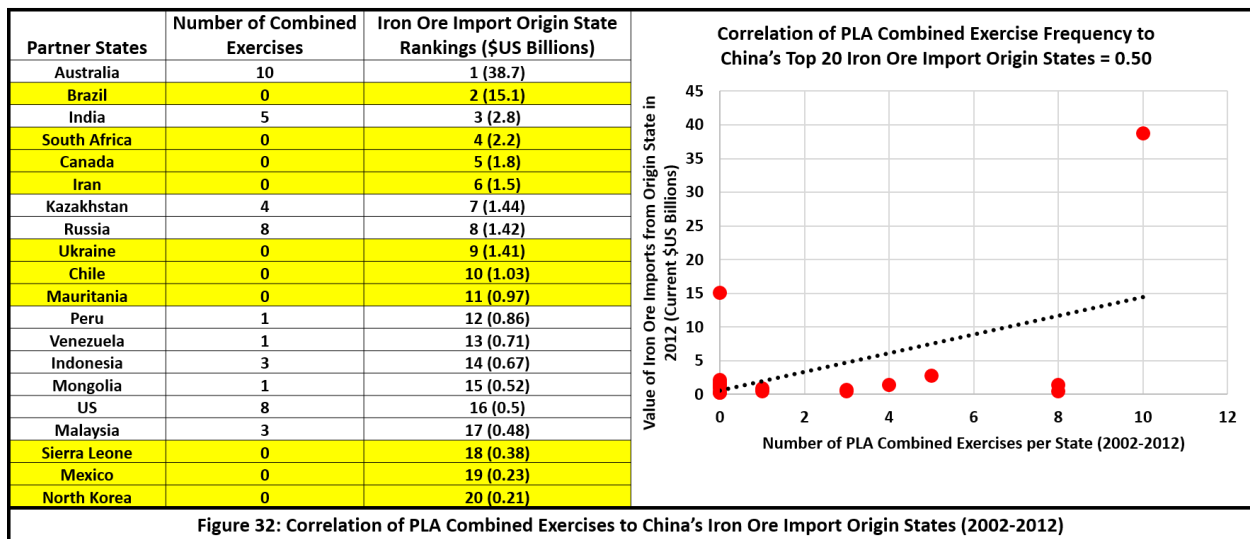
Nevertheless, the 2012 correlation results in Figure 31 provide an important insight into the challenges facing Beijing as it seeks to develop cooperative security relationships with states in a dynamic global marketplace. A major energy commodity supplier such as Australia, may have a leading role in supplying the Chinese market for several years in a row but that role may decrease in response to market adaptations—especially present in nascent markets like China's natural gas market—until the original state is replaced in subsequent years by other states. Given the years of preparatory military diplomacy activity that typically lead up to combined exercises with the original state, it is probable that combined exercises will often lag behind new trade relationships until military diplomacy once again builds a cooperative security relationship with the new trading partner. One may reasonably surmise that in coming years, new observations of China's combined exercises and natural gas suppliers will yield positive correlations once the

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

international natural gas market adjusts for China’s growing demand and China’s network of suppliers matures and becomes less dynamic than it has been in these early years. The reasoning behind this assumption is that China will want to develop closer security relationships with states that prove to be consistent providers of significant natural resources over states that prove to be only temporary or small-scale energy supply partners. With these observations of China’s energy trade relationships complete, we now turn to similar examinations of China’s iron ore and refined copper imports.

Iron ore was China’s third largest import in 2012, totaling some \$74.2 billion that year.³²⁴ Australia and Brazil dominated the import origin rankings, accounting for \$38.7 billion and \$15.1 billion, respectively. The third largest import origin state—India—came in at a very distant \$2.8 billion (see Figure 32). In the previous patterns observed for assumption one,



China’s combined exercise engagement rate with its top ten trade partners or importers of a given commodity were typically higher than the engagement rate with states ranked 11-20. That is, the PLA was more likely to have engaged its larger suppliers in at least one combined exercise than its smaller suppliers. For iron ore, however, China’s engagement rate of 40% for

³²⁴ Ibid.

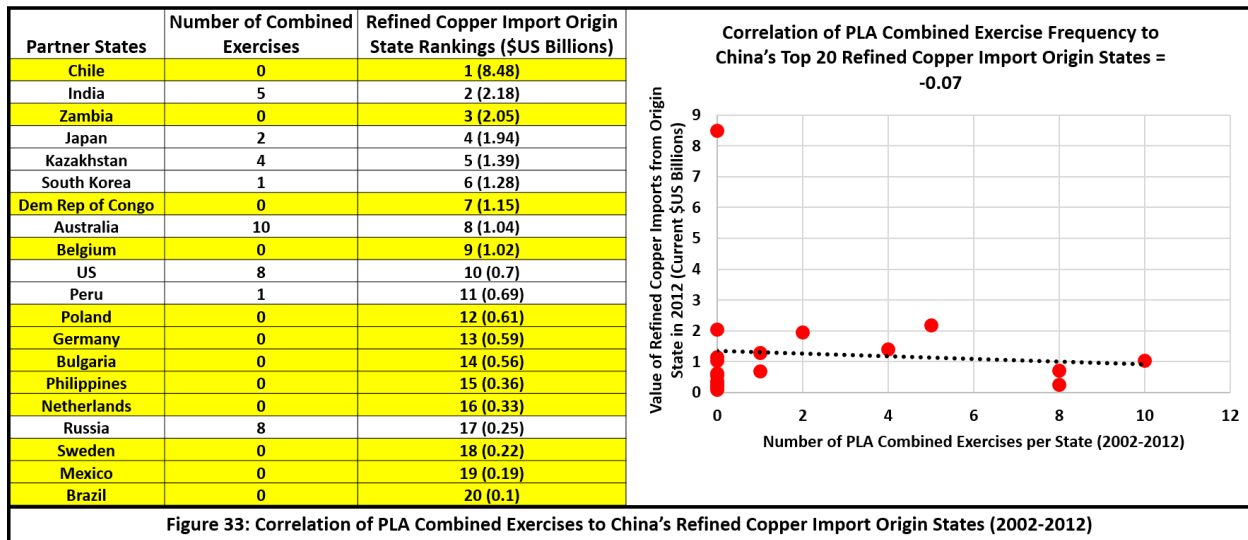
the top ten suppliers, consistent with other examples, was then exceeded by the 60% engagement rate for the next ten states, providing an overall engagement rate of 50% for its top 20 iron ore suppliers. This higher engagement rate across a broader range of states suggests a higher level of interest in security cooperation with states supplying this important natural resource.

Furthermore, for the first time, analysis of the second assumption confirms that the larger the supplier of iron ore, the more the PLA engaged that supplier in combined exercises, with the correlation yielding 0.50.³²⁵ Australia, India, and Russia—all ranked in the top four of China's combined exercise partners by frequency—also ranked in the top ten of China's iron ore suppliers. Indeed, Australia ranked first in both categories, which played a significant role in the stronger measure of correlation. Once more, however, Pakistan remains absent on the rankings list, again suggesting that one must consider other factors, economic or otherwise, for the high frequency of that state's combined exercise engagements with China.

China's refined copper imports in 2012 totaled \$25.7 billion, with Chile dominating the rankings at \$8.48 billion followed distantly by India with \$2.18 billion in exports of this commodity to China (Figure 33). The patterns of China's combined exercises followed the relationship patterns identified for the previous commodities for assumption one, with six of the top ten suppliers of refined copper also participating in at least one combined exercise. Again, this engagement rate is nearly four times the 17% engagement rate for the rest of the world, indicating once more China's apparent preference for pursuing cooperative security relationships with states that are important commodity suppliers. The engagement percentage for states ranked 11 through 20 fell to 20%, for an overall top 20 engagement percentage of 40%. When it came to assumption two, the correlation of -0.07 indicated no clear pattern of China engaging larger refined copper suppliers more frequently in combined exercises. Once more, Pakistan did

³²⁵ Rounded to the nearest tenth.

not make an appearance on either list, again defying both assumptions when it comes to China's



preference for engaging states based on that state's status as a major trade partner or major commodity supplier. With these observations in mind, we now turn to a final important analysis of China's combined exercises and its international economic interests: the relationship between the frequency of China's combined exercises with other states, the locations of those exercises, and the geographic proximity of these partners and locations to China's major maritime and land trade routes.

As introduced earlier in this chapter, China's effort to secure its international economic interests has two primary components. First, China must consider and pursue cooperative security relations with its major trading partners and major suppliers of key commodities. The preceding correlation analysis strongly suggests that China's military diplomacy, in the form of its combined exercises, does indeed demonstrate proclivity towards engagement with states with which it has major trade relationships and/or which are suppliers of economically significant natural resources. Second, China must also consider how to secure the land and maritime routes by which its global trade flows. Of the two, the latter component may be the more pressing concern. Souring relations with individual states may adversely affect China's economic

security to a degree, but any economically disruptive effects would most likely be temporary and minor due to the nature of global markets. China could most likely compensate for a disruption of commodity supplies from one state by increasing imports from a diverse range of alternative suppliers. However, disruption of a maritime or land shipping route because of the unilateral closure of a chokepoint by a belligerent state, would have outsized effects, disrupting trade with many states—especially when those states are geographically clustered as is the case with China’s major suppliers of energy in and around the Persian Gulf. This is the root of the aforementioned “Malacca dilemma,” clearly identified by Beijing as a key security concern. While the Malacca Strait is the most acute of these strategic chokepoints, China must also consider similar dilemmas at locations including the Suez Canal, the Bab el-Mandeb, Hormuz, the entirety of the Indian Ocean, and the various potential chokepoints along the Sea of Japan. In any disruption scenario requiring military intervention, the PLA would need not only the capability to project force to these areas, but also the ability to sustain forces in these areas. No matter how advanced a state’s military capabilities, sustaining military operations abroad requires the development and maintenance of cooperative political and military relationships with local states. For Beijing then, no matter the “omnidirectional” military diplomacy rhetoric of its security policy, one expects to see clear patterns of military diplomacy activity with geoeconomically relevant states.

Given the relationship between geography and China’s international economic interests, it now behooves us to correlate China’s combined exercise partners, the locations of China’s combined locations, and their proximity to China’s major trade routes. The assumption for this final correlation effort is that China’s combined exercises do not always need to be with major trading states or major commodity suppliers. Indeed, a state’s geographic proximity to China’s

major trading routes may be sufficient to make that state an attractive target of military diplomacy efforts because close security cooperation with such a state may provide advantageous political and military support for securing nearby trade routes. This appears to explain the absence of Pakistan from the preceding trade ranking and commodity supplier analysis despite its rank as China's most frequent combined exercise partner (tied with Australia). What Pakistan does not have in status as a major trade partner or supplier of natural resources for the Chinese market, it does have in terms of geographic proximity to multiple strategic chokepoints for Chinese energy and commercial traffic.

Figure 34 maps the frequency of China's combined exercises with other states from 2002 to 2012 in relation to the geographic proximity of those states to key trade routes. Several important details become obvious based on this information. First, China's two most frequent combined exercise partners--Australia and Pakistan--bracket either end of the Indian Ocean trade routes upon which China relies for the bulk of its energy and commercial transportation. India, stretching southward from Asia into the middle of the ocean bearing its name, is tied for fourth in frequency having participated in five combined exercises. Second, many of China's mid-frequency partners similarly straddle the Malacca Strait or border the South China Sea with Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia all having participated in three combined exercises apiece with the PLA while Thailand has participated in six. Third, the majority of Central Asian states—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia--rank similarly as mid to upper-frequency partners in combined exercises. The latter three of these states also notably serve as suppliers of energy and/or hosts for important oil and gas pipelines transiting their territories to China. Fourth, China has engaged multiple states bordering the important maritime shipping route from the Indian Ocean to Europe through the Bab el-Mandeb then up through the

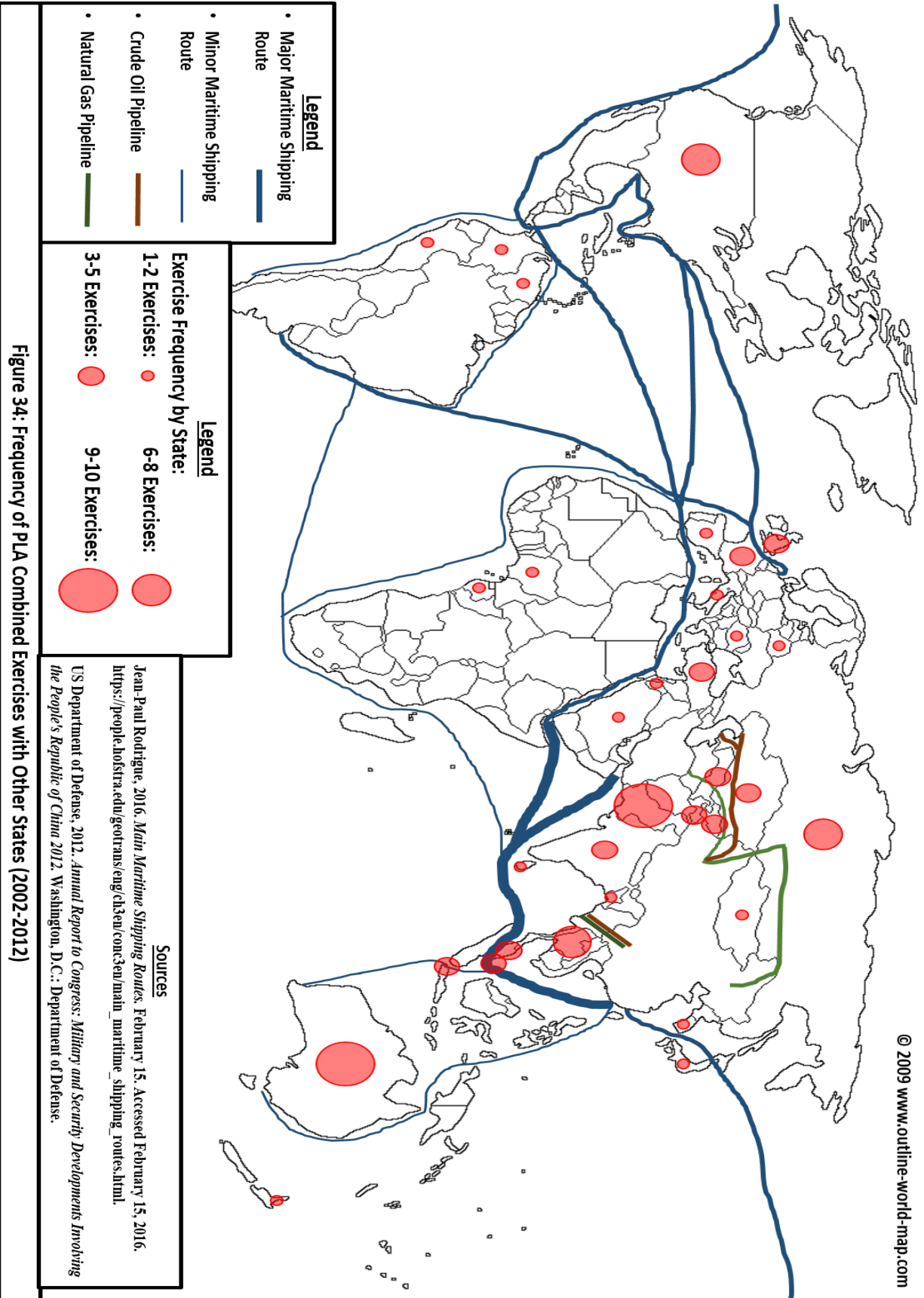
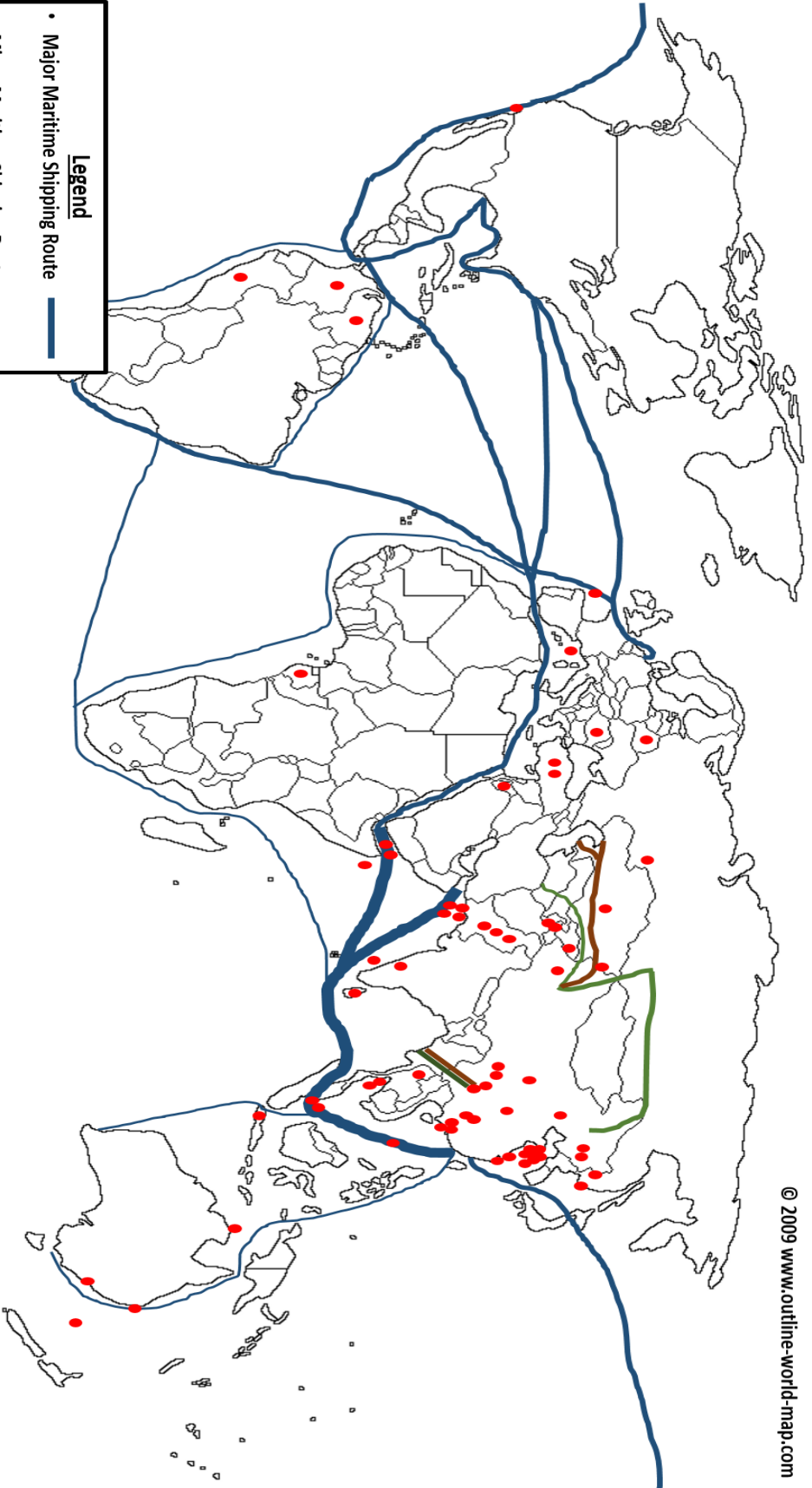


Figure 34: Frequency of PLA Combined Exercises with Other States (2002-2012)

Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and across the Mediterranean. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Italy, France, and Spain have all participated in at least one combined exercise with China. Fifth, China has engaged the US, Japan, and South Korea in combined exercises, states that exist either at the terminus of, or astride, the maritime shipping route to and from North America. In summary, the geographic pattern of China's combined exercise partners arcs across a great swath of China's most important maritime and land shipping routes, with nearly every one of its high to mid-frequency combined exercise partners bordering or astride one or more of these important trade routes. This again supports the assertion that the growth of China's military diplomacy is closely related to the growth of its international economic interests.

Finally, while examination of the geography of China's combined exercise partner states is useful, it does not quite provide the entire story. One must also consider the actual locations of the exercises themselves because they often take place outside of either state's territory. The assumption here is that where China chooses to conduct its exercises is also indicative of its desire to improve its ability to protect its international economic interests and these patterns should be detectable. Of China's 65 combined exercises, 26 (38%) of them occurred within China's land or maritime borders while 42 (62%) took place abroad.³²⁶ Figure 35 charts the locations of China's combined exercises from 2002 to 2012. A cursory look at the map quickly reveals several combined exercise location clusters. The largest cluster of exercises occurs in and around Qingdao (PLAN's North Sea Fleet headquarters) on the Shandong Peninsula and stretches south to Shanghai. The locations of these exercises placed them in close proximity to several of China's (and the world's) largest ports including Shanghai, Ningbo-Zhoushan, Qingdao, Tianjin, and Dalian, which were ranked 1st, 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th, respectively on the

³²⁶ The total for China's combined exercise location count is 68 instead of 65 because three exercises took place in stages that required movement of forces from exercise areas belonging to one state to areas belonging to another state.



- Legend**
- Major Maritime Shipping Route
 - Minor Maritime Shipping Route
 - Crude Oil Pipeline
 - Natural Gas Pipeline
 - PLA Combined Exercise Location

Sources

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Figure 35: Locations of PLA Combined Exercises with Other States (2002-2012)

list of the world's largest container ports in 2012.³²⁷ This fact reminds us of China's dependence upon trade for economic prosperity and the challenges China faces in securing trade routes and ports in its own territory.

The next largest geographical cluster of exercises takes place with Pakistan hosting seven exercises on land or in the Arabian Sea near the mouth of the Gulf of Oman. The Arabian Sea has been the venue for Pakistan's *Aman* series of maritime exercises, bringing together naval forces from states including Japan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Britain, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and the US to exercise with China and Pakistan. The common denominator for these states seems to be their shared interest in ensuring the continued free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz. Although Pakistan is the formal host, the Pakistani Navy has historically granted the PLAN participants significant leadership roles in the exercises and Pakistani media has singled out China's welcome participation in the exercises.³²⁸ Despite, India's apparent exclusion from these exercises, readers will note China has participated in a separate combined maritime exercise with India off the southwestern coast of the Indian Peninsula, also near the shipping routes through the Indian Ocean. A smaller grouping of three exercises exists in the Gulf of Aden and off the Coast of Somalia where PLAN vessels participating in the counter-piracy mission there engaged naval vessels from the US, Russia, and South Korea in one-on-one counter-piracy exercises. The South Korea exercise is the only one between the two states and is notable for its location—far away from the Korean Peninsula—and

³²⁷ World Shipping Council, 2016. "Top 50 World Container Ports." *World Shipping Council*. Accessed March 8, 2016. <http://www.worldshipping.org/about-the-industry/global-trade/top-50-world-container-ports>.

³²⁸ Vijay Sakhuja, 2009. "Maritime Multilateralism: China's Strategy for the Indian Ocean." *The Jamestown Foundation*. November 4. Accessed March 7, 2016. http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35692&no_cache=1#.VuC7mPkrKUI. See also: Masroor Afzal Pasha, 2011. "Naval exercise AMAN-11." *Daily Times*. March 13. Accessed March 7, 2016. <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/karachi/13-Mar-2011/naval-exercise-aman-11> and Daily Times. 2009. "Naval Exercise 'Aman 2009' Kicks Off." *Daily Times*. March 6. Accessed March 9, 2016. <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/karachi/06-Mar-2009/naval-exercise-aman-2009-kicks-off>.

for the fact that China is North Korea's sole military ally. Given the strained and complicated relations between China, Japan, and South Korea, it appears their common interest in preserving the flow of energy and commerce through geographic chokepoints far from national territory, has also provided acceptable circumstances for combined exercises.

Finally, the PLA has exercised at both ends of the South China Sea, engaging Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand in their respective territories while also hosting exercises in and around Guangzhou at the northern end of the sea and near the PLAN's South Fleet headquarters at Sanya on Hainan Island. The single exercise in the middle of the South China Sea was a maritime search and rescue exercise with the US Navy in 2006. Because of its geographic contiguity with the Malacca Strait, the South China Sea serves as the primary maritime artery through Southeast Asia for energy and commerce between Europe, Africa, the Middle East and East Asian states. Disruption of that commerce would have significant economic repercussions for all states dependent upon the free flow of maritime traffic through the region. Beyond its significance as a trade route thoroughfare, the sea's substantial fisheries, along with its proven and potential oil and gas resources, make these waters valuable in their own right.³²⁹ Notably absent from the South China Sea are any exercises with Vietnam or the Philippines, the two of China's six rival claimants to disputed maritime features in the region with which tensions had grown particularly acute through the last years of the decade from 2002 to 2012.

Although the elements of this case study examination demonstrate reasonably strong support for the proposition that China's expanding military diplomacy activities are related to the need to protect its overseas economic interests, questions remain. The patterns of China's

³²⁹ For more on the economic significance of the South China Sea and the nature of the competing claims to the disputed territory, see Bill Hayton, 2014. *The South China Sea: The Struggle for Power in Asia*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

combined exercises do not explain every instance of why China has chosen to engage various states in combined exercises. Indeed, for explanations of China's combined exercise engagements with states like Romania, Belarus, and Gabon one would need to consider factors beyond China's relatively minor economic interests in those states. Furthermore, one must also ask why China has not engaged several states in which it does have significant economic interests. Germany and Brazil's high bilateral trade partner rankings, Angola, Turkmenistan, and Bahrain's statuses as major energy suppliers, and Myanmar's role as host state for oil and gas pipelines bypassing the Malacca Strait, would seem to justify the attention of Beijing's security strategists. To be sure, it takes two willing partners to engage in combined exercises and other military diplomacy activities. China may indeed be interested in engaging these states at a deeper level of security cooperation but these states, for their various reasons, may be reluctant to do so.³³⁰ These questions are worthy of further research because they would help delineate and refine our understanding of the various factors that bound China's military diplomacy activities, at least as they relate to combined exercises and their relationship to China's international economic interests.

Despite these open questions, the overall pattern of China's combined exercise engagements suggest a close relationship with its economic interests. The strong correlations between the growth of combined exercises with China's GDP, the volume of its annual trade, and the increase of China's FDI outflows are all strong indicators of the role China's economic interests have played in the relationship. Beijing's announcement of the "going out" policy and the near-simultaneous expansion of China's military diplomacy activity to include combined exercises are another interesting point that seems to corroborate the assertion in question. One also observes that China's combined exercise engagement rates through the decade (percentage

³³⁰ David Bachman, personal communication, 14 April 2016.

of states China has engaged at least once) with its largest trade partners and with its largest commodity suppliers have consistently been two to four times the average engagement rate of states overall. Although the analysis did not detect a strong correlation between the frequency of combined exercises and the rankings of its various trade partners, this is explained by the finite engagement capabilities of the PLA. With such broad economic interests spread across so many states, the PLA has thus far had to balance the breadth and depth of its combined exercises, generally making choices to engage more states less frequently rather than fewer states more frequently. Finally, the geographic patterns of the PLA's combined exercises also reveal China's interest in enhancing its ability to protect sea and land lines of communication, with many exercises taking place with or in states proximate to global trade routes and strategic chokepoints. The assertions regarding Beijing's desire to protect its international economic interests as an explanation for the growth of China's military diplomacy activity thus seem to be supported based on the case of the PLA's combined exercises. With these observations in mind, we turn to a second brief case study—China's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief engagements—by which to further test the assertion.

Case Study Two: The PLA's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Engagements

This correlation analysis of China's HA/DR engagements will generally follow that of the preceding section with the following caveats. First, I remind readers that this section focuses on determining the relationship between the PLA's international HA/DR engagements and China's international economic interests. This section once more stipulates to the existence of multiple influencing factors on China's military diplomacy engagement choices, but examining those other factors, worthy as that effort may be, is not the intent of this final section and will need to await further research at another time. In addition, this section will not undertake the

same extent of correlation analysis as the previous section. The intent here is to provide a concise overview of the activity and then focus on two of the analytical measures to determine the strength or weakness of the relationship with China's economic interests. Bearing in mind the reasons presented in Chapter Two for the selection of the PLA's HA/DR engagements as a worthwhile case study companion to combined exercises, we now proceed with the final section of this chapter.

Beginning with the delivery of earthquake relief aid to Afghanistan following the two Hindu-Kush Earthquakes in 2002, and continuing with more institutionalized regularity since 2009, the PLA conducted a total of 32 HA/DR engagements with 27 other states by the end of 2012. Figures 36 and 37 capture the details of these engagements, which may be classified into three general categories. The largest category is disaster/crisis relief in which the PLA deployed to deliver aid materiel in the form of tents, blankets, food, medicine, water, etc. and to provide emergency evacuations of host nation and, occasionally, Chinese citizens. 18 of the PLA's 32 HA/DR engagements fall into this category, launched in response to major natural disasters or social crises including earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, forest fires, as well as refugee emergencies stemming from political conflict. Units from three of the four major service branches—the PLAA, PLAN, and PLAAF—have now participated in these disaster relief missions.³³¹

The second largest category of PLA HA/DR engagements are in the form of scheduled humanitarian medical assistance missions to other states that are not in response to disasters. These missions involve providing a range of medical treatment to underserved foreign populations as well as Chinese citizens living abroad. 11 of 32 PLA HA/DR engagements fit

³³¹ The fourth service branch during the period of 2002-2012 was the Second Artillery Corps, responsible for China's nuclear missile deterrent capabilities as well as shorter range, conventional, ballistic missiles. The Second Artillery Corps did not participate abroad in any military diplomacy activities.

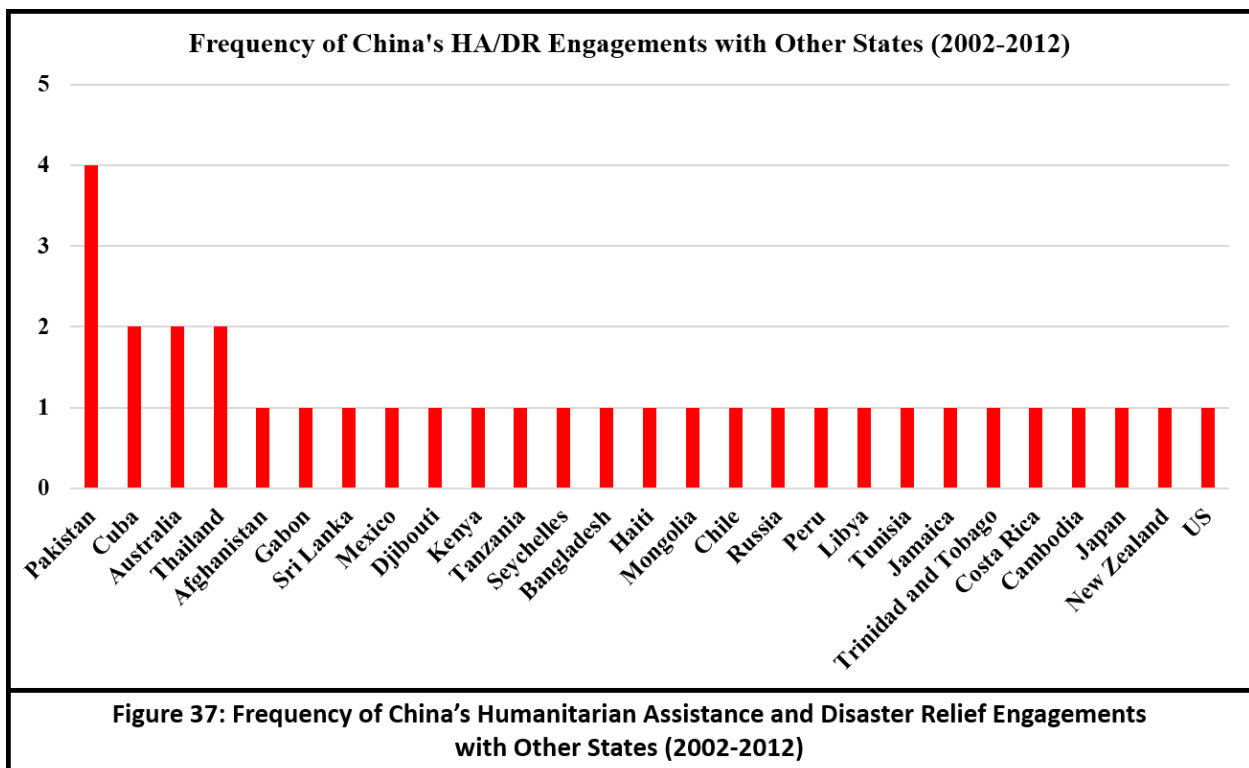
Year	HA/DR Engagement Name	Engagement Description	Participant States	Engagement Location
2002		HA/DR Operation (Earthquake Relief Aid Delivery)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
2009	<i>Peace Angel-2009</i>	Combined HA/DR Training and "Joint Humanitarian Medical Rescue Operation"	Gabon	Gabon (Ogooue-Ivindo Province)
		HA/DR Operation ("Refugee" Relief Aid Delivery)	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
		HA/DR Operation ("Refugee" Relief Aid Delivery)	Pakistan	Pakistan
		HA/DR Operation ("Swine Flu" Relief Aid Delivery)	Mexico	Mexico
2010	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Djibouti	Djibouti
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Kenya	Kenya
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Tanzania	Tanzania
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Seychelles	Seychelles
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Bangladesh	Bangladesh
		HA/DR Operation (Earthquake Relief Aid Delivery, Medical Team, Search and Rescue Team)	Haiti	Haiti
		HA/DR Operation ("Snow Disaster" Relief Aid Delivery)	Mongolia	Mongolia
		HA/DR Operation (Earthquake Relief Aid Delivery)	Chile	Chile
		HA/DR Operation (Forest Fire Relief Aid Delivery)	Russia	Russia
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery, Medical Team, Search and Rescue, Helicopter Lift)	Pakistan	Pakistan
	<i>Peace Angel-2010</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Peru	Peru
2011		HA/DR Operation ("Civil War" Relief Aid Delivery, Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation)	Libya	Libya
		HA/DR Operation ("Turmoil" Relief Aid Delivery)	Tunisia	Tunisia
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery, Air Transport)	Pakistan	Pakistan
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Cuba	Cuba
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Jamaica	Jamaica
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Costa Rica	Costa Rica
	<i>Cooperation Spirit-2011</i>	HA/DR Exercise	Australia	China (Duijiangyan, Sichuan)
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery)	Pakistan	Pakistan
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery)	Thailand	Thailand
	HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery, Air Transport)	Thailand	Thailand	
	HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery)	Cambodia	Cambodia	
2012		HA/DR Operation (Tsunami Relief Aid Delivery, Search and Rescue)	Japan	Japan
	<i>Cooperation Spirit-2012</i>	HA/DR Exercise	Australia, New Zealand	Australia (Brisbane)
		HA/DR Operation (Hurricane Relief Aid Delivery)	Cuba	Cuba
	<i>China-US Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster-Relief Tabletop Exercise</i>	HA/DR Exercise	US	China (Chengdu, Sichuan)

Figure 36: China's HA/DR Engagements with Other States (2002-2012)

into this category and nine have been conducted by the PLAN's *Peace Ark* hospital ship in two separate months-long voyages in 2010 and 2011, dubbed logically enough *Harmonious Mission 2010* and *Harmonious Mission 2011*. Two of these medical assistance missions—*Peace Angel-2009* in Gabon and *Peace Angel-2010* in Peru—were conducted as the second phase of combined disaster relief training held with local military forces. This makes them closely related to the third category of PLA HA/DR engagements: combined HA/DR exercises and training with foreign military personnel. In addition to the first stages of the *Peace Angel* missions, China has participated in a total of five of these types of engagements, one each with Australia, Australia

and New Zealand in a trilateral event, and the US. These latter three engagements were exercises only and did not include follow-on medical assistance missions. The highlighted engagements in Figure 36 consist of the five engagements in this final category, because they are also included in the tally of combined exercises due to their dual nature.

Figure 37 breaks out the states with which China has engaged in this military diplomacy activity as well as the frequency of these engagements. Interestingly, Pakistan is once more first on the list of states engaged by the PLA, followed by Cuba, Australia, and Thailand. While



some may be tempted to declare this is a function of Pakistan's geologic proclivity for earthquakes or meteorological tendency towards flooding, this is not necessarily the primary reason. Indeed, natural disasters occur with regularity around the world and Beijing always has a choice about when and where it will deploy the PLA for disaster relief missions. To the extent that China has the agency to pick and choose its HA/DR engagements, there must exist additional reasons beyond the fickleness of nature for why the PLA deploys more frequently to

certain states and not to others. Furthermore, while state wealth plays a role in a state's ability to respond to natural disasters without outside help, Figures 36 and 37 demonstrate that the PLA has engaged states with a range of national wealth levels in HA/DR events. Because of their benign, and even beneficial character, HA/DR exercises are a useful way to engage a broad cross-section of states, including states with which tensions may exist and wealthier states otherwise capable of handling their own domestic natural disasters like the US, Australia, and New Zealand. HA/DR exercise engagements with these states may also prepare China for participation in future multinational responses to natural disasters. Nevertheless, China has engaged middle and upper-income states in disaster relief efforts as well, including Russia, Chile, and Japan. This again indicates Beijing's engagement choices are predicated upon factors beyond simply state wealth and domestic disaster relief capability.

With these observations in mind, we turn to the first correlation of the PLA's HA/DR engagements and China's international economic interests. As we did in the previous section, we begin with basic measurements of Chinese economic activity during the period from 2000 to 2012. Unsurprisingly, just as there was in the case of combined exercises, there is a strong measure of correlation between China's HA/DR engagements and China's GDP growth (0.75), China's trade volume by value (0.70), and China's FDI Outflows (0.74).³³² However, what these correlations suggest is somewhat less clear than in the case of combined exercises. In both cases, it seems certain that China first needed to achieve a certain level of wealth, and the PLA needed to reach a certain capability level, before Beijing tasked it with missions on the international stage. However, unlike the near simultaneous promulgation of the "going out" policy and the launch of combined exercises, the PLA's HA/DR engagements only commenced with regularity some seven years after the "going out" policy was announced and Chinese businesses and

³³² Correlations are rounded to the nearest tenth.

investments had already begun burgeoning overseas. For more clarity we turn to an assessment of the relationship between the PLA’s HA/DR activities and China’s major trade partners.

Figure 38 is reminiscent of the various correlation results from the combined exercise case study. Similar to the previous section, the left side of the figure shows that the PLA engaged 50% of its top ten trade partners in HA/DR activities in at least one HA/DR exercise, well above the global average of 14%.³³³ The engagements with three of those five states were disaster relief operations conducted in Japan, Russia, and Thailand while the engagements with the US and Australia were in the form of HA/DR exercises. Interestingly, China did not engage trade partner states ranked 11 to 20 in any HA/DR engagements. The reason for this may simply

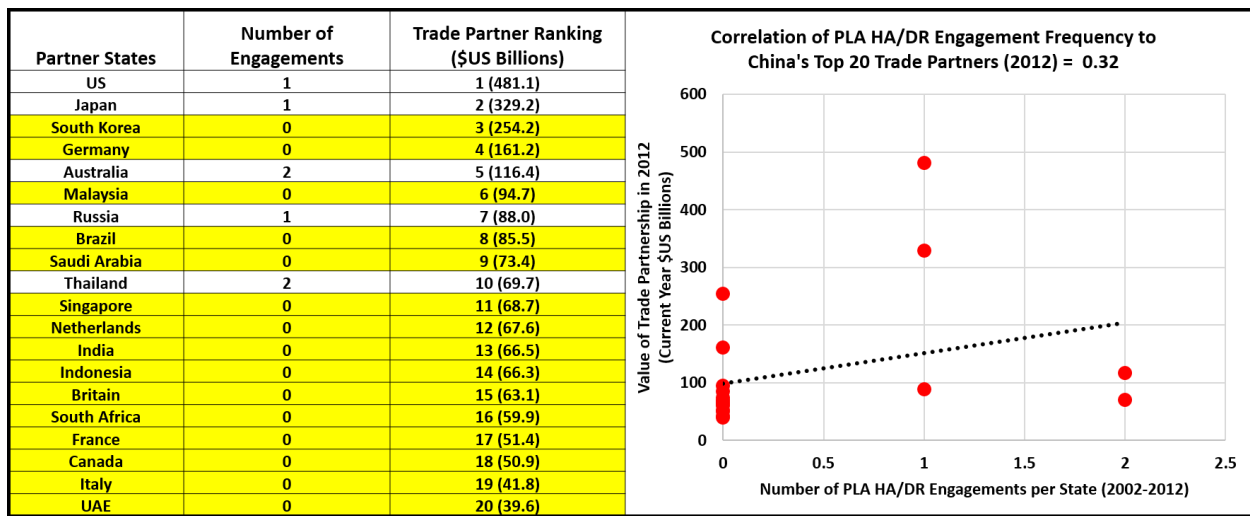


Figure 38: Correlation of PLA HA/DR Engagements to China's Major Trading Partners (2002-2012)

be the relative youth of HA/DR as a part of China’s MD panoply, commencing with regularity only in 2009. This naturally limits the number of states engaged so far and one may expect the sample size to grow accordingly as this activity continues. Nevertheless, through 2012 one observes that the majority of those states not engaged are relatively wealthy and their modern infrastructures and favorable geography shields them somewhat from the disaster travails of

³³³ Beijing’s global HA/DR engagement percentage comes from the number of states it has engaged in combined exercises (27) divided by the total number of states in the world (193).

lower income states, precluding the need for relief operations or humanitarian assistance missions. It remains true that China did not engage them in HA/DR exercises or training events either. Even India and Indonesia, lower income states which regularly experience various natural disasters, were not engaged by China. The reasons for this deserve further study, but for now, the most relevant point is that China did choose to engage more of its top ten trade partners than it chose to engage states further down the list.

The correlation results on the right side of Figure 38 are somewhat different than those observed in the last case study. The slightly positive correlation of 0.32 is larger than most of the similar correlations in the previous section and suggests that for the states China engaged in HA/DR activities that were also in the top 20 trade partner rankings, the higher the trade partner ranking, the more frequently China engaged that partner in HA/DR activities. Readers recall that most of the correlations in the previous case study demonstrated practically neutral correlations, leading to the reasonable speculation that China balanced higher frequency engagements with certain states against the desire to engage more states less often given the finite engagement capabilities of the PLA. In this case, it appears China does favor more frequent HA/DR engagements with certain states over the need to engage more states. Indeed, bilateral HA/DR engagements with the US and Australia since 2012 have become a mainstay of the Chinese military diplomacy relationship with those states, occurring with greater frequency than with other states, meaning that the correlation becomes even more positive if we include the years beyond the temporal bounds of our case study.³³⁴ Expansion of the temporal bounds beyond 2012 also reinforces the first assumption, as China's HA/DR activities expanded to include more

³³⁴ US Department of Defense, 2015. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2015*. Annual Report to Congress, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 42, 68, and 76-77.

states on the top 20 list including Singapore, India, and Indonesia.³³⁵ With this strong relationship between China's HA/DR engagements and its international economic interests, we turn once more to consideration of the geographic proximity of China's HA/DR partners to the trade routes upon which the Chinese economy depends.

Figure 39 depicts both the frequency and locations of the PLA's international HA/DR engagements.³³⁶ Pakistan immediately stands out as China's most frequent HA/DR partner state and location. Each of the four events in Pakistan have been PLA disaster relief aid deliveries following major natural disasters. The PLA's HA/DR engagement with Pakistan, in addition to the frequency of combined exercises with Pakistan, are impressive because of the sustained level of security cooperation interest it indicates that Beijing holds for that country. The rationale for the PLA's close partnership with the Pakistan Armed Forces goes beyond both nations' strategic rivalries with neighboring India and increasingly involves Pakistan's favorable geographic, cultural, and commercial proximity to the Middle East.³³⁷ The economic value of Pakistan to Beijing has become apparent by such initiatives as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for which China pledged some \$46 billion in infrastructure investment designed to link Kashgar, in China's Xinjiang Province, with the Chinese-developed and operated port of Gwadar in southwestern Pakistan.³³⁸ In this case, the chronology of PLA MD engagements parallel, and even perhaps precede somewhat, the chronology of China's economic security interest in

³³⁵ Ibid., 42.

³³⁶ New Zealand, Australia, and the US are the three exceptions on the map. New Zealand participated in the multilateral *Cooperation Spirit-2012* HA/DR exercise in 2012 with China and Australia but that exercise was held in Brisbane, Australia. New Zealand receives an engagement dot to denote its status as a one-time participant, not because it was the location of the engagement. Australia receives an engagement dot denoting its two engagements with China, but one of the two was held in China's Sichuan Province. The US' single engagement was likewise held in Sichuan Province. All other dots indicate both locations and frequency of state engagement.

³³⁷ Muhammad Daim Fazil, 2015. "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Potential and Vulnerabilities." *The Diplomat*. May 29. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/the-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-potential-and-vulnerabilities/>.

³³⁸ Ibid.

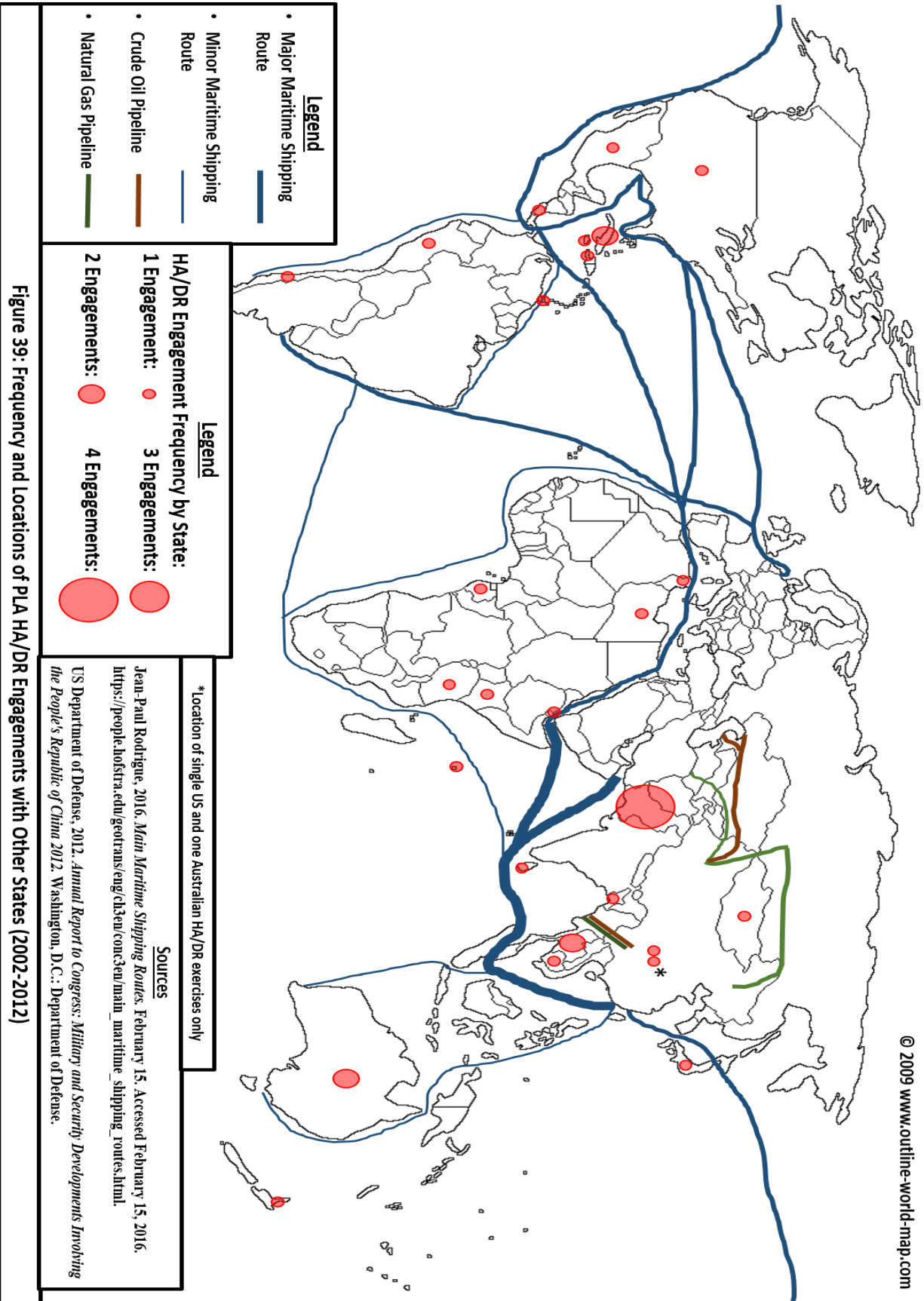


Figure 39: Frequency and Locations of PLA HA/DR Engagements with Other States (2002-2012)

creating an alternative route for energy and commerce that bypasses the Malacca Strait through territory belonging to a close security partner. This reinforces the hypothesis that Beijing considers the security requirements of its overseas investments at about the same time it contemplates what and where those investments will be.

Two of the next three most frequent states for HA/DR engagement were Australia—anchoring the southeastern end of the Indian Ocean—and Thailand, with its access to the South China Sea without being a rival claimant to any of the territory. The third of these three states is Cuba, not a major trade partner or supplier of commodities, but located in the heart of the Gulf of Mexico. The PLA's first HA/DR visit to this state occurred during the *Peace Ark's* four nation *Harmonious Mission 2011* humanitarian assistance visit which included Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Costa Rica. While these states are economically insignificant to China, they do possess some geo-political and geo-economic significance. One notes that this first visit to the region marked an expansion of the PLA's international presence to an area very close geographically to the US and that Beijing chose to do it through the unobjectionable form of a humanitarian assistance mission. Only later in 2011 did China engage Venezuela in a combined exercise for the first time, followed by a similar engagement with Colombia in 2012. In the case of *Harmonious Mission 2011*, the *Peace Ark* also transited through the Panama Canal as it arrived in, and later departed from the region, marking only the second time that PLAN vessels had ever used that crucial waterway.³³⁹

Finally, mapping the PLA's HA/DR engagements and comparing them to China's combined exercises reveals a significant complementary relationship. While China has engaged multiple states in both HA/DR activities and in combined exercises, there is a marked tendency

³³⁹ China Military Online, 2015. "Chinese Navy's hospital ship Peace Ark passes through Panama Canal." *China Military Online*. Edited by Tao Zhang. November 24. Accessed March 15, 2016. http://english.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2015-11/24/content_6783282.htm.

to conduct HA/DR engagements with states that China has not engaged in combined exercises, yet still have relevance to China's international economic interests. For example, four of the five states visited during the *Peace Ark's* inaugural humanitarian assistance mission in 2010 were states not previously engaged in combined exercises and all five either bordered the Indian Ocean or were located in the Indian Ocean. The *Peace Ark's* stop in Djibouti, located as it is on the crucial Bab el-Mandeb Strait, is the most obvious example of Beijing directing HA/DR engagements toward states with geographic proximity to crucial maritime shipping lanes.

This pattern of complementarity between HA/DR engagements and combined exercises being used to expand the PLA's presence to geo-economically significant states is also evident elsewhere. For instance, as of 2012, the PLA had engaged only a single African state in a combined exercise, the cross-categorized HA/DR combined exercise and humanitarian assistance mission in Gabon in 2009. Yet the PLA had conducted five additional HA/DR operations with African states, meaning that all six of the PLA's engagements in Africa have been HA/DR-related. Among these were Libya and Algeria, both on China's top 20 list of oil suppliers for 2012, and Kenya and Tanzania, both bordering the western edge of the Indian Ocean. The same holds true for China's HA/DR engagements with Mexico and Chile—states that rank as a major trade partner (Mexico) or as a major supplier of key commodities (Chile), but not yet engaged in combined exercises. This complementarity suggests Beijing seeks to maximize the state partners it engages through these two MD activities and that PLA planners are cognizant of both where the PLA has been, and where it would be useful to send it next.

In summary, the PLA's pattern of HA/DR activity seem to confirm the assertion that they are directed towards states with relevance to China's international economic interests. Indeed, when we consider the cumulative results of this chapter's two case studies, we see that each

military diplomacy activity complements the other in increasing the PLA's ability to operate in areas pertinent to its international economic interests. Adding the PLA's HA/DR activities to any of the combined exercise charts in the previous section listing China's top trade partners and commodity suppliers strengthens the observation that China is far more likely to engage its economically significant partners than it is to engage states not on these lists. Certainly, there is still a gap in our understanding of how exactly China would seek to protect its economic interests abroad because the range of possible contingencies is very large and the factors unique to each contingency are difficult to foresee. Nevertheless, building cooperative security relationships with many of these states ostensibly provides the PLA with the political goodwill and operational familiarity that can prove beneficial during future contingencies. Each of these engagements increases the PLA's operational experience in new areas of the globe and accustoms the international community to the PLA's growing international presence. Each of these engagements also prepares the PLA to assume an even larger role in contributing to global security, either unilaterally or, more likely, in partnership with other states.

These two case studies now complete the argument regarding the assertion that China's international economic interests explain the growth of China's military diplomacy from 2002 to 2012. From theory to practice, a strong case exists for material interests as a driver of Chinese MD. With this in mind, the dissertation now shifts gears to examine another explanation commonly offered in the literature, namely, that China's military diplomacy growth is an effort to improve China's national image. Completing this argument and then evaluating it based on the patterns of China's military diplomacy is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Image Building as Explanation for the Growth of China's Military Diplomacy

The hypothesis of this chapter is that the growth of China's military diplomacy can be explained as an effort to create a positive image of the state in the eyes of both domestic and international audiences. This explanation, introduced during the literature review in Chapter Two, remains unsupported in the literature by any substantive empirical analysis or links to a larger theoretical framework.³⁴⁰ The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is the formation of a complete argument that links the patterns of Chinese military diplomacy to relevant theory. The complete argument of this chapter is that military diplomacy provides the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) an avenue to affirm images of China's greatness on the world stage to its domestic population in a manner also unobjectionable to the international community. The purpose of presenting this image to the domestic audience is to bolster perceptions of the CCP as China's competent ruling authority. The purpose of presenting positive images to China's international audience is to communicate reassurance about the benign—even beneficial—nature of China's growing international military presence.

As did the first section in Chapter Three, the first section of this chapter focuses on theory—this time drawing primarily on social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT)—to begin to explain the psychological roots of image and status and their relevance to China's MD activity. This section also extends the theory to China's specific circumstances, introducing the images China desires to impress upon its various audiences and why this is so. Once this theoretical and contextual background has been established, the heart of the chapter examines the patterns of our two representative case studies: the PLA's

³⁴⁰ Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 58-59.

participation in combined exercises and the PLA's participation in international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. If the hypothesis is correct, one expects to find distinct correlations between the patterns of China's MD activities and the images China wishes to create of the state. These correlations will be manifest in a variety of ways including the state partners China engages, the declared purposes of those engagements, the names given to the engagements, and the size of the engagements. In general, one would expect to see patterns in China's MD wherein the symbolic values of various events appear to outweigh the functional utility of those events. The challenge of this chapter is in the strongly subjective nature of the explanation. Image and status are inherently dynamic, subject to the psychological biases of their myriad audiences. Consequently, it is important to lay a firm theoretical foundation for the phenomenon of image building as an explanation for the growth of China's military diplomacy activity.

Theoretical Foundations of the Argument

Writing in 2006 and early 2007, at roughly the midpoint of the decade of interest for this dissertation, China scholar Joshua Cooper Ramo declared:

China's greatest strategic threat today is its national image. The country is not, in the short term, likely to be invaded. The country's most important strategic issues, challenges as diverse as sustaining economic growth and the threat of Taiwanese independence, have at their root a shared connection to China's national image (*guojia xingxiang*). Tactical challenges such as the quality of foreign direct investment (FDI) that the country attracts, the willingness of other nations to provide technological and educational aid, and the spread of Chinese businesses into international markets all share a basis in national image. Even the leadership's desire to maintain internal stability has ties to how the country is seen and how she sees herself. For one of the few times in its history, this famously inward-looking nation is vulnerable to how it is seen abroad. How China is perceived by other nations – and the underlying reality that perception reflects— will determine the future of Chinese development and reform.³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Joshua Cooper Ramo, 2007. *Brand China*. Monograph, The Foreign Policy Centre, London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 12.

Ramo was not the only one to recognize China's image problems. Indeed, Beijing has been very cognizant of international perceptions—positive, but more especially, negative—regarding its rise for a long time. This cognizance was manifest in the late 1990s and early 2000s by the ongoing debates within China about how best to characterize the changes the state was undergoing in terms of its growing economic, political, and military power and to counter the “China threat theories” attendant to those changes.³⁴² From senior Chinese foreign policy advisor Zheng Bijian's “peaceful rise” term to the eventually adopted “peaceful development” consensus, Beijing has been very sensitive regarding its national image as it navigates the tumultuous changes, internal and external, attendant to the growth of its comprehensive national power.³⁴³ According to our literature review, image building has also been a frequently asserted explanation for China's growing military diplomacy activity. This section focuses on understanding the theoretical roots of state concern with image—or status—in general, and of China's preoccupation with it in particular, preparatory to the empirical analysis in the subsequent case study sections.

Social identity theory and self-categorization theory provide scholars with useful approaches to understanding the psychological roots of state behaviors that the dominant schools of neorealism and liberalism have largely overlooked.³⁴⁴ Rather than the roles played by material interests or international regimes and institutions in influencing state behaviors, SIT and SCT delve into the psychological and emotional motivations of human interactions and apply them at group-levels of analysis. Together, SIT and SCT are known as the “social identity

³⁴² Ibid., 7-11.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, 2010. “Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy.” *International Security* 34 (4): 66.

approach” to understanding the motivations and behaviors of social groups, including states.³⁴⁵ Social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his colleagues developed social identity theory to explain the intergroup perpetration of mass horrors like the Holocaust and other intergroup discrimination.³⁴⁶ Their experimental work led them to conclude that identification as a member of a group inherently changes individual perceptions and behaviors towards other groups.³⁴⁷ SIT researchers observed that the formation of groups led to competitive, rather than cooperative, intergroup behavioral norms and that, as Professor Matthew Hornsey writes, “The motivating principle underlying competitive intergroup behavior was a desire for a positive and secure self-concept.”³⁴⁸ Hornsey continues:

If we are to accept that people are motivated to have a positive self-concept, it flows naturally that people should be motivated to think of their groups as good groups. Furthermore, drawing on Festinger’s writings on social comparison, it was argued that people evaluate their group with reference to relevant outgroups. Groups are not islands; they become psychologically real only when defined in comparison to other groups. Striving for a positive social identity, group members are motivated to think and act in ways that achieve or maintain a positive distinctiveness between one’s own group and relevant outgroups. It was this process that was presumed to underpin real world instances of intergroup differentiation and outgroup derogation.³⁴⁹

This desire for a positive and secure self-concept can be further broken down into two distinct components. Pride is the positive self-concept group members feel for the group of which they are a member while prestige is the positive perception of a group’s attributes by outsiders.³⁵⁰ The two are interrelated inasmuch as feelings of pride are bolstered by evidence of prestige. Conversely, pride in one’s group can also be undercut when other groups signal negative

³⁴⁵ Matthew J. Hornsey, 2008. "Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory: A Historical Review." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2 (1): 208.

³⁴⁶ Jonathan Mercer, 2014. "Feeling Like a State." *International Theory* 6 (3): 522.

³⁴⁷ Hornsey, "Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory: A Historical Review," 206-207.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ Allan Dafoe, Jonathan Renshon, and Paul Huth, 2014. "Reputation and Status as Motives for War." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 374.

perceptions of a group's attributes or devalue its achievements.³⁵¹ A major consideration of these components is that although groups may seek prestige, they have no power to compel it from other groups. Groups may seek it, but there is no guarantee that they will obtain it because it is derived wholly from the perceptions of other groups.

In a world full of groups—especially the super groups known as states—group desire for a “positive and secure self-concept” often means state behavior *unconducive* to maintaining the status quo. Hornsey explains, “SIT was the first social psychological theory to acknowledge that groups occupy different levels of a hierarchy of different status and power, and that intergroup behavior is driven by people’s ability to be critical of, and to see alternatives to, the status quo. For Tajfel, SIT was at its heart a theory of social change.”³⁵² At the state level then, there exists a certain amount of competition for status that is driven by the collective identity of millions of individuals who identify themselves—or are identified by others—as members of a state differentiated from members of other states.³⁵³ This dissertation adopts the definition of status provided by Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth as “collective beliefs about a given state’s ranking on valued attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, and diplomatic clout).”³⁵⁴ This competition for status is typically manifest by measurement of an endless variety of achievements sporting grammatical modifiers like “the first,” “the fastest,” “the largest,” or “the most.” Readers will recognize the material aspects of this interstate competition in terms of space races (first in space, first to the moon), arms races (most powerful weapons, largest militaries), infrastructure and transportation (tallest buildings,

³⁵¹ Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 69.

³⁵² Hornsey, "Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory," 207.

³⁵³ Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 69.

³⁵⁴ Deborah Welch Larson, T.V. Paul, and William C. Wohlforth, 2014. "Status and World Order." In *Status in World Politics*, edited by T.V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson and William C. Wohlforth, 3-29. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 7.

fastest trains/ocean liners/planes), or economic achievements (largest GDP, fastest growth, most billionaires), et cetera.³⁵⁵ However, as the definition points out, some status attributes are intangible and cannot be measured directly including “cultural achievements, soft power, and moral authority.”³⁵⁶ SIT researchers further note that groups are often creative in finding alternative ways to affirm their positive social identities. These strategies include, “making downward intergroup comparisons that are more flattering to the ingroup, focusing only on dimensions that make the ingroup look relatively good, devaluing dimensions that reflect poorly on the ingroup, and engaging in social change to try to overturn the existing status hierarchy.”³⁵⁷

As SIT scholarship advanced, some researchers began focusing more on intragroup dynamics rather than intergroup behaviors. This branch of study is known as self-categorization theory and it illuminates the factors affecting group formation and ingroup behavior. SCT proposes that individuals operate within a hierarchy of identities ranging from the highest level of inclusiveness (human being) to intermediate social identities (state or other group), to the lowest level of identity as an individual person.³⁵⁸ The degree to which an individual identifies with a group is a function of how well that individual fits into that group, especially relative to other competing groups, and of how much access an individual has to a group.³⁵⁹ If fit and accessibility are both high, then it becomes much easier for an individual to adopt a group’s social identity and begin acting, feeling, and thinking in ways that are stereotypical of the group.³⁶⁰ SCT has implications for international relations because, again, groups only exist in differentiation to other groups and intragroup dynamics are tied closely to intergroup behaviors.

³⁵⁵ Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 72.

³⁵⁶ Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 2014. "Status and World Order." 8-9.

³⁵⁷ Hornsey, "Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory," 207.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 208-209.

The manner by which individual and group—in this case, state—identities intersect deserves further attention. Professor Jon Mercer at the University of Washington explains the interoperation of various psychological and emotional factors that facilitate the switch from individual identity to state identity.³⁶¹ First, Mercer argues, “Culture influences feeling and thinking.”³⁶² All the cultural factors that shape and give context to human experience—language, religion, family and social norms, etc.—serve to build individual emotional and cognitive identification with a larger group. Second, group members typically interact with each other with higher frequency and longer duration that allows members to influence each other in the form of increasingly shared norms, attitudes, and beliefs that then become accepted measures of esteem.³⁶³ Third, Mercer writes, “Emotion is contagious... because we use how others feel as evidence of how we should feel.”³⁶⁴ Finally, individual identity switches to social identity when individual-level interests become closely associated with group-level interests.³⁶⁵ Mercer also observes, “Traumatic events elicit shared emotional reactions within that group even when the experience is not first hand.”³⁶⁶ In this way, large scale traumatic events—genocide, economic depression, war, etc.—contribute to shared historical memories that can be passed down from one generation to another, contributing to the formation and maintenance of powerful group (state) identities.

Together, the SCT and SIT elements of the social identity approach help explain the dynamics at the core of this chapter’s argument. SCT explains how and why state authorities leverage group (state) identity to maintain their support. Hornsey writes, “People are influential

³⁶¹ Mercer, “Feeling Like a State.”

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 523.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 524.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

within groups to the extent that they embody the prototypical attitudes, behaviours [sic], and values of the group. Leaders manage their rhetoric to locate themselves within the heart of the group, and to the extent that they succeed in doing this, leaders will be seen to be more legitimate and more influential.”³⁶⁷ It thus behooves group leaders—political regimes, political parties, and other state authorities—to conflate themselves with the identity of their state group. In this way, group members feel, think, and act in ways that support not only a group’s well-being, but also enable the continued status of the leadership at the center of the group. Group leaders, eager to maintain their privileges within the group, thus find it in their interest to emphasize group identity. According to SIT, the best way for them to do this is by continuously differentiating the in-group from outgroups in a way that builds pride in the in-group and earns prestige from outgroups. These efforts to promote a “positive and secure self-image” at the state level is often manifest internationally as competitive status-seeking behaviors discussed in the preceding pages. Failure of group leadership to deliver a positive and secure self-image destabilizes the legitimacy of the leadership’s status within the group. Professor Yong Deng describes the net effect of this pressure on Chinese leaders as it applies to China’s quest for status. Deng writes, “Chinese officials and analysts alike have, since the mid-1990s, evoked “international status” (*Guoji Diwei*) as if it were the most desirable value, the one that leads to power, security, and respect. Judging by the frequency of the term’s use in official Chinese discourse and scholarly analyses, the PRC may very well be the most status-conscious country in the world.”³⁶⁸

Applied to China, the social identity approach does much to illuminate our understanding of China’s international behavior, including the growth of its military diplomacy activity. This understanding necessarily begins with examining a driving force of modern Chinese status-

³⁶⁷ Hornsey, "Social Identity Theory and Self Categorization Theory," 211.

³⁶⁸ Deng, 2008. *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*, 8.

seeking: nationalism. Chinese nationalism permeates both its domestic and international politics in ways few other factors do. The literature on Chinese politics and foreign policy almost invariably includes extended examinations of the role nationalism plays in those same fields.³⁶⁹ Despite this attention to Chinese nationalism, the vast majority of works approach Chinese nationalism as a fully conceived factor without consideration of the theoretical origins of this crucial psychological motivator. Chinese foreign policy literature in particular lacks the social identity approaches offered by SIT and SCT despite the obvious relevance of the theories to understanding the motivations of Chinese international behavior.

China's brand of nationalism—like most states'—is replete with the psychological factors SCT and SIT identify as operative in group formation and intergroup competition. It consists of China's proud cultural heritage and historical memories of China's greatness mixed with unjust, exploitative, and cruel treatment at the hands of Western powers and Japan.³⁷⁰ The period of this unjust treatment has been enshrined in national consciousness as China's "century of humiliation" [*bainian guochi*] and forms the bedrock of the CCP's patriotic education policies that ensure the humiliation narrative remains fresh in the population's memory.³⁷¹ Despite the CCP's patriotic education policies, Professor William Callahan observes that one should not understand Chinese nationalism as a purely top-down phenomenon. He writes, "While it is popular to see the state as the actor and the masses as the audience, here the actor is the audience, and the audience is the actor, as Chinese nationalism is produced and consumed in an interactive

³⁶⁹ The list of such works is simply too long for inclusion in a single footnote. For representative works, see: Peter Hays Gries, 2004. *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. See also Zheng Wang, 2012. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press. See also Susan L. Shirk, 2007. *China, Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail its Peaceful Rise*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press. See also Denny Roy, 2013. *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press.

³⁷⁰ William A. Callahan, 2010. *China: The Pessimist Nation*, New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 14-19.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 32-38.

and subjective process. The party-state's campaigns are so successful because they draw on ideas that preceded the state—civilization and barbarism, national pride and national humiliation—that resonate with popular feelings."³⁷² This top-down and bottom-up Chinese nationalism extends to ideas regarding China's "rightful place in the world" and influences Chinese attitudes towards diplomacy and foreign policy—especially with states it views as contributors to China's century of humiliation.³⁷³ Indeed, states that have demonstrated some manner of relative superiority over another state are often the reference groups that motivate the inferior state to status-seeking behavior.³⁷⁴ In China's case, these reference states are primarily Japan, the United States, and Russia.³⁷⁵

In *Never Forget National Humiliation*, Professor Zheng Wang of Seton Hall University, provides a valuable insider perspective on the CCP's use of nationalism to unite the country under its rule. Wang argues that following the perceived bankruptcy of communism in the wake of Tiananmen and the demise of the Soviet Union, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) initiated a sea change in its *raison d'être*. The CCP abandoned its role as "the vanguard of the working class" in favor of a new role as "the party of the firmest and most thoroughgoing patriots" and made national rejuvenation its primary mission.³⁷⁶ In making this change, the party tapped into pre-existing national historical memories of "chosenness, myths, and trauma" as it initiated its patriotic education program in 1991.³⁷⁷ Wang explicitly applies SIT (one of the few authors to do so) to explain how historical memory functions in Chinese identity formation. Chinese people are united by feelings of civilizational greatness and by feelings of victimization at the

³⁷² Ibid., 25.

³⁷³ Ibid., 15.

³⁷⁴ Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 68.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Zheng Wang, 2012. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 130-135.

³⁷⁷ Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 96-100.

hands of other groups—primarily western states including the US and Japan—during its so-called “century of humiliation.” As part of CCP efforts to leverage these emotive memories, it conflates itself with China and reinforces perceptions of itself as savior and defender of Chinese honor and sovereignty, positioning itself at the center of Chinese group identity. The Party now faces the challenge of maintaining this ruling position—arguably its primary goal. Wang cites Peter Hays Gries when he writes, “The legitimacy of China’s current rulers is highly dependent upon successful performance on the international stage. The ruling party is responsible for maintaining China’s ‘national *mianzi*’ (face) in its dealings with other nations.”³⁷⁸ Professor Denny Roy describes the apparent high priority Beijing places on China’s status in his book *Return of the Dragon*. He writes:

All national governments care about their reputation and make some effort to present their policies in a favorable light. Some states seem particularly insistent on gaining international respect. Many observers have placed China in this category based on two strong patterns of Chinese behavior: seeking international prestige and recognition as a great power and displaying great sensitivity and even overreaction toward perceived affronts to national pride. If so, we might consider adding “status” to the short list of China’s most fundamental objectives.³⁷⁹

This responsibility to maintain national “face” on the international stage, however, comes with its own attendant challenges.

The CCP walks a fine line between meeting domestic, nationalistic expectations for manifestations of greatness on the world stage and behaving in ways that its neighbors and the US find provocative. Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox explain how the economic and social changes sweeping China over the last three decades, including the accessibility of the internet to the majority of the Chinese population, have created new foreign policy actors within China capable of influencing China’s international behavior. They write:

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 135.

³⁷⁹ Denny Roy, 2013. *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 19-20.

Of the new foreign policy actors, netizens are the most dynamic. Nationalist sentiment is widespread and criticism of Chinese leaders for bowing to international demands is incessant on the Internet. While many foreign policy decisions are made with little regard to public opinion, Chinese officials are aware that dissatisfaction can give rise to questioning of the Party's ability to govern. Hence, leaders' actions can be constrained in international crises, particularly when the United States or Japan are involved, or if any issue related to Taiwan or Tibet surfaces as the focus of international attention."³⁸⁰

Denny Roy further describes the paradoxical foreign policy challenges the CCP faces in trying to manage this nationalist sentiment:

China is in a transitional period during which many Chinese simultaneously feel *both* greater entitlement to international deference because of their rising power *and* sensitivity to what they see as continued victimization. This is a flammable combination. Anxious to bolster its mandate to rule, the CCP takes every opportunity to reinforce its message to China's people that the PRC continues to make gains in its drive to become a powerful, influential, and prestigious player in international politics. The message increases the Chinese public's expectations that the time has arrived for China to rectify past injustices and for other countries to submit to China's will rather than the reverse.³⁸¹

Whatever desires for "rectification of past injustices" may exist, the present reality is that the CCP faces a severely constrained international security environment that tempers these nationalistic impulses at the elite level in Beijing. Yong Deng summarizes the overall challenge when he writes, "China's struggle for status is about creating an international environment that allows the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-state to continue self-paced reforms at home; increase power and recognition abroad to secure China's core interests; reassure other states of China's nonthreatening intent; and projects its influence in Asia and beyond."³⁸²

Given these challenges, the CCP plays a "two-level game" in which it must balance the occasionally conflicting demands coming from its domestic and international audiences.³⁸³ The

³⁸⁰ Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, 2010. *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, SIPRI Policy Paper, Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, vii.

³⁸¹ Roy, 2013. *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security*. 260.

³⁸² Deng, 2008. *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*, 21.

³⁸³ Xiaoyu Pu and Randall L. Schweller, 2014. "Status Signalling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Blue-Water Naval Ambition." In *Status in World Politics*, edited by T.V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson and William C. Wohlforth, 141-162. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 145.

question for the CCP is one of how best to demonstrate “gains” to its domestic audience without aggravating on-going security dilemmas with its neighbors and the US. Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko employ SIT to provide a useful perspective on state status seeking behavior that helps us understand how China may address this conundrum. China, they agree, has been consistent in seeking restoration of its great power status.³⁸⁴ In summarizing the three status seeking strategies states pursue, they write, “Applied to international relations, SIT suggests that states [China] may improve their status by joining elite clubs (social mobility), trying to best the dominant states (social competition), or achieving preeminence outside the arena of geopolitical competition (social creativity).”³⁸⁵ China has clearly employed all three strategies both simultaneously and individually in its various fields of endeavor at different times. China has been very successful in its social mobility and competition in terms of its economic growth achievements. China’s diplomatic influence and cultural appeal are also higher than they perhaps have ever been. However, it is on the military and security fronts that Beijing continues to feel status-constrained. Unfortunately, given the conflicting expectations of the CCP’s domestic audience and the heightened threat awareness of the international audience, military status seeking that satisfies both audiences is highly problematic.

China’s military status-seeking behaviors have thus far largely catered to China’s domestic audiences. This is because the domestic audience presents a more immediate threat to the stability of the country and to the ongoing ruling position of the CCP.³⁸⁶ On the social mobility front, China’s accession over the decades to elite military clubs—its nuclear, space, stealth fighter, and aircraft carrier capabilities, for example—have been celebrated domestically, but criticized internationally. On the social competition front, China’s well-known, long-term,

³⁸⁴ Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 66.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁸⁶ Pu and Schweller, 2014. "Status Signalling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Blue-Water Naval Ambition." 145.

military modernization efforts have likewise been celebrated domestically, but have once more been viewed critically by much of the international community. Military victory in armed conflict is a socially competitive pathway to military status, but this is something that China is unlikely to pursue in the near term given the US-led regional security architecture and China's dependence on a peaceful environment for continued economic growth.³⁸⁷ As Larson and Shevchenko point out, "status requires acceptance from others."³⁸⁸ Social mobility and social competition strategies, applied to military-related endeavors, are popular at home, but alarming—and unaccepted—abroad. Professor David Bachman at the University of Washington links the international alarm regarding China's growing military power to the authoritarian nature of its domestic political system in contrast to the democratic values of the US and many other high-status nations. He writes, "China's communist political system is the biggest constraint on China's international prestige. It is increasingly recognized as powerful, but it is feared. The US [because of its democracy], to oversimplify, is powerful but respected."³⁸⁹ For the CCP to maintain pride at home while also garnering prestige internationally, given this reluctance to accept China's status as an international security power—requires employment of the social creativity strategy.

This dissertation argues that China's military diplomacy has been a significant component of China's social creativity strategy to gain international status. China's MD serves to alleviate nationalist pressure from its domestic audience by reinforcing positive self-images of China as a great, benevolent, and accepted power that contributes to international security and

³⁸⁷ Allan Dafoe, Jonathan Renshon, and Paul Huth, 2014. "Reputation and Status as Motives for War." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 377.

³⁸⁸ Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 82.

³⁸⁹ David Bachman, personal communication, 15 April 2016.

“harmony.”³⁹⁰ At the same time, MD allows China to try to fashion an image to its international audience that emphasizes China’s general support for existing international norms and downplays perceptions of China as a threat to other states.³⁹¹ China’s military diplomacy signals the state is a cooperative and contributing member of the international community committed to addressing shared security threats in a manner consistent with its great power “obligations and responsibilities.” Moreover, China’s so-called New Security Concept with its accompanying declarations of omni-directional military diplomacy engagements that are not directed at any third party and continued criticism of alliances as cold war relics, demonstrate an attempt to differentiate China’s security approach from the US and its regional treaty allies.³⁹² With this understanding of the theoretical and practical relationship between theory and Chinese military diplomacy, the next section turns to an examination of the discernible patterns of PLA MD that support the argument thus far.

Case Study One: The PLA’s Combined Exercises

The purpose of this case study is to test the literature assertions that China’s military diplomacy activity has grown in a manner consistent with the state’s desire to create a positive state image in the eyes of both domestic and international audiences. More specifically, how do the patterns associated with Chinese combined exercises demonstrate support for the hypothesis? Because of the subjective nature of this hypothesis, the analysis in this section will necessarily be more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Additionally, I reiterate the stipulation that many factors influence which states China seeks to engage in combined exercises but that the analysis of this chapter and section must remain focused on describing and evaluating the relationship

³⁹⁰ Information Office of the Ministry of National Defense of the PRC, 2012, "Top Ten Firsts of Chinese Military Diplomacy from 2002 to 2012," *People's Daily Online*, Edited by Meng Yan and Jun Liang, September 26, Accessed December 5, 2013, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/7960693.html>.

³⁹¹ Deng, 2008. *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*, 16-17.

³⁹² Larson and Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." 82.

between China's combined exercises and the asserted role of image-building. Finally, this section and the next will not be able to address all aspects of image building as a driver of military diplomacy, nor will it seek to address the degree to which China is successful in these efforts. Indeed, such an extended analysis would require its own dissertation-length treatment. However, this chapter will lay out the basic outline of the argument and approaches by which to begin demonstrating the validity of the argument. With these caveats in mind, there are still clear patterns of correlation between the PLA's combined exercises and the images it attempts to convey to its audiences.

This section focuses on three key elements of those patterns from 2002 to 2012; the state partners China engages, the characterization and names of the engagements, and the size of the engagements. These elements were chosen specifically for their applicability to evaluating the assertions made in the literature that China's military diplomacy activity is driven in part by China's desire to portray a positive image of the state. The states China engages in combined exercises are important because they ostensibly reveal China's status aspirations. The declared purposes of the PLA's combined exercises and the names given to those engagements are useful for our purposes because they indicate the strategic narrative Beijing is creating for the PLA's growing international presence. The narrative for the domestic audience is that China has overcome its historical weakness and is a great power once again, associating with and accepted by other great world powers and that this rejuvenation was made possible by the competent leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The narrative for the international audience is somewhat similar, demonstrating China's return as a major international power, but as a power that generally seeks to support the stability of the system that has enabled its resurgence. The size of the engagements is useful because, in relation to the first two elements, it helps us further

discern the symbolic versus functional purposes of the exercises. The assumption for this third element is that image building as a purpose of military diplomacy can be detected by evaluating the prioritization of image over substance in MD engagements.

We begin with an examination of China's state partners. Figure 40 reviews much of the information from Chapter Three regarding China's combined exercises, but it also includes two

Year	Combined Exercise/Training Engagement Name	Engagement Description	Participant States (GDP per capita/Polity IV Score)	Engagement Location
2002	<i>China-Kyrgyzstan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Kyrgyzstan (\$322/-3)	Kyrgyzstan
2003	<i>Multilateral Joint Counter-terrorism Exercise of the armed Forces of the SCO Member States</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Russia (\$2,975/6), Kazakhstan (\$2,068/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$381/-3), Tajikistan (\$238/-3)	Kazakhstan-China Border
	<i>Sino-Pakistani Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Pakistan (\$565/-5)	China (Shanghai)
	<i>Sino-Indian Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	India (\$558/9)	China (Shanghai)
2004	<i>Sino-French Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	France (\$33,875/9)	China (Qingdao)
	<i>Sino-U.K. Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Britain (\$38,306/10)	China (Qingdao)
	<i>Sino-Pakistani Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Pakistan (\$652/-5)	China (Xinjiang)
	<i>Sino-Australian Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia (\$30,441/10)	China (Qingdao)
2005	<i>China-Russia Joint Military Exercise</i>	Combined Exercise	Russia (\$5,324/6)	China (Shandong), Russia (Vladivostok)
	<i>China-Pakistan Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	Pakistan (\$714/-5)	Pakistan (Waters off Karachi)
	<i>China-India Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	India (\$729/9)	India (Waters off Cochin)
	<i>China-Thailand Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	Thailand (\$2,874/9)	Thailand (Waters off Sattahip)
2006	<i>China-US Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	US (\$46,437/10)	US (Waters off San Diego)
	<i>China-Tajikistan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Tajikistan (\$407/-3)	Tajikistan (Hatlon Prefecture)
	<i>China-US Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	US (\$46,437/10)	China (South China Sea)
	<i>China-Pakistan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Pakistan (\$877/-5)	Pakistan (Abbottabad)
2007	<i>Peace-07 (Aman 2007)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Pakistan (\$954/2), Malaysia (\$7,241/3), Bangladesh (\$543/-6), Britain (\$48,428/10), US (\$48,062/10), France (\$41,601/9), Italy (\$37,716/10), Turkey (\$9,310/7)	Arabian Gulf
	<i>China-India Joint Maritime Exercise</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	India (\$1,050/9)	Qingdao
	<i>Second Multilateral Maritime Exercise of Weapons (Western Pacific Naval Symposium)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Singapore (\$39,224/-2), US (\$48,062/10), France (\$41,601/9), Australia (\$40,958/10)	Singapore
	<i>Strike 2007</i>	Special Forces Training	Thailand (\$3,963/-1)	China (Guangzhou)
	<i>Peace Mission-2007</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Russia (\$9,101/4), Kazakhstan (\$6,771/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$722/3), Tajikistan (\$524/-3), Uzbekistan (\$830/-9)	China (Xinjiang), Russia (Chelyabinsk)
	<i>China-Spain Friendship 2007</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Spain (\$32,709/10)	Atlantic Ocean
	<i>China-France Friendship 2007</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	France (\$41,601/9)	Mediterranean
	<i>China-Australia-New Zealand Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia (\$40,958/10), New Zealand (\$32,382/10)	Australia (Tasman Sea)
	<i>Hand-in-Hand 2007</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	India (\$1,050/9)	China (Kunming, Yunnan)
	2008	<i>Strike 2008</i>	Special Operations Training	Thailand (\$4,385/4)
<i>Hand-in-Hand 2008</i>		Counter-Terrorism Training	India (\$1,023/9)	India (Belgaum)
2009	<i>Peace-09 (Aman 2009)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Pakistan (\$1,010/5), US (\$47,002/10), Britain (\$37,166/10), Japan (\$39,323/10), Australia (\$42,715/10), France (\$41,631/9), Bangladesh (\$684/5), Turkey (\$8,624/7), Nigeria (\$1,092/4), Malaysia (\$7,312/6)	Arabian Sea
	<i>Peace Angel-2009</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Gabon (\$8,062/3)	Gabon (Ogooue-Ivindo Province)
	<i>Cooperation-2009</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Singapore (\$38,578/-2)	China (Guilin, Guangxi)
	<i>Peacekeeping Mission-2009</i>	Peacekeeping Exercise	Mongolia (\$1,717/10)	China (Beijing)
	<i>Peace Mission-2009</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Russia (\$8,563/4)	Russia (Khabarovsk), China (Taonan, Jilin)
	<i>Blue Peace Shield 2009</i>	Counter-Piracy	Russia (\$8,563/4)	Somali Coast
	<i>Friendship Operation-2009</i>	Mountain Troop Training	Romania (\$8,220/9)	Romania (Brad)

Figure 40: China's Combined Exercises with Other States including GDP per Capita and Polity IV Scores (2002-2012)

2010	<i>Friendship-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Pakistan (\$1,043/6)	China (Qingtongxia, Ningxia)	
	<i>Peace Mission-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Russia (\$10,675/4), Kazakhstan (\$9,071/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$880/-88), Tajikistan (\$744/-3), Uzbekistan (\$1,377/-9)	Kazakhstan (Matybulak)	
	<i>China-Turkey Joint Air Force Exercise</i>	Air Force	Turkey (\$10,112/7)	Turkey	
	<i>China-Australia Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise and Joint Training of Marines on Basic Tasks</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia (\$51,846/10)	China (Qingdao and Guangdong)	
	<i>Joint Maritime Maneuver Exercise</i>	Passing Exercise	Australia (\$51,846/10)	Australia (Waters off Sydney)	
	<i>Strike-2010</i>	Anti-Terrorism Special Forces Training	Thailand (\$5,112/4)	China (Guilin, Guangxi)	
	<i>China-Australia Joint Maritime Exercise and Training</i>	Military Maritime Training	Australia (\$51,846/10)	Australia (Waters off Darwin)	
	<i>Blue Strike-2010</i>	Marine Training	Thailand (\$5,112/4)	Thailand (Sattahip)	
	<i>Friendship Operation-2010</i>	Mountain Troop Training	Romania (\$8,298/9)	China (Kunming, Yunnan)	
	<i>1st China-Turkey Joint Army SOF Unit Training</i>	Special Forces Training	Turkey (\$10,112/7)	Turkey	
	<i>Cooperation-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Singapore (\$46,570/-2)	Singapore	
	<i>Peace Angel-2010</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Peru (\$5,056/9)	Peru	
	<i>China-South Korea Counter-Piracy Exercise</i>	Counter-piracy	South Korea (\$22,151/8)	Gulf of Aden	
	2011	<i>Shaheen-1</i>	Air Force Joint Training	Pakistan (\$1,231/6)	Pakistan
		<i>Peace-11 (Aman 2011)</i>	Naval Exercise	Pakistan (\$1,231/6), US (\$49,781/10), Australia (\$62,217/10), France (\$43,808/9), Britain (\$41,020/10), Indonesia (\$3,648/8), Japan (\$46,204/10), Malaysia (\$10,428/6), Saudi Arabia (\$23,256/-10), Turkey (\$10,584/9), Sri Lanka (\$3,129/4)	Pakistan (Waters off Karachi)
<i>Sharp Knife-2011</i>		Special Forces Training	Indonesia (\$3,648/8)	Indonesia (Bandung)	
<i>Divine Eagle-2011</i>		Airborne Troops Training	Belarus (\$6,306/-7)	Belarus (Baranovich)	
<i>Cooperation-2011</i>		Special Forces Training	Venezuela (\$10,755/-3)	Venezuela	
<i>Friendship-2011</i>		Anti-terrorism Training	Pakistan (\$1,231/6)	Pakistan	
<i>Cooperation Spirit-2011</i>		Combined HA/DR Exercise	Australia (\$62,217/10)	China (Dujiangyan, Sichuan)	
2012		<i>Maritime Cooperation-2012</i>	Maritime Exercise	Russia (\$14,079/4)	China (Yellow Sea off Qingdao, Shandong)
		<i>Blue Strike-2012</i>	Marine Training	Thailand (\$5,918/7)	China (Zhanjiang and Shanwei, Guangdong)
		<i>Peace Mission-2012</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Russia (\$14,079/4), Kazakhstan (\$12,120/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$1,178/7), Tajikistan (\$962/-3), Uzbekistan (\$1,719/-9)	Tajikistan (Khujand)
	<i>Sharp Knife-2012</i>	Special Forces Training	Indonesia (\$3,701/8)	China (Jinan, Shandong)	
	<i>China-US Joint Anti-Piracy Drill</i>	Anti-Piracy Drill	US (\$51,457/10)	Gulf of Aden	
	<i>Cormorant Strike-2012</i>	Special Forces Exercise	Sri Lanka (\$3,351/4)	Sri Lanka	
	<i>Cooperation Spirit-2012</i>	HA/DR Exercise	Australia (\$67,646/10), New Zealand (\$39,505/10)	Australia (Brisbane)	
	<i>China-Jordan Anti-Terrorism Training of Special Forces</i>	Special Forces Anti-Terrorism Training	Jordan (\$4,897/-3)	Jordan (Amman)	
	<i>Divine Eagle-2012</i>	Airborne Troops Training	Belarus (\$6,722/-7)	China (Xiaogan, Hubei)	
	<i>China-Colombia Training of Special Forces</i>	Special Forces Training	Colombia (\$7,885/7)	Colombia (Bogota)	
	<i>China-US Joint Humanitarian-Assistance and Disaster-Relief Tabletop Exercise</i>	HA/DR Exercise	US (\$51,457/10)	China (Chengdu, Sichuan)	

Figure 40 Continued: China's Combined Exercises with Other States including GDP per Capita and Polity IV Scores (2002-2012)

new variables for consideration. First, it includes a basic measurement of state wealth: gross domestic product per capita.³⁹³ This variable is included because this basic measurement of state wealth also provides additional oblique insights about a state's status. These status indicators include the relative success of a state's economic and political model, its ability to compete in the global economic system, the general quality of life afforded to citizens and residents of that state, and its ability to pay for social goods and services including transportation infrastructure,

³⁹³ The World Bank, 2016. *World DataBank*. January 8. Accessed January 8, 2016. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>. All GDP per capita data is in current year US dollars.

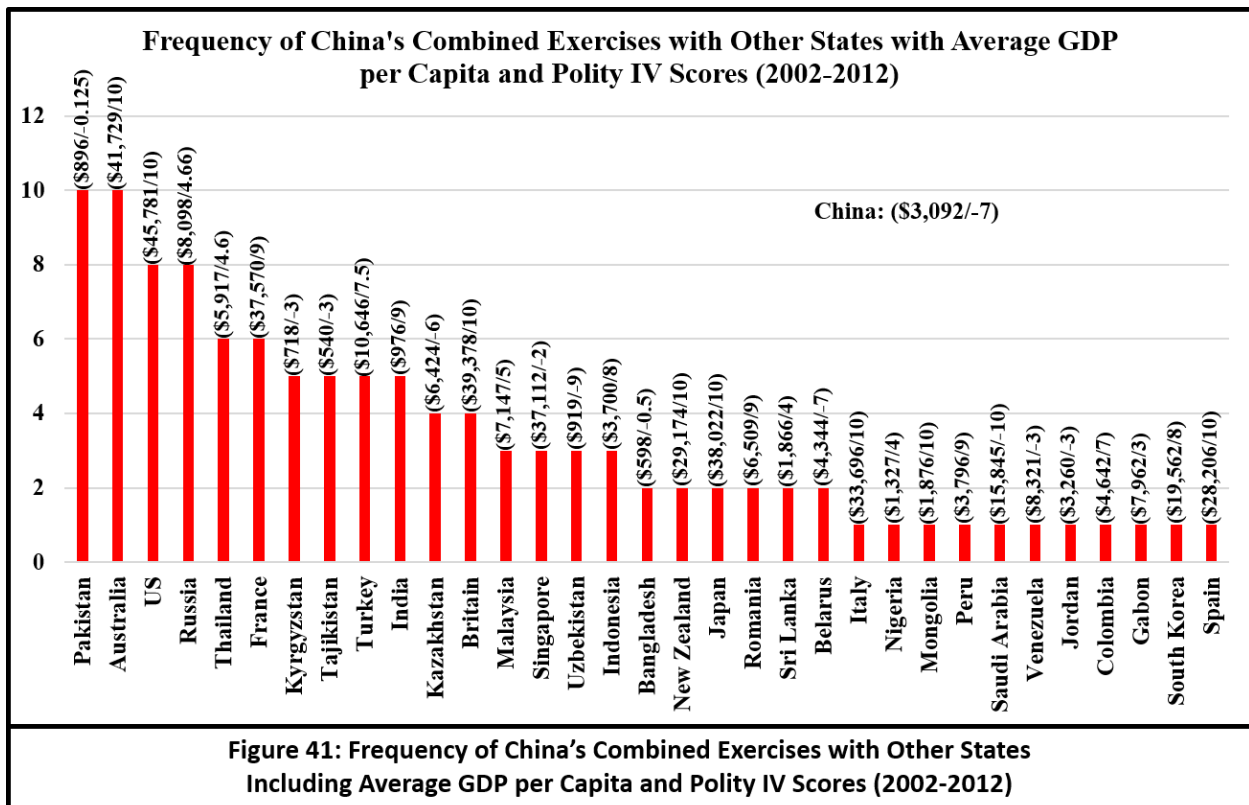
education, health, and military capabilities. Typically, the higher the GDP per capita, the higher a state's status in these related areas. State military capabilities, in particular, are relevant to this research but they are very difficult to rank because of the multitude of ways they can be measured (size of armed forces, power projection capabilities, orders of battle, nuclear capabilities, alliances, defense expenditures, etc). Because GDP per capita provides a useful measurement by which to gauge a state's overall status, this is the first variable added to Figure 40. Readers will note that during this decade, China's GDP per capita nearly quintupled from \$1,142 in 2002 to \$6,265 in 2012 with a decade average of \$3,092. The analytical assumption is that the ranking of China's combined exercise partners based on this variable will help provide insight into the images China seeks to portray to its various audiences. The dissertation argues that engagements with wealthier states allows Beijing to portray China as a great power to its domestic audience and as a cooperative supporter of international security to its international audience. Combined exercises with poorer states allow Beijing to portray China as a great power with superior military capabilities relative to its exercise partners. They also portray an image of China as a benevolent actor seeking to promote its vision of omnidirectional friendship and cooperation to its domestic audience, oftentimes in contrast to the "hegemonic" or "cold war" military diplomacy activities of the United States and its partners.

The second newly added variable is each state's polity score as provided by the Center for Systemic Peace's Polity IV Project. This project ranks states on a 21 point regime authority scale ranging from hereditary monarchies (-10) to consolidated democracies (+10).³⁹⁴ China's Polity IV score through the decade from 2002 to 2012 was -7. These scores are included because they provide additional important insights into the types of states China engages in combined

³⁹⁴ Center for Systemic Peace. 2014. *The Polity Project*. Monty G. Marshall. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.

exercises. If China's efforts to create a positive international image are indeed influenced by its own authoritarian regime type, how is this manifest in the patterns of states it seeks to engage in combined exercises? Including the state Polity IV scores of the states China engages in combined exercises will allow us to begin answering this question and then to make informed appraisals of how Beijing seeks to create positive images of the state to both domestic and international audiences. The analytical assumption is that Beijing seeks combined exercise opportunities with advanced democracies in part to demonstrate acceptance of China's rising international status to its domestic audience. At the same time, Beijing seeks combined exercises with other similarly authoritarian states because these engagements allow the PLA to play a leadership role in those engagements further portraying China's high status to its domestic audience.

Figure 41 adds these variables to the chart of China's most frequent exercise partners.



The GDP numbers reflect the average GDP size through the decade, while the Polity IV scores reflect the average scores in the years these states participated in combined exercises with the PLA. A review of Figure 41 yields several interesting insights into the pattern of China's combined exercises with other states. First, of the 33 states China engaged in combined exercises, nine (27%) of them had lower GDPs per capita than China while 24 (73%) of them had GDPs per capita higher than China's. Moreover, nine of the 24 wealthy states China engaged in combined exercises were not just wealthier, but significantly wealthier, with GDPs per capita ten or more times larger than China's. This indicates a marked inclination for the PLA to engage wealthier states in combined exercises.³⁹⁵

Figure 42 demonstrates there is a moderately positive correlation (0.21) between the frequency of a state's participation in combined exercises with China and GDP per capita. Figure 42 also reveals an interesting middle-income gap in the states China engages. With the exceptions of only South Korea and Saudi Arabia—two states China has only engaged once each in combined exercises—China's exercise partners are also clearly bifurcated between poor and wealthy states. From the perspective of image building and status seeking, this appears to support the analytical assumptions. Participating in combined exercises with wealthier states—higher status states typically possessing advanced military capabilities—presents China with opportunities to portray the PLA as belonging to an elite group of great military powers. The domestic audience, via unwaveringly positive publicity of these engagements in Chinese state media, receive the impression that China is both acting as a great power should and, furthermore,

³⁹⁵ This apparent Chinese preference for exercising with wealthier states is even stronger when considering the number of states falling into each wealth category. For example, according to the World Bank, in 2008 129 states had GDPs per capita ranging from \$1-\$10,000. 33 states had GDPs per capita between \$10,000 and \$30,000. 36 states had GDPs per capita greater than \$30,000. Similar ratios are found in each year throughout the decade from 2002 to 2012. Despite the far larger number of poorer states, China chose its combined exercise partners from the wealthiest group.

is recognized and accepted as a great power by other states.³⁹⁶ Participating in combined

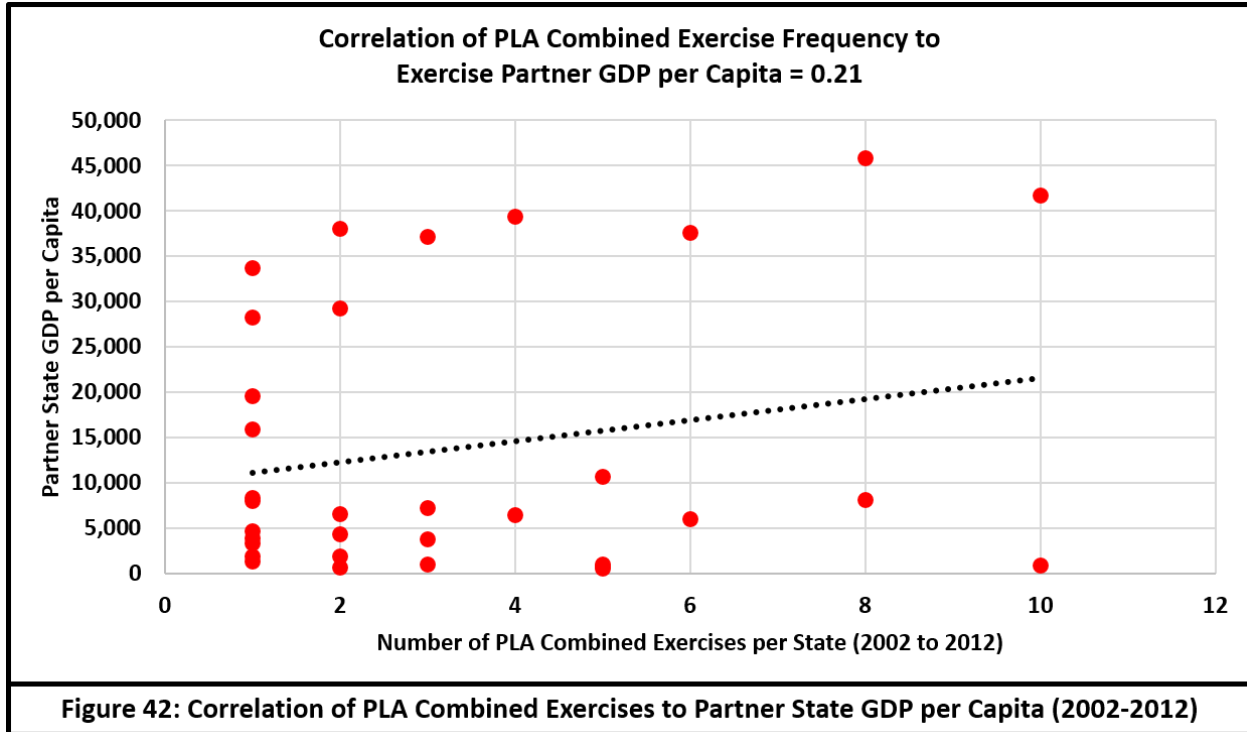


Figure 42: Correlation of PLA Combined Exercises to Partner State GDP per Capita (2002-2012)

exercises with lower income states—most likely possessing more modest military capabilities-- supports the image of China as a superior, albeit benevolent, power that is willing to cooperate with all countries in contributing to international security. This is consistent with the “omnidirectional” rhetoric in China’s official pronouncements of its defense policies. The prominent lack of combined exercises with middle-income states possessing GDPs per capita roughly between \$10,000 and \$30,000 may indicate Beijing does not see much status-seeking value in engaging such states, although this certainly deserves further multivariate analysis.

Second, analysis of Figure 41 data shows that China has made it a point to engage not just wealthy states, but states with high status in international affairs. Following the

³⁹⁶ The topic of Chinese state media coverage of PLA military diplomacy activities deserves much more consideration than is possible in this chapter. A formal qualitative and quantitative examination of how Chinese media outlets portray PLA military diplomacy activities is the logical next step in making the argument that image building is an important explanation for the growth of Chinese military diplomacy. My research for this dissertation included reviewing scores of articles in various on-line Chinese media outlets, both English and Chinese. This research informed and reinforced the hypothesis of image building as a driver of Chinese MD.

commencement of combined exercises in 2002, China soon engaged Russia (2003), France (2004), Britain (2004), and the US (2006) over the next four years. These states possess perhaps the highest status of any states by virtue of their historical and cultural influence on world history, as the victors in World War II, and—most importantly—as permanent members, with China, of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). China places tremendous value on the United Nations and its role as a permanent member of the Security Council.³⁹⁷ Combined exercises with the other members of the UNSC is yet another way to reinforce the image to China's various audiences of China as a leading member of the international community. Readers will also note that the US, Russia, France, and Britain are also among China's most frequent combined exercise partners indicating that Beijing places value on the image of China as an elite state engaging cooperatively with other elite states and feels a need to refresh the image often.

Finally, it is interesting to note the Polity IV scores of the states China engages. In terms of which states China chose to engage first in combined exercises, five of the first six states China engaged had negative polity scores, and the sixth was Russia with its own long history of authoritarianism, despite its positive polity score. To be sure, these early exercise partner states were all geographic neighbors presenting limited logistical barriers to engagement and five of them were members of the then-nascent Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Nevertheless, the timing of these initial engagements and the polity scores of the participants along with their relatively low status suggests these exercises may have been useful as low risk learning opportunities for the PLA. Poor performance by the PLA would not necessarily result in widespread exposure of any shortcomings to more capable—and more critical—audiences. Moreover, they allowed the PLA to take a leadership role among these regional partners—

³⁹⁷ Deng, 2008. *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*, 46.

primarily SCO member states—that would help satisfy the domestic audience’s desire for evidence of China’s competence, leadership, and acceptance on the international stage.

Following its engagements with these first six states, China quickly expanded the political spectrum of its partners to encompass many of the world’s leading democracies with India, Britain, France, and Australia participating in four of the next five combined exercises. Since the authoritarian state-leaning commencement of combined exercises, the frequency of China’s combined exercises with both authoritarian and democratic government types have been distributed fairly evenly. Australia, with a polity score of 10, and Pakistan, with an average polity score of -0.125 during the decade, were tied for the most frequent exercises with China, while states like Saudi Arabia (-10) and Italy (10) participated only once each. Geographic dispersion of states was also fairly even, with the PLA traveling great distances to participate in combined exercises with both authoritarian (Venezuela and Belarus) and democratic states (Peru and Romania) alike.

For the purposes of this case study, perhaps the most pertinent observation is that overall, 11 (33%) of China’s combined exercise partners had negative average polity scores, while 22 (66%) of China’s partners had positive scores. The average polity score of China’s combined exercise partners through the decade is 3.79. Figure 43 illustrates the slightly positive correlation (.09) of combined exercises to Polity IV scores. One of the key implications for the larger number of democratic combined exercise partner states is that China can use such exercises for its image/status-building purposes. China can point to frequent exercises with Australia, the US, France, and Britain as evidence of its acceptance on the international stage by the world’s leading democracies. In so doing it seeks to minimize notions within its domestic audience that China’s regime type denies it full acceptance as a prestigious great power. Minimizing such

notions serves to reinforce domestic perceptions of the CCP as a competent ruling authority that is indeed enabling China to “make gains” in improving China’s international status. Combining the GDP per capita data and Polity IV Scores bolsters this notion of China using its exercise partners to bolster its international image. While not all of the democratic states with high polity

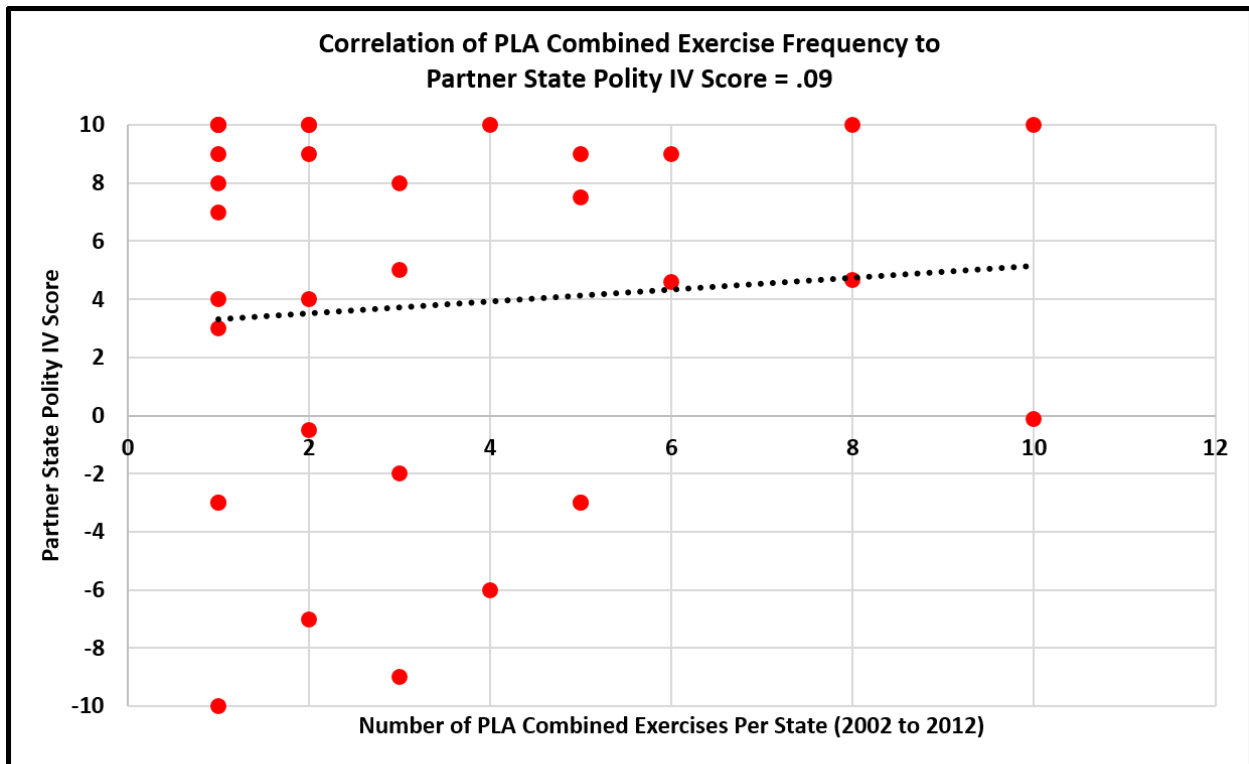


Figure 43: Correlation of PLA Combined Exercises to Partner State Polity IV Scores (2002-2012)

scores are wealthy (India and Mongolia), every one of the wealthy states China engages in combined exercises has a high positive polity score, thereby allowing China to associate with states that possess both of these high-status attributes. For CCP propaganda purposes, repeated association with the world’s leading states leads to increased equation with the world’s leading states for China.

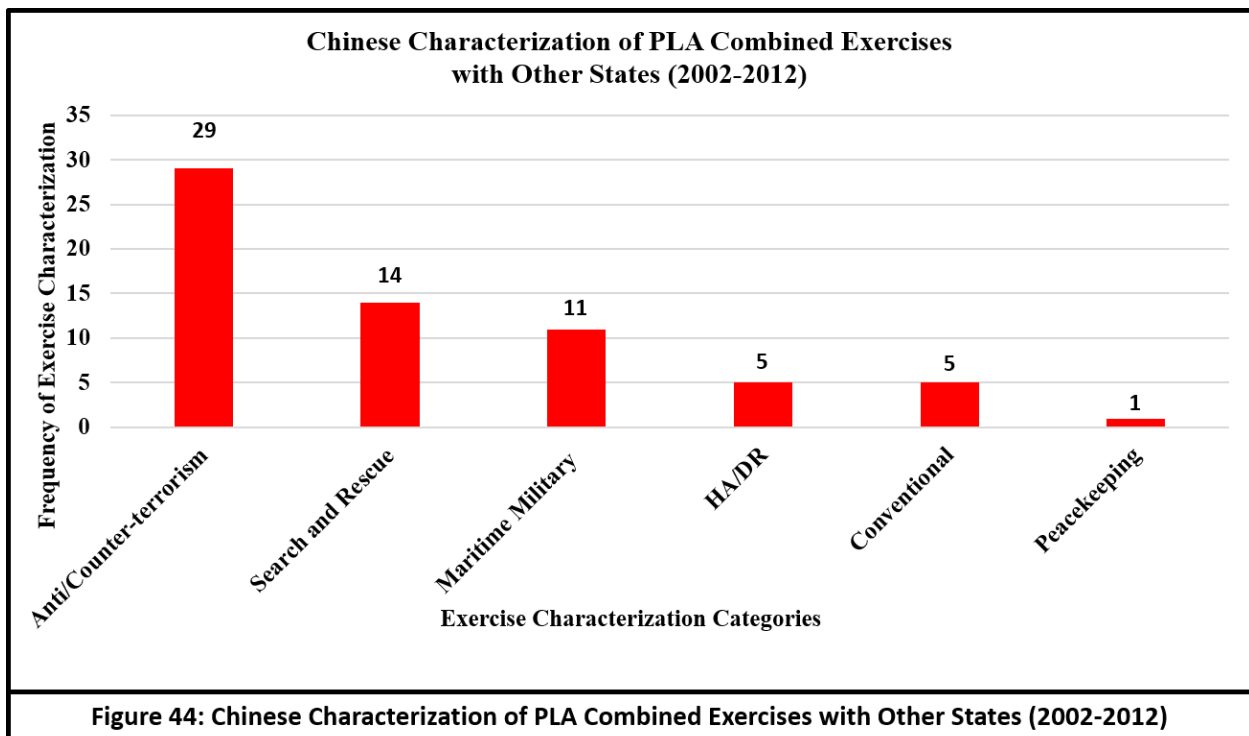
The preceding analysis yields important information regarding the attributes of the states China engaged in combined exercises from 2002 to 2012. In sum, while there is significant diversity among China’s exercise partner states in terms of wealth and regime type, in both cases

there also appears to be a marked tendency to seek association with states having higher status in those attributes. This does not mean there is no status-pertinent usefulness in combined exercises with lower income, more authoritarian states. Indeed, such exercises allow China to play a leadership or senior partner role not always possible in engagements with high status states. Nevertheless, when it comes to combined exercise partners, the majority of China's partners have been higher relative to China on both economic and political status spectrums. With these observations regarding China's partner states in mind, it now behooves us to examine the narratives China promulgates that allow it to engage with such a diverse slate of exercise partners.

The narratives of Chinese combined exercises are important because they reveal much about the images of the state Beijing seeks to create in the minds of its domestic and international audiences. This section looks more closely at two key components of China's narratives regarding its combined exercises, namely, the characterizations China provides of these exercises in its official pronouncements and the names China gives these exercises with other states. The characterizations are useful to contemplate because they indicate the kinds of transnational security issues China feels it can successfully address through cooperative efforts with other states without provoking significant international pushback to the PLA's expanded activities. These issues ostensibly motivate the PLA's growing international presence and provide the overt rationale for the states China chooses to engage in combined exercises. The names given to these exercises are useful in a similar way. Exercise names encapsulate the purposes of exercises and convey a sense of the relationship between China and the states it engages. For domestic audiences, characterizations and names create images of China's role in the world that include affinity with great powers and competent, cooperative, contributions to

safeguarding regional and global security. These messages serve to engender domestic pride in China’s international status. For international audiences, exercise descriptions and names indicate China’s efforts to find common cause with other great powers and highlight China’s contributions to global security. The intended message is that China is a contributor to the current system, not a destabilizer and, as such, its growing international activity is not only *not* to be feared, but should be welcomed by other states.

The exercise characterizations in Figure 44 come primarily from China’s defense white papers, but are also drawn from Chinese media reports about the events. Characterizations of



China’s 65 combined exercises fall into six categories. By far, the most commonly described purpose for Chinese combined exercises with other states has been anti/counter-terrorism. At 29 exercises (45%), anti/counter-terrorism characterizations are more than double the next most commonly described purpose of PLA exercises—search and rescue—which stands at 14 (22%). China has reason to be concerned about terrorism. China’s long-restive Xinjiang Province

borders on several Central Asian states possessing ethnic and religious ties to Xinjiang's ethnic Uighur population. China's efforts to form the SCO in the late 1990s and early 2000s included rhetorical security aspirations to jointly combat "terrorism, separatism, and extremism" within SCO member states and across borders.³⁹⁸ The transnational terrorism threat became far more acute with the Al Qaeda attacks on the US on September 11, 2001. The horrific images of collapsed buildings and thousands of civilian casualties brought terrorism to the forefront of global consciousness and engendered a tremendous outpouring of international sympathy for the United States and support for the US response against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that had provided safe haven for Al Qaeda. For China, the US-declared "Global War on Terror" prompted further progression of the SCO's anti-terrorism rhetoric to more concrete practices. Thus, in October of 2002, China held its first combined exercise with Kyrgyzstan, notably described as having counter-terrorism purposes. Since then, 28 more terrorism-related exercises followed over the next decade, conducted with both neighboring states but also with states as far afield as Belarus, Venezuela, and Colombia.³⁹⁹ Although SCO states dominated early counter-terrorism exercises, China soon expanded that list to include Pakistan, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other states in these exercises. For domestic audiences, these exercises demonstrated the growing international reach of the PLA and a broader range of security partners—definite "gains" that the PLA and the CCP could present as evidence of China's improving international status. For international audiences, the anti-terrorism themes of the exercises were, and continue to be, unobjectionable given the global terrorism zeitgeist.

³⁹⁸ Nathan and Scobell, 2012. *China's Search for Security*, 165.

³⁹⁹ Engagement characterizations in Figure 38 use the descriptions provided in China's defense white papers. Chinese media reporting of combined exercises revealed that each of the "special operations training" events were also focused on counter-terrorism purposes, even if the white papers did not so indicate, and they are therefore included in the tally of terrorism-related exercises.

The PLA's anti-terrorism combined exercises serve additional useful image-building purposes for Beijing. As noted in the literature from Chapter Two, they place China on the same side as the great powers and the vast majority of the international community on this issue. With terrorism as the common global threat, Beijing can use terrorism-focused combined exercises as a way to demonstrate common cause with the world's leading states. While the US was leading international military coalitions against states that nominally supported terrorism, China was participating in multilateral (SCO) and bilateral exercises with other states to nominally combat terrorism as well. For domestic and international audiences alike, these exercises present images of China competently contributing to global security in a manner befitting a world power. Chinese media reporting of these exercises is often heavy on photos of PLA and foreign military personnel in the middle of heroic looking action: rappelling from helicopters, infiltrating target areas on rubber boats, and holding their weapons at the ready while dressed in camouflage.⁴⁰⁰ The names given to these exercises by the PLA further support the images they desired to create. Although early anti-terrorism exercises sported unimaginative names like "China-Pakistan Joint Counter-terrorism Exercise," all terrorism-related exercises soon adopted more vivid titles. Names like "Strike 2007," "Peace Mission 2007," "Sharp Knife 2011," and "Divine Eagle 2011" emphasize PLA professionalism, capability, ferocity, and intent. Furthermore, these names are invariably reserved for counter-terrorism exercises so that when the question is asked, "'Strike' who?" the answer is "terrorism" and not any particular state. "Terrorism" thus provides China with an amorphous enemy against which it can demonstrate fierceness, resolve, and leadership at relatively low cost in terms of actual monetary expense of the exercises and in terms of ameliorating international concern about Chinese intent.

⁴⁰⁰ China Daily, 2012. "China, Belarus Hold Joint Commando Drills." *SinaEnglish*. December 6. Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://english.sina.com/china/p/2012/1205/534753.html>.

The second most common characterization of combined exercise purposes is search and rescue. These maritime exercises are likely so common because of their low capability threshold, making them an easy starting point for the PLAN from which to engage foreign navies in combined exercises. Their innocuous nature also makes them more feasible with states otherwise wary about engaging China's military due to political concerns. Indeed, a review of Figure 40 demonstrates that 13 of the PLAN's 14 search and rescue exercises took place early in the decade—from 2003 to 2007—with the final exercise in 2010. Search and rescue, or "SAR" exercises, were also the first type of exercises through which China engaged wealthy, democratic states, with France, Britain, Australia, and the US all first engaged this way. The simplicity of the exercises also decreases the risks of revealing sensitive military capabilities in bilateral relationships that suffer from significant levels of strategic wariness and mistrust. SAR exercises focus on a helpful element of patrolling global sea lines of communication, hunting for wayward or lost vessels and people at sea and then providing rescue assistance. For domestic audiences, images of PLAN vessels and helicopters operating with naval forces from other states creates a sense that China is an important and accepted member of the international community providing a valuable service to all.⁴⁰¹ Beijing demonstrates "gains" to this audience with every new exercise partner and venue. Indeed, Chinese media reporting on these types of exercises frequently includes complimentary statements from the foreign partners extolling the professionalism and capability of the Chinese participants.⁴⁰² To the international audience, China once again promotes an image of support for the global commercial transportation system status quo, and acclimatizes the international community to the PLA's presence. This does not

⁴⁰¹ Xinhua News Agency, 2006. "Sino-US Search-and-rescue Exercise Held on South China Sea." *China.Org.cn*. November 20. Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/MATERIAL/189469.htm>.

⁴⁰² Xinhua News Agency, 2006. "US Commander Hails 'Open Approach' of Chinese Navy." *China.Org.cn*. November 17. Accessed November 4, 2016. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/international/189317.htm>.

mean the international community blissfully accepts the intended benign image, but it does minimize to a degree the basis for objection to PLAN activities abroad.

Maritime military exercises are the next most frequent description category, with 11 (17%) exercises held from 2007 to 2012. These exercises step up the complexity of naval activities beyond search and rescue to include such practices as maritime helicopter operations, anti-piracy tactics and procedures, complex formation maneuvering, and live fire drills.⁴⁰³ These exercises fall short of conventional exercises because their purposes are to share best practices and introduce foreign navy personnel to how various partners perform these basic skills rather than training for combined, conventional, naval combat operations. Four of these exercises have been large multilateral affairs in which China played a prominent role—the Pakistan-hosted “Aman” exercises, for example—while the others have been bilateral events, including three anti-piracy drills. In each case, the image-building opportunities are similar to those already discussed. Photos of Chinese and foreign naval vessels sailing together on the high seas, sharply dressed PLAN officers interacting with foreign counterparts, and quoted compliments regarding the PLAN’s prowess from foreign partners all help portray Beijing’s desired images.⁴⁰⁴ The names of these events—“Aman [Peace]-2009,” “Blue Peace Shield 2009,” and “Maritime Cooperation -2012”—invoke sentiments of defensive, benign, and cooperative intent. The same messaging holds true for the remaining exercise characterization categories of HA/DR and peacekeeping.

⁴⁰³ Vijay Sakhuja, 2009. "Maritime Multilateralism: China's Strategy for the Indian Ocean." *The Jamestown Foundation*. November 4. Accessed March 7, 2016.

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35692&no_cache=1#.VuC7mPkrKUI.

⁴⁰⁴ Xinhua, 2009. "Chinese Navy Ship Arrives at Pakistani Port for Multinational Exercises." *Xinhuanet*. Edited by Hongjiang Wang. March 5. Accessed May 5, 2016. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/05/content_10949544_2.htm.

The final characterization of China's combined exercises is simply conventional military operations. These are exercises that focus on specific combat-related skills that do not fit into any other category. Only five (8%) of China's combined exercises over the course of the decade fall into this category. Two of these were small scale mountaineering skills training exercises conducted with Romania ("Friendship Operation-2009" and "Friendship Operation 2010") and two of these were small scale PLAAF air to air exercises with Turkey ("China-Turkey Joint Air Force Exercise") and Pakistan ("Shaheen [Falcon]-1") meant to familiarize the partners with each other's aircraft, flight training, basic aerial skills, etc. The more remarkable of these two PLAAF engagements was the exercise with Turkey because of the concerns it raised among Turkey's NATO allies that the fighter jet exercise may compromise sensitive NATO aircraft capabilities.⁴⁰⁵ This exercise marked the first time China engaged a NATO member in air exercises and it marked the first deployment abroad of China's SU-27 fighter aircraft. Despite these firsts—normally expected to receive coverage in Chinese media—this exercise was not listed in any of China's defense white papers, nor did I find mention of it in Chinese state media sources. It is possible that the negative attention it drew abroad caused Beijing to reconsider advertising it at home. If so, this supports the image building explanation of combined exercises as it pertains to China's domestic audiences. In a case where elements of the international audience reacted negatively and the exercise stirred controversy, Chinese state media may have deemed it best to minimize domestic publicity due to the less than flattering response abroad. This highlights the difficulty of image making to multiple audiences and it also has bearing on the final exercise belonging to the conventional category, "Peace Mission-2005."

⁴⁰⁵ Joshua Kucera, 2010. "Should the U.S. be Worrying about Turkey's Air Force Exercises with China?" *Eurasianet*. October 2010. Accessed May 5, 2016. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/62173>.

The final conventional exercise—originally called “China-Russia Joint Military Exercise” in the defense white papers, but later dubbed “Peace Mission-2005”—was China’s largest and most complex combined exercise of the decade. It involved participation of PLAA, PLAAF, and PLAN elements with their Russian counterparts in a large-scale, multi-domain, combat exercise that included maritime blockade operations, amphibious and airborne assaults, anti-ship and anti-submarine operations, and even simulated bomb runs by Russian strategic bombers.⁴⁰⁶ The exercise involved roughly 10,000 troops, with 1800 from Russia and 8200 from the PLA making it, by far, China’s largest exercise in terms of PLA troop participation.⁴⁰⁷ Originally billed as an anti-terrorism exercise, the scale and nature of the activities were patently unsuited to non-state opponents.⁴⁰⁸ Indeed, this is the one PLA exercise during the decade that drew the most concerned attention from other world powers because of the images it presented of Sino-Russian military strength and the unclear messaging it sent to non-specified states.⁴⁰⁹ Simply put, this exercise rattled the region in a manner counter to the charming, benign, and cooperative image that China sought to create for itself. That Beijing recognized the counter productivity of the exercise to its international branding effort is evident in all of China’s subsequent combined exercises. First, as mentioned, Beijing changed the name of the event to the soft-sounding “Peace Mission-2005” and it became the first of that standing series of exercises with SCO member states. Second, Beijing has since characterized all subsequent “Peace Mission” exercises as possessing anti/counter-terrorism purposes, and the activities within those exercises have been consistent with those characterizations: much smaller in scale

⁴⁰⁶ Martin Andrew, 2005. "Power Politics: China, Russia, and Peace Mission 2005." *The Jamestown Foundation*. September 27. Accessed May 5, 2016.

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30909&no_cache=1#.Vyv8G4QrKUK.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Tom Parfitt, 2005. "Russia and China Rattle Sabres with Joint War Games." *The Guardian*. August 18. Accessed May 5, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/aug/19/russia.china>.

and involving units and equipment more suitable to operations against non-state actors. Third, at no time from 2005 to 2012 did Beijing repeat the large-scale, conventional military nature of “Peace Mission-2005” with any other states. For whatever image building value the exercise may have held for China’s domestic audience—the PLA operating competently as a major military power peer—the negative international reaction apparently had a moderating effect on how China engaged other states in combined exercises for the rest of the decade. With these observations regarding how Beijing characterizes its combined exercises to promote desired images to its various audiences, we turn to the final portion of this section: how the size of China’s combined exercises relate to China’s image building efforts.

When considering the size patterns of China’s combined exercises, one should bear in mind the challenges Beijing faces in trying to satisfy two primary audiences. In general, the domestic audience seeks affirmation of China’s greatness on the world stage and evidence of acceptance of China’s role as a major power by other major powers. The PLA demonstrates “gains” in these areas to the domestic audiences by emphasizing each new exercise and each new state partner regardless of the actual size of the engagements. The international audience—consisting primarily of foreign policy, military, and academic professionals—watches closely for indicators of strategic intention that demonstrate China is either a status quo or a revisionist power. Beijing satisfies international wariness by limiting the size of its exercises, providing plausible deniability for any potential “China threat” chatter. In both cases, Beijing inherently emphasizes the symbolic versus functional purposes of the engagements. A steady stream of small exercises with new state partners conveys desired images to its audiences, but limits the utility of such events because of the building block nature of combined exercises. 15 PLA special operations troops practicing land navigation, marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat, and

rappelling for two weeks with counterparts from the Royal Thai Army will provide little material benefit to PLA modernization efforts.⁴¹⁰ However, the same exercise serves a useful purpose in projecting oversized images of international engagement to domestic audiences. To further examine this, Figure 45 once again summarizes China's combined exercises but it now also

Year	Combined Exercise/Training Engagement Name	Engagement Description	Participant States (GDP per capita/Polity IV Score)	Engagement Size by Number of Participating PLA Personnel
2002	<i>China-Kyrgyzstan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Kyrgyzstan (\$322/-3)	200 PLA ("several hundred" Total)
2003	<i>Multilateral Joint Counter-terrorism Exercise of the armed Forces of the SCO Member States</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Russia (\$2,975/6), Kazakhstan (\$2,068/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$381/-3), Tajikistan (\$238/-3)	700 PLA (1,300 Total)
	<i>Sino-Pakistani Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Pakistan (\$565/-5)	420 PLA
	<i>Sino-Indian Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	India (\$558/9)	420 PLA
2004	<i>Sino-French Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	France (\$33,875/9)	420 PLA
	<i>Sino-U.K. Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Britain (\$38,306/10)	420 PLA
	<i>Sino-Pakistani Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Pakistan (\$652/-5)	100 PLA (200 Total)
	<i>Sino-Australian Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia (\$30,441/10)	410 PLA
	<i>China-Russia Joint Military Exercise</i>	Combined Exercise	Russia (\$5,324/6)	8,200 PLA (10,000 Total)
2005	<i>China-Pakistan Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	Pakistan (\$714/-5)	460 PLA
	<i>China-India Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	India (\$729/9)	460 PLA
	<i>China-Thailand Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	Thailand (\$2,874/9)	460 PLA
	<i>China-US Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise	US (\$46,437/10)	460 PLA
2006	<i>China-Tajikistan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Tajikistan (\$407/-3)	250 (500 Total)
	<i>China-US Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	US (\$46,437/10)	460 PLA
	<i>China-Pakistan Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	Pakistan (\$877/-5)	100 PLA (400 Total)
	<i>Peace-07 (Aman 2007)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Pakistan (\$954/2), Malaysia (\$7,241/3), Bangladesh (\$543/-6), Britain (\$48,428/10), US (\$48,062/10), France (\$41,601/9), Italy (\$37,716/10), Turkey (\$9,310/7)	460 PLA
2007	<i>China-India Joint Maritime Exercise</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	India (\$1,050/9)	560 PLA
	<i>Second Multilateral Maritime Exercise of Weapons (Western Pacific Naval Symposium)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Singapore (\$39,224/-2), US (\$48,062/10), France (\$41,601/9), Australia (\$40,958/10)	460 PLA
	<i>Strike 2007</i>	Special Forces Training	Thailand (\$3,963/-1)	15 PLA (30 Total)
	<i>Peace Mission-2007</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Russia (\$9,101/4), Kazakhstan (\$6,771/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$722/3), Tajikistan (\$524/-3), Uzbekistan (\$830/-9)	1600 PLA (7500 Total)
	<i>China-Spain Friendship 2007</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Spain (\$32,709/10)	500 PLA
	<i>China-France Friendship 2007</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	France (\$41,601/9)	500 PLA
	<i>China-Australia-New Zealand Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia (\$40,958/10), New Zealand (\$32,382/10)	690 PLA
	<i>Hand-in-Hand 2007</i>	Counter-Terrorism Exercise	India (\$1,050/9)	103 (206 Total)
	<i>Strike 2008</i>	Special Operations Training	Thailand (\$4,385/4)	15 (30 Total)
	<i>Hand-in-Hand 2008</i>	Counter-Terrorism Training	India (\$1,023/9)	137 PLA (270 Total)
2009	<i>Peace-09 (Aman 2009)</i>	Maritime Military Exercise	Pakistan (\$1,010/5), US (\$47,002/10), Britain (\$37,166/10), Japan (\$39,323/10), Australia (\$42,715/10), France (\$41,631/9), Bangladesh (\$684/5), Turkey (\$8,624/7), Nigeria (\$1,092/4), Malaysia (\$7,312/6)	560 PLA
	<i>Peace Angel-2009</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Gabon (\$8,062/3)	63 PLA (70 Total)
	<i>Cooperation-2009</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Singapore (\$38,578/-2)	61 PLA (122 Total)
	<i>Peacekeeping Mission-2009</i>	Peacekeeping Exercise	Mongolia (\$1,717/10)	46 PLA (91 Total)
	<i>Peace Mission-2009</i>	Anti-terrorism Exercise	Russia (\$8,563/4)	1300 PLA (2600 Total)
	<i>Blue Peace Shield 2009</i>	Counter-Piracy	Russia (\$8,563/4)	500 PLA
	<i>Friendship Operation-2009</i>	Mountain Troop Training	Romania (\$8,220/9)	10 PLA (20 Total)

Figure 45: China's Combined Exercises with Other States Including Size/Participant Numbers (2002-2012)

⁴¹⁰ Xinhua, 2007. "China, Thailand Stage Combined Training of Special Troops." *China.gov.cn*. Edited by Li Lin. July 16. Accessed May 7, 2016. http://www.gov.cn/misc/2007-07/16/content_686577.htm.

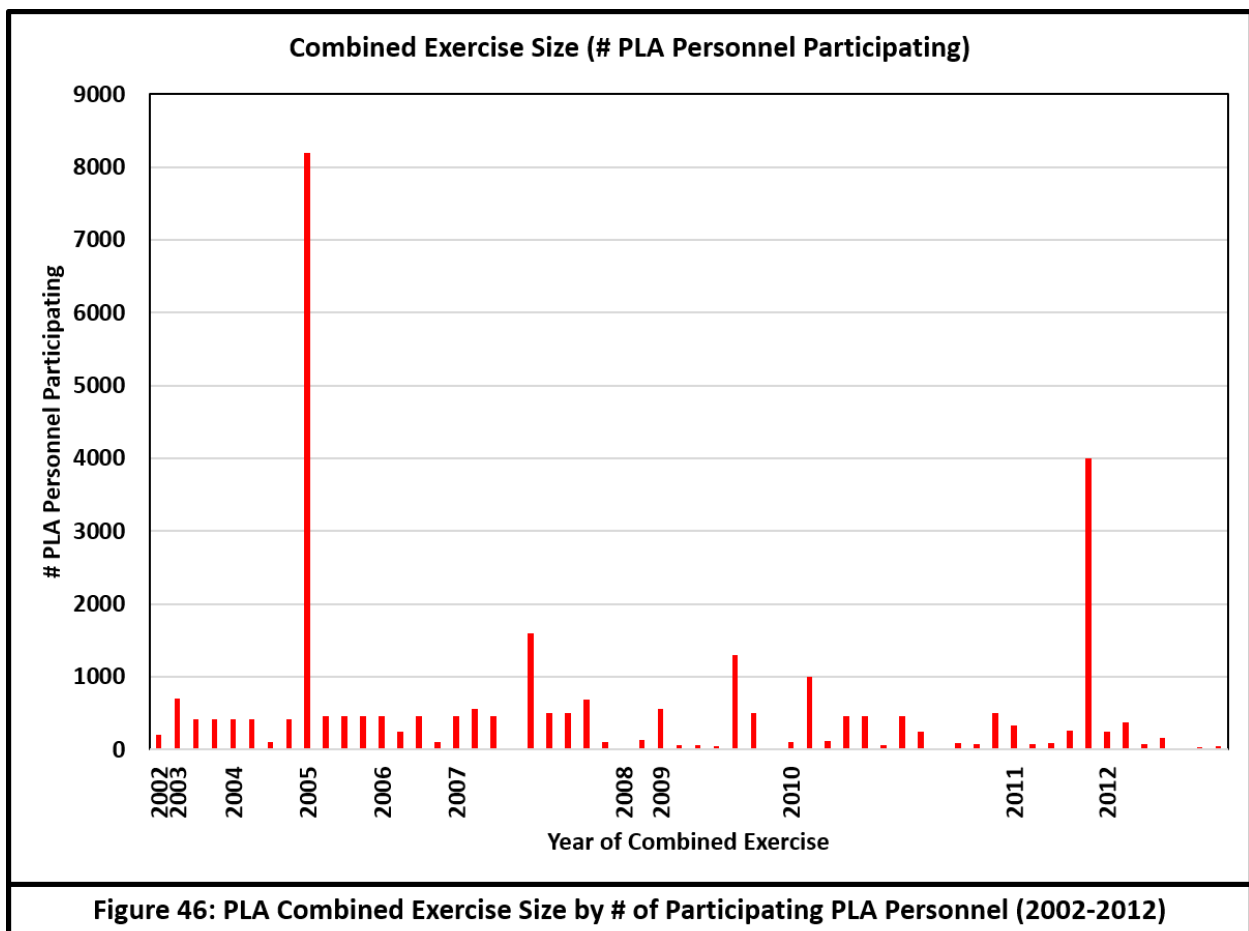
2010	<i>Friendship-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Pakistan (\$1,043/6)	100 PLA (200 Total)	
	<i>Peace Mission-2010</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Russia (\$10,675/4), Kazakhstan (\$9,071/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$880/-88), Tajikistan (\$744/-3), Uzbekistan (\$1,377/-9)	1,000 PLA (5,000 Total)	
	<i>China-Turkey Joint Air Force Exercise</i>	Air Force	Turkey (\$10,112/7)	100-125 PLA (estimate only)	
	<i>China-Australia Joint Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise and Joint Training of Marines on Basic Tasks</i>	Search and Rescue Exercise	Australia (\$51,846/10)	460 PLA	
	<i>Joint Maritime Maneuver Exercise</i>	Passing Exercise	Australia (\$51,846/10)	460 PLA	
	<i>Strike-2010</i>	Anti-Terrorism Special Forces Training	Thailand (\$5,112/4)	60 PLA (120 Total)	
	<i>China-Australia Joint Maritime Exercise and Training</i>	Military Maritime Training	Australia (\$51,846/10)	460 PLA	
	<i>Blue Strike-2010</i>	Marine Training	Thailand (\$5,112/4)	250 PLA (500 Total)	
	<i>Friendship Operation-2010</i>	Mountain Troop Training	Romania (\$8,298/9)	10 PLA (20 Total)	
	<i>1st China-Turkey Joint Army SOF Unit Training Cooperation-2010</i>	Special Forces Training	Turkey (\$10,112/7)	Unknown	
		Anti-terrorism Training	Singapore (\$46,570/-2)	86 PLA (146 Total)	
		Combined HA/DR Training	Peru (\$5,056/9)	75 PLA	
		Counter-piracy	South Korea (\$22,151/8)	500 PLA	
	2011	<i>Shaheen-1</i>	Air Force Joint Training	Pakistan (\$1,231/6)	Unknown
<i>Peace-11 (Aman 2011)</i>		Naval Exercise	Pakistan (\$1,231/6), US (\$49,781/10), Australia (\$62,217/10), France (\$43,808/9), Britain (\$41,020/10), Indonesia (\$3,648/8), Japan (\$46,204/10), Malaysia (\$10,428/6), Saudi Arabia (\$23,256/-10), Turkey (\$10,584/9), Sri Lanka (\$3,129/4)	330 PLA	
<i>Sharp Knife-2011</i>		Special Forces Training	Indonesia (\$3,648/8)	69 PLA (140 Total)	
<i>Divine Eagle-2011</i>		Airborne Troops Training	Belarus (\$6,306/-7)	83 PLA	
<i>Cooperation-2011</i>		Special Forces Training	Venezuela (\$10,755/-3)	Unknown	
<i>Friendship-2011</i>		Anti-terrorism Training	Pakistan (\$1,231/6)	260 PLA (490 Total)	
<i>Cooperation Spirit-2011</i>		Combined HA/DR Exercise	Australia (\$62,217/10)	Unknown (15 Australia)	
2012		<i>Maritime Cooperation-2012</i>	Maritime Exercise	Russia (\$14,079/4)	4000 PLA
		<i>Blue Strike-2012</i>	Marine Training	Thailand (\$5,918/7)	250 PLA (500 Total)
		<i>Peace Mission-2012</i>	Anti-terrorism Training	Russia (\$14,079/4), Kazakhstan (\$12,120/-6), Kyrgyzstan (\$1,178/7), Tajikistan (\$962/-3), Uzbekistan (\$1,719/-9)	369 PLA (2000 Total)
	<i>Sharp Knife-2012</i>	Special Forces Training	Indonesia (\$3,701/8)	70 PLA (140 Total)	
	<i>China-US Joint Anti-Piracy Drill</i>	Anti-Piracy Drill	US (\$51,457/10)	165 PLA	
	<i>Cormorant Strike-2012</i>	Special Forces Exercise	Sri Lanka (\$3,351/4)	8 PLA	
	<i>Cooperation Spirit-2012</i>	HA/DR Exercise	Australia (\$67,646/10), New Zealand (\$39,505/10)	24 PLA (60 Total)	
	<i>China-Jordan Anti-Terrorism Training of Special Forces</i>	Special Forces Anti-Terrorism Training	Jordan (\$4,897/-3)	50 PLA (100 Total)	
	<i>Divine Eagle-2012</i>	Airborne Troops Training	Belarus (\$6,722/-7)	Unknown	
	<i>China-Colombia Training of Special Forces</i>	Special Forces Training	Colombia (\$7,885/7)	Unknown	
	<i>China-US Joint Humanitarian-Assistance and Disaster-Relief Tabletop Exercise</i>	HA/DR Exercise	US (\$51,457/10)	Unknown PLA (20 US)	

Figure 45 Continued: China's Combined Exercises with Other States Including Size/Participant Numbers (2002-2012)

includes size data as manifest by the numbers of PLA and international personnel participating in the exercises.⁴¹¹

⁴¹¹ Data on the numbers of participants is often difficult to ascertain. China's defense white papers do not include data on the number of participants in combined exercises. Chinese media reporting often does not provide the data either. Consequently, Figure 43 participant data is derived from a combination of Chinese and international media reporting along with scholarly works. Readers should note that open source information regarding numbers of personnel participating in combined exercises was found for only 58 of 65 events on the chart. For exercises involving PLAN vessels, participant data is based on open source crew complements of the vessels reported as participating in the exercises. PLAN vessels typically perform international cruises as task forces or flotillas consisting of one or two combatants and an attending replenishment ship, but not all vessels in such groups participate in every exercise. For combined air exercises, the estimated number of participants is based upon the reported number of deployed aircraft and the flight crew, ground crew, logistics, and leadership personnel typically required to support the number of deployed aircraft.

The information in Figure 45 supports the hypothesis of image building as a driver of combined exercises in an important way. In 20 (34%) of the 58 combined exercises for which we have data, the total number of participating PLA personnel is 100 or less. Figure 45 lists the numbers of participants in seven of the 65 exercises as unknown (unreported), although based on their type (primarily special forces and HA/DR exercises) and historical precedent, it is safe to assess that they too numbered less than 100 personnel per exercise. This means that 27 (42%) of China's 65 combined exercises each involved less than 100 PLA personnel. In only five (8%) of



the 65 combined exercises during this decade did the PLA participants number more than 1000.

In these larger combined land exercises and in the medium-sized maritime exercises, the number of participants is actually smaller when one considers the number of PLA personnel who actively interact with their foreign counterparts. For example, the majority of PLA maritime exercises

involved from one to three PLAN vessels interacting with foreign ships bringing the number of PLAN “participants” into the 250-750 range based on standard crew complement information. However, the numbers of PLAN sailors directly engaging their foreign counterparts in a significant manner at such exercises is much smaller, typically limited to a handful of senior PLAN officers. The same observation applies to the PLA soldiers participating in the larger combined exercises involving several hundred or more troops from each side: the majority remain in their own units and the interaction occurs primarily at the officer level.⁴¹² Figure 46 above graphs the numbers of participants in exercises through the decade to illustrate more clearly the consistently low numbers of participants.

The point of these observations regarding the sizes of China’s combined exercises is that imagery of the engagements often appears to serve a larger purpose than does the functional substance of the visits. One representative example of this phenomenon is the Chinese media reporting of the PLAAF’s “Divine Eagle-2012” airborne troop exercise with Belarus. Characterized as an anti-terrorism exercise, Chinese media reporting was extensive, consisting of large captioned photos of the action and minute-by-minute narration of how Chinese paratroopers and their Belarussian counterparts swiftly and successfully attacked the targeted terrorist stronghold.⁴¹³ None of the reporting included information regarding the size of the exercise in terms of numbers of participants, nor did it mention the scripted nature of the exercise. Indeed, the photos of the exercise promulgated in the media reporting look like they might have come straight from a movie set because the photographers apparently shot their

⁴¹² Personal communication from multiple US military officers with direct subject matter knowledge.

⁴¹³ Xinhua, 2012. "Zhongguo Baieluosi Juxing 'Shen Ying-2012' Kongjiangbing Fankong Lianxun [China Belarus Conduct 'Divine Eagle-2012' Airborne Anti-terrorism Joint Training]." *China.com.cn*. December 6. Accessed May 12, 2016. http://news.china.com.cn/live/2012-12/06/content_17531979.htm. See also: Jingguo Wang and Jinke Shen, 2012. "'Shen Ying-2012' Kongjiangbing Fankong Lianxun Zonghe Lianyan Chenggong Juxing ['Divine Eagle-2012' Airborne Anti-terrorism Joint Training and Comprehensive Drills Conducted Successfully]." *ChinaNews.com*. December 5. Accessed May 12, 2016. <http://www.chinanews.com/mil/2012/12-05/4385487.shtml>.

images in close proximity to the action. Furthermore, the images capture a range of activities including troops parachuting from aircraft, fast roping from helicopters, and advancing on the terrorist target with a helicopter and armored vehicles in support. The net effect is to create an image of a major military training engagement when in reality it probably involved less than 100 troops from each side.⁴¹⁴ What's more, Xinhua distributed the photos and the narration to multiple Chinese media outlets with the same photos, the same captions, and the same narrations repeated verbatim each time, helping to ensure exposure of the selected images to a broader audience. For the domestic audience, the reporting created images that were literally larger than life, portraying the skill of elite PLAAF troops and their preparedness to fight international terrorism. At the same time, the anti-terrorism characterization of the event and the modest scale meant the exercise drew no criticism from abroad.

In sum, there does appear to be support for the assertion in the literature that China uses military diplomacy in the form of combined exercises to promote a positive image to domestic and international audiences. Combined exercises with higher status states as measured by GDP per capita, regime type, or membership in elite international institutions like the UNSC, allows Beijing to promote an image of the state as an accepted peer of the leading international powers. Combined exercises with lower status states allows Beijing to exercise leadership among these states as exemplified by its participation in SCO-related exercises. Beijing's narrative of greatness on the world stage is supported by the common characterizations of China's combined exercises as serving useful international security purposes that place China on the same side as the international community in facing common threats. Furthermore, the patterns of China's

⁴¹⁴ China's combined exercise iterations tend to be reciprocal in size. Media reporting indicted some 83 PLA troops participated in "Divine Eagle-2011" held in Belarus the preceding year. Although open source media has not provided specific numbers of participants, it is most probable that a similar number participated in the 2012 iteration of the exercise.

combined exercises demonstrate restraint in terms of the size and complexity of these engagements so as not to unduly alarm the international audience while at the same time still allowing Beijing to portray images of the state as competent, capable, and contributing to international security as a great power should. In all of these ways, the symbolic purposes of the exercises often seem to override the functional utility of the exercises. With this case study of China's combined exercises in mind, we turn to our final case study of the chapter: the patterns of China's HA/DR engagements and how they relate to the state's image building and status-seeking efforts.

Case Study Two: The PLA's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Engagements

Assessing the patterns of the PLA's HA/DR engagements differs from combined exercises at least three fundamental ways. First, unlike combined exercises that span the spectrum of military diplomacy purposes (see Figure 5, page 19) and therefore possess significantly more complex ambiguity in their messages to various audiences, HA/DR engagements are weighted heavily towards the soft power purposes of military diplomacy. Because of this, one may argue that the purpose of HA/DR military diplomacy is more about promulgating positive images of a state than anything else. The implication of this is a much cleaner and more consistent message to both domestic and international audiences. Whereas combined exercises require Beijing to walk a fine line between portrayals of state greatness to its domestic audience at the same time it seeks to allay "China threat" concerns abroad, HA/DR engagements convey both messages at the same time. Indeed, whereas there is evidence that China has limited the size and types of its combined exercises because of international concern, when it comes to HA/DR there is theoretically much greater latitude for robust international engagement by the PLA because of the perceived positive contributions to humanity at large.

Second, some of the measures used to evaluate combined exercises as image building efforts—state partners, GDP per capita, Polity IV scores, and size of PLA participation—are somewhat different when applied to the PLA’s HA/DR engagements. The major difference lies in the superior/inferior aspect of HA/DR activities. A state provider of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance possesses an inherently superior status to a receiver of such assistance, as temporary and circumstantial as that status may be. Thus, domestic audiences can view instances of China’s deployment of the PLA to provide assistance to states stricken by manmade or natural disasters as proof of China’s comparative wealth, stability, capability, generosity, good fortune, and good intent. The humbled recipients of such assistance likely perceive some of the same images. As related to international status, observers typically expect great powers to be assistance providers and not assistance receivers. Furthermore, the government entities in some authoritarian states—Myanmar and North Korea, for example—are reluctant to receive foreign aid or, if they do receive such aid, relabel the assistance to lead their populations to believe the national government provided the supplies, erasing foreign involvement to bolster claims of ruling legitimacy.⁴¹⁵ Therefore, many status-seeking states are more likely to emphasize their aid contributions over their assistance requirements even when they remain relatively poor.⁴¹⁶ These state and regime behaviors are consistent with both the SIT and SCT theories introduced at the beginning of this chapter. This means the measures used to evaluate combined exercises require more nuanced interpretations. For example, one would expect to find China’s HA/DR assistance typically going to states with lower relative GDP per capita figures, but it may also be

⁴¹⁵ Patrick Barta and James Hookway, 2008. "Myanmar Remains Reluctant to Accept Foreign Aid." *The Wall Street Journal*. May 10. Accessed May 18, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121042574673782959>.

⁴¹⁶ Rani D. Mullen and Sumit Ganguly, 2012. "The Rise of India's Soft Power: It's Not Just Bollywood and Yoga Anymore." *Foreign Policy*. May 8. Accessed May 18, 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/05/08/the-rise-of-indias-soft-power/>.

true that China provides disaster relief assistance to wealthier states as well because of the superior/inferior aspect of these activities.

Finally, because of the smaller number of PLA HA/DR activities over a shorter period of time, correlations of activity offer only limited utility in determining the relationship between HA/DR activities and potential influencing factors. Beijing has engaged 23 of its 27 HA/DR partner states only once and its most frequent partner, Pakistan, only four times. The relative immaturity of the activity requires this case study to present more descriptive arguments for how image building relates to HA/DR engagements as opposed to the more numerically derived observations in the preceding case studies. Nevertheless, the discernable patterns provided by this case study will help guide future research efforts into this area when future cases are added to the database.

With these considerations in mind, we now review the three major elements by which to assess image building as a driver of PLA HA/DR engagements. The first element is the timing of the introduction of this activity. The dissertation argues that changes in the geopolitical context support the hypothesis of image building as a reason for China's expansion of military diplomacy to include HA/DR engagements. Next, we review the GDP per capita data for each partner to determine how these numbers relate to the states China engages in HA/DR activities. Breaking down the PLA's HA/DR activities into three sub-categories—disaster/crisis relief, humanitarian assistance missions, and HA/DR training events—reveals nuances in the images China seeks to portray to its various audiences. China positions itself as a partner of other great powers in supporting international relief efforts to other states. Finally, the Polity IV scores of China's HA/DR partner states are useful to contemplate because, given Beijing's sensitivity to China's status as a non-democratic state, Polity IV scores help demonstrate that China is

acceptable to—perhaps even superior to—the democratic states to which it renders aid. Unlike the previous case study, this section will not analyze the size of the PLA’s HA/DR engagements because of spotty reporting on the sizes of deployments and inconsistency in other methods of measurement. Some event reporting listed numbers of people receiving medical treatment without further specifying the nature of those treatments, some reporting described the value of aid supplies delivered, and some listed numbers of PLA personnel participating. This posed difficulty when it came to assessing the patterns of activity that might have bearing on the hypothesis. The exploration of these elements commences with a focus on the timing of the introduction of HA/DR as a new military diplomacy activity for the PLA.

As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, in 2007 Joshua Cooper Ramo describes China’s national image as the state’s greatest strategic threat. It is worth reviewing the foreign policy aspects of why Ramo made this claim about China. Following the Tiananmen Square controversy in June of 1989, China’s foreign policy drifted in a counter-productive direction. Joshua Kurlantzick describes what happened and how Beijing recognized its folly and changed the course of its foreign policy:

In the mid-1990s, China had tried to use military strength to intimidate other countries in Asia, by aggressive moves like sending ships to unoccupied, disputed reefs in the South China Sea. At the same time, China called on other nations in the region to abandon their alliances, mostly with the United States, arguing that these had been made obsolete by the [end of the] Cold War. This strategy backfired. Countries across the region condemned Beijing’s aggressive behavior and solidified their military links with the United States, drawing the US armed forces closer into the region, and closer to China—exactly what Beijing did not want. . . Overall, as the regional specialist Denny Roy found in the late 1990s, China seemed to have no coherent, effective foreign policy in Asia. . .

Beijing eventually recognized its mistakes: seizing reefs had turned countries against China, but offering assistance during the Asian financial crisis had won friends. As Chinese officials told me [Kurlantzick], after internal debate, the leadership in Beijing

decided to tone down the military action and instead focus on building China's global soft power... Wooing, not intimidating, would now be the order of business.⁴¹⁷

This period of wooing extended through most of the first decade of the 21st Century, and has since become known as the period of China's "charm offensive," also the title of Kurlantzick's book. It is during this "charm offensive" period that much of the expansion of China's military diplomacy activities occurred as described throughout this dissertation.

Unfortunately, beginning in roughly 2008 and continuing through the writing of this dissertation, China's foreign policy again took an aggressive turn, reviving international concerns about China's strategic intent. Most scholars describe China's international behavior during this period as "assertive," manifested by a return to actions designed to solidify China's claims to disputed territories with Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, and other states in the South and East China Seas and on the border with India in Arunchal Pradesh. Contending arguments for the reasons behind Beijing's return to assertiveness in its foreign policy include nationalist pressures from China's domestic population, "premature triumphalism" following the global financial crisis that originated in the United States, and Beijing's defensive responses to US behaviors Beijing deemed threatening.⁴¹⁸ As usual, a combination of these factors likely led to the new tenor in Chinese foreign policy, but for our purposes here, the relevant point is how Beijing proceeded. Instead of a wholesale revamping of its assertive foreign policy approach and perhaps returning to its more cautious "charm offensive," Beijing instead proceeded with the assertive behaviors, but also added PLA HA/DR engagements to its repertoire. At the same time that international concern regarding Chinese assertiveness was waxing once more, Beijing

⁴¹⁷ Joshua Kurlantzick, 2007. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 37-38.

⁴¹⁸ For more on the return of China's assertive behavior, see: Robert S. Ross, "Chinese Nationalism and Its Discontents," *The National Interest*, November/December 2011: 45-46. See also: Andrew Scobell and Scott W. Harold. 2013. "An Assertive China? Insights from Interviews." *Asian Security* 9 (2): 111-131.

regularized PLA deployments to assist other states with their disaster recovery and humanitarian assistance needs. As Beijing's assertive behaviors damaged its image in some respects, it instituted activities designed to bolster its image in other respects. To be sure, Beijing considered deploying the PLA for regular HA/DR operations years earlier than 2009, but it ultimately postponed doing so until 2009 when the need to burnish China's image was more acute.⁴¹⁹ This dissertation does not attempt to assess the effectiveness of the image building aspects of HA/DR engagements in states with which China has tense relations. Further research is necessary in future years to explore the patterns of PLA HA/DR engagement in relationship to improving China's image with specific states. However, it is apparent from the timing of its introduction as a general class of military diplomacy that Beijing may have felt HA/DR activities could play a role in mitigating the image damaging effects of the state's renewed assertiveness.

Figure 47 lists the PLA's HA/DR engagements from 2002 to 2012 and includes the World Bank GDP per capita data and Center for Systemic Peace Polity IV scores for each state in each year engagements took place.⁴²⁰ The GDP per capita data becomes most useful for analysis purposes when considered in the context of the subcategories of HA/DR activity the PLA engages in. Figure 45 thus breaks out the three categories by color-coding them so readers can more easily identify the subcategories. HA/DR engagements classified as disaster/crisis relief operations are white (18 events), humanitarian assistance missions are shaded green (11 events), and HA/DR training engagements are shaded in yellow (5 events). Readers will recall that two of the five HA/DR training engagements were multi-phase events where the first half of

⁴¹⁹ Drew Thompson, 2008. "International Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance: A Future Role for the PLA?" *China Brief* (The Jamestown Foundation) 8 (11).

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4941#.V0NzdPkrKUI.

⁴²⁰ The World Bank, 2016. *World DataBank*. January 8. Accessed January 8, 2016.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>. See also: Center for Systemic Peace. 2014. *The Polity Project*. Monty G. Marshall. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.

Year	HA/DR Engagement Name	Engagement Description	Participant States (GDP per capita/Polity IV Score)	Engagement Location	
2002		HA/DR Operation (Earthquake Relief Aid Delivery)	Afghanistan (\$192/-66)	Afghanistan	
2009	<i>Peace Angel-2009</i>	Combined HA/DR Training and "Joint Humanitarian Medical Rescue Operation"	Gabon (\$8,062/3)	Gabon (Ogooue-Ivindo Province)	
		HA/DR Operation ("Refugee" Relief Aid Delivery)	Sri Lanka (\$2,057/6)	Sri Lanka	
		HA/DR Operation ("Refugee" Relief Aid Delivery)	Pakistan (\$1,010/5)	Pakistan	
		HA/DR Operation ("Swine Flu" Relief Aid Delivery)	Mexico (\$7,648/8)	Mexico	
2010	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Djibouti (\$1,358/2)	Djibouti	
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Kenya (\$992/8)	Kenya	
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Tanzania (\$709/-1)	Tanzania	
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Seychelles (\$10,805/UNK)	Seychelles	
	<i>Harmonious Mission 2010</i>	HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Bangladesh (\$760/5)	Bangladesh	
		HA/DR Operation (Earthquake Relief Aid Delivery, Medical Team, Search and Rescue Team)	Haiti (\$662/-77)	Haiti	
		HA/DR Operation ("Snow Disaster" Relief Aid Delivery)	Mongolia (\$2,650/10)	Mongolia	
		HA/DR Operation (Earthquake Relief Aid Delivery)	Chile (\$12,785/10)	Chile	
		HA/DR Operation (Forest Fire Relief Aid Delivery)	Russia (\$10,674/4)	Russia	
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery, Medical Team, Search and Rescue, Helicopter Lift)	Pakistan (\$1,043/6)	Pakistan	
		<i>Peace Angel-2010</i>	Combined HA/DR Training	Peru (\$5,056/9)	Peru
	2011		HA/DR Operation ("Civil War" Relief Aid Delivery, Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation)	Libya (\$5,518/-77)	Libya
			HA/DR Operation (Tsunami Relief Aid Delivery, Search and Rescue)	Japan (\$46,679/10)	Japan
			HA/DR Operation ("Turmoil" Relief Aid Delivery)	Tunisia (\$4,298/-88)	Tunisia
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery, Air Transport)	Pakistan (\$1,230/6)	Pakistan	
<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>		HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Cuba (\$6,093/-7)	Cuba	
<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>		HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Jamaica (\$5,332/9)	Jamaica	
<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>		HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Trinidad and Tobago (\$18,287/10)	Trinidad and Tobago	
<i>Harmonious Mission 2011</i>		HA/DR Operation (<i>Peace Ark</i> Medical Humanitarian Assistance)	Costa Rica (\$8,963/10)	Costa Rica	
<i>Cooperation Spirit-2011</i>		HA/DR Exercise	Australia (\$62,216/10)	China (Dujiangyan, Sichuan)	
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery)	Pakistan (\$1,230/6)	Pakistan	
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery)	Thailand (\$5,539/7)	Thailand	
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery, Air Transport)	Thailand (\$5,539/7)	Thailand	
		HA/DR Operation (Flood Relief Aid Delivery)	Cambodia (\$879/2)	Cambodia	
2012	<i>Cooperation Spirit-2012</i>	HA/DR Exercise	Australia (\$67,646/10), New Zealand (\$39,505/10)	Australia (Brisbane)	
		HA/DR Operation (Hurricane Relief Aid Delivery)	Cuba (\$6,448/-7)	Cuba	
	<i>China-US Joint Humanitarian-Assistance and Disaster-Relief Tabletop Exercise</i>	HA/DR Exercise	US (\$51,457/10)	China (Chengdu, Sichuan)	

Figure 47: China's HA/DR Engagements with Other States Including GDP per Capita and Polity IV Scores (2002-2012)

the engagement was combined training and the second half of the event was a medical humanitarian assistance mission. On Figure 47, these engagements are indicated by both yellow and green shading.

With the HA/DR subcategories identified, we begin to see some interesting engagement patterns when it comes to the GDP per capita data for the states belonging to each group (see Figure 48). Most obviously, the average GDP per capita for the five states the PLA engaged in HA/DR training and exercises is roughly five times higher than the other two categories and six times higher than China's average GDP per capita of \$5,038 during the period from 2009-2012.

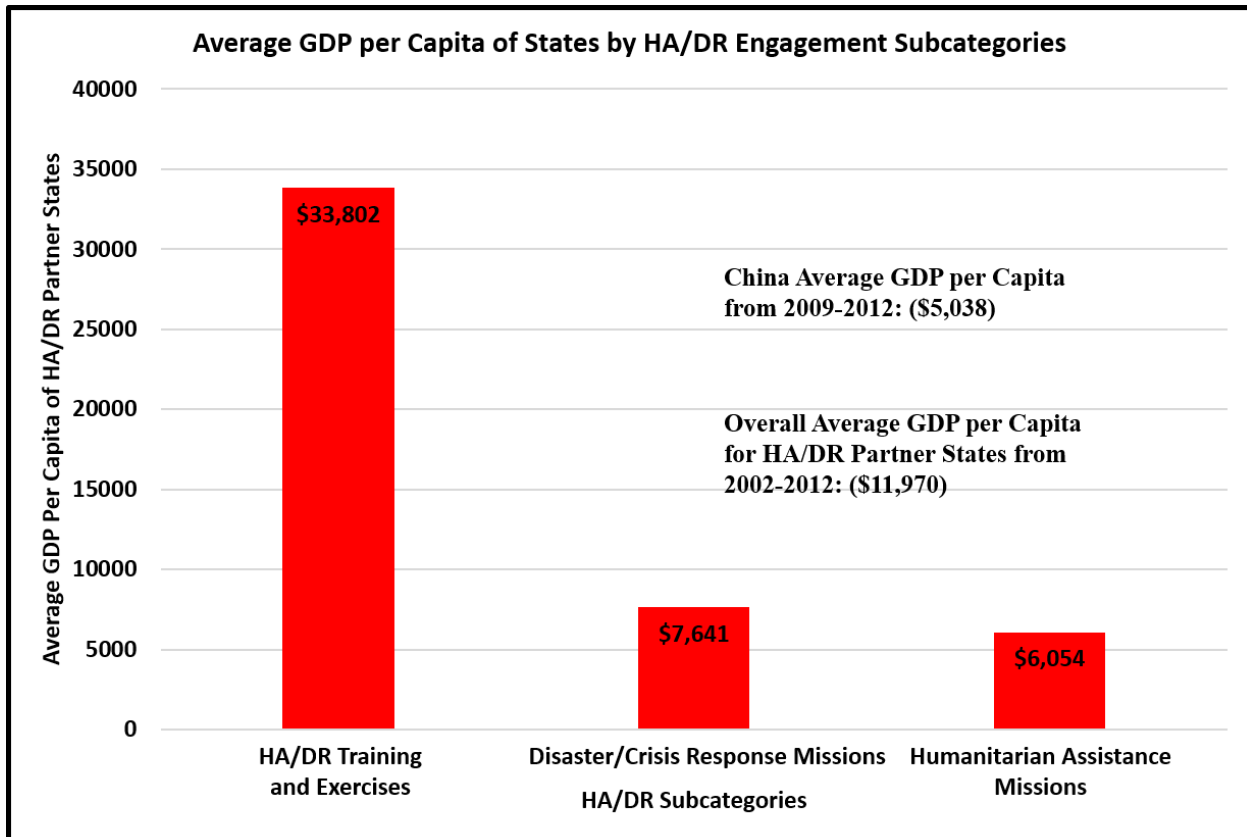


Figure 48: Average GDP per Capita of States by HA/DR Engagement Subcategories (2002-2012)

For the purposes of image building and status-seeking, this wealth disparity suggests Beijing seeks engagement in HA/DR training and exercises with wealthy partners to portray China as a peer member of states able and willing to provide assistance to other states. By associating with states like the US, Australia, and New Zealand, China is creating an impression of punching above its weight in terms of contributions to international HA/DR operations. For Beijing's domestic audiences, media images of PLA soldiers training side by side with military personnel from wealthy states provides evidence of China's importance in the international community as a competent peer of wealthy states.⁴²¹ The 2009 Gabon exercise falls under this category as well.

Although Gabon's GDP per capita was on the lower end of the states in this group at \$8,062,

⁴²¹ CCTV.com, 2012. "China, Australia, New Zealand Hold Joint Military Drill." *CCTV.com*. Edited by Jianfeng Zhang. October 30. Accessed May 22, 2016. <http://english.cntv.cn/program/newshour/20121030/105229.shtml>. See also: Xuanliang Li, 2012. "Four Highlights of 'Cooperation Spirit 2012' Drill." *English.people.cn*. October 31. Accessed May 22, 2016. <http://en.people.cn/90786/7998087.html>.

Gabon is still among the wealthier sub-Saharan Africa states and, it must be noted, had higher GDP per capita wealth than China at the time. Chinese media coverage of the “Peace Angel-2009” event was replete with pictures of Gabonese and Chinese military personnel responding to a simulated mining accident including images of helicopters evacuating people with simulated injuries to a PLA mobile hospital and local civilians lining roads to observe the opening ceremonies.⁴²² Following the conclusion of the exercise portion of the engagement, the participating troops then transitioned to offering humanitarian medical assistance to underserved Gabonese in the region.

As one would expect, the GDPs per capita of the states China engaged in one of the other two categories were significantly lower. States to which China responded for disaster/crisis response and humanitarian assistance missions averaged \$7,641 and \$6,054 respectively. This is in keeping with the premise that poorer states typically require more international assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters than wealthy states. However, what is most interesting about these figures is that China’s own average GDP per capita during the 2009-2012 period when most of these missions occurred was still lower than the averages of both of these categories. In effect, a poor state was responding to natural disasters and extending assistance to states wealthier than itself. This phenomenon was especially pronounced in the PLA’s assistance to Japan following the devastating Tohoku Earthquake and subsequent tsunami in early 2011. Japan’s GDP per capita in that year was \$46,679—roughly nine times larger than China’s. Japan is also the only state possessing such wealth assisted by China during the entire period. Indeed, the next wealthiest state to receive similar disaster relief assistance from China during the period was Chile in 2010 with a GDP per capita of \$12,785 when it suffered its major earthquake in that

⁴²² Global Times, 2009. ““Peace Angel 2009” Kicks Off.” *Global Times*. June 22. Accessed May 22, 2016. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/438609.shtml>.

year. This pattern of activity supports the hypothesis of China as a status-seeking state, a state that identifies itself with great powers and subscribes to the idea that great powers have a responsibility to assist other states following disasters. This is despite the economic reality that China is poorer on a per capita basis than many of the states it assists. In Japan's case, one wonders if the assistance rendered came with a certain amount of self-satisfaction in Beijing at the image of China providing aid to Japan, its major regional competitor and historical nemesis. China as the aid provider and Japan as the aid petitioner are a juxtaposition for these two states over the last three to four decades where aid has traditionally flowed in the opposite direction. Certainly much more work should be done to clarify the issues related to these observations, but the patterns of PLA HA/DR activity in relation to state GDP per capita do appear to support the premise of PLA image promotion and status-seeking as a major influence in this military diplomacy activity.

The last measure for examination in this case study focuses on the Polity IV Scores of the states the PLA engages in HA/DR activities. China's non-inclusion in the club of wealthy democratic states due to the authoritarian nature of the CCP continues to play an underlying role in limiting China's international status. China's perennial Polity IV score of -7 over the course of the decade from 2002 to 2012 ties it with Cuba as the lowest scoring state on the list of states with which the PLA has engaged in HA/DR. The most interesting and most pertinent aspect of the HA/DR state Polity IV scores is how weighted they are on the positive side. The average Polity IV score for China's HA/DR partner states is 6.7.⁴²³ By way of reminder and comparison, the average Polity IV score for China's combined exercise partner states is 3.79. In fact, 12

⁴²³ The average did not include the five states with Polity IV scores indicating they were under foreign military occupation (Afghanistan, -66), collapsed/failed states (Haiti and Libya, -77), in transition periods between regime types (Tunisia, -88), or states without Polity IV scores listed (Seychelles). For more information on the Polity IV scores and coding, see Center for Systemic Peace. 2014. *The Polity Project*. Monty G. Marshall. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.

(44%) of China's 27 HA/DR partner states had Polity IV scores of 8 or higher and 20 (74%) of 27 states had positive scores.

Based on these numbers, it appears Beijing has a marked preference for dispatching the PLA to engage in HA/DR activities with states that are higher on the political status scale than China. Part of the answer as to why this is can be found by looking at the states China has engaged in HA/DR exercises and their polity scores: the US (10), Australia (10), New Zealand (10), Peru (9), and Gabon (3). Association with these states demonstrates (perhaps with the exception of Gabon) not only the intercontinental reach of PLA HA/DR engagement but also places China in the company of established democracies, again demonstrating international acceptance of China as a peer regardless of regime type shortcomings. In like manner, humanitarian assistance missions and disaster relief operations in democratic states portray an image of China that not only associates with, and is accepted by, democratic states, but is even superior to them by virtue of China's relative status as aid provider. To domestic Chinese audiences, this bolsters impressions of the state's international status. For the CCP, such impressions reaffirm the party's role as China's competent ruling authority and supports the party's need to demonstrate regular "gains" to its occasionally restless constituency. For the international audience, these engagements reinforce the positive aspects of China as a growing net contributor to international stability and security.

Taken together, the patterns of PLA HA/DR engagement generally support the hypothesis of status and image building as purposes for the expansion of this military diplomacy activity. To be sure, further study will be required to refine and strengthen the argument and such research would benefit the field of PLA studies. However, from the perspective of the limited purpose of examining the plausibility and validity of the assertions made in the literature

regarding the motivating purposes of China's military diplomacy, the data and the patterns tend to support the claims. The patterns of China's combined exercises and HA/DR engagements do apparently serve image and status purposes by supporting Beijing's efforts to create and promulgate impressions of China as an accepted, important, and leading great power in the international community. Chapter Five now consolidates these findings and discusses their implications for policy, theory, and future practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide greater understanding of the growth of Chinese military diplomacy during the decade from 2002 to 2012 when much of that growth took place. After an introduction to the theory, purposes, and practices of military diplomacy in general, Chapter One of the dissertation next surveyed China's military diplomacy activity in particular, demonstrating the growth of PLA MD activity in terms of its types, frequency, number of state partners, participating service branches, and locations and sizes of activity. With the phenomenon thus established, Chapter Two reviewed the existing literature in order to provide an overview of the explanations commonly offered for why China was choosing to deploy the PLA abroad for these purposes. The review of the literature did indeed provide these explanations, but it also revealed that these explanations were typically asserted rather than demonstrated, lacking any systematic examination to support the assertions. This gap in the literature—the lack of a complete explanatory argument that linked theory to empirical practice—serves as the focus of the next two chapters of the dissertation.

In order to summarize the findings of this dissertation, it is useful to review once more Figure 18, which was first introduced in Chapter Two. Figure 18, as readers will recall, illustrates the bounds on the scope of the research. Although the intent of the dissertation is to provide explanations applicable to the entirety of China's military diplomacy activity, the large size of the universe of activity—12 major MD activity types—in combination with the seven explanations distilled from the literature, required a more prudent and modest approach. Consequently, as Figure 18 illustrates, I chose to examine the explanations that the growth of China's military diplomacy were influenced by Beijing's desire to protect its growing

international economic interests and the desire to promote a positive image of the state. As indicated by the darker red boxes on Figure 18, the MD activity type case studies by which to examine these assertions were the PLA’s combined exercises and training events and the PLA’s HA/DR engagements with other states. The intent was to use the identifiable patterns of these two activities to see if they correlated in any way with what one would expect to see if the explanations were valid (see Figure 19, page 107). Similar methods could be applied to

<u>MD Activity Type</u>	<u>Literature Review Explanations</u>							
	<i>Amity</i>	<i>Reassurance</i>	<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>Deterrence</i>	<i>Modernization</i>	<i>Military Development</i>	<i>Int’l Economic Interests</i>	<i>Status/Image</i>
Strategic Security Dialogues								
Military Attaché Offices								
High-level Military Exchanges								
Functional/Educational Military Exchanges								
PLA Navy (PLAN) Port Calls								
UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs)								
Combined Exercises/Training								
Opening PLA Exercises to Foreign Observers								
Ministry of National Defense (MND) Information Office								
Anti-Piracy Operations								
Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) Ops								
Military Aid/Arms Sales								

Figure 18: Research Bounds--Case Study and Research Question Intersection

examining the theoretical and empirical “contents” of every other box where the MD activity types intersect with the two explanations, helping us understand the extent to which the findings are generalizable to the larger universe of China’s overall military diplomacy program.

Researchers could then adopt similar approaches for examining each of the remaining empty boxes. In the end, this approach could lead to a much deeper and more nuanced understanding of China’s military diplomacy program.

The point of this review of Figure 18 is to make clear how much room there is for future study in this field. This entire dissertation focused on just four of a possible 84 activity/explanation intersection boxes, and even within these four boxes the analysis yielded new areas requiring further refinement and additional research. The work done in this dissertation fills an important gap in the literature on China's military diplomacy and provides useful vectors for future research in the field for like-minded scholars. This final chapter of the dissertation will summarize the findings of the research regarding the two hypothesized explanations and then identify the implications of these findings for policymakers and scholars interested in understanding China's growing military diplomacy activity. In the process, the chapter will also address areas within the scope of the project requiring further research.

Summary of Findings and Implications: Protection of International Economic Interests as Explanation for the Growth of Chinese Military Diplomacy

Chapter Three's analysis of the growth of China's MD activity as a result of Beijing's desire to protect its international economic development interests demonstrates significant support for the validity of the explanation. The extent to which China's economy depends upon international trade—measured by trade as a percentage of GDP—clearly concerns Beijing and prompted the dispatch of the PLA overseas to participate in missions and conduct operations that would advance the PLA's ability to protect China's interests. The correlations between China's economic growth, its major trade partners, its major commodity suppliers and the patterns of the PLA's combined exercises and HA/DR engagements are very clear. In case after case, China engages its major economic partner states in these military diplomacy activities at rates much higher than it engages the general population of states. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of these engagements has to do with states that are not major trading partners of China's but possess

value as military diplomacy partners based upon their proximity to the international maritime and land shipping routes upon which China depends for the transit of its commerce and energy supplies. This helps explain why a state like Pakistan, without major economic significance as a trade partner in its own right, is China's overall most frequent combined exercise and HA/DR engagement partner. Pakistan's geo-economic attributes—proximity to the Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb—make it an attractive military diplomacy partner above and beyond its strategic value vis-à-vis India. Furthermore, its value as a transit corridor between the Arabian Sea and China that would allow China's commerce and energy supplies to bypass the rest of the Indian Ocean, the Malacca Straits, and the tense South China Sea is evident by Chinese financial investment in infrastructure supporting the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor. Such investments, although announced subsequent to the decade of study, helps clarify the correlations between the patterns of MD activity and China's international economic interests.

Indeed, the patterns of Chinese MD and their correlations to China's overseas economic interests from 2002 to 2012 seem to provide reliable indications of what observers may expect in the future for China's international security and economic activity. The database of Chinese military diplomacy created for this dissertation does not extend beyond 2012, but the trends identified in this decade appear to have close bearing on developments that occurred in the years from 2013 to the present (May 2016). For example, in late 2013 during state visits to Kazakhstan and then Indonesia, Xi Jinping announced the creation of two new initiatives designed to link the Eurasian landmass in a way that facilitates trade and commerce between states on both ends of the two continents.⁴²⁴ The "Silk Road Economic Belt" initiative will invest in road, rail, and air links to bolster trade between China, Central Asia, and Europe while

⁴²⁴ Scott Kennedy, 2015. "Building China's One Belt, One Road." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. April 3. Accessed May 24, 2016. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/building-china%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cone-belt-one-road%E2%80%9D>.

the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” will develop ports and other maritime infrastructure to do the same along the maritime routes between China and Europe.⁴²⁵ Together, these initiatives are known as “One Belt, One Road” or OBOR. The striking impression of maps charting the various OBOR trade routes is how closely they parallel the state partners and locations of



China’s combined exercise and HA/DR activities during the preceding decade (see Figure 49).

A review of Figures 34, 35, and 39 from Chapter Three of this dissertation demonstrates that the majority of China’s military diplomacy activities during the preceding decade occurred with states along or near these routes.

The expansive design and scope of Xi’s OBOR vision has begun to win the attention of a broader audience who are questioning the strategic and security implications of the grand plan.

Writing in 2015, Defense News journalist Wendell Minnick reported:

Many experts question how China will establish security for these new routes, since many of them snake through potentially dangerous areas such as Africa's coast (maritime piracy) and the "wild west" of Central Asia (Islamic extremism). The routes will require logistics hubs, communication networks, airports, railway lines, modern highways, ports

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

and a military component that allows for a rapid response to a crisis. For the military, this means long-range, fixed-wing cargo aircraft, littoral combat ships capable of operating in the narrow and shallow areas of the Strait of Malacca and Suez Canal, hospital ships, and an enhanced capability to conduct Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW).⁴²⁶

What Mr. Minnick and his experts were either not aware of, or simply did not mention, is that China had already been preparing the foundations of the security cooperation required for implementation of OBOR by means of the PLA's MD activities over the course of the preceding decade. Indeed, the timing of these activities in comparison with the 2013 and 2014 announcements of major initiatives like OBOR or the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor suggest that Beijing's strategic foresight in planning the PLA's various MD activities extends a decade or more. This is especially true when one considers that combined exercises typically occur only after a range of preparatory MD activity such as strategic dialogues, high-level exchanges, opening of defense attaché offices, etc., has taken place. Beijing's strategic foresight is impressive. To be sure, as the dynamics of trade and political relations with individual states vacillate, so too will China's MD engagements with those states. However, the overall patterns and strategic intent of China's activity continues apace no matter what adjustments are required in the margins.

Finally, the patterns of China's MD activity and their correlation to China's international economic interests may also be useful in helping to predict how China's military diplomacy might expand further to include new activity types beyond those practiced during the decade of this study. For example, over the last three decades, China's official documents and pronouncements frequently disavowed any intent to establish military bases in foreign states. However, during the course of researching and writing this dissertation, China successfully concluded negotiations and began construction on its first overseas military base, a port facility

⁴²⁶ Minnick, Wendell. 2015. "China's 'One Belt, One Road' Strategy." *Defense News*. April 12. Accessed May 24, 2016. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/04/11/taiwan-china-one-belt-one-road-strategy/25353561/>.

for provisioning and refueling PLAN vessels.⁴²⁷ Knowing the patterns of Chinese military diplomacy and their correlation with important economic interests, it was little surprise that the location of this first overseas base was Djibouti, located on the strategically vital Bab el-Mandeb which gives China proximal access to the shipping traffic from both Europe and the Arabian Peninsula to China and vice versa. A 2015 New York Times article about this first overseas military base provides insights into how Chinese thinking has changed regarding overseas bases when it quotes well-known Professor Shen Dingli from Fudan University. In remarks about the PLA's new base in Djibouti, Shen states, "The United States has been expanding its business all around the world and sending its military away to protect those interests for 150 years. Now, what the United States has done in the past, China will do again... We need to safeguard our own navigational freedom... If whoever—pirates, ISIS, or the US—wants to shut down the passage, we need to be able to reopen it."⁴²⁸ The threats Shen envisions are telling. He captures two of the themes of the PLA's combined exercise activities from 2002 to 2012 as identified in Chapter Three: counter-terrorism and anti-piracy exercises. The final perceived threat on the list, the United States, would require yet another expansion of Chinese MD beyond MOOTW to larger scale conventional warfighting exercises with amenable partners. Given the patterns of PLA MD activity and the evolution of Chinese thinking regarding overseas bases, it is entirely plausible that Djibouti will be but the first of more in the coming years, with subsequent bases likewise established in states with significant economic importance to China or astride important lines of communication similar to Djibouti.

⁴²⁷ Jane Perlez and Chris Buckley, 2015. "China Retools its Military with a First Overseas Outpost in Djibouti." *New York Times*. November 26. Accessed December 15, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/world/asia/china-military-presence-djibouti-africa.html?_r=0. See also: John Lee, 2015. "China Comes to Djibouti: Why Washington Should be Worried." *Foreign Affairs*. April 23. Accessed May 25, 2016. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-africa/2015-04-23/china-comes-djibouti>.

⁴²⁸ Perlez and Buckley, 2015. "China Retools its Military with a First Overseas Outpost in Djibouti." *New York Times*.

Shen Dingli's comments on China's rationale for the base in Djibouti allude to an additional evolutionary aspect of Chinese international security perspectives. Beijing's changing perspective is beginning to include rethinking modern China's long-held stance against entering into formal military alliances with other states. Some Chinese scholars including Qinghua University's Professor Yan Xuetong are advocating for such a change, arguing "[China's] non-alignment policy is seriously outdated, as the country's strategic environment has been transformed and as China needs resources and unhindered global public goods. His [Yan's] argument is that China's worldwide interests cannot be protected by rhetoric alone and thus Beijing needs to build a set of political, economic and military alliances or at least clearly rank friendly and unfriendly countries."⁴²⁹ This thinking regarding military alliances is still nascent and relatively unlikely in the next decade or so under the present international security order. However, a sudden US retrenchment from its current international security roles similar to proposals floated by the presumptive Republican candidate for the US presidency in 2016, may move this timeline forward as China sees a need to fill any security vacuum and protect the freedom of navigation for commerce upon which its economy depends.⁴³⁰ This could prompt an accelerated deepening and broadening of Chinese military diplomacy engagements with a range of states willing to cooperate with such efforts should circumstances require, including the establishment of additional overseas military bases and pursuit of more formal military alliances.

The findings of Chapter Three have bearing on the international relations theories that form the basis of the complete argument regarding the role of China's international economic interests as a driver for the expansion of PLA MD activity. China's military diplomacy activity

⁴²⁹ Vasilis Trigkas, 2014. "Is China A Lonely Diva?" *The Diplomat*. September 3. Accessed May 28, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/is-china-a-lonely-diva/>.

⁴³⁰ Michael Auslin, 2016. "Trump's Isolationism Threatens Japan's Security." *National Review*. May 9. Accessed May 28, 2016. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/435148/japan-stands-global-order>.

as a whole provides an excellent case study for both realism and liberalism. The strongest impressions from the case studies in Chapter Two are those of a state behaving in ways predominantly consistent with tenets of realist international relations theory. Perhaps this is not surprising given the chapter's focus on the material drivers of PLA MD activity. In many ways, China's military diplomacy behaviors reflect David Shambaugh's description that, "China is, in essence, a very narrow-minded, self-interested, realist state, seeking only to maximize its own national interests and power. It cares little for global governance and enforcing global standards of behavior (except its much-vaunted doctrine of noninterference in the internal affairs of countries). Its economic policies are mercantilist and its diplomacy is passive. China is also a lonely strategic power, with no allies and experiencing distrust and strained relationships with much of the world."⁴³¹ Although much of that applies to China's military diplomacy activity as it relates to its international economic interests, one also observes a China that is cognizant of its limitations and cautious about the way it goes about preparing to protect its interests.

For China to legitimate its climb to regional hegemony, it will need to find a message and set a standard of behavior that resonates with its neighbors and functions in a manner similar to the liberal order established by the US following World War Two.⁴³² China's neighbors are unlikely to accept Beijing's leadership if that "leadership" is characterized by raw self-interest, power politics, and bullying—the same things China has so often accused the US of doing. If China can demonstrate a consistent record of moderating its own interests in favor of common interests, it may gain some acceptance of its role as a regional or even global leader. Military diplomacy may help China to establish such a track record. Consistent with New Security

⁴³¹ David Shambaugh, 2013. *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 310.

⁴³² Robert E. Kelly, 2014. "Can China Legitimate Its Would-Be Hegemony in Asia?" *The Diplomat*. August 7. Accessed May 26, 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/can-china-legitimate-its-would-be-hegemony-in-asia/>.

Concept tenets regarding the need for cooperative efforts to address transnational security efforts, China's MD activity appears to pursue such cooperation with an expanding array of states. The themes of its combined exercises are also the themes du jour for being a responsible member of the international community. Counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, and maritime search and rescue form the bulk of China's combined exercises, while many of its HA/DR engagements prepare China to cooperate in concert with other states in responding to natural disasters and other crises. Formation of the SCO demonstrates a desire to institutionalize security cooperation with other states in addressing some of these shared issues. However, a more significant test will be in the form of China's inclination—or disinclination—to greater multilateral cooperative efforts with regional democracies, including states with which it has outstanding historical and territorial disputes. Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, and the Philippines stand out as states China has not yet engaged in any significant military diplomacy efforts. Without these states, and with continued US wariness, China will likely remain very limited in its ability to create, let alone lead, a significant cooperative regional security order.

These implications for theory also hold implications for practice as policy-makers assess China's actions and formulate appropriate responses. Understanding why and how the PLA is operating abroad is a key component of this effort. Chapter Three's demonstration of the PLA's proclivity for seeking engagement with states in places that correlate to China's economic interests provides some benefits to policymakers. As mentioned, it creates some measure of predictability in terms of forecasting China's subsequent geopolitical moves. Consistency of state behavior in accordance with known and understood state interests is always useful because it allows observer states to observe current trends and forecast them into the future. This in turn facilitates formulation of proactive long-term strategy rather than reactive short-term coping. In

China's case, understanding the relationship of the PLA's military deployments to the OBOR initiative will aid the US in deciding if China's behavior is worthy of disruption or accommodation. If China's actions demonstrate pursuit of political and security relationships that seek to exclude the US from the region or if China's actions demonstrate harm to US conceptions regarding the free passage of goods through global commons, then the US would have reason to spoil such actions. The patterns of MD behavior identified in Chapter Three do not reveal practices exclusionary of the US or disruptive to the current international security system. They remain, as of yet, entirely too modest in comparison to the partnerships the US has in the region. Furthermore, whatever political sympathies China shares with states like Iran, those sympathies have not yet been sufficient for China to engage Iran in combined exercises or even in HA/DR operations. China remains very cautious about the states it engages in military diplomacy. This is an attitude the US should seek to encourage not only by continuing its own robust engagement with states around the world, but also with states China is engaging at higher intensity levels. Moreover, while China demonstrates its preference for bilateral military diplomacy events, the US should continue its leadership role in facilitating cooperative multilateral military diplomacy engagements. Invitations for PLA participation in such events would help further socialize the PLA into the international community and exemplify the types of behaviors that support the stability of the international security system. When necessary, dis-invitations to such multilateral engagements can also send strong messages regarding unacceptable international behavior.

Chapter Three provides vectors for several areas of continuing research into China's combined exercises and HA/DR engagements. The first and most obvious is that researchers must continue to chronicle these MD activities. The 2013 release of *The Diversified*

Employment of China's Armed Forces marked the last time one of China's defense white papers included appendices of the PLA's various MD activities. The 2015 defense white paper, titled simply *China's Military Strategy*, was shorter by far than any of its predecessors and did not detail any of China's increasingly robust MD programs. It did confirm that the growth of the PLA's international engagements would continue apace with the increase of China's "national strength," stating vaguely:

China's armed forces will engage in extensive regional and international security affairs, and promote the establishment of the mechanisms of emergency notification, military risk precaution, crisis management and conflict control. With the growth of national strength, China's armed forces will gradually intensify their participation in such operations as international peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, and do their utmost to shoulder more international responsibilities and obligations, provide more public security goods, and contribute more to world peace and common development.⁴³³

The Ministry of National Defense Information Office website and other Chinese media outlets continue to report a cascading stream of military diplomacy-related information on international military exchanges, combined exercises, HA/DR engagements and other activities. Tracking these activities are a prerequisite to future pattern detection and analysis similar to that done in this dissertation.

Next, although this dissertation drew extensively on official Chinese sources and Chinese media for its analysis, future research could benefit from discussions on Chinese military diplomacy with Chinese scholars and government officials dealing with the topic. Such interviews were not possible for this dissertation due to positionality, ethical, and administrative concerns related to my status as an active duty US military member, but a civilian researcher may be able to include these methods in future research. Much remains unknown about the offices and levels at which the coordination of China's military diplomacy activity takes place.

⁴³³ Information Office of the State Council, 2015. *China's Military Strategy*. White Paper, Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

If, as this dissertation suggests, a significant level of strategic coordination occurs in order for the MD and international economic correlations identified in Chapter Three to exist, how and where is this coordination accomplished within the CCP and state government organs? This information has proven to be a persistent gap in the field of study.

Along these lines, future research could also focus on how the PLA's expanding international engagement is influencing the PLA itself. Bearing in mind Alastair Iain Johnston's observations in *Social States: China in International Institutions*, how are China's military diplomacy engagements resulting in institutional and behavioral changes at home and abroad?⁴³⁴ For example, as specific combined exercises with specific states become routinized, what institutional changes are occurring within the PLA to support the planning and execution of annual recurring engagements? How does the PLA choose which units will participate in various MD activities? What resource allocation changes in terms of funding and manpower are being made to keep pace with the growth in the PLA's MD activity? At the same time that the PLA is operating abroad and interacting with foreign states more than ever, there are relatively recent indications that the PLA remains concerned about exposing its members to international influences. For example, in 2013 the PLA's National Defense University released a 92 minute documentary entitled *Silent Contest* warning about the politically corrupting influences of engagement with Western powers and alerting Chinese viewers to the dangers of US efforts to enmesh China into the US-led world order.⁴³⁵ This raises questions about the kind of pushback against MD that may be taking place within the PLA and even perhaps within civilian governing organs. Despite these outstanding questions, the empirical record of China's MD still strongly

⁴³⁴ Alastair Iain Johnston, 2008. *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

⁴³⁵ Jingjing Huang, 2013. "'Silent Contest' Silenced." *Global Times*. November 17. Accessed March 30, 2016. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/825489.shtml>.

supports the contention that the growth of the activity is being driven in significant part by security concerns for its international economic interests.

Summary of Findings and Implications: Image Building as Explanation for the Growth of Chinese Military Diplomacy

Chapter Four examines the hypothesis found in the literature that China's desire to improve the nation's image explains the growth of the PLA's military diplomacy. The chapter begins with an overview of the social identity approaches that describe how and why groups of people—in this case, states—behave competitively towards each other (social identity theory) and how subgroups compete internally to gain and maintain leadership (self-categorization theory). These theories provided the underpinnings for understanding the psychological motivations for modern China's status-seeking behaviors. In China's case, the CCP uses collective historical memories of China's ancient greatness and the more recent “century of humiliation” to urge on efforts supporting “national rejuvenation” and a return to world prominence. The CCP also positions itself as being the arch defender of China's international interests and national honor in order to legitimate its ruling authority in the eyes of its domestic audience. While the domestic audience evaluates the CCP, in part, on the basis of its ability to demonstrate continual gains in terms of China's activities on the world stage, the international audience looks for indicators of Chinese strategic intent. Beijing uses the PLA's MD engagements to satisfy the sometimes-conflicting expectations of both audiences. A steady stream of new, albeit modest, combined exercises with new state partners in new parts of the world combined with images of PLA troops engaging in international HA/DR work each provide elements of the confirming images both audiences seek.

Once again, the analysis focuses on the patterns of activity in the two case studies that support the assertion regarding image building as a driver of PLA MD activity. These patterns include the status attributes of the states China engages in military diplomacy (measured by each state's GDP per capita and Polity IV scores), how Beijing characterizes its MD activities, the predominantly modest sizes of China's combined exercises, and the geopolitical context of the timing of the introduction of HA/DR as a new MD activity. In general, the case studies find China's practice of these two MD activities possess high symbolic as opposed to functional values, suggesting strong support for the hypothesis. The patterns in both case studies reveal marked preferences for China to engage states that are both significantly wealthier and more democratic. The images thus produced for the crucial domestic audience are of China functioning as an accepted peer to other great, leading, powers. The images for the international audience are of a China that is rising to be sure, but also of a China generally supportive of the current international system and cooperative in addressing shared threats. These findings appear to support the assertions in the literature regarding the roles played by image and status in the growth of China's MD activity.

Image continues to play a role in China's international behavior in the years following 2012 as well. The introduction of this dissertation begins with an account of the PLAN's response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, but there is more to this event with bearing on this dissertation. When Typhoon Haiyan roared across the Philippines on November 6, 2013, China's initial aid response was roundly criticized in the foreign media for its paltry size. As many outlets reported, China's initial contribution of \$100,000 was the same amount pledged by South Korean figure skater Kim Yu-na, and only 10% of the \$1,000,000 pledged by furniture

maker Ikea.⁴³⁶ The image of the world's second largest economy contributing less than tiny New Zealand was enough even for Chinese state-controlled media to criticize the aid response. An editorial in the English-language edition of the *Global Times* stated, "China, as a responsible power, should participate in relief operations to assist a disaster-stricken neighboring country, no matter whether it's friendly or not. *China's international image is of vital importance to its interests* [italics added]. If it snubs Manila this time, China will suffer great losses."⁴³⁷ Many attributed China's slow response to nationalist sentiment stemming from the on-going tensions between China and the Philippines over disputed territory in the South China Sea.

Eventually, however, the international rebuke was enough to spur greater, if still meager, contributions from China including the dispatch of the PLA Navy (PLAN) hospital ship *Peace Ark* to the heavily damaged area around Tacloban. When Xinhua News reported on the ship's arrival on November 25, some two and a half weeks after the Typhoon struck, no mention was made of the delayed arrival. Instead, the article reported:

China's Peace Ark Hospital Ship Monday has *already* given medical aid to patients in typhoon-hit areas in central Philippines, after going into the Leyte Gulf on Sunday afternoon. They have transferred seven heavily injured people to the hospital ship for treatment as soon as they [arrived] in the disaster area... In order to optimize use of the hospital ship, the Peace Ark will set up a field hospital in the disaster area to receive patients and transfer them to the ship for further treatment. The ship is moored at Leyte Gulf about 10 nautical miles off Tacloban City, due to its *huge* tonnage... The ship is also *ready* to treat patients transferred by local public hospitals and other foreign medical teams. At the same time, it will send epidemic prevention teams to the disaster areas to carry out anti-epidemic work... The Peace Ark was *warmly welcomed* by officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and local government officials, who emphasized that the arrival of the well-equipped hospital ship is *very timely* [italics added].⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ William Pesek, 2013. "Cheapskate China Wins No Friends in Philippines." *Bloomberg*. November 28. Accessed May 30, 2016. <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2013-11-14/cheapskate-china-wins-no-friends-in-philippines>.

⁴³⁷ *Global Times*, 2013. "Islands Spat Shouldn't Block Typhoon Aid." *Global Times*. November 12. Accessed May 30, 2016. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/824153.shtml#.UoQfZ2RgYVo>.

⁴³⁸ Xinhua News, 2013. "China's Hospital Ship Begins Treating Patients in Disaster-hit Central Philippines." *Global Times*. November 25. Accessed May 30, 2016. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/827493.shtml#.UqIU4Y2A2U1>.

The article's emphasis on the timeliness of the arrival, the size and capability of the vessel, the preparedness of PLAN personnel, and the welcome by local government and military officials, indicate attempts to address the exact aspects of China's initial response that drew so much criticism. One wonders if the comments from the Philippines officials in the final sentence of the article might have been somewhat sarcastic in nature and the Xinhua reporter missed it in translation. Together, the two articles reveal Beijing's sensitivity to international criticism and willingness to modify behavior to project a more positive image.

The value Beijing places on promoting the state's image is of use to policy-makers in the US and elsewhere who wish to influence China's international behavior. Joshua Cooper Ramo talks about "image sovereignty," the ability for a state to "project a clear image of what the country is and what it hopes to become."⁴³⁹ China, says Ramo in 2007, "has let its image sovereignty slip out of its control."⁴⁴⁰ The problem from Beijing's point of view is that the revolution in information technology allows near instantaneous communication between Beijing's domestic and international audiences. China is subject to instant feedback regarding unacceptable Chinese international behaviors ranging from the poor national images created by littering, loud, and demanding Chinese tourists in Paris and Rome, to tardy responses to nations in distress in China's own front yard.⁴⁴¹ This presents opportunities to leverage popular domestic opinion against the CCP by providing feedback that paints the CCP as incompetent and unaccepted by world powers. To be sure, delving into a nationalistically charged relationship as an outside power can have unforeseen consequences. CCP control of Chinese media is a major hurdle to overcome, but as the Haiyan example illustrates, it is possible.

⁴³⁹ Joshua Cooper Ramo, 2007. *Brand China*. Monograph, The Foreign Policy Centre, London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 9.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 22. See also: Tim Frederick, 2013. "Chinese Tourists Misbehaving Abroad." *GBTimes*. June 12. Accessed May 30, 2016. <http://gbtimes.com/travel/chinese-tourists-misbehaving-abroad>.

Ongoing tensions in the South China Sea provide an interesting hypothetical example of how foreign policymakers might use China's image sensitivities to influence China. The CCP continues to enact "patriotic education" programs at all levels of education within the state, ensuring the population shares the same historical memories of China's century of humiliation. This education keeps Japanese World War Two-era aggression particularly fresh in the minds of new generations of Chinese and fosters continuing bilateral political tensions. The initial Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the subsequent brutal conquest of much of Eastern China including the Nanjing massacre, and Japanese war crimes are shared trauma for the Chinese that unifies the state. What would happen however, if Beijing's aggressive actions to claim sovereignty over most of the South China Sea including its mineral rights and fisheries were labeled internationally in terms particularly sensitive to China's image? A media meme similar to "The South China Sea: China's Modern-Day Manchukuo" would be immediately understood by the Chinese domestic population. The analogy is not perfect, but the imagery is clear. It would call to mind every criticism of imperialistic Japanese behavior, equating China's actions against weaker states like the Philippines with behaviors commonly deemed unacceptable and shameful. Along these lines, awareness of the findings in Chapter Four regarding China's preference to engage wealthy democracies in military diplomacy activities because of the positive images thus portrayed could also be used to signal concern regarding Chinese actions that destabilize the region. Cancellation or curtailment of various MD engagements by these high status foreign partners would convey images and messages contrary to those desired by Beijing.

The primary shortcoming in Chapter Four analysis is also an area ripe for future study. Quantification of intangible factors like national image-consciousness, status value, and

nationalism is problematic to say the least. The work in Chapter Four touched on this only peripherally by citing examples of how China uses out-sized media coverage of military diplomacy events to paint larger than life pictures for domestic audiences. Much more work can, and should be, done to solidify this research. A set of qualitative methods that would also lend itself well to providing some quantitative rigor in such an endeavor is textual and discourse analysis.⁴⁴² Social scientists use these methods to explore the dominant narratives in study populations, including how pervasive and influential they are.⁴⁴³ A systematic study of Chinese media reporting on PLA military diplomacy activities would do much to strengthen the findings of this dissertation. In like manner, exploring how Chinese media portrayals are received by the domestic audience would also be incredibly useful. The comments submitted by Chinese netizens in response to such reports would be a fascinating case study. Having viewed scores of these articles in both English and Chinese media, my impression is that the image building aspects of Chinese MD are important, but the methodological work to support that impression has yet to be accomplished. In like manner, a comparative analysis of foreign media reporting on Chinese military diplomacy engagements would also do much to illuminate differences in how the international community perceives these activities. Identifying qualitative differences in the narratives between Chinese and foreign media coverage of the same events would be very useful in determining if China's desired images are indeed being received and accepted by its various MD partners. If they are not, such analysis would then help determine exactly what messages are being received.

⁴⁴² Jason Dittmer, 2010. "Textual and Discourse Analysis." In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, edited by Dydia DeLyser, Steve Herbert, Stuart Aitken, Mike Crang and Linda McDowell, 274-286. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

From a theoretical perspective, one of the interesting findings of the research in Chapter Four is the degree to which China has employed the social mobility strategy in its military diplomacy. Prior to writing the chapter, the social creativity aspects of China's military diplomacy garnered my attention. China's New Security Concept, disdain of alliances, and omnidirectional rhetoric all support the view that China is engaging in a style of military diplomacy quite different from that practiced by the US. However, the growth in China's military diplomacy activity and the frequency of its association with major powers portrays China as also employing the social mobility strategy as it pursues membership in an elite club of great powers. China emulates the MD behaviors of other great powers as borne out by the comments from Fudan University's Prof Shen who cited historical US military diplomacy behavior as a template for current and future Chinese behavior. However, it is unlikely China will be a truly accepted member of the great power club for quite some time—its membership remains aspirational rather than actual. While it does engage great powers, with the exception of Russia, these engagements remain limited to very narrow areas of search and rescue and HA/DR engagements. Even counter-terrorism exercises, with all their symbolic value over the last 15 years, are not yet an option for the PLA with the militaries of wealthy democracies. It is the metaphorical equivalent of China having access to the parlor of the club, but not the restaurant or the golf greens. Indeed, Prof Shen and Beijing must still resolve the major difference between US and Chinese practices of MD. While the US uses its military diplomacy to reassure allies and partners that it will abide by its treaty commitments as a security guarantor, China's reassurance efforts center on portraying a benign image of the state that does not provoke other states to invoke those security obligations. As long as this remains the case, image building will remain an important component of Chinese MD practice.

Final Thoughts

When discussing this dissertation with classmates and others, I am often asked which of the two explanations I find more compelling. Clearly, Chinese military diplomacy is a multi-causal phenomenon with complementary explanations. However, now that I am at the point of completing my examination of these two specific explanations, my answer to which is more compelling must be the material explanation. The overall argument is better supported by the evidentiary patterns of China's military diplomacy and their correlation to the various measures of China's international economic interests. While the argument for MD as a tool for image building is plausible and generally supported by the analysis, the intangible psychological nature of the motivators—emotions dealing with the need for positive and secure self-conceptions—means accepting evidence that is substantially less quantifiable. In terms of evidentiary strength, the material explanation wins.

At the same time, however, I find that the psychological components of image building and status seeking runs deeply through both explanations. Indeed, when it comes to human social behavior, one cannot escape the psychological component. Protecting international economic interests is, after all, motivated fundamentally by fear of perceived threats or fear of loss. The social identity approaches to understanding state behavior offer insights that go deeper than the material concerns, even if they are harder to specify. Pride, prestige, and status clearly motivate Beijing in powerful ways. Memories of greatness (pride) combined with memories of unjust treatment (anger, vengeance) help unify the population under CCP leadership and spur them on to achieve impressive material feats. As we consider the generalizability of the findings of this dissertation, we see that each of the remaining five explanations in the literature (amity, reassurance, cooperation, deterrence, and military modernization) all have significant

psychological components to their theoretical roots. In fact, if China is to truly become a world leader, accepted and respected by other states, the largest obstacles it must overcome are not material, but psychological. All this to say, while I find the material explanations in this dissertation to be more compelling, I find the image building explanation to ultimately be more important.

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