

An Essay on China's Military Diplomacy: Examination of Intentions in Foreign Strategy*

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Introduction

Article 65 of the People's Republic of China Law on National Defense adopted in March 1997 stipulates in regards to China's foreign military relations that "The People's Republic of China adheres to the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity: mutual non-aggression non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, independently handles its military relations with other countries, and conducts military exchanges and cooperation."¹ China strengthened its military diplomacy in the 1990s, and military exchanges have been rising steadily year-by-year. While the growth in military exchanges is a phenomenon that is not limited to China, it is a new development that had not been seen before in Chinese diplomacy. However, there has been little research into China's military diplomacy (the difference between military diplomacy and military exchanges will be explained below), and there are many things that remain unclear about why China has been putting so many resources into military diplomacy, what the actual situation is, and what are the strategic intentions behind China's development of its military diplomacy. My objective in this paper is to categorize the content of China's military diplomacy to clarify the general picture and characteristics, and particularly the strategic intentions of its military diplomacy. However, there are many obstacles in the way of gaining an understanding of China's military diplomacy. While there has been some progress in representing the true state of affairs in such official documents as *China's National Defense*,² there remains a strong propagandistic coloration that can make it difficult to understand the

* Originally published in Japanese in *Boei Kenkyusho Kiyo* (NIDS Security Studies), Vol.8, No.3, March 2006, pp. 21-37.

¹ The "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" were articulated on June 28, 1954 in a joint statement between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru recognizing peaceful coexistence and friendly relations between states with differing political and social systems based on five principles (mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence). These principles were also raised at the Bandung Conference of 1955, and were even incorporated into the Constitution in 1982.

² The original Chinese-language text is available in annual editions as *Zhongguo de guofang*, published by the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. This paper uses *Chugoku no kokubo* (China's National Defense) (the Japanese-language version) published by the Information Office. While white papers always have an official Japanese translation, quotes in this paper shall refer back to the original text as necessary to make suitable corrections to translation problems. The white paper has been issued four times, in July 1998, October 2000, December 2002, and December 2004. To avoid confusion, I shall refer to these versions as *China's National Defense 1998*, *China's National Defense 2000*, *China's National Defense 2002*, and *China's National Defense 2004*. The white paper is also accessible in English, at <http://english.people.com.cn/whitepaper/defense2004/defense2004.html>.

true intentions behind China's actual behavior. In this paper, therefore, in addition to relying on the official documents published by the Chinese government and on papers published by Chinese researchers, I will also advance my analysis by consulting the research results of researchers based outside of China.

As noted above, there is not necessarily a large amount of research to draw upon that is related to China's military diplomacy or military exchanges. In China, all that is available is the comprehensive and valuable basic knowledge provided by the research of Yang Songhe.³ For research results outside of China, there has been research focusing on US-China military exchanges, US-Russia military exchanges, and other bilateral exchanges,⁴ as well as research focusing on multilateral military exchanges in which China has become much more active since the 1990s.⁵ Research consisting of comprehensive analyses of China's military diplomacy and military exchanges in general include a paper by the US-based China specialists Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, as well as Taiwan's Wu Ming-Chieh, Wu Chien-te, and the Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs.⁶ While the report by Allen and McVadon is the most comprehensive research regarding China's military

³ Yang Songhe, *Junshi waijiao gailun* (Survey of Military Diplomacy), *Junshi yiwen chubanshe*, Beijing, 1999. This document was part of an all-forces military science research project in the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1991 to 1995).

⁴ Research targeting Japan-China defense exchanges is extremely rare. See my article "Chugoku no nikokukan gunji koryu-tai-Nichi 'Shinshiko' gaiko no shikinseki (China's Bilateral Military Exchanges-A Test Case of 'New Thinking' Diplomacy Versus Japan)," *Toa* (East Asia), No.437, November 2003. Elsewhere, there is a fair amount of research targeting US-China military exchanges; for reference see the following: David M. Finkelstein and John Unangst, *Engaging DoD: Chinese Perspectives on Military Relations with the United States*, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses Corporation, October 1999; Junichi Abe, "Gunji koryu kara mita Bei-Chu kankei (US-China Relations as Viewed from Military Exchanges)," *Bei-Chu kankei to Nihon* (US-China Relations and Japan), The Japan Institute of International Affairs, 2002; Thomas Christensen, "PRC Security Relations with the United States: Why Things Are Going So Well," *China Leadership Monitor*, Issue 8, Fall 2003, <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20034/tc.html>, accessed June 20, 2005; Jing-dong Yuan, "Sino-US Military Relations Since Tiananmen: Restoration, Progress, and Pitfalls," *Parameters*, Spring 2003, p. 64, <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/03spring/yuan.pdf>, accessed June 20, 2005; and Kevin Pollpeter, "US-China Security Management: Assessing the Military-to-Military Relationship," Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2004. For the latest research results on China-Russia (-Soviet) military exchanges, see the following: Ming-yen Tsai, *From Adversaries to Partners?: Chinese and Russian Military Cooperation after the Cold War*, Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003.

⁵ Ken Jinbo "Nichi-Bei-Chu no Ajia-Taiheiyo takokukan anzen hoshu kyoryoku—kyocho to tairitsu, soi no kozu (Japan-US-China Asia-Pacific Multilateral Security Cooperation—The Structure of Harmony and Confrontation/Divergence)," *Shinboei ronshu*, Vol.25, No.3, December 1997. Akio Takahara, "Chugoku no shin anzenhoshu kan to chiiki seisaku—1990-nendai kohan iko no shintenkai (China's New Security Concept and Regional Policy—New Developments Since the Late 1990s)," in Akio Igarashi, Hiroshi Sasaki, and Akio Takahara, eds., *Higashi Ajia anzenhoshu no shintenkai (New Developments in East Asian Security)*, Akashi Shoten Co., Ltd., 2005.

⁶ Wu Ming-Chieh, "Chungkung jenmin chiehfangchun 1989-1996-nien tuiwai chiaoliu ch'ing'uang yenche (Analysis of the Chinese Communist People's Liberation Army 1989-1996 Foreign Exchange Situation)", Master's thesis at National Sun Yat-Sen University Center for Policy Studies, Kaohsiung, June 1997. Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, Report No. 32, Washington DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1999. Wu Chien-te, "Chungkung t'uitung chunshih waichiao chanlueh chih yenchiu (Research into Military Diplomatic Strategy Promoted by the Chinese Communists)" *Chungkung yenchiu*, Vol. 34, No. 3, March 2003. Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., *Chungkuo chunli chipen paokao* (Basic Report on China's Military Strength), Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, Taipei, 2004.

exchanges, it does not use the categorization approach of this paper. Of these papers, the only one that attempts to extract the characteristics of China's military diplomacy through a non-comprehensive classification of countries targeted for military diplomacy by type is the research by the Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs.

In this paper, I take the approach of building on earlier research to inductively summarize and categorize the reality of military diplomacy actually practiced by China in the post-Cold War period, and to clarify China's strategy for military diplomacy. Naturally, China has never revealed whether it has a target country classification list in regard to its military diplomacy, and this paper may end up being nothing more than an attempt at a deep reading of China's behavior. We have a tendency to ascribe more strategic intent to foreign countries than is actually there, and being overly enthusiastic at categorization may not be very productive. Moreover, we unavoidably run up against such problems as deciding which category a country should be placed in, or whether it should actually fall into multiple categories, or whether the categories themselves can even be fixed. In this paper, I have used the categorization approach simply as a tool for assessing China's strategic intentions, and attempted to sketch out a general picture of China's military diplomacy.

I. China's Foreign Strategy and Military Diplomacy

A. Definition of Military Diplomacy

Military exchanges normally refer to the activities of national defense organizations engaging in various forms of exchanges with the defense organizations of various foreign countries. While it originally meant exchanges and cooperation with allied or friendly countries, in the post-Cold War period in particular it has often come to refer to exchanges with armed forces of non-allied countries.⁷ In China, however, the concept of "military diplomacy" is used, and the above military exchanges are viewed as a narrow definition of military diplomacy, or in other words, as nothing more than "foreign affairs work performed by defense institutions and armed forces" or as an extension of military diplomacy activities. In addition, the broad definition of military diplomacy is defined as "all diplomatic activities relating to national security and military diplomatic activities," thereby differentiating it from "political diplomacy" (or regular diplomacy) conducted by civilian politicians or diplomatic officials and other civilian officials (other than soldiers and military officials).⁸

In form, military diplomacy and political diplomacy do not look all that different, consisting mostly of such things as visits, meetings, discussions, negotiations, receptions, press conferences, diplomatic protocol, participation in international conferences, treaty signings, and exchanges of diplomatic documents. In the case of military diplomacy, however, the content is mainly military in nature, soldiers are participating, the military coloration is strong,

⁷ Yuichiro Nagao, Kyoichi Tachikawa, and Katsuya Tsukamoto, "Reisen shuketsugo no gunji koryu ni kansuru kenkyu (Military Contacts after the the Cold War)," *Boei Kenkyusho Kiyo* (NIDS Security Studies), Vol. 4, No. 3, February 2002, p. 1.

⁸ Yang Songhe, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 5.

military strength is used to demonstrate national power, and it characteristically evinces more dignity, more formality, and more solemnity.⁹

B. Military Diplomacy Within Diplomatic Strategy

China promotes military diplomacy with other countries to guide its general diplomacy strategy, to win benefits for national security, and to ensure that the international situation develops in directions beneficial to China. In other words, military diplomacy should probably not be viewed as ordinary diplomatic activity in the political or economic sphere, but as diplomacy having strategic and military significance.

What does China's foreign strategy consist of? In discussion about the international situation and external work in the course of a political report presented to the Sixteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in November 2002, General Secretary Jiang Zemin stated that "[w]e will oppose hegemonism and power politics" in an apparent reference to the United States, "[we] will continue to improve and develop relations with the developed countries...(omitted section) [and] we will broaden the converging points of common interests and properly settle differences on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, notwithstanding the differences in social system and ideology," and "will continue to enhance our solidarity and cooperation with other third world countries." He also emphasized friendly relations and regional cooperation.¹⁰

According to one Chinese researcher on strategic issues, diplomatic strategy in China today means "to improve the state's comprehensive national power, to increase China's influence as a great power, and to create an international environment beneficial to the great revival of the Chinese nation in the 21st century."¹¹ China's self-image is that "even if we are a great power, we are still not a strong country."¹² Since China is not a strong power, it certainly cannot put itself in an exposed position, but should instead "conceal our capacities to gain some time, and do whatever we have to do. (*Taoguang Yanghui*)"¹³ For China to escape from being just a big country to become a strong country, continuing economic growth over a long period of time is more important than anything else, and an essential condition for that is a stable, peaceful

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jiang Zemin, "Quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui, kaichuang Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi shiye xinjumian—zai Zhongguo gongchandang di-shiliuci quanguo daibiao dahui shangdi baogao" (Build a Well-off Society in an All-round Way and Create a New Situation in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics—Report Given During the Sixteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China)" (November 8, 2002), *Zhongguo gongchandang di-shiliuci quanguo daibiao dahui wenjian huibian* (Documents of the Sixteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China), Renmin chubanshe, Beijing, 2002, pp. 46-47.

¹¹ Li Wuyi, et al, *Daguo guanxi yu weilai Zhongguo* (Great Power Relationships for the Future of China), Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, Beijing, 2002, p. 458.

¹² Chen Li, et al, eds., *Zhongguo guojia zhanlue wenti baogao* (Report on the Issues of China's National Strategy), Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, Beijing, 2002, p. 351.

¹³ Jiang Xiyuan, *Daguo zhanlue yu weilai Zhongguo* (Great Power Strategies for the Future of China), Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, Beijing, 2003, p. 340.

international environment. Specific measures China could take fall under the following three areas.¹⁴

First, seek to induce political and diplomatic divisions between the nations of the West and restrain the United States. For China, it goes without saying that the most important bilateral relationship is the relationship with the United States. The country that is the biggest factor in promoting China's development is the United States, while at the same time the country that is the biggest impediment to China's development, as can be seen from the Taiwan issue, is again the United States. As a result, China needs to avoid confrontations with the United States, and to promote a cooperative relationship in order to obtain the maximum possible benefit. Meanwhile, China also has to exert efforts to build friendly relations with neighbors so as to break up any "anti-China coalition" that the United States may be planning. In addition, while the United States is attempting to strengthen its alliance relationships with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Japan, contradictions between the United States, Europe, and Japan are actually spreading. China must avoid letting relations deteriorate with major powers other than the United States, and should instead try to improve relations still more with these other powers, in order to isolate the United States from these other powers.

Second, use membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) to respond to economic globalization. WTO membership has been a huge shock to China's domestic economy, and there is a good possibility that sectors that are weak in international competitiveness such as agriculture, the automobile industry, and services could be overwhelmed by foreign industry. While the downfall of weak industries can be viewed as the market mechanism at work, such a result can lead to increased unemployment and other social costs. Despite this risk, however, the country must open up even wider and actively participate in international competition. China also needs to boost the competitiveness of its companies, and strengthen its financial risk management to avoid falling into the same rut that has plagued the countries of Southeast Asia.

Third, create a multilateral security cooperation mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region to put a check on the US alliance network in the security sphere. As possible frameworks for multilateral security cooperation, China puts emphasis on such organizations and discussion forums as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), The Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and hopes to use these venues to create security environments that are of benefit to China. The SCO and ARF, in particular, are organizations where China has a strong influence and where the United States is either not involved at all or plays just a small role, giving China more leeway to assert its opinions and work to prevent the formation of anti-China alliances in the region.

Of these three areas, military diplomacy is most likely to be directly involved with the first and third areas. In other words, the main axes of operation for military diplomacy are to place

¹⁴ See Li Wuyi, et al, op. cit., pp. 469-475.

restraints on the United States in international society in view of its position as the pole with the strongest influence, and to promote great power diplomacy that strengthens China's national power, and multilateral diplomacy that centers on neighboring countries.

C. Objectives of Military Diplomacy

What kind of diplomacy is China specifically aiming for with military diplomacy? In the broader sense of military diplomacy, there are several objectives that can be considered in addition to the objective of military exchanges.¹⁵ Some traditional military exchange objectives that have been listed include: first, training and strengthening one's own military units, second, strengthening relationships with other countries (including avoidance of the making of enemies, sales of military technologies and weapons, and establishment of influence), and third, introduction of the latest military technologies.¹⁶ In general, China also has not exhibited much change from these military exchange objectives.

In addition to the above list, the fourth objective is the conveyance of China's position on security to foreign countries. For example, when China engages in military diplomacy, it uses as many opportunities as possible to extinguish the "China threat theory" among foreign countries, to state China's position in regard to the Taiwan issue, and to criticize US sales of arms that effectively constitute support for the Taiwan military.¹⁷ In these exchanges, the terminology used is consistent, with the same things said regardless of whom they are meeting, and they use division of roles to convey a strong message to visitors. Statements made by China while on exchanges normally have specific agendas, and China intentionally manipulates the discussions to achieve political objectives.

The fifth objective is to acquire information about foreign military units.¹⁸ Through military diplomacy, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) can gain understanding of other countries' actual military strengths, as well as their military systems, military strategies, military philosophies, military science and technologies, and military industries, and can learn the history, present state, and development of these countries' military modernization efforts. If there are joint benefits to be obtained with China, mutual cooperation can be promoted, and if it is a country like the United States that China is likely to target as a threat, then countermeasures can be researched and defensive preparations firmed up.¹⁹

¹⁵ This classification of China's military diplomacy relies heavily on previous research cited by Allen and McVadon, op. cit., p. 4, pp. 12-16, and Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., op. cit., pp. 156-161.

¹⁶ Nagao, Tachikawa, and Tsukamoto, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

¹⁷ Shinichi Ogawa, "Anpo taiwa, Nichi-Bei domei to Ajia-Taiheiyo shokoku (Security Dialogue, the Japan-US Alliance, and the Countries of Asia-Pacific)," *Boei Kenkyusho Kiyo* (NIDS Security Studies), Vol.1, No.1, June 1198, p. 67. According to analysis by the Taiwan Ministry of Defense, one of the objectives of China's military diplomacy also includes statements of "One China" and blocking Taiwan's weapons acquisition channels. Ministry of National Defense, *ROC 2002 National Defense Report, Republic of China*, Ministry of National Defense, Taipei, 2002, p. 45. In fact, statistically, the number of times that China has countered the "China threat theory," or mentioned the "Taiwan issue" during military exchanges has risen sharply since 1995. Wu Ming-Chieh, op. cit, p. 85.

¹⁸ Yang Songhe, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁹ Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., op. cit., p. 153.

II. Categories of Routine Military Diplomacy—Classification by Contents

A. Bilateral Routine Military Diplomacy

Mutual Exchange of Military Attachés

Here, let us examine what is specifically performed in China's military diplomacy. All countries have routine activities that they perform, and China's military diplomacy is no different. First, we shall look at the bilateral and multilateral military diplomacy programs routinely performed by China in regards to all foreign countries.

In promoting military diplomacy, one of the most basic exchanges is the mutual placement of military attachés, which surely involves mutual acceptance of bilateral relations in the military sphere. The objective for placement of military attachés is the establishment of a stable liaison route for exchanges, exchanges and discussion of military information, and preservation of routine contacts. As of 2004, China had military relations with over 150 countries, and military attachés offices in more than 100 of those countries. From the other side, 85 countries had military attaché offices in their embassies in China. Compared with 1998, the countries with military relations had increased by about 50 countries, the military attaché offices in China's embassies abroad had increased by about 10 offices, and the military attaché offices in other countries' embassies in China had increased by about 20 offices. It would appear that in just six years China had aggressively and rapidly expanded its military relations with other countries.²⁰

Responsibility for control of China's military attachés is assumed mainly by the Ministry of National Defense. As is surely well-known, the Ministry of National Defense is nothing more than a front organization in the government (part of the State Council) for the sake of appearances as the international window for the General Staff Headquarters. The Ministry of National Defense has responsibility for guidance and control of the military's external work, and for control of military attachés sent overseas and of military attachés sent by foreign countries to China, with specific administration performed by departments within the General Staff Headquarters (mainly the Foreign Affairs Office and the Intelligence Department).²¹

²⁰ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 74. *China's National Defense 1998*, p. 38

²¹ Yang Songhe, *op. cit.*, p. 246. In addition, the General Political Department unifies direction and control over external propaganda, and the Liaison Department of the General Political Department handles liaison affairs. The General Logistics Department is in charge of foreign logistics contacts (specifically what this entails is unclear). The General Armament Department is the organization that unifies direction and control over arms preparation and development, with a Foreign Affairs Department for handling external affairs. China's foreign military science and technology exchanges and cooperation activities have expanded since the launch of reforms, and foreign military trade, military assistance, military training, and military industrial cooperation are progressing. The General Armament Department is in charge of these cooperative efforts. Yang Songhe, *op. cit.*, p. 246. Since China has no weapons sales relationship with Japan, the vast majority of military exchanges with Japan are handled through the General Staff Headquarters' Foreign Affairs Office.

Mutual Visits by Military Delegations

China organizes visiting delegations consisting of currently serving high-level military representatives for frequent mutual visits with foreign military organizations, where they engage in exchanges of opinions on military issues. As Table 1 shows, in the period previous to 1998, covering somewhat more than 20 years, China sent more than 1,300 military delegations to more than 80 countries, of which high-level delegations accounted for more than 180 of those visits. From the other side, there were more than 2,100 visits to China by foreign military delegations, with the number of delegates reaching into the tens of thousands, of which more than half constituted high-level visiting delegations.²²

If we consider that most mutual high-level visits are performed over a two-year cycle, this means that China averaged less than 18 high-level visiting delegations per two-year period in the 20-plus years before 1998, while receiving an average of fewer than 105 visits by visiting delegations from foreign countries in each two-year period. In the period from 2003 to 2004, high-level military delegations from the PLA visited more than 60 countries, while more than 130 foreign military leaders from more than 70 countries visited China. The expert visiting delegations mentioned here are assumed to be part of so-called functional exchanges, which include exchanges by military services or units, and research or educational exchanges.²³

²² *China's National Defense 1998*, p. 38.

²³ Allen and McVadon, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-24.

Table 1 Visits by high-level military delegations
between China and foreign countries

Period	Visiting delegations from China to foreign countries	Visiting delegations from foreign countries to China
20-plus years before 1998	More than 1,300 military delegations visited more than 80 countries. Of these, more than 180 were high-level visiting delegations (average of fewer than 18 visits per two-year period).	More than 2,100 delegations visited China, of which more than 1,050 were high-level visiting delegations (average of fewer than 105 visits per two-year period).
1997 to 1998	More than 100 delegations visited the majority of surrounding countries.	More than 130 delegations from surrounding countries visited China.
1999 to 2000	More than 70 important delegations visited more than 60 countries. More than 150 expert visiting delegations were also sent out.	More than 160 high-level delegations visited China. More than 180 foreign military expert visiting delegations visited China.
2001 to 2002	High-level military delegations visited more than 60 countries.	High-level leaders from more than 60 countries made more than 90 visits to China.
2003 to 2004	High-level military delegations visited more than 60 countries.	More than 130 high-level visiting delegations from more than 70 countries visited China.

Note: The publishing dates for *China's National Defense* vary from one year to the next. Whereas the 2002 and 2004 editions were published in December, the earlier editions were published in July and October, respectively. As a result, some caution is required in comparing figures from one year to another.

Source: *China's National Defense 1998*, p. 38. *China's National Defense 2000*, p. 48. *China's National Defense 2002*, p. 61. *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 74.

While the descriptions of mutual visits in *China's National Defense* are extremely patchy in terms of period delimitation, criteria, and expression, so that it is difficult to discern anything more than a rough comparison, a look at Table 1 shows that high-level exchanges increased in the 2000s, with a particularly sharp jump in the number of Chinese delegations visiting foreign countries to more than six times higher than the pre-1998 average. In other words, the PLA used the boundary marking the new century as the moment to start coming out much more aggressively. Moreover, one surprising fact in looking at these routine bilateral exchanges is that this increase in China's military diplomatic relations has happened virtually everywhere, whether it be with major powers, with surrounding countries, with Africa, with Latin America, with Oceania, or even with far-flung developing countries in the farther reaches of the Third World.²⁴ This is surely a major policy shift entailing a huge organizational burden.

²⁴ Wu Chien-te, op. cit., p. 87. Since many of the countries in these regions recognize Taiwan, strengthening relations with such countries is significant for its value in the international isolation of Taiwan. Regarding the diplomatic rivalry between China and Taiwan, see my "Taiwan o meguru kokusai kankei (International Relations Surrounding Taiwan)" in Ryosei Kokubun, *Chugoku seiji to Higashi Ajia* (Chinese Politics and East Asia), Keio gijuku daigaku shuppankai, 2004, pp. 275-280.

Opening of Military Bases and Military Exercises

A common feature of all of these various types of exchanges is observation tours by China and foreign countries of each other's military units. In the past, however, while China's visiting delegations in foreign countries would observe operational units, China would usually present visiting delegations to China with scenes of so-called "showcase units" of the kind often seen in socialist countries, rather than real operational units.²⁵

In 2003 and 2004, however, there were examples of traditional military exercises being opened to observers from foreign military attaché delegations, like the exercises in advanced nations.²⁶ In August 2003, China invited military observers from 15 countries to visit China's largest combined tactical training base in Zhurihe in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to observe the "Northern Sword-0308U" exercises of the Beijing Military Area Command. This was the first large-scale military exercise China had ever opened to observation by foreign military officers. In October 2003, the PLA again invited military observers from 15 countries to the "Northern Sword-0308U" combined military exercises of the Beijing Military Area Command. In September 2004, foreign military observers were invited to watch Exercise "Dragon-2004" of the Chinese Navy, while military leaders and observers from 16 countries, as well as military attachés stationed in China, observed the "Iron Fist-2004" ground forces exercise in the Jinan Military Area Command.

Since its establishment in October 1949, China had never voluntarily shown its military strength to foreign soldiers. This growing trend since 2003 of opening up military exercises is an unprecedented situation, and what China's real intentions may be is still not clear. We may speculate that, as the PLA modernizes, perhaps China hopes to use the opening of these exercises to display its military prestige and to boost its regional and international influence.

Military Study Abroad and Military Scientific Exchanges

China is believed to be promoting military study abroad and military scientific exchanges for such reasons as introducing the military training and education methods of advanced countries, gathering foreign military and diplomatic information, or transmitting China's special experience in building a military to developing country's armed forces. At the present time, 19 military colleges and universities in China have exchange relationships with their counterparts in 25 countries, including the United States and Russia. In the past few years, China is reported to have sent more than 1,000 military exchange students to more than 20 different countries.²⁷ In January 2000, China's Minister of National Defense, Chi Haotian, visited

²⁵ Pollpeter, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁶ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 75.

²⁷ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 75. According to an official in China's Ministry of National Defense Foreign Affairs Office, more than 1,300 officers have been sent since 1996 to military academies in 20 different countries, including the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany, and these people have assumed core command roles in the PLA since their return to China. Wei Wei, "Buduan kaichuang junshi waijiao gongzuo xinjunmian—Fang guofangbu waishi biangongshi fuzeren (New Situation in Never-Ending Military Diplomacy Operations—Visiting an Official at Ministry of National Defense Foreign

Russia and signed a 15-year military cooperation agreement, and it has been reported that 800 soldiers have attended Russian military academies annually since that time,²⁸ from which we can surmise that the scale of military study abroad in Russia is much larger than in any other country.

For officer trainees in the PLA's military academies, the opportunities for study tours in foreign countries before graduation have increased. In 2004, nearly 100 officers at the division and brigade command level were sent abroad for the first time on study tours. They went in four separate groups, to Argentina and Venezuela, Switzerland and Greece, Egypt and Turkey, and Malaysia and Thailand, for a total of eight countries. In 2004, nearly 600 officer trainees from Course and Principal Course in the National Defense University Strategy, the Nanjing and Xian Political Colleges, the Air Force Command Academy Military Administration Leadership Seminar, and other places, were sent abroad for study in Australia, Egypt, France, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Turkey, Britain, the United States, and elsewhere.²⁹

Conversely, China also accepts exchange students from other countries at its military academies, in departments made especially for exchange students. During the period from about 1973 to mid-1998, nearly 10,000 officers and expert technical personnel from Third World military organizations received training in China, and more than 8,000 experts were sent to Third World countries (presumably as military consultants).³⁰ In recent years, China has placed more emphasis on these kinds of exchanges. From mid-1998 to 2000, China accepted nearly 1,000 military exchange students and trainees from countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. This project has continued,³¹ with 1,245 military personnel from a total of 91 countries receiving training at Chinese military academies in 2003 and 2004. And it would appear that the number of exchange students and trainees in China will only increase in the future.

Since 1999, China has hosted the slightly less than two-month-long International Symposium Course, attracting military officers from 44 countries as participants in 2003 and

Affairs Office)," *Jiefang junbao* (online edition) (PLA Daily), August 11, 2003, http://www.pladaily.com.cn/gb/pladaily/2003/08/11/20030811001171_TodayNews.html, accessed August 11, 2003. As can be seen here, China is vague about the target periods, and also announces different figures on differing occasions. Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether the figures are for students studying abroad each year, an aggregate number, or cumulative. In this case, I concluded from the context that it must be the cumulative total of students with experience studying abroad.

²⁸ "Zhong-E qian 15 nian junshi hezuo jishu—Xianggang *Taiyangbao* peilu neirong hanxu lianhe yanxi, ren yuan jiaoliu, qingbao jiaohuan ji junshou (China-Russia Sign 15-Year Military Cooperation Agreement—Content of Report by Hong Kong's *Taiyangbao* Includes Joint Exercises, Personnel Exchanges, Information Exchanges, and Arms Sales)," *Zhongguo ribao* (China Times), February 8, 2000. This was a report from the centrist Hong Kong newspaper *Taiyangbao* that was taken off the wire. While much of the content of the military cooperation between China and Russia was not disclosed, this report lists agreements for exchanges between the three military service academies, annual mutual visits by as many as 15 to 20 military delegations, 800 military personnel to be sent from China to study in Russia each year, joint military exercises, joint development of weapons, etc.

²⁹ Wei Wei, "2004 nian Zhongguo junshi waijiao huoyue wushi (China Military Diplomacy in 2004 Active, Pragmatic)," *Jiefang junbao* (PLA Daily), December 20, 2004. Goh Sui Noi, "PLA Sends Elite Officers to Study Abroad," *Straits Times*, January 7, 2005, <http://taiwansecurity.org/ST/2005/ST-070105.htm>, accessed July 3, 2005.

³⁰ *China's National Defense 1998*, p. 38.

³¹ *China's National Defense 2000*, p. 50. *China's National Defense 2002*, p. 62.

2004.³² While similar seminars in the Asia-Pacific region include the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) in the US state of Hawaii, and Japan's National Institute for Defense Studies, the seminar's length and scale of participation makes it comparable in size to US seminars and amply demonstrate the enthusiasm China has for this kind of activity.

China is also actively engaged in Track 2 exchanges utilizing current and retired intelligence officers. In addition to mutual visits by current intelligence officers, China has current and retired officers and strategy specialists visit foreign countries. For example, the China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CISS), believed to be under the jurisdiction of the General Staff Headquarters Intelligence Department, and the China Association for International Friendly Contact, believed to be under the jurisdiction of the Liaison Department in the General Political Department, maintain constant contacts with foreign politicians, current and retired military officers, current and retired bureaucrats, and private-sector military experts.³³

These military study abroad and military scientific exchanges can be viewed as opportunities for China to spread propaganda and to stifle criticism of China, as well as for nurturing pro-China factions within the other nations.

B. Multilateral Routine Military Diplomacy

Participation in the UN Military Staff Committee and PKOs

For multilateral military diplomacy, China first of all participates in the UN Military Staff Committee and in peacekeeping operations (PKOs). The Military Staff Committee is under the jurisdiction of the UN Security Council, and was established to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council's military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, the employment and command of forces placed at its disposal, the regulation of armaments, and possible disarmament (UN Charter, Article 47). While China first participated in the Military Staff Committee in 1972, the committee was then nothing more than symbolic, and activities were at a low key. Nevertheless, the UN activities, with the exception of support among fellow socialist nations, constituted the first multilateral military diplomatic activities for China. Near the end of 1980, China affirmed a UN PKO, and in 1986 conducted an inspection tour of a ceasefire monitoring organization for the first time.³⁴ It was probably around this time that China first became aware that UN PKOs could be of benefit in improving the country's international image.

According to *China's National Defense 2004*, China has sent military observers for ceasefire monitoring and other staff officers and personnel for a total of 13 UN peacekeeping operations since sending the first military observers to a UN PKO in 1990, reaching a total of 3,362

³² *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 76.

³³ Satoshi Amako, et al., eds., *Iwanami gendai Chugoku jiten* (Iwanami Dictionary of Contemporary China), Iwanami Shoten, 1999, p. 828. Zhongguo guoji youhao lianluohui (China International Friendship Liaison Association) pamphlet (obtained in September 2002).

³⁴ Yang Songhe, op. cit., p. 222.

troops.³⁵ The largest scale force deployed was for the Cambodia PKO in 1992, when China sent 47 military observers and an engineering unit of about 400 troops (aggregate deployment numbers reaching about 800).³⁶ Later, China sent civilian policemen and PLA soldiers to Congo (Kinshasa), Liberia, East Timor, Afghanistan, Serbia-Herzegovina, Haiti, and so forth.³⁷ In 2001, China established the UN PKO Affairs Office, and since 2002 has been participating in the UN PKO high readiness standby mechanism, with a UN-standard engineering battalion and other units kept at constant readiness.³⁸ It appears that China in the 21st century has become much more active in regards to UN PKOs.

Participation in International Arms Control and Disarmament Activities

Article 66 of the People's Republic of China Law on National Defense adopted in March 1997 stipulates that "The People's Republic of China supports the military-related activities conducted by the international community that are conducive to maintaining world and regional peace, security, and stability, and supports its efforts to impartially and rationally settle international disputes, and its efforts at arms control and disarmament." China's first published "white paper" related to defense³⁹ was also a publication announcing how much China puts the UN at the center of arms control and disarmament activities.

While certainly a phenomenon that is not limited to China alone, China appears to selectively participate in arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction regimes that are beneficial to itself. For example, China is believed to have aggressively moved ahead of the United States, Britain, and France in signing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty because it saw the signing as a way to restrict the military behavior of the United States. On the other hand, while to some extent agreeing with and supporting efforts to ban and remove land mines, China does not see this as militarily beneficial for a continental power, and it has shown no inclination to sign the Mine Ban Protocol in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCCW).⁴⁰

In regards to nuclear arms control and disarmament, China began moves to join the international nuclear disarmament framework in 1988. China for many years was not a part of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) system centering on the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union that was established in 1970. In 1988, however, China acceded to US persuasion and signed a Safeguard Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency accepting inspections of its civilian atomic energy facilities. Then, in March 1992 China joined the NPT to take up its rights and responsibilities as a nuclear weapons state. Later,

³⁵ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 73.

³⁶ Yang Songhe, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

³⁷ *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 73-74.

³⁸ *China's National Defense 2002*, pp. 60-61.

³⁹ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *Zhongguo de junbei kongzhi yu caijun* (Chinese Arms Control and Disarmament), Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Beijing, 1995.

⁴⁰ "Taijin jirai mondai ni kansuru Chugoku no tachiba (China's Position on the Anti-Personnel Mine Issue),"

Web page of the People's Republic of China Embassy in Japan,

<http://www.china-embassy.or.jp/jpn/zgbk/gfzc/t62864.htm>, accessed July 2, 2005.

China implemented one last round of nuclear bomb tests in 1995 and 1996, four tests in all, before signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996. China has not yet ratified it, however. In October 1997, China began participation in the Zangger Committee, a multilateral organization based on the NPT that has adopted a list of export control items for nuclear materials and related facilities, equipment, and materials, followed in January 2004, after preparation of the requisite domestic laws and administrative ordinances, by participation in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an organization with similar intent.

On the other hand, China has not changed its negative stance in regard to control of missile technology proliferation. In October 1994, the United States and China announced the “Joint US-China Statement on Stopping Production of Fissile Materials for Nuclear Weapons” and the “Joint US-China Statement on the Missile Proliferation Issue,” and discussed China’s entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). While China in June 1998 announced it was actively studying participation in MTCR, it has not yet actually done so, limiting itself to implementation of the “Missiles and Missile-related Items and Technologies Export Control Regulations” in August 2002, and announcement of the accompanying “Control List.”⁴¹

With these legal revisions, China has basically completed its adjustment of domestic law to bring it into conformity with international standards regarding the export of missile-related technology. However, China did not actually ban the export of missile technology to other countries, only going so far as to forbid importing countries from transferring that technology to a third country without China’s permission (Article 6 of the Regulations). In other words, China can legally continue to sell missile technology to Pakistan and Iran, and all that has happened is that those countries are banned from transferring the technology to a third country.⁴² In fact, even if China joins the international framework, the United States is merely trying to obtain enforcement of obligations. From China’s standpoint, it is natural to view with suspicion participation in an international framework that merely seeks enforcement of obligations without being rewarded with the requisite rights.⁴³

As of June 2005, China had not yet joined the Australia Group (AG), an international export controls framework for prevention of the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons-related materials. For the present, China has adjusted its domestic law in regards to

⁴¹ “Zhonghua renmin gongheguo daodan ji xiangguan wuxiang he jishu chukou guanzhi tiaoli (People’s Republic of China Missiles and Related Items and Technologies Export Control Regulations)” and “Daodan ji xiangguan wuxiang he jishu chukou guanzhi qingdan (Missiles and Related Items and Technologies Export Control List),” State Council of the People’s Republic of China, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guowuyuan gongbao* (Official Bulletin of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China), Vol. 1057, 2002 No. 28, August 10, 2002, pp. 19-25.

⁴² Yuan I, “‘Taot’an ch’uk’ou kuanchih’ Chungkung neihua kuochi kueifan—T’ung-i ch’i taot’an pute chuan-i chih tisankuo jeng chiench’ih ke chuan-i chih dierhkuo (‘Missile Export Controls’ Means PRC Internalizes International Standards—Agrees Missiles Should Not Be Transferred to Third Countries, But Firmly Insists on Ability To Transfer to Second Countries),” *Lian He Pa* (United Daily), August 27, 2002.

⁴³ See my article, “Chu-Tai kankei to kokusai anzenhosho—Yokushi, kakusanboshi, takokukan anzenhosho kyoryoku (China-Taiwan Relations and International Security—Deterrence, Nonproliferation, and Multilateral Security Cooperation),” *Kokusai seiji* (International Politics), *Nihon kokusai seiji gakkai* (The Japan Association of International Relations), No. 135, March 2004, p.66.

the issue of nonproliferation of biological and chemical weapons-related materials, and of ballistic missile technology, but continues to be wary of joining international frameworks.⁴⁴

On the other hand, there are areas in which cooperation between the United States and China has progressed since the 9-11 terrorist attacks. For example, the George W. Bush administration has been promoting the Container Security Initiative (CSI) since January 2002 to prevent terrorist use of shipping containers.⁴⁵ While China has agreed to participate in CSI, first in Hong Kong, and later in Shanghai and Shenzhen,⁴⁶ it probably did so to avoid the loss of benefits (longer customs delays) in the trade relationship with the United States that would have come with non-participation in CSI. However, China has not shown any intentions of participation in the Proliferation Security Initiatives (PSI).⁴⁷ For China, the current target of PSI is North Korea, and there is probably a calculation in that case that a US-led drive to put North Korea into a corner is not necessarily in conformity with China's best interests.

Joint Exercises Targeting Non-Traditional Threats

While China has been selective in its participation in US-led arms control and disarmament initiatives and in the PSI, one area that China is actively promoting on its own has been joint military exercises targeting terrorism, piracy, drugs, and other non-traditional threats. Since an October 2002 joint military anti-terrorism exercise with Kyrgyzstan, China has participated in a number of bilateral and multilateral joint exercises in the name of "anti-terrorism."⁴⁸

In August 2003, China held joint anti-terrorism exercises with the SCO member countries of Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. In October of that same year, there was a sea rescue training exercise with Pakistan. In November, China held a joint seaborne anti-terrorism exercise with India. Then, in March, June, August, and October 2004, China held in rapid succession a joint maritime search-and-rescue exercise with France, a joint search-and-rescue exercise with Britain, a counter-terrorism exercise with Pakistan, and a joint maritime search-and-rescue exercise with Australia.⁴⁹ These joint exercises are occurring at an increasingly accelerated pace.

⁴⁴ For the state of China's adjustment of domestic law regarding nonproliferation of WMD and ballistic missile technology, see *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 77-83.

⁴⁵ See the US Customs and Border Protection web page, "CSI In Brief," http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/enforcement/international_activities/csi/csi_in_brief.xml, accessed November 21, 2003.

⁴⁶ US Customs and Border Protection, "Hong Kong Signs Declaration to Join US Customs Anti-Terrorist Container Security Initiative: Hong Kong to Target and Pre-Screen Cargo Destined for US," September 23, 2002, http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/press_releases/92002/09232002.xml, "China Signs Declaration of Principles With Container Security Initiative to Target and Pre-Screen Cargo Destined for US" July 29, 2003, http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/press_releases/072003/07292003.xml, accessed November 21, 2003.

⁴⁷ To prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missiles, and related materials threatening the peace and stability of international society, this is an effort by participating countries to study and implement measures for prevention of transfer and transport, including by sea. Ministry of Foreign Affairs web page, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/fukaku_j/psi/psi.html, accessed June 30, 2005.

⁴⁸ "Zhongguo jundui yu waijun juxing lianhe junyan sousuo (Chinese Forces and Foreign Forces Perform Joint Search Exercises)," *Zhongguo qingnianbao*, August 7, 2004.

⁴⁹ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 98.

One objective for China for engaging in joint anti-terrorism exercises with foreign countries is to improve the standard of anti-terror cooperation, particularly with the countries of Central Asia, in order to strike against the so-called “three evil forces” (terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism), and to stabilize the situation in the border areas within China.⁵⁰ Moreover, while traditional joint military exercises often envision a specific hypothetical enemy, responses to non-traditional threats are not likely to raise concerns by third party countries, and military cooperation can proceed openly with advanced nations.

III. Military Diplomacy Category—Classification by Function

A. Arms Import and Technology Acquisition Types

Next, I will examine China’s military diplomacy activities by function. This is a classification from the perspective of how much something can contribute to modernization of China’s armed forces, how well China can contribute to modernization of other countries’ armed forces, and how much these actions can boost China’s influence.

The first area that needs focusing on is the arms import and technology acquisition type of military diplomacy. This sort of “exchange” is the responsibility of the General Logistics Department, and it is believed that trading companies operating under the jurisdiction of the PLA are in fact engaged in back-door activities. Besides Russia, countries now exporting “non-lethal weapons” to China include Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and other members of the European Union (EU), as well as countries like Ukraine.⁵¹ In particular, China has in recent years developed military relations with a total of 13 countries, beginning with Russia, and Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense indicates that these exchanges are directed by the General Staff Headquarters and the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND).⁵² Technology acquired from Russia has mainly been in the area of nuclear weapons and conventional arms-related technology, while technology acquired from Israel has mainly been for the manufacture of advanced weapons supplied from the United States.⁵³

In past years, China’s armaments industry was plagued by numerous control and technology problems, such as in the 1980s, when China completely failed to develop a new, satisfactory jet fighter for fighting in a modern war.⁵⁴ China has attempted to compensate for this deficiency by acquiring technology from abroad, with such acquisitions taking the form of official government cooperation routes, acquisition of dual-use military-civilian technologies,

⁵⁰ Li Gang, ed., and Liu Huaqin, asst. ed., *Shanghai hezuo zuzhi—Jiasu tuijin de quyue jingji hezuo* (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization-Acceleration and Promotion of Regional Economic Cooperation), *Zhongguo haiguan chubanshe*, Beijing, 2004, pp. 32-34.

⁵¹ Tsai, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

⁵² Ministry of National Defense, ROC, 2002 National Defense Report, Republic of China, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

⁵³ Emi Mifune, “Chuto to no renkei o kyoka suru Chugoku—Bei-Chu kankei ni ataeru eikyo o chushin ni (China Strengthens Its Links with Middle East—Centering on the Effects on US-China Relationship),” *Mondai to kenkyu* (Issues and Studies), Vol.33, No.12, September 2004, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Tsai, op. cit., p. 155.

and unofficial routes.⁵⁵ An example of an official contract with Russia for transfer of production technology is the Su-27 fighter, for which China is said to have plans to build 200 of its own Su-27 fighters. In 1993, China and Russia signed the Agreement of Military Cooperation for the Next Five Years, for which Russia dispatched more than 5,000 specialists to China, while 1,646 Chinese defense technicians went to Russia for training.⁵⁶ Similar kinds of technology agreements have continued to be made since that time.

However, Russia's policy on arms transfers to China has been centered on the basic principle of not harming Russian security, and as a result Russia will not sell its most sophisticated weaponry to China, demonstrating that there is a self-imposed limit to the two countries' cooperation.⁵⁷ China often directly invites engineers to China for technology transfers and guidance. In the 1990s, for example, China is said to have brought an entire cruise missile development group from Russia to Shanghai. There are believed to be 1,000 to 3,000 Russian engineers and scientists who have been brought to China on head-hunting contracts to date. China has utilized the deteriorating economic conditions in Russia to skillfully play on the emotional states of Russian engineers and scientists.⁵⁸ While there may be some argument as to whether head-hunting should be considered an aspect of military diplomacy, it is certainly true that expanded contacts due to military exchanges have made possible a brain drain from Russia to China.

The PLA also frequently engages in military science and technology exchanges. The PLA Academy of Military Science and other Chinese research institutions engage in a wide range of academic exchanges with foreign militaries. As of 2002, China had already engaged in as many as 100 expert technical group exchanges with dozens of different countries.⁵⁹

In addition, since the 1990s China has used the dual-use civil-military integration (CMI) approach to engage in international technology cooperation with other countries in such areas as microelectronics, space technology, new materials, propulsion systems, missiles, computers, and information technology. China's national defense industries use the CMI model to acquire new technologies mainly from advanced nations. The results in the shipbuilding and aerospace industrial sectors (including missiles and satellites) have been particularly striking.⁶⁰

B. Arms Export and Technology Cooperation Type

China also uses a type of military diplomacy that centers on arms exports and technology assistance to other countries. In the past, this was aligned with China's "revolutionary diplomacy" policy, which I will discuss more fully later, and involved assistance in the form of weaponry provided free to socialist nations and developing countries, or other various

⁵⁵ Tsai, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁵⁶ Tsai, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁵⁷ Tsai, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁵⁸ Tsai, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-168.

⁵⁹ *China's National Defense 2002*, p. 61. *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 75.

⁶⁰ Richard A. Bitzinger, "Civil-Military Integration and Chinese Military Modernization," *Asia-Pacific Security Studies*, 3:9, December 2004, pp. 1-4, <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/APSSS/Civil-Military%20Integration.pdf>, accessed February 3, 2005.

forms of arms exports, and has been implemented since the very beginning of the revolution and liberation.⁶¹ China became famous as an arms-exporting nation in 1987 when it was criticized by the United States for its sale of Silkworm missiles to Iran (China called the report a “baseless rumor”).⁶² Later, China’s arms exports and technology cooperation mainly targeted such countries as Thailand, Myanmar, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq (pre-Iraq War), Syria, and Sudan.⁶³ In particular, China is suspected of having transferred ballistic missile-related technology to Pakistan, North Korea, and Syria.

While the export of armament materials is usually for the objective of establishing friendly relations and securing foreign currency, in addition to the economic benefits for China and reduction of arms manufacturing costs through use of mass production, there is also a political objective. For example, sales of arms naturally lead to a long-term cooperative relationship between the two countries involved and helps to establish the selling country’s influence within the acquiring country. Taiwanese China specialist Shen Ming-Shih asserts that political objectives for China’s arms exports include maintenance of strategic balance (the military balance between India and Pakistan), and expansion of regional political influence (resisting Vietnam’s threat to Thailand).⁶⁴ However, China is careful to address the concerns of nearby countries, stating that its arms exports to other countries are conducted under the principle of doing no harm to regional stability.⁶⁵

In the 1990s, however, sanctions against arms exports to the Middle East were implemented, and China lost a large-scale arms market. Nevertheless, the major markets today for Chinese-made weapons are Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, and China engages in moderately priced weapons and equipment exports and technology cooperation with more than 20 countries in these regions.⁶⁶ The relationship with Pakistan is particularly close, even to the point of joint production of arms. China apparently uses its arms exports and technology cooperation to block countries as much as possible from entering into military cooperation relationships with the United States and other Western countries, and to maintain its own influence.

C. Military Assistance Type

The third type of military diplomacy is military assistance to other countries. In past years, countries receiving military assistance from China have traditionally been surrounding

⁶¹ Shen Ming-Shih, “Zhonggong junshou de zhengjing yihan (Political and Economic Implications of Chinese Communist Arms Sales),” *Gong dang wen ti yan jiu* (Studies on Chinese Communism), Vol. 21, No. 11, November 15, 1995, p. 31.

⁶² Yang Songhe, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

⁶³ Shen Ming-Shih, op. cit., pp. 33-35.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁵ In July 1991, the Chinese government announced that its arms exports are governed by the following three principles: 1) Arms exports are to improve a country’s self-defense capability; 2) Exports should not undermine regional balance; and 3) Arms exports should not lead to interference in other country’s internal affairs. Yang Songhe, op. cit., p. 154.

⁶⁶ Ministry of National Defense, ROC, *2004 National Defense Report, Republic of China*, Ministry of National Defense, Taipei, 2004, p. 37.

socialist countries based on China's so-called ideological "internationalism," and mainly included North Korea (1951 to 1958), North Vietnam (1950 to 1976), Laos (1960 to 1977), and Albania (1961 to 1978).⁶⁷

China's military assistance in the 1960s and 1970s mainly targeted about 60 less-developed countries, with most of this being in the form of grant aid. Assistance consisted of the dispatch of military experts and military advisors, training for officers, political operatives, and technicians, supply of weapons, equipment, material, and rear-area logistical support, and medical and sanitary support.⁶⁸ Since 1973, China has offered training and education to nearly 10,000 officers and expert technicians of all grades from the armed forces of developing countries, and has sent over 8,000 experts to developing countries.⁶⁹

Entering the period of reform and openness, China made adjustments to its foreign policies, reviewing its funding for foreign military assistance projects and weapons items provided, and has adopted many different patterns of assistance in response to conditions in the recipient countries, including grants, cost recovery methods, loans, extended period loans, and barter trading, in order to continue providing arms and equipment assistance.⁷⁰ China has provided military assistance to 40 countries, including North Korea, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Somalia. China has also recently commenced arms and equipment assistance to 10 other countries, including Mauretania, Cape Verde, Thailand, and Burkina Faso. Thirty of these countries receive assistance in the form of grants, while the 20 other countries receive other types of assistance.⁷¹ Assistance appears to have increased in recent years for such nearby surrounding countries as Pakistan, Myanmar, and Cambodia.

Even with the massive amounts of economic assistance that China has received since the period of reform and openness began, in China's stance of maintaining and continuing military assistance can be seen a powerful desire on the part of the Chinese government to maintain its influence as a great power in surrounding countries.

D. Symbolic Type

The fourth type, which is defined by function, is symbolic military diplomacy. The objective of this type of military diplomacy is the promotion of friendship and propaganda for national prestige, and its activities can include mutual naval visits and arts and sports exchanges between armed forces. There have been many examples of Chinese Navy vessels paying visits to foreign countries for the purpose of improving projection of naval power into distant seas and the development of other naval capabilities.⁷² Yet visits by naval vessels to foreign

⁶⁷ Yang Songhe, *op. cit.*, pp.135-141, 241-242.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 141-142.

⁶⁹ *China's National Defense 1998*, p. 38.

⁷⁰ Yang Songhe, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp. 141-142. This book contains no mention of military assistance to Cambodia, a scene of genocide (the Pol Pot regime), or to Iran, suspected of nuclear development, despite the huge international effects of such assistance. There is a good possibility that this book covers up facts that may not reflect well on China.

⁷² Shigeo Hiramatsu, *Yomigaeru Chugoku kaigun* (The Reborn Chinese Navy), Keisoshobo, Tokyo, 1991, pp. 162-166.

countries are also highly symbolic exchanges because of their newsworthiness. Without friendly bilateral relations, there could be no mutual exchange of naval visits. The diplomatic objective of mutual naval visits is to deepen understanding and build a good impression among the people of the host country for the visiting nation, and accumulate diplomatic resources for the state.⁷³

In November 1985, the Chinese Navy made its first fleet visit to three countries in South Asia (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh).⁷⁴ It was right around this time that China was switching its naval strategy to an “offshore defense,” and the fleet visit to foreign countries attracted a lot of attention. In the 1990s, Chinese Navy vessels visited nearly 20 different countries, of which two visits by fleets during March to May 1997 were particularly noteworthy, with one fleet making good-will visits to the United States, Mexico, Chile, and Peru, and the other visiting Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia.⁷⁵ In the years 1998 to 2000, the fleet further widened its radius of activity, visiting New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Tanzania, and South Africa.⁷⁶ Finally, from May to September 2002, Chinese Navy vessels actually circumnavigated the globe, visiting 10 countries along the way.⁷⁷ From October to November 2003, the Chinese Navy paid friendly visits to the US territory of Guam, and to Brunei and Singapore.⁷⁸

On the other side, an incomplete list of naval visits to China since 1999 as found in *China's National Defense* includes naval vessels from Ireland, Italy, Britain, Russia, Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Belgium, Canada, Spain, Chile, Turkey, the United States, Pakistan, Mexico, India, France, Indonesia, and South Korea⁷⁹. Of these, the French Navy has visited China most often since 1990.⁸⁰

As will be discussed later, China continues to put off a mutual exchange of naval visits with Japan. Since mutual naval visits are highly symbolic exchanges that represent good bilateral relations, what this means is that China's military diplomacy in regards to Japan is not progressing well.

IV. Category of Military Diplomacy—Classification by Geopolitical Strategy

Next, I would like to clarify China's geopolitical strategy using a classification of the characteristics of military diplomacy for each target country. This is a categorization of China's military diplomacy, and it basically means classifying other countries into “enemy, allied, and neutral forces,” which can be considered an extension of the concept of united front operations divided into struggle, cooperation, and coopting. From the point of view of

⁷³ Wu Ming-Chieh, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷⁴ Yang Songhe, op. cit., p.84.

⁷⁵ *China's National Defense 1998*, p. 39.

⁷⁶ *China's National Defense 2000*, p. 49.

⁷⁷ *China's National Defense 2002*, p. 61.

⁷⁸ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 75.

⁷⁹ *China's National Defense 2000*, pp. 49-50. *China's National Defense 2002*, pp. 80, 82, 86. *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 75, 88.

⁸⁰ As of May 2004, there have been seven such visits. “Zhong-Fa junshi wajiao huoyue (China-France Naval Diplomacy Becomes Active),” *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), May 18, 2004.

the Chinese Communist Party and China, the united front is a strategy and tactic to strengthen allies and gather in friendly (neutral forces) over a wide range in order to isolate and destroy the main enemy.⁸¹ An example of the application of the united front concept to foreign relations is the “Theory of the Three Worlds” advanced in the 1970s for the purpose of building up a united front against the Soviet Union, in which the United States and the Soviet Union were classified in the first world, the advanced nations in the second world, and developing nations in the third world.⁸² China has now switched to an omnidirectional foreign policy, and no longer bothers to publically identify which country belongs to which “world.” Nevertheless, a look at China’s behavior toward other countries shows that this kind of classification continues to overshadow its diplomatic methods. An after-the-fact re-examination of China’s military diplomacy from the perspective of geopolitical strategy can generally be divided into six categories, with Russia and the United States at the two poles, as shown below.

A. Strategic Partnership Type

After the Cold War ended, China entered into partnerships with major countries and regional organizations. Of these, the closest and strongest strategic partnership has been with Russia, which shares with China a multipolar worldview and a common interest in restraining the United States. A characteristic of the military diplomacy for both China and Russia has been the development of close and multi-dimensional exchange methods since the end of the Sino-Soviet confrontation in 1989.

These two countries, which at one time were on the brink of war, first engaged in confidence building measures (CBMs). For China, its national borders on the north and northwest (the old Soviet border regions) are important. From 1990 to 1993, China unilaterally reduced its troop numbers along the border, which had been a heavy burden, and Russia in response reduced its own troop levels along its Chinese border areas.⁸³ Later, as shown in Table 2, the two countries moved away from propagandistic measures to more effective transparent measures, exchange measures, and limiting measures, to bolster their confidence building standard.

⁸¹ Amako, et al., eds., *Iwanami gendai Chugoku jiten* (Iwanami Morden China Dictionary), p. 927.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 1188.

⁸³ Tsai, *op. cit.*, p. 88-89.

Table 2 Major confidence building measures between China and Russia

Date	Major content
1990-	China and Russia reduce troop levels near borders
1992.12 1993.9	Joint statements of non-use of force and non-aggression
1993.11	Establishment of direct hot-line between the commanders of China's Shenyang Military District and Russia Far East Military District
1994.7	Agreement on the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities, as a "tension-reduction" measure
1994.9	Declaration of non-first use and non-targeting of nuclear weapons against each other
1995.8	Agreement on Military Cooperation in Border Areas strengthens exchanges between military units stationed in border areas
1996.4	Declaration to Build a Strategic Cooperation Partnership Based on Agreement on Military Confidence-Building in Border Areas (Shanghai Agreement), China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan strengthen cooperation and exchanges among military units stationed in border areas Establishment of hot-line between heads of state of China and Russia
1997.4	Based on Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan place limits on troop levels in border areas

Note: The details of these China-Russia CBMs were not officially disclosed, which makes it difficult to verify how effective they actually were.

Source: Ming-yen Tsai, *From Adversaries to Partners?: Chinese and Russian Military Cooperation after the Cold War*, Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2003, pp. 88-90, p. 93.

In July 2001, the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation between China and Russia was signed, further strengthening the strategic direction of their bilateral cooperation. Moreover, at a China-Russia summit meeting held in October 2004, an agreement regarding all remaining issues along the China-Russia border was signed, and the border demarcation problem was completely resolved. From 1997 to 2004, the two countries' respective General Staff headquarters (chief of staff level) met eight times for strategic consultations, discussing international and regional issues of mutual interest.⁸⁴ This development of relations between the two countries has further stabilized the political foundations for China-Russia military exchanges. China and Russia are deepening their strategic relationship over a wide range, including mutual visits by heads of state, mutual visits by high-level military leaders, mutual naval visits, disarmament in the border areas, confidence-building measures, arms sales, and technology transfers.

During a visit to Russia in June and July 2005, President Hu Jintao and Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the China-Russia Joint Statement on the 21st century world order, followed in August by performance of the first traditional-style Sino-Russian joint military

⁸⁴ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 67.

exercises and announcement of an agreement for establishment of a new security cooperation mechanism.⁸⁵ Where the SCO framework had previously mainly been used for multilateral anti-terror exercises, these latest exercises were conventional military exercises designed to resist a shared military threat, and meant that China and Russia had moved one step closer to a quasi-alliance relationship.

In addition, the arms trade relationship between the two countries is also extremely close. At the present time, China is Russia's largest market, and Russia is also China's largest weapons customer. The arms trade between China and Russia helps to promote modernization of China's military equipment, and also helps Russia to secure foreign exchange and maintain its defense industries. At the same time, Russia can use sales of naval and air armaments to China as a way to restrain US forces deployed in the Asia-Pacific region. Russia can also monitor its sales of arms to China to ascertain exactly how far China's military modernization has progressed, and with a nuclear shield for back-up, it has apparently concluded that much time will be required before China can become a serious threat to Russia.

Table 3 Arms sold by Russia to China in the 1990s

Name	Number
Sovremenny-class Destroyers	4
SS-N-22ShiShM (Sunburn ship-to-ship missile)	32 missiles (2 systems)
IL-28 Beagle bomber	1
IL-76MD Transport Aircraft	7
Ka-27 Multi-Purpose Helicopters	12
S-300 (SA-10) SAM	4 launchers (100 missiles)
Su-27SK Fighters	50 (licensed production, 200)
Kilo/type submarines	4
T-80U Main Battle Tanks	200
A-50 AE&W Aircraft	Unknown
Tor-M1 SAM System	15
Su-30MKK Fighters	40

Source: Same as Table 2 (p. 127).

Armaments that China obtained from Russia during the 1990s are shown in Table 3. This list is largely dominated by naval and air weapons systems that can threaten the US presence in the Asia-Pacific region. According to media reports, China obtained 5 billion US dollars worth of arms from Russia from 2002 to 2004. Based on the weapons list provided by China, it is clear that future arms sales to China will provide Russia with 10 billion US dollars in income.⁸⁶ With such large-scale arms sales taking place between the two countries of China and Russia, exchanges between their armed forces will also naturally be quite close.

⁸⁵ "Zhonghe lianhe gongbao (Sino-Russian Joint Communiqué)," *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), July 4, 2005.

⁸⁶ "Junhuo jiaoyi lianhe junyan Chongge jiaqiang junshi guanxi (Arms Trade and Joint Military Exercises Strengthen China-Russia Military Relationship)," *Zhongguo shibao* (China Times), December 17, 2004.

B. Strategic Placement Type

Next, what is important for China is military diplomacy that can ensure the use of strategic overseas strongholds. This is not merely for good-neighborly relations with surrounding countries, but is specifically aimed at surrounding countries where China wants to promote military diplomacy for strategic reasons, and in recent years has even included countries that are geographically distant from China. Some classic examples of countries that China has begun to emphasize for having strategic overseas strongholds include Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

China and Pakistan have traditionally had an extremely close military relationship, with arms sales and military assistance being frequent occurrences. In addition, China and Pakistan hold defense and security consultations at regular intervals. However, the most distinctive change in recent years has been China's approach to military administrations that become isolated from mounting international criticism, giving China an opportunity to establish a string of overseas military strongholds near searoutes that are important to China. For example, there have been media reports of China developing a long-term military assistance relationship with Myanmar, and building a naval base there,⁸⁷ and of the establishment of a communications listening post at Gwadar, a fishing port in the southwest corner of Pakistan near the border with Iran, to monitor ships navigating back and forth across the Arabian Sea.⁸⁸ In Bangladesh, China is reported to be rebuilding the port of Chittagong, a base that faces on the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, into a naval port as "one part of cooperation against piracy and terrorism."⁸⁹

In addition, China and Cambodia signed a military cooperation agreement in 2004, while in May 2005 there was a report that China was considering stationing PLA troops in Kyrgyzstan⁹⁰. If this stationing of units is realized, military diplomacy with Kyrgyzstan will certainly need to be classified under this category.⁹¹

China has previously been in the camp opposing alliances and the stationing of foreign armed forces as a "vestige of the Cold War." Entering the 2000s, however, China's

⁸⁷ Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., op. cit., pp. 159-160.

⁸⁸ Sudha Ramachandran, "China's Pearl in Pakistan's Waters," *Asia Times Online*, March 4, 2005, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/GC04Df06.html, accessed July 3, 2005.

⁸⁹ "Bangladesh Plays the China Card," *The Acorn*, September 20, 2004, <http://opinion.paifamily.com/?p=912>, accessed July 3, 2005. "PLA to Upgrade Bangladesh Port Facility," *NEWS Insight*, 3 July, 2005, <http://www.indiareacts.com/nati2.asp?recno=2969>, accessed July 3, 2005.

⁹⁰ "Chuchun Chierhchissu? Chungkung: Jenchen ssuk'ao (Bases in Kyrgyzstan? Chinese Communists: Seriously Considering It)," *Lian He Pao* (United Daily), May 31, 2005.

⁹¹ Another case of a Chinese overseas military stronghold was Kiribati. China had signed a Satellite Tracking Base Agreement with Kiribati in 1997, and was operating a satellite tracking station there. In November 2003, however, China cut off diplomatic relations with Kiribati when that country formed diplomatic relations with Taiwan authorities. In addition to its satellite tracking duties, this tracking station was also believed to have been used by China to gather information about missile defense system tests being performed by the United States in the Marshall Islands. When China cut diplomatic relations with Kiribati, it lost a valuable military base in the Pacific region. "Chugoku uchu kaihatsu keikaku ni anun—Taiwan to gaiko kankei juritsu no Kiribas, eisei kichi no tekkyo yokyu (Dark Clouds Over China's Space Development Plans—Kiribati Establishes Diplomatic Relations with Taiwan, Demands Withdrawal of Satellite Base)," *Mainichi shinbun*, November 13, 2003.

anti-alliance rhetoric has toned down.⁹² While the likelihood of China signing treaties of alliance or entering into defense cooperation treaties remains low, as China itself promotes military cooperation with strategically important countries it will certainly move toward further establishment of various military bases overseas.

C. Coopting Surrounding Countries

Thirdly, what is important for China is military diplomacy that aims for building good-neighborly, friendly relations with surrounding countries that are absolutely essential for the formation of an international environment that is beneficial to China. The country has a land border that stretches for 22,000 kilometers, and a continental coastline of 18,000 kilometers. The surrounding countries adjoining its land border include North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, while neighboring countries across the sea include Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, and Malaysia.⁹³ China uses a coopting surrounding countries type of military diplomacy that is targeted mostly at these countries and the next tier of surrounding countries in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Northeast Asia. Of these countries, Russia, India, Japan, Pakistan, Myanmar, and North Korea, while targeted by the coopting surrounding countries type of military diplomacy, also fall under other categories.

While China is often called “the power with the most neighboring countries in the world,” it either has been or still is today involved in territorial disputes, resource development competition, or historical awareness issues regarding past wars with many of these surrounding countries. Moreover, South Korea, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, and others are US allies. There are people who argue that the US insertion of large armed forces into Central Asia in the name of anti-terrorism after the 9-11 attacks set off alarm bells in China that it was coming under complete encirclement⁹⁴. Stabilization of the surrounding region is still a very important issue for China right now.

Multilateral Approach

The coopting surrounding countries type of military diplomacy involves cooperation divided into bilateral and multilateral approaches, and the multilateral approach holds much the greater weight. Since Southeast Asia and Central Asia are basically groupings of “small

⁹² Masayuki Masuda, “Chugoku gaiko to kokusai shisutemu—NATO to no ‘senryaku taiwa’ teiki no ronri to kodo (Chinese Foreign Policy in the Post-9/11 World),” *Boei Kenkyusho Kiyo* (NIDS Security Studies), Vol.7, No.2/3, March 2005, pp. 79-80.

⁹³ In addition to this list, Sikkim, which has merged with India, is often counted by China as a neighboring country. Tang Xizhong, “Yi, Makesi zhuyi de guoji guanxi lilun he Zhongguo waijiao de jiben yuanze (1. Marxist International Relations Theory and Basic Principles of Chinese Diplomacy),” Tang Xizhong, Liu Shaohua, and Chen Benhong, “Zhongguo yu zhoubian guojia guanxi (1949-2002) (China’s Relations with Surrounding States (1949-2002)),” *Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan*, Beijing, 2003, pp. 13-14.

⁹⁴ Liu Shaohua, “Si, Guojia anquan liyi he Zhongguo yu zhoubian guojia guanxi (4. Benefits to National Security and China’s Relations with Surrounding States),” Tang Xizhong, Liu Shaohua, and Chen Benhong, op. cit., p. 87.

countries” in which the influence of any single country is relatively small, these areas create groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the SCO to boost their international political voice and give themselves influence with the great powers. This has been called the Gulliver approach.⁹⁵ China has already in recent years developed a security dialogue mechanism with surrounding countries.

First, for the Southeast Asian countries, China at first showed a negative response to multilateral security cooperation.⁹⁶ China with its “horizontal link”⁹⁷ tradition is believed to prefer bilateral diplomacy with small countries. In particular, in the relationship with Southeast Asian countries involving a sovereignty dispute over the Spratly Islands, China initially promoted one-on-one dialog. Apparently, China believed that this method would make it easier to “divide and conquer.” But around 1992 to 1993, China began targeting ASEAN as a whole for dialogue. Security analyst Ken Jinbo has listed four reasons for this change, including: 1) a better response to the “China threat theory;” 2) a judgment that the regional security dialogue format is moderate with weak binding force and any losses can therefore be held to a minimum; 3) increased mutual economic dependence; and 4) friendly relations with ASEAN already in progress, making it difficult to reject its calls for dialogue.⁹⁸ Moreover, in the course of moving toward this multilateral diplomacy, China proposed the strongly idealistically colored New Security Concept as a theoretical background for its position.⁹⁹ China apparently realized that any further rejection of multilateralism would drive the countries of Southeast Asia into making alliances with other great powers in opposition to China, and to prevent this from happening China should instead show a friendly embrace.¹⁰⁰

Entering the 2000s, China was no longer passive, instead taking a leading role in arguing for an emphasis on regional mechanisms. China used the ARF platform to host the Conference on Confidence-Building Measures in 2003 and 2004, the ARF Workshop on Drug— Alternative Development in Kunming, Yunnan Province, in September 2004, and the first meeting of the ARF Conference on Security Policy in Beijing in November of that year.¹⁰¹ That China is actively aiming toward an East Asia community concept that excludes the United States is now well-known. China specialist Akio Takahara has listed six complex reasons why China has switched over to an emphasis on multilateralism, including: 1) advent of unipolar

⁹⁵ Takahara, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁹⁶ Jinbo, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

⁹⁷ This is a term derived from “hezong-lianheng (vertical link-horizontal link)” used by the Han-era historian Sima Qian in his *Shiji (Records of the Grand Historian)*, a description of China’s Spring and Autumn Warring States period. “Vertical link” refers to the six Eastern countries that banded together to form an alliance opposed to the great power of Qin, or in other words, a policy taken by small countries. “Horizontal link,” on the other hand, refers to the policy taken by Qin to destroy this “vertical link” by seeking treaties of alliance one at a time with each of the six countries. In the end, the “horizontal link” policy won out, and Qin destroyed the six small eastern powers one at a time using divide-and-conquer methods, leading to the establishment of a unified empire for all of China.

⁹⁸ Jinbo, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

⁹⁹ For the transition to China’s New Security Perspective, see Seiichiro Takagi, “Chugoku no ‘Shin Anzenhosho Kan’ (China’s ‘New Security Concept’),” *Boei Kenkyusho Kiyo* (NIDS Security Studies), Vol. 5, No. 2, March 2003.

¹⁰⁰ Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 159.

¹⁰¹ *China’s National Defense 2004*, p. 70.

international order centered on the United States, and fear of isolation; 2) break-up of the Soviet Union and increase in the number of adjacent countries; 3) risks of globalization as demonstrated by the Asian financial crisis and appearance of non-traditional threats; 4) confidence of a great power due to economic growth; 5) China threat theory leads to “sole winner” situation, and 6) outbreak of nuclear tensions on the Korean Peninsula.¹⁰²

Next is Central Asia, which has many similarities to Southeast Asia in its military diplomacy relationships with China can therefore be placed in the same category. Five Central Asian countries became independent as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, and China wasted no time at all in recognizing their independence, establishing ambassadorial level diplomatic relations by January of the following year. It meant that a wonderful chance had arrived for China to extend its influence into a region where five Central Asian countries had become independent due to the Soviet Union's collapse, or in other words, had previously been within the Russian sphere of influence. With the state visits to Central Asia by Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin in April 1994 and July 1996, respectively, China strengthened its bilateral relationships with the five Central Asian countries, focusing on the economic and trade relationships.¹⁰³ The five Central Asian countries were declared to be nuclear-free zones, and China, considering that confidence-building and confirming national borders with the five countries was important, settled all its boundaries by July 2000.¹⁰⁴ After the 9-11 terrorist attacks in 2001, however, the US presence in Central Asia suddenly increased, with US forces being stationed in Uzbekistan, and a base agreement being signed with Tajikistan, dealing a shock to SCO functions.¹⁰⁵

As a result, China continued its efforts to retain influence in Central Asia. China articulated a policy of “friendship with neighbors, stabilization of neighbors, and prosperity of neighbors,” and worked through the SCO to develop military diplomacy relationships with Central Asian countries. In June 2001, SCO member states signed the Shanghai Treaty on a crackdown on terrorism, separatism, and extremism, and it officially went into effect in 2003. In addition, the SCO member states launched a regional anti-terrorism agency in January 2004. In that same year the SCO member states established a mechanism for regular meetings by the security committee secretaries, and opened a permanent secretariat for the Regional Counter-Terrorism Agency in Tashkent, to strengthen security cooperation among the countries.¹⁰⁶

Bilateral Approach

Apart from the multilateral frameworks, China is also active in bilateral military diplomacy. In

¹⁰² Takahara, op. cit, pp. 193-194, 211.

¹⁰³ Liu Shaohua, “Shisan, Zhongguo yu Zhongya guojia de guanxi (13. Relationship between China and Central Asian States),” Tang Xizhong, Liu Shaohua, and Chen Benhong, op. cit., pp. 283-286.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 289-291.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp. 296-297.

¹⁰⁶ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 69. “Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi chengyuan yuanshou Tashengan Xuanyan (Tashkent Declaration by Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization),” *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), June 19, 2004.

April 2004, a defense and security consultation was held with Mongolia for the first time. China has also held one strategic consultation each with the defense ministries of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁷

Surrounding countries that China has particularly targeted for strengthening bilateral military diplomacy include South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, countries which are either US allies or otherwise have strong relationships with the United States. China has worked to strengthen its relations with South Korea, a country with which it was an enemy for many years, ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, and now believes that “peaceful co-existence, stability, and realization of peaceful reunification” are desirable for North and South Korea.¹⁰⁸ China is now working for denuclearization to ensure stability on the Korean Peninsula. To this end, China is trying to change US views of North Korea as an enemy state, and to separate the United States from its allies in Japan and South Korea so that the United States will become incapable of attacking North Korea.

However, out of consideration for its ally North Korea, China has been more cautious than elsewhere in promoting the development of a military relationship with South Korea, so that the relationship has not reached the point of regular defense and security consultations or joint training. Since 2001, South Korea has boosted the rank of officials visiting China to include the Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff Headquarters. On the other side, visits of high-level Chinese military delegations to South Korea have at last been included as destinations in the diplomatic tours by the chief of General Staff Headquarters and commanders of military regions. There are also mutual port calls by naval vessels and other activities that demonstrate a slow but sure rise in the level of Chinese military diplomacy with South Korea.¹⁰⁹

China uses sales of arms, etc., to strengthen its military relationship with Thailand, and in recent years has made high-level mutual visits, as well as annual defense and security consultations since 2002.¹¹⁰ For the Philippines, meanwhile, China held a defense and security consultation for the first time in May 2005, and signed an agreement for China to give equipment and material valued at 80 million pesos (about 160 million yen) to the Philippine armed forces.¹¹¹ The Philippines is a US ally, and China appears to have timed its embrace of the Philippines to coincide with the withdrawal of Philippine military units from Iraq and a corresponding cooling of the US-Philippine relationship, and to be using military aid as a way to boost its influence.

¹⁰⁷ *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁰⁸ Liu Shaohua, “Si, Guojia anquan liyi he Zhongguo yu zhoubian guojia guanxi (4. Benefits to National Security and China's Relations with Surrounding States),” Tang Xizhong, Liu Shaohua, and Chen Benhong, op. cit., p. 88.

¹⁰⁹ *China's National Defense 2002*, pp. 77-88. *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 86, 88, 91, 95.

¹¹⁰ *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 96-97.

¹¹¹ “Firipin ni 1-oku 6000-man en, Chugoku ga gunji shien—Hatsu no anpo kyogi (160 Million Yen to Philippines, China Gives Military Aid—First Ever Security Consultation),” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 24, 2005. Specifically what equipment and materials were provided remains unclear.

D. Coopting Advanced Countries

The fourth category of military diplomacy is the coopting advanced countries type of military diplomacy, which is being applied to the many advanced countries that are distantly separated from China and therefore do not have serious security issues with China. Among advanced countries that are not one of China's surrounding countries, and which China can reasonably expect to become a strategic partner, and which at the same time could cause major damage to China if it were to become an enemy, the classic target is France. China uses military diplomacy to develop active military contacts with such advanced countries in order to create an international environment that is beneficial to China.

Since a strategic dialogue mechanism was established between the Chinese and French military in 1997, military diplomacy with France has involved consultations seven times up to 2004.¹¹² China opposes US unipolar domination, and hopes to see military technology cooperation in the future with France, an advanced country that shares, at least in public expressions, its strategic goal of a multipolar world. With Britain, China holds regular strategic security dialogues, and has established a mechanism for security dialogue between the two sides. For the China-Germany military relationship, the second strategy consultation between the two countries' armed forces was held in July 2004.

In 2004, the top four names in the Hu Jintao administration visited Europe,¹¹³ while General Liang Guanglie, head of the General Staff Headquarters, visited France and Britain. They campaigned actively for removal of the arms embargo first slapped on China at the time of the second Tiananmen Incident in June 1989. One commentator has indicated that, if these leaders could get the arms embargo against China lifted, this would apply pressure on Russia, which currently has a virtual monopoly on the China arms market, and make it easier for China to procure advanced high-tech weaponry from Russia in the future.¹¹⁴ Since the EU has a code of conduct on arms exports regulating the export of arms to outside areas,¹¹⁵ lifting the arms embargo related to the second Tiananmen Incident will not necessarily lead to the unbridled release of exports to China, and the EU side is not expected to increase arms exports to China in either "quality or quantity."¹¹⁶

¹¹² *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 68.

¹¹³ In early May 2004, just as the EU was launching its 25-member structure, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Germany, Belgium, Italy, Britain, Ireland, and the EU headquarters. President Hu Jintao visited France early in that year, and then in June visited Poland, Hungary, and Rumania. Wu Bangguo, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, visited Bulgaria, Denmark, and Norway, while Jia Qinglin, the chairman of the People's Political Consultative Conference, visited South Korea, Australia, Spain, and Portugal, starting August 26. For details, see Chapter 4 of National Institute for Defense Studies, ed., *Higashi Ajia senryaku gaikan 2005* (East Asian Strategic Review 2005), "National Printing Bureau, 2005, pp. 94-95.

¹¹⁴ "Yu Ou meng chingcheng E ni fangk'uan tui Chungkungchun E shou (Competition from European Alliance to Force Relaxation of Russian Sales to Chinese Communist Military)," *Lian He Pao* (United Daily), May 2, 2004.

¹¹⁵ "European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports," The Council of European Union, Brussels, 5 June 1998 (OR.en).

¹¹⁶ Secretary Colin L. Powell, "US-European Union Joint Press Conference With Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard R. Bot, EU High Representative Javier Solana, and EU Commissioner Benita

Above all because of expressions of concern from both the United States and Japan, it is difficult to see the EU's lifting of the arms embargo leading to massive exports to China, especially of the most modern fighters or naval vessels. Nevertheless, it is easy to see China taking India's behavior as a model and trying to secure the introduction of military technology from France, and the importance of any improvement in relations with France would mainly lie in being able to improve on the performance of existing Russian-made weaponry.¹¹⁷ Like China, India also procured vast amounts of arms from Russia, but for modernization India turned to France to purchase secondary equipment and components that generally improved the performance and efficiency of their Russian-made platforms and equipment systems. Moreover, China may well have intentions of trying to raise its military relationship with France in the future to a level of strategic partnership that comes close to the partnership with Russia, a possibility that is worthy of attention.

Elsewhere, China as of 2004 was engaged in security dialogues under various names with Canada, Mexico, Italy, Poland, Greece, New Zealand, and others.¹¹⁸ Of these countries with medium-level military power, one relationship that deserves attention is China's military cooperation with Brazil. In September 2000, China launched its first high-resolution optical imaging satellite. This satellite was an information-gathering satellite capable of performing reconnaissance on conditions in areas surrounding China and sending photographs in real-time with high-speed transmission. According to China military specialist Richard Fisher, there was a good possibility that the satellite's high-speed image transmission technology had been provided to China by Brazil.¹¹⁹

While the states listed above include countries that have been traditional allies or friends of the United States, some of them have seen their relationships with the United States run into a rough patch due to disagreement over the use of armed force in Iraq. For China, these countries are "winnable targets," and military diplomacy targeting them can therefore be classified as the "coopting type."

China has also proposed a dialogue with NATO. China has traditionally had a strong tendency to oppose such alliances as "relics of the Cold War." In October 2002, however, Chinese Ambassador to Belgium Guan Chengyuan visited NATO Secretary General George Robertson and proposed a "strategic dialogue" between China and NATO.¹²⁰ Since that time, no progress on dialogue has been seen, and the topic has not been taken up in *China's National Defense*. Nevertheless, there remains a possibility that China will in the future be

Ferrero-Waldner," Press Center, Het Binnenhof, The Hague, Netherlands, December 10, 2004, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/39668.htm>, accessed July 14, 2005. This was a comment made during a press conference with Secretary of State Powell in the Netherlands, with the actual statement being made by Netherlands Foreign Minister Bernard Bot.

¹¹⁷ National Institute for Defense Studies, ed., op. cit., pp. 114-115.

¹¹⁸ *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 68, 96-97.

¹¹⁹ According to a report by the *Washington Times*, this satellite, called "Ziyuan 2" ("Resource 2," but for which the true code name is "ianbing 3") was in reality being used by the PLA Operations Planning Department mainly for reconnaissance of nearby regions, including US forces in Japan and military facilities in Taiwan. Bill Gertz, "Chinese 'Civilian' Satellite a Spy Tool," *Washington Times*, August 1, 2001, <http://taiwansecurity.org/News/2001/WT-080101.htm>, accessed July 3, 2002.

¹²⁰ Masuda, op. cit, p. 77.

promoting exchanges with alliance networks that center on the United States.

E. Restraining Type

The fifth type, viewed from a geopolitical perspective, is restraining type military diplomacy directed against surrounding regional powers that may become a threat to China in the future, such as Japan or India, or are constantly causing trouble, such as North Korea, and therefore creates a security environment that is not beneficial to China. For China, having the two countries of Japan and India develop close military cooperation relationships with the United States constitutes an “envelopment of China.” As a result, China’s military diplomacy for Japan or India includes an element of restraining their proximity to the United States, in an attempt to prevent formation of a “China envelopment.”

Military Diplomacy for Japan

Allen and McVadon assert that, for China, the goals of military diplomacy with Japan (the Japan side would call it defense exchanges) are: 1) gathering intelligence on both Japanese forces and US forces in Japan; 2) trying to erode JSDF support for the alliance with the United States; 3) understanding Japanese defense planning and thinking; 4) learning how another Asian nation manages its military; and 5) contributing to the important general bilateral relationship between the two most important countries in the region.¹²¹

Defense exchanges between Japan and China in the 1980s were generally led by strategic considerations on the Chinese side, and centered on high-level exchanges. Prior to the 1990s, exchanges with Japan’s Self-Defense Forces were conducted within a dialogue framework in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But while the Japanese side was responding cautiously to these overtures, changes in China’s foreign affairs policies and domestic policies, as well as events in Japan (such as the official visit to Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone in July 1985), led to the Chinese side also assuming a more negative stance to exchanges.¹²² Then, the second Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 led to a virtually complete shut-off of military exchanges with Japan.

About four years after the second Tiananmen Incident, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visited Japan in May 1993 and agreed during Japan-China foreign minister talks to a resumption of a security dialogue between the two countries. The first meeting was held in March 1994, and it was decided that the dialogues should occur at regular intervals at the vice-minister level for the two countries’ foreign affairs and defense authorities. As a result, Tetsuya Nishimoto, chairman of the SDF Joint Staff Council, visited China in February 1995.

The “Japan-US Joint Declaration on Security” announced in April 1996, and the “Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation” announced in September 1997, as well as the ensuing review process, became the focus of discussions in the Japan-China security dialogues

¹²¹ Allen and McVadon, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

¹²² Shigeo Hiramatsu, *Chugoku Jinmin Kaihogun* (The Chinese People’s Liberation Army), Iwanami shinsho, 1987, pp. 185-186.

and defense exchanges. Naoaki Murata, Administrative Vice Minister for the Defense Agency, visited China in August 1996, while from China, Xiong Guangkai, vice chairman of the PLA General Staff Headquarters, visited Japan in November 1997. During this period, the Chinese side persistently asked whether the Taiwan situation was included in the “surrounding emergency situations” mentioned in the Guidelines, and repeatedly voiced criticism of Japan. China’s Japan specialists have expressed strong concerns that Japan is attempting to switch from being an economic power to a “political power,” and that Japan is strengthening the Japan-US security system to rapidly expand its role in the international security sphere.¹²³ It would appear, then, that China’s military diplomacy toward Japan at the time was positioned as a method for forestalling a stronger Japan-US alliance.¹²⁴

While China’s positioning of military diplomacy for Japan has probably not changed in its basics since that time, the Japan-US alliance was reconfirmed in practice and Japan implemented laws based on the Guidelines such as “the Law on a Situation in the Areas Surrounding Japan,” so that China’s intention of forestalling a stronger Japan-US alliance has essentially failed. The Chinese side must these days be more conscious of a need for “limits,” and no longer subjects the Japanese side to such a continuous stream of harsh criticism. In fact, a stronger Japan-US security system may actually have reconfirmed for China the strategic importance of Japan.

There was a period from 1997 to 1998 when China’s foreign policy can be said to have switched over to an “emphasis on Japan” policy.¹²⁵ In February 1998, China’s Minister of Defense Chi Haotian visited Japan, while in May of that same year Minister of State for Defense Fumio Kyuma visited China, where an agreement was reached to actively promote defense exchanges between Japan and China. These Japan-China defense exchanges were not limited to high-level only, but also included working level, unit, education, and training and research level exchanges, and there was high expectations of actively continuing these beyond 1998. However, China reacted angrily to the visits to Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, unilaterally canceling a visit to China by Minister of State for Defense Gen Nakatani planned for April to May 2002, and indefinitely delaying a proposed port call by a Chinese naval vessel in Japan.

In 2001, China’s Minister of Defense Chi Haotian visited Japan and discussed the possibility of mutual naval visits. But this proposal was unilaterally put on hold by China in an angry response to Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, a situation that still held as of July 2005. As can be seen from the historical experience, whenever the security relationship between Japan and the United States is strengthened, China begins to put more emphasis on military diplomacy with Japan. On the other hand, in a different context, China has followed a pattern in the 1980s, the 1990s, and again in the 2000s, of making a strategic approach to

¹²³ Mi Qingyu, “Daolun (Introduction),” Mi Qingyu, supervising ed., Xiao Wei, author, *Zhanhou Riben guojia anquan zhanlue* (Postwar Japan’s National Security Strategy), Xinhua chubanshe, Beijing, 2001, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁴ Shigeo Hiramatsu, *Chugoku no gunjiryoku* (China’s Military Power), Bunshun shinsho, 1999, pp. 192-193.

¹²⁵ “Chugoku josei (China Situation),” *Boei nenkan kankokai*, ed., *Boei nenkan (2001)* (Defense Annual (2001)), Boei media sentaa, 2001, pp. 208-209, 211.

Japan, but then using so-called “historical perception issues” as an opportunity to veer away again.

In September 2003, Minister of State for Defense Shigeru Ishiba visited Beijing and again proposed a mutual exchange of naval vessel visits. While the parties agreed on early realization of such an exchange, it was in actuality put off again. However, immediately after a visit to Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Koizumi, the fourth security consultation meeting between Japan and China was held in January 2004, followed by a fifth meeting in October.¹²⁶ Then, at the defense vice minister level consultations held in March 2005, the Chinese side at last announced detailed plans for Japan-China defense exchanges, to start in 2006 (hinting, in other words, at a start following the end of Prime Minister Koizumi's term as president of the Liberal Democratic Party).¹²⁷ With the exception of summit meetings and the highly symbolic mutual naval visits, military diplomacy with Japan has shown definite progress, so that the pattern of “historical awareness issues” being used as opportunities to veer away from exchanges may at last be coming to an end.

Military Diplomacy for India

As with Japan, India is another country that China appears to be targeting for restraining the United States. During the Cold War, China and India were for a long time in a confrontational relationship. The main reasons for this state of affairs were the territorial issue, the Tibet issue, and the issue of Chinese military assistance to Pakistan.¹²⁸ A change appeared when President Jiang Zemin visited India in November and December 1996. This marked the first official visit of a Chinese head of state since the two countries had established diplomatic relations. In November of that same year, China and India had signed a “Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control” to achieve a relaxation of military tensions. After China's victory over the Indian army in the border conflict of 1962, China had not displayed a strong concern about Indian power. More often it had been India that had shown worries about Chinese power.

China began placing more strategic emphasis on India in 1998 when India announced to the world that it had tested a nuclear bomb.¹²⁹ In addition, China's military diplomacy for India appears to have had the goal of relaxing tensions in their bilateral relations, as well as to put restraints on US-India relations. China's attempt to draw nearer to India appears to have been sparked by the sudden strengthening of US-Indian relations after the 9-11 terrorist attacks in

¹²⁶ *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 96-97.

¹²⁷ “Kantei no sogo homon 06-nen jitsugen maemuki—Boei kyogi de Chugoku (Leaning Toward Realization of Mutual Naval Vessel Visits in 2006—Defense Consultations in China),” *Mainichi Shimbun*, March 25, 2005.

¹²⁸ Zhang Minqiu, “Di 6-zhang, Xiaochu zhangai, jianli he fazhan youxiao mulin guanxi (Chapter 6, Remove Obstacles, and Establish and Develop Friendly Neighbor Relations),” Zhang Minqiu, ed., *Zhong-Yin guanxi Yanjiu (1947-2003)* (Studies in China-India Relations (1947-2003)), Beijing daxue chubanshe, Beijing, 2004, pp. 324-344.

¹²⁹ Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., op. cit., p. 161.

2001.¹³⁰ India expressed its support for the US War on Terror, and secured US support for its position that the anti-Indian activities in the Kashmir region constituted terrorism, and further expanded its military exchanges and military cooperation with the United States. Since 9-11, the two countries have moved sharply closer to each other, with expansion of US arms exports to India, exchanges of high-level visits between the two countries, and establishment of such groups as the “Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group” and “Security Cooperation Group.” However, India did not send troops to Iraq as the United States had hoped. While the United States and India do not expect the relationship to develop into a full-fledged alliance, China is watching the development of the US-India relationship with extreme care.

China has accelerated its own approach to India, and the Chinese and Indian navies held a joint relief training exercise in November 2003. When Indian Chief of Army Staff N.C.Vij visited China in December 2004, Vij invited PLA units to participate in anti-terrorism military exercises in India, and the two countries also agreed to boost the military cooperation relationship, including consultations between high-ranking officers.¹³¹ Furthermore, in June 2005, the foreign ministers of China and India announced the establishment of a “Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity.”¹³²

As can be seen from the above, China in the past won a military victory against India in a border conflict, and therefore does not seem bothered by the kind of serious historical perception issues that cloud its relationship with Japan. As a result, it has been relatively easy for China to promote a strategic and symbolic approach to India. The closeness of the military relationship between the two countries that has been seen in recent years may hint that China’s military diplomacy for India could be moving from the restraining type over to the coopting type.

Military Diplomacy for North Korea

In addition to Japan and India, China’s military diplomacy for North Korea can also be viewed as gradually converting over to a restraining type.¹³³ As we saw in Section 4, China provided a quite large amount of military assistance to North Korea in the days when the Sino-Soviet confrontation led to an international competitive relationship with the Soviet Union. In 1992, however, China established diplomatic relations with South Korea and has since that time been steadily decreasing its military assistance. Nevertheless, as can be seen just from 2003 and 2004, with the visit to China by Jo Myong-rok, First Vice-chairman of the North Korean National Defense Commission (March 2003), the visit to North Korea by Xu Caihou, executive deputy director of the General Political Department (August 2003), the visit to

¹³⁰ Zhang Minqiu, “Di 5-zhang, Zhongyin guanxi zhong de daguo yinsu (Chapter 5, Great Power Factors in China-India Relations),” Zhang Minqiu, ed., op. cit., pp. 313-316.

¹³¹ “Chinese, Indian military leaders underscore bilateral ties,” Xinhua News Agency, December 28, 2004.

¹³² “Urajiosutoku de Chu-In gaisho kaiken, Ryogoku kankei nado iken kokan (2005-nen 6-gatsu 3-ka) (China and India Foreign Minister Meeting in Vladivostok, Exchange of Opinions on the Two Countries’ Relations, Etc. (June 3, 2005),” Web page of the People’s Republic of China Embassy in Japan, <http://www.china-embassy.or.jp/jpn/xwtd/t198406.htm>, accessed July 2, 2005.

¹³³ Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., op. cit., p. 161.

China by Li Tai-il, North Korea's Vice-Minister of People's Armed Forces (November 2003), the visit to North Korea by a delegation of Border Guard units headed by Li Yu, assistant to the chief of General Staff (June 2004), and the visit to China by Kim Il-ch'ol, Minister of the People's Armed Forces (July 2004), mutual high-level visits between China and North Korea have continued.¹³⁴ The relationship between China and North Korea is so rife with secrecy, with only platitudes ever announced in public, that it is often difficult to tell from afar what the specific content may be of the talks that take place during these mutual visits, and exactly what kind of cooperation and assistance is implemented. As a result, we can here only judge from outward appearances in our study of changes in China's military diplomacy toward North Korea.

For China, while North Korea was originally an allied country that fought together in the Korean War as a fellow Socialist country, and a neighboring country with a close relationship in military affairs, the military diplomacy for North Korea is now in the process of changing into a restraining type. North Korea, suffering from economic breakdown and deepening diplomatic isolation, had the foundations cut out from under its foreign policy when China and Russia established diplomatic relations with South Korea, especially since it had in the past relied entirely on aid from China and the Soviet Union (now Russia).¹³⁵ It is conceivable that North Korea would rather move away from relying wholly on China alone, using normalization of relations with the United States and Japan, and acquisition of aid from those two countries, to diversify its methods for maintaining its system. If North Korea antagonizes the United States or Japan too sharply, those two countries would promote defense cooperation in missile defense and other areas, to the detriment of China. On the other hand, if North Korea were to become cooperative and establish diplomatic relations with the United States and Japan, China's previous monopoly on influence over North Korea would be diluted. On this point, China faces a serious dilemma.

Since the days of the Bill Clinton Administration, China has acted at the request of the United States to promote dialogue with North Korea. After the advent of the George W. Bush Administration, and especially after the United States positioned North Korea in March 2002 as a part of the "Axis of Evil," the relationship between the United States and North Korea became still more important, while China's role on the Korean Peninsula has become increasingly marginalized. China's actions in the "Six-Party Talks," which are guided by the

¹³⁴ *China's National Defense 2004*, pp. 86-87, 89, 92. "Kin soshoki no sokkin ga ho-Chu—3-sha kyogi e chousei (Close Associates of General Secretary Kim Visit China—Adjustment for Three-Party Talks)," *Asahi Shimbun*, April 22, 2003. "Chugoku gun daihyodan ga Kita Chosen kara kikoku—'6-sha' mae ni yuko enshutsu (Chinese Military Delegation Returns from North Korea—Demonstration of Friendship before 'Six-Party Talks')," *Asahi Shimbun*, August 23, 2003. "Cho-Cho kokan ga yuko kakunin (Chinese and North Korean Military Commanders Affirm Friendship)," *Kyodo tsushin*, November 19, 2003. "Chu-Cho, kokkyo keibi de kyotei Dappoku boshi, gun massatsu kaihi nerau (China and North Korea Sign Border Control Agreement Prevent Escapes from North Korea, To Avoid Military Friction)," *Sankei shimbun*, July 1, 2004. "Kita Chosen jinmin buryokusho ga ho-Chu Kaku mondai de renkei kyoka (North Korean People's Armed Forces Minister Visits China To Strengthen Ties in Regards to Nuclear Issue)," *Sankei shimbun*, July 14, 2004.

¹³⁵ Nobuo Shimotomai, *Ajia reishensi* (History of the Asian Cold War), Chuo koronsha, 2004, p. 164. Fu Kuo-liang and Ts'ao Ping-yang, *Huai-jou t'e Chungkuo?—Chungkung tuiwai kuanhsi* (A Conciliatory China?—Chinese Communist Foreign Relations), Haige wenhua ch'upan, Taipei, 2004, p. 109.

objective of persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear development plans, can be viewed as attempts to restrain the behavior of North Korea, since the results of progress on the nuclear development issue may well lead to North Korea falling under the influence of the United States, or even to its complete collapse and reunification with South Korea, both of which are eventualities that China would like to avoid.¹³⁶ The Chinese and North Korean military still maintain a certain relationship with each other, based on their shared experiences in the Korean War, and they remain in open contact. But even the high-level mutual visits mentioned above probably were not so much used by China to provide encouragement for North Korea or to promise military assistance, as to be attempts to use persuasion to restrain North Korea's "runaway" behavior.

F. Conflict Avoidance and Promotion of Military Modernization Type

Finally, we come to the military diplomacy for the United States, the country most important for China, and the country which is "hegemony" in the world, and this can be classified as a conflict avoidance and promotion of military modernization type. For China, the main objective of military exchanges with the United States is avoidance of conflict with US armed forces.¹³⁷ During the Ronald Reagan Administration, when the Cold War and the Sino-Soviet confrontation were still going on strong, the United States and China were in a honeymoon relationship, and the United States was exporting arms to China. However, after a Sino-Soviet (now Russian) rapprochement, the occurrence of the second Tiananmen Incident, and the end of the Cold War, US-China relations reverted to confrontation. While China sought a "constructive strategic partnership" with the United States during the Clinton Administration, events went in the reverse direction and a series of bilateral crises erupted. With the relaxation of the Soviet confrontation in the 1990s, the only true crises for China since that time have been with the United States. A list by Chinese international political scientist Yang Jiemian includes the second Tiananmen Incident of June 1989, the Yinhe freighter incident of July 1993, the third Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1996, the bombing by mistake of the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia in May 1999, and the military aircraft collision off Hainan Island in April 2001.¹³⁸ There was also an incident in the Yellow Sea in October 1994, when aircraft from the US carrier Kitty Hawk came close to a confrontation with Chinese air force planes while tracking a Chinese submarine.¹³⁹ The United States and China have repeatedly encountered these extremely tense situations, and both countries keenly feel the need to avoid conflicts.

Furthermore, in the case of the Taiwan Straits in particular, where the United States has

¹³⁶ When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in January 2003, China is said to have stopped shipments of oil to North Korea for three days, "for technical reasons." This action can be viewed as an example of China applying restraints to stop North Korea's "runaway" behavior.

¹³⁷ Pollpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹³⁸ Yang Jiemian, *Hou lengzhan shiqi de Zhong-Mei guanxi weiji guanli de lilun he shijian* (Crisis Management Theory and Practice in China-US Relations in the Post-Cold War Period), Shanghai renmin chubanshe, Shanghai, 2003. See Chapter 5.

¹³⁹ For more details on this incident, see the following. Asahi shimbunsha, ed., *Honryu Chugoku—21-seiki no Chuka sekai* (Onrushing China—The Chinese World of the 21st Century), Asahi shimbunsha, 1998, pp. 256-258.

determined to intervene, selling arms to Taiwan and otherwise engaging in security cooperation with the Taiwan authorities, China's sense of crisis has increased, and it more than ever feels the necessity for avoiding conflicts. China hopes to use military diplomacy to convey to the United States the principle of "One China" in regards to the Taiwan issue, and its stand in principle opposing arms exports to Taiwan,¹⁴⁰ and also to restrain as much as possible military cooperation between the United States and Taiwan, and to widen the distance between them.

China and the United States are promoting dialogue on the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and anti-terrorism issues, and the two countries are engaged in both regular and impromptu strategic security dialogues at the assistant foreign minister level, in multilateral disarmament control and nonproliferation of WMD discussions, in anti-terror and anti-terror finance consultations, and in defense consultations at the assistant defense minister level. Furthermore, the United States and China hold regularly scheduled meetings of the "Military Maritime and Air Safety Working Group," operating under the mechanism of the "Military Maritime Consultative Agreement."¹⁴¹

In addition to management of conflict occurrence, another objective of China in promoting military exchanges with the United States is to understand the US experience with modernization of armed forces, for example with its experience in strategy, tactics, unit management, battlefield management, personnel training, and development of information warfare.¹⁴² For the United States, an important goal of exchanges is to help China acquire an accurate understanding of the technology that backs up US forces, and of the professionalism and capabilities of US forces, and to expand its influence and boost deterrence.¹⁴³ On the other hand, it cannot be doubted that functional exchanges have contributed to the strengthening of China's armed forces, and that the US objective of deterring China has only been partially successful.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, China never shows the United States its most advanced units or operational units, preferring to present "showcase units" only, so that it has only been the United States that has shown its battlefield-ready forces to the other side.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, criticism of China for stealing US military scientific and technological information has been rising in the US Congress since the mid-1990s. The US House of Representatives Cox Report (The Report of the Select Committee on US National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China) accusing China of using illegal routes to acquire US military scientific and technological information, issued in 1999, is a typical example of such criticism.

In April 1993, China announced "Eight Principles for the Military Transparency Issue."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Wu Ming-Chieh, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁴¹ *China's National Defense 2004*, p. 68.

¹⁴² Democratic Progressive Party Department of Chinese Affairs, ed., op. cit., pp. 158-159.

¹⁴³ Pollpeter, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁴⁴ Pollpeter, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁴⁵ Pollpeter, op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁴⁶ "Zhongguo tichu junbei touming wenti bayuanze (China Proposes Eight Principles for the Military Transparency Issue)," Junshi kexueyuan, ed. *Shijie junshi nianjian 1995-1996* (World Military Annual 1995-1996), Jiefangjun chubanshe, Beijing, 1996, pp. 13-14.

According to these principles, China holds that avoidance of damage to any country's security is a basic principle for maintenance of transparency, and that suitable and feasible mechanisms for military transparency should be settled together by countries in consultations as equals, and not be forced by one country on another. Furthermore, a great military power like the United States should voluntarily improve its own transparency and make large reductions in sea and air forces, and should not try to hinder the peaceful development of civilian science and technology in developing countries. Moreover, China asserted that transparency can only be improved when bilateral relations become better and trust is obtained.¹⁴⁷ As can be seen from this statement, China does not really believe in improving military transparency for the objective of building confidence between two countries that are in confrontation.

To avoid the above situation, in which exchanges have only served to benefit the Chinese side, the George W. Bush Administration has taken a conservative approach to exchanges, setting strict standards for US-China military exchanges and always demanding that the principles of "reciprocity and transparency" be observed whenever military exchanges are performed with China.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

Based on the issues taken up in this paper, I have clarified the following five points as characteristics of China's military diplomacy.

First, China's military diplomacy is a part of the state's general foreign relations strategy, and does not merely constitute international exchanges implemented between defense organizations. As seen in Section 2, military diplomacy is oriented at the part of general foreign relations policy that is related to military security. China has been generally pushing to open up to the world, and in the general increase in foreign relations activities, military diplomacy matters have also tended to increase. As became clear in Sections 3 to 5, China's military diplomacy is diplomacy based on military security and calculation of geopolitical benefits, and diplomacy that uses improvement of the international environment to achieve military modernization. At this point, we can discern hardly any vestiges of the old ideological diplomacy from the period when untied military assistance was offered to socialist countries and third world countries.

Second, the goals and methods of China's military diplomacy are very orthodox when viewed from a practical perspective. As can be seen in Section 4, the functions of China's military diplomacy are to serve the national interest by maintaining a favorable security environment, achieving modernization of armed forces, and establishing influence in other countries. China tries to make effective use of limited resources in order to maximize its own national interest, and puts priority on placement of the state's resources into military diplomacy. As seen in Section 3, China's military diplomacy has expanded in quantity at a remarkable speed in the few years since the end of the 20th century, and has also improved in

¹⁴⁷ Pollpeter, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁴⁸ Pollpeter, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

quality, with a sharp increase in the resources poured into PLA exchanges.

Third, China's geopolitical strategy in military diplomacy is, basically, to develop the concept of a united front operation. As seen in Section 5, the conclusion that can be reached from China's diplomatic activities is that China clearly positions and allocates each country it has exchanges with based on what it can do for China, such as Russia's contribution to modernization of armed forces, surrounding countries where relations are deepening in the form of military assistance or construction of bases, the ARF and France as targets for coopting, Japan and India as countries that need restraining, and the United States, with which China wants to avoid conflict and which is needed for modernization of armed forces. In a sense, China places Russia and the United States on its wings, and then embraces medium powers or tries to restrain them from approaching too closely to the United States.

Fourth, China is strengthening its participation in multilateral military diplomacy. Where the United States and Japan have begun to lose their enthusiasm for multilateralism, China is implementing a military diplomatic strategy that puts emphasis on the ARF and SCO, and has discovered benefits to multilateralism. Researcher Yuan Jindong of the US-based Monterey Institute of International Studies, has said that China's attitude toward multilateralism and regionalism is "thinking unilaterally, pursuing issues bilaterally, and posturing multilaterally."¹⁴⁹ China's military diplomacy is a likely candidate for an example of a realist that finds its interests by coopting power politics while showing behavior in an idealistic way.

Fifth, China's military diplomacy is wrapped in a strong strategic sense. Reinhard Drifte, a European specialist in Japanese and Chinese security-related issues, has said that, China has the ability of a small and relatively coherent political leadership to develop and implement foreign policies in a much more consistent way than an open democratic political system can, allowing the optimum use of even a small tactical advantages or ploys.¹⁵⁰ As the example of a sudden development of Chinese-Philippine military cooperation immediately after the Philippines withdrew its troops from Iraq shows, one characteristic of China's military diplomacy is its remarkable strategic sense and mobility. Military diplomacy based on China's traditional foreign strategy is not conducted aimlessly, but instead proceeds with an advanced sense of strategy.¹⁵¹

In this paper, I have tried to use a categorization approach to clarify China's military diplomacy strategy. Categorization helps make it easier to understand what China's strategic intentions are, by looking at what type of military diplomacy is used for which country. However, what we need to be aware of is that the target countries do not always fall neatly into China's military diplomacy categories. One country may be classified under two

¹⁴⁹ Jing-Dong Yuan, "Culture Matters: Chinese Approaches to Arms Control and Disarmament," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 19, Pt. 1, April 1999, p. 97.

¹⁵⁰ Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Security Relations with China since 1989: From Balancing to Bandwagoning?*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ In China, which in many respects remains a developing country, we need to remember that, for top officials, an official trip outside of the country remains a "privilege." This is no different from many other developing countries where military diplomacy has previously been rare. However, what strategic thinking or calculations the PLO uses to determine which individual officials get to travel to foreign countries remains completely unclear, and will probably remain so for a long time to come.

categories, while another may be moving from one category to a different category, with changes in the target country causing China to actively alter its type of military diplomacy. For example, France is being “upgraded” from a coopting type to a strategic partnership type, India from a restraining type to a coopting type, and Kyrgyzstan from a coopting type to a strategic positioning type. How Japan is handled can be understood in the same way. If the Japan-US alliance is re-strengthened, and China comes to the conclusion that the danger of a Japan-China conflict in the East China Sea or the Taiwan Straits has increased, then the content of military diplomacy for Japan would likely change to something close to a conflict avoidance type, and if, on the other hand, China should be able to grab an opportunity to drive Japan and the United States farther apart, the diplomacy would shift closer to a coopting type. China is expending great amounts of effort to “upgrade” confrontational or high-tension target countries into closer relationships, and the increasing number of countries that have been successfully “upgraded” is testament to the steady results of China’s military diplomacy. If the military diplomacy of China can achieve results that lead to a stable security environment, China will be able to put efforts into economic development and military force modernization, which will in turn provide further resources for the development of military diplomacy. China’s progress in military diplomacy strategies should result in this virtuous circle. We should note, however, that China has achieved these drastic policy changes in a remarkably short time without undergoing a revolution in the political system, or in other words, while maintaining the one-party dictatorship of the Communist Party. We shall need to continue further observation to determine whether Chinese diplomacy has begun to show changes in its essence, or whether it is nothing more than the tactical changes of a realist showing behavior in an idealistic way.