THE MILITARY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract:

China is determined to uproot a traditional ground-based People's Liberation Army (PLA) towards a high-tech based modern armed forces to protect China's national interests in an ever-changing geo-political and security environment in the 21st century. In fact, this high-tech based military transformation mindset has been initiated since the early 1990s when China constantly increased its defense spending at an average of 12-15% annually and rigorously pursued modern and advanced weapon system and equipment acquisition and development programs, which induced constant impressive comments from other countries. China's intention is underlined by its defense policy and evolving military strategy.

Keywords: People's Republic of China; armed forces; technology.

Resumen:

China está decidida a transformar su Ejército de Liberación Popular (PLA) tradicional, basado en las fuerzas terrestres, en unas fuerzas armadas modernas basadas en la alta tecnología, para proteger los intereses nacionales de China en el cambiante entorno político y de seguridad del siglo XXI. De hecho, esta concepción de transformación militar basada en alta tecnología se inició a principios de los 90, con un aumento constante del gasto en defensa de China a una media del 12-15% anual; así como la rigurosa puesta en marcha de programas de sistemas de armas, adquisición de material y desarrollo, lo que causó constantes e impresionantes comentarios de otros países. La intención de China queda de manifiesto en su política de defensa y en la evolución de su estrategia militar.

Palabras clave: *República Popular China; fuerzas armadas; tecnología.*

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Introduction

> We will… ensure that our armed forces are capable of winning a war in the information age, modernization of weapons and equipment should be accelerated and personnel training enhanced. We will gradually increase spending on national defense as the economy grows and continue to modernize national defense and the armed forces.

These were crystal clear statements made by Mr. Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the highest military decision-making body under the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), who assumes the highest authority as commander-in-chief to lead the 23 million strong armed forces of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Hu's statements symbolize China's determination to uproot a traditional ground-based PLA towards a high-tech based modern armed forces to protect China's national interests in an ever-changing geo-political and security environment in the 21st century. In fact, this high-tech based military transformation mindset has been initiated since the early 1990s when China constantly increased its defense spending at an average of 12-15% annually and rigorously pursued modern and advanced weapon system and equipment acquisition and development programs, which induced constant impressive comments from other countries.

China's intention and determination to pursue high-tech based armed forces in the 21st century are underlined by its defense policy and evolving military strategy.

1. Defense Policy: Mirror Reflection of a Growing Power

The national defense report of the PRC, published in December 2006, has provided the definition of China's defense policy in the 21st century as:

First, the objective of building national defense is to uphold national security and unity, and ensure the interests of national development. This includes guarding against and resisting aggression, defending against violation of China's territorial sea and air space, and borders; opposing and containing the separatist forces for "Taiwan independence" and their activities; providing a solid security guarantee for sustaining the important period of strategic opportunity for national development.

Second, defense modernization is to achieve all-round, coordinated and sustainable development of China's national defense and armed forces. To achieve these objectives, the modernization works in a comprehensive way to ensure that the armed forces are revolutionary in nature, modernized and regularized. It requires work to deepen the adjustment and reform of military organizations and structures, as well as policies and systems.

Third, modernization is to enhance the performance of the armed forces with informationization as the major feature. Currently, the PLA promotes the composite development of informationization and mechanization to achieve overall capability improvement in the fields of firepower, assault, mobility, protection and information. The PLA is stepping up its efforts to build a joint operational command system, training system and support system for fighting informationized wars and enhance the building of systems

integration of services and arms. Such high-tech war fighting capability can only be achieved by constant enhancement of scientific and technological efforts.

Fourth, modernization is to implement the military strategy of active defense in the new era. The objective of active defense strategy in the 21st Century is to win local wars under conditions of informationization. Taking joint operation as the basic form of active defense, the ground force aims at moving from regional defense to trans-regional mobility, and improving its capabilities in air-ground integrated operations, long-distance maneuvers, rapid assaults and special operations. The Navy aims at gradual extension of the strategic depth of offshore defensive operations and enhancing its capabilities in integrated maritime operations and nuclear counterattacks. The Air Force aims at speeding up its transition from territorial air defense to both offensive and defensive operations, and increasing its capabilities in areas of air strike, air and missile defense, early warning and reconnaissance, and strategic projection. The Second Artillery Force (i.e. China's missile force) aims at progressively improving its force structure of having both nuclear and conventional missiles, and raising its capabilities in strategic deterrence and conventional strike under conditions of informationization.

Fifth, China commits to improve its limited nuclear arsenals in line with a self-defensive nuclear strategy. It remains firmly committed to the policy of "no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances," and upholds the principles of counter attack in self-defense and limited development of nuclear weapons.

The interesting part of this carefully-written defense policy may either intentionally or unintentionally disclose Chinese strategic objectives and interests which might have resulted in its constant support of defense modernization.

First, it has identified the upholding of national security and unity as first priority, and treating the separatist movements such as "Taiwan independence" as a direct and imminent threat to national security and unity. Therefore, it is considered by most analysts of Chinese military affairs that the purpose of China's military build-up during the past decade or so has been to acquire a capability that would enable China to either coerce Taiwan into accepting the "one China" solution to the Taiwan problem, or at least to prevent Taiwan from moving toward formal independent status. Beijing's refusal to renounce the use of force against Taiwan and the increasing numbers of short range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) deployed in areas facing Taiwan are hard evidence of China's determination to use force against separatist movements.

Second, it has shown China's intention to modernize its armed forces beyond the capability to deal with "Taiwan independence". The decision to transform the PLA from traditional ground-force military to high-tech informationized joint war fighting armed forces leads most analysts to believe that the objectives driving this build-up go far beyond the Taiwan issue. The most basic and long-range objective of the Chinese leadership has been both to obtain recognition for China as a great power and to be treated by the other great powers with the respect that comes with this status. Two factors construe a great power, one is strong economy, and the other is compatible military force. China's booming economy has provided China with the economic strength that constitutes one of the two essential factors of great-power status.

The other factor, military force, is no where near a level that is conclusive to great-power status. At a minimum, such status would presumably require forces that include not only

arrays of advanced high-tech weapon systems and platforms to exert suppressive fire powers, but also air and sea refueling capabilities, global communications systems, and bases in friendly countries for moving large numbers of troops and supplies. Although working to develop some of these capabilities, China still lacks most of them. However, the apparent significance of defined defense policy is that an advance toward the status of a military great power has become a long-term objective of the Chinese leadership.

Third, as China's military capability increasingly stretches beyond its land mass, it is hard to think that China will not gain a paramount position in the East Asian region. Apart from coercing Taiwan and interdicting U.S. naval intervention, pursuing a denial strategy for the maritime areas close to China's own borders and the area around Taiwan would be logical for building a military force for limited regional objectives within China's reach.

2. Guidelines of the Military Strategy for the 21st Century

The set of guidelines under which the PLA currently operates was issued in 1993 and is known as the Military Strategic Guidelines for the New Period. The 1993 guidelines have characterized the most likely type of future warfare as "local wars under modern high-tech conditions". By 2002, the CMC has officially replaced "local war under high-tech conditions" with "local war under modern informationization" to cope with the evolving war fighting characteristics in present and future. Such a move also symbolizes that the current military strategy is actually a flexible strategy, by adding new elements and features in its constant modernization programs. In the current military strategic guidelines, the Chinese strategic analysis includes at least six strategic-level issues that the guidelines are expected to address.

a. Presenting the strategic analysis. It considers the nature of the global security environment and what it means for the security of China.

b. Adjusting the content of the active defense strategy. This issue accounts for the need to adjust the traditional military strategy of the "active defense" to cope with the changing nature of warfare.

c. Articulating the strategic missions and objectives of the armed forces. This issue covers broader national security interests so that the PLA can develop missions to support them.

d. Issuing guidance for military combat preparations. This is primarily a capabilities-based assessment. It identifies the types of war the PLA must be prepared to fight in the future.

e. Identifying the main strategic direction. This is more or less a contingency-based assessment and would induce impacts in the development of capabilities as well as force deployment decisions.

f. Determining the focus for army building. This factor spells out the modernization programs and reform initiatives that would eventually become the outcome to enable the decisions or assessments made in the other five factors.

Therefore, based on these logical military strategic analysis and assessments and compounded by the capabilities to be achieved in the future, it appears to the outside world that China is determined to create a military that is capable enough to fight and defeat other regional militaries on its periphery, and a military that is credible enough., operationally, to deter intervention by outside military forces.

3. China's War Fighting Strategy

The next question is "how will the PLA fight wars in the future?" The writings published in Chinese military books, journals, and reports from Chinese military newspapers provide us with bird's eye view on this question with at least seven war fighting strategic principles.

a. The first strategic principle is seizing the initiative early in a conflict. Chinese military analysts are aware that Iraq, by not seizing the initiative in the 1991 Gulf War, allowed the U.S. to build up its forces until it had overwhelming superiority. If China is to be victorious against a superior military power, China must go on the offensive from the very beginning.

b. The second strategic principle for defeating a militarily superior adversary is the importance of supervision. Supervision is valuable not only for an immediate tactical advantage but also as an important way of seizing the initiative. Surprise puts the adversary in the position of reacting to China's moves, making it easier to maintain the initiative thereafter.

c. The third strategic principle is the value of preemption. If China waits for a superior adversary to commence military threats, it will be difficult for China to seize the initiative, and the adversary will likely wield the strength of forces. If China initiates a preemption strategy, China can seize the initiative and may enjoy an initial advantage in the local balance of forces. Preemption also greatly increases the chances of successfully achieving supervision.

d. The fourth strategic principle is raising the cost of conflict. Some Chinese military analysts believe that a militarily superior adversary might be sensitive to casualties and economic costs and that the sudden destruction of a significant portion of adversary forces would result in a severe psychological shock and a loss of will to continue the conflict.

e. The fifth strategic principle is to address limited strategic aims. China, as a militarily inferior country, cannot expect to achieve total victory over a militarily superior adversary. But if its aims are limited, the inferior country could create a situation in which the costs to its adversary of reversing the results of an initial offensive exceed the benefits of such a reversal, and therefore the adversary will choose to live with the results.

f. The sixth strategic principle is to avoid direct confrontation with militarily superior adversary. It is a war fighting strategy commonly practiced by the PLA in previous conflicts.

g. The seventh strategic principle is to conduct concentrated attacks or attacking key military targets such as command systems, information systems, weapon systems, logistic systems, and the linkages between the systems.

4. Implementing New Strategies and Building of Advanced Military Power

Before 2002, Chinese leadership was putting economic modernization and development as the first and foremost priority of national interest, while military modernization is subordinated to economic construction and modernization. However, the military modernization was placed on equal footing with the economic modernization as indicated in the Chinese National Defense Report in 2004 and 2006, with emphasis on the need of compensating each other in line with China's expanded interest in protecting its economic development and maintaining a relatively peaceful and stable environment. The most obvious indication of this parallel emphasis on defense and economics is the substantial increase of defense spending from 2003-2007, closely in line with continuous high economic growth in the same period. More spending on defense modernization symbolizes Chinese intention to speed up implementation of new military and war fighting strategies so as to build an advanced PLA to cope with war fighting scenarios in future contingencies.

5. Modernization in Joint War Fighting Operation: Theory and Doctrine

Military theory in China identifies warfare across the battlefield in terms of five dimensions, namely land, sea, air, space, and electromagnetic spectrum. PLA military science experts believe that new information technology and the development of automated systems have made strategic cues and warning, intelligence, communications, and command and control more critical in all of these dimensions of warfare.

Among the dimensions of war, the PLA particularly emphasizes space. As Ashley J. Tellis argued that

> *...Beijing's investments in counter space technology are driven by uncompromisable strategic concerns. In the near term, Beijing focuses on developing all possible means of defeating the superior US conventional forces it experts to encounter in any war over Taiwan. Over the longer term, China is preparing for prospective geopolitical rivalry with the United States.*

Senior PLA military experts also expressed the belief that control of space will be of tremendous significance in future information warfare with the primary combat operation in future war being the struggle for space control. Therefore the PLA is not only emphasizing in developing "hard" strike space capability such as launching anti-satellite missiles demonstrated in January 2007 to destroy enemy space systems, but also investing in developing "soft" strikes against space-based information systems to neutralize enemy satellites. PLA believes that whoever controls space will have the initiative in war. In exercises, PLA war game planners included scenarios of simulated communication deception and jamming as part of electronic warfare played to confuse enemy forces. Recent exercises also show the enhancement in increasing use of digital network of its command and control systems. Launching of defense communication satellites in 2000 and 2003 also demonstrated PLA's determination to integrate military command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence system. Those military communication satellites use fiber-optic cable, high frequency and very high frequency (VHF) communications, microwave systems to enable the Central Military Commission (CMC), the General Staff Department, and commanders to

communicate with forces in their theater of war on a real-time or near real-time basis. Added to satellite-based command, control, and communication system, the PLA also developed airborne warning and control system (AWACS) to enhance theater war campaign command and control operations. The PLA AWACS is designated as Kong-jing 2000(KJ2000) which is equipped with indigenous-made phase-array radar and has a data link capability; a data processing system; friendly, hostile, and unidentified Indentification Friend-or-Foe system; and a C^3I capability. The KJ-2000 can exchange data with other aircraft and naval ships equipped with compatible data links. In the continental mainland and in close proximity to China's borders, the PLA already is able to provide real-time support for joint military operations with communications and data relay satellites. Articles published by Jiefangjun Bao (the Liberation Army Daily) detailed exercises in the Guang Zhou, Chengdu, Shenyang, and Beijing military regions using networked forces supported by satellite communications.

All of the command, control, communication, and targeting architectures already fielded or under development by the PLA are necessary and appropriate responses for a major military power in the information age if that nation desires to keep pace with improvements in armaments and technology. Evidences provided above show that the PLA has made significant strides in the last decade or so in transforming itself into a force that can engage in a modern war along its periphery out to a range very much away from Chinese land mass. When it achieves its goals of deploying satellite tracking and data relay systems and fielding new long-range missiles with multiple warheads, it may well achieve its goal of targeting an enemy's deployed naval battle groups. Thus, China is close to achieving a viable anti-access strategy that would impede other militaries conducting operations in the Western Pacific region.

6. Maritime Strategy and Naval Operation

Recently developed offshore active defense strategy adopted by the PLA Navy (PLAN) is based on the perception of the need to protection of economic life lines and offshore territories and natural resources. Geopolitical situation in East Asia resulted in a requirement for the PLAN to control the Yellow Sea, much of the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, the very northern portion of the South China Sea, and the Tonkin Gulf. This sea control area also closely approximates the PRC's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and also generally follows the contour of the so-called "first island chain". The PLAN is facing tremendous challenge in controlling the perceived maritime territories. First, it is a vast space, and the waters are heavily traveled. Second, sea control implies a requirement to keep track of all the ships at sea in the area to be controlled. To actually control the sea in time of conflict would require very thorough around-the-clock surveillance and control of the air space above the surface. These are a capability the PLA does not yet possess.

In order to enhance sea control in line with the new offshore active defense strategy, the PLAN is putting emphasis on conducting naval operations with the assistance of space-based navigation, surveillance, command, control and communication satellite systems to provide around-the-clock coverage of offshore maritime activities. However, with the shortage of aircraft carrier battle groups and limited land-based naval aviation units, the PLAN still lack the means to fulfill its intention to exercise around-the-clock sea control in its defined maritime boundaries.

Naval modernization in recent years indicates that the PLAN is yet to become a true maritime power. However it did make progress in terms of implementing anti-access strategy in areas of future conflict, such as Taiwan, in future war scenario. The introduction of new types of diesel-electric submarines with the capability of launching anti-ship cruise missiles, surface warships with the capability of launching supersonic anti-ship missiles are clear indication that China is enhancing PLAN's offensive capability in line with offshore active defense strategy to protect its offshore territories. Should China wish to protect its EEZ as well as sea lanes of communication in supporting China's continuous economic growth and development, it has to develop carrier-based naval operation groups so as to conduct real sea control surrounding China. Currently there is still no indication that China is moving towards to develop a blue water maritime strategy, however the debates among naval experts and strategists over the construction of aircraft carriers symbolize China perhaps is in the junction of revising its maritime strategy and could result in a major departure of its historical offshore active defense strategy which only covers limited maritime area close to shore.

7. PLA Air Force and New Doctrines

As noted in the 2006 Chinese National Defense Report, the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) is striving to speed up its transition from territorial air defense to both offensive and defensive operations and to increase its capabilities in the areas of air strike, air and missile defense, early warning and reconnaissance, and strategic projection. This is a clear indication that PLAAF is transforming from a single territorial air defense mission towards multi mission operation with perhaps a higher priority for operations supporting ground and naval task forces. These broad missions are translated into specific operational concepts and training requirements through various campaign scenarios, which can be considered as new PLAAF operational doctrines. The new campaign scenarios developed by the PLAAF are comprised by offensive air campaign, air defense campaign, air blockade campaign, joint anti-air strike campaign, and the airborne campaign. With these new PLAFF campaign theory and doctrines in mind, the PLAAF is in need of more advanced aircraft integrated with effective support systems. It would rely heavily on networking and informationalization to employ air power effectively in conducting and supporting joint operations. These aspirations will likely be constrained by the current technological limitations of the Chinese aviation industry and by the resources made available to support PLAAF modernization. The future PLAAF force structure will be influenced by threat perception, budget allocation, and the speed of technological modernization.

8. New Doctrine and the PLA's Missile and Nuclear Force

In the past, the Second Artillery is the only military unit responsible for deploying and launching both conventional and nuclear-tipped missiles. With the transformation of doctrine in line with the development of new campaign theory, the responsibility of launching both conventional and nuclear-tipped missiles has been decided between the military regions and the Second Artillery. With the emerging doctrine in conducting long-range precision strike by conventional short range and medium range ballistic missiles (SRBM & MRBM), the responsibility of launching those missiles is gradually given to the commanders of the military region to enhance efficiency of strike capability. The Second Artillery is more responsible for nuclear deterrence and receiving orders directly from the CMC. The doctrinal

transformation of the Chinese missile force implies the leadership's concern in enhancing missile strike effectiveness in joint firepower attack during the course of deterrence combat, counter missile attacks, blockade attack, disturbance attacks, mobile force combat, and fire power attacks. With emphasis on developing space military capability by the Chinese leadership, the Second Artillery could assume new responsibility for China's antisatellite (ASAT) weapons, its computer network attack capabilities, or radio frequency (RF) and laser weapons. Should it be the case in future, China would create a PLA branch having a mandate similar to that of the U.S. Strategic Command.

9. Building a Recognized Modern and Advanced Military Force

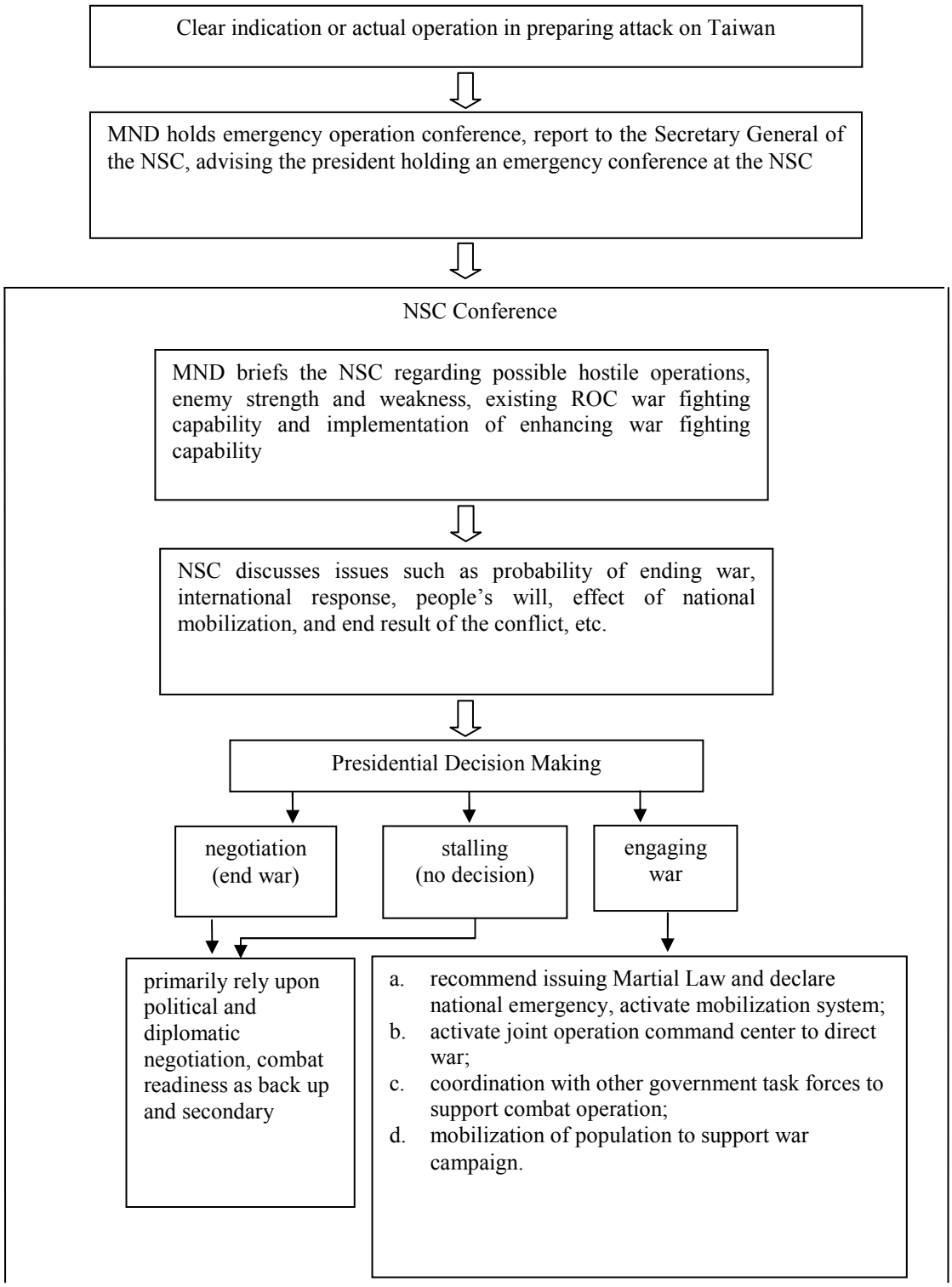
Apparently, China's military modernization goals are to develop a modern force equipped with advanced weapon systems and professional skills capable of fighting and winning, at least, a local war under informationization condition and securing Chinese national interests and unity. How and when China is to achieve this objective requires constant attention and analysis by the Chinese themselves and by outsiders. Chinese published defense reports and strategic doctrines already spell out the road map to achieve these objectives, and China is soon to be recognized as a real regional power, if not a global power. However, other factors such as sufficient increase of defense spending in the next decade or so, military technology research and development, and most importantly how China sees its power are key elements to decide whether China is becoming a real regional or global power.

10. Deterring Threats with Effective Crisis Management mechanisms—Taiwan's Response

When assessing PLA military maneuvers, exercises, and activities across the Taiwan Strait, it is important to identify exactly whether these military postures would lead to tension escalation, potential crisis, or a real crisis. Equally important is the activation of Taiwan's emergency reaction mechanisms to cope with potential threats and report to the commander-in-chief, the president, in order to ensure an effective response to the situation. If faced with a potential military escalation, the MND will activate emergency reaction mechanisms in accordance with the "Regulations of Coping with Surprise Situation in the Period of Regular Combat Readiness" and immediately proceed with military crisis and threat assessments to identify treads of crisis development. The minister of national defense and general chief of staff then immediately report to the president through the chain of command. The president, after receiving a situation assessment report and recommendations on crisis management options, either directly orders the defense minister to implement measures to deal with the situation or calls an emergency convening of the Taiwanese National Security Council (NSC) in order to reach more comprehensive decisions in coping with the potential military threats (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1.: Decision Making Process of ROC's Defensive Operation[2]

[2] Source: MND, 2004


Clear indication or actual operation in preparing attack on Taiwan
MND holds emergency operation conference, report to the Secretary General of the NSC, advising the president holding an emergency conference at the NSC
NSC Conference
MND briefs the NSC regarding possible hostile operations, enemy strength and weakness, existing ROC war fighting capability and implementation of enhancing war fighting capability
NSC discusses issues such as probability of ending war, international response, people's will, effect of national mobilization, and end result of the conflict, etc.
Presidential Decision Making
negotiation (end war)
stalling (no decision)
engaging war
primarily rely upon political and diplomatic negotiation, combat readiness as back up and secondary
a. recommend issuing Martial Law and declare national emergency, activate mobilization system;
b. activate joint operation command center to direct war;
c. coordination with other government task forces to support combat operation;
d. mobilization of population to support war campaign.

In the process of identifying the nature of a threat, intelligence gathering and intelligence assessment are vital to deciding the appropriate emergency response mechanism. The ROC's military intelligence operations possess the capability to detect nearly all air, sea, and ground PLA military activities including signals intelligence (SIGINT) to a range of 250 NM inside China's southwest coastal provinces. For example, during the March 1996 PLA missile exercises near Taiwan, with the assistance of SIGNT, former President Lee immediately ordered the upgrade of the level of combat readiness, which included a 24-hour stand-by combat alert of the armed forces and the issuance of live ammunition to ground forces stationed at offshore islands, including Penghu, Kinmoy, and Matzu.

President Lee also immediately called an emergency conference of the NSC in order to make decisions on all internal and external emergency response recommendations suggested by responsible government departments and regarding interagency task force operations. The emergency response actions were carried out without declaring a national emergency in accordance with the National Emergency Act. There was a brief period of panic in the Taiwanese financial market, which resulted in a stock market crash of over 1,000 points. The foreign currency exchange was confronted with excessive demand but was eventually stabilized via an emergency supply of hard currencies. During the crisis, the military stayed on full alert and kept very close eyes on the PLAAF activities in the coastal region. At the same time, preventive diplomacy also took place in Washington, D.C. along with some levels of U.S. intervention intended to limit the crisis.

The level of tension was then deescalated following the PRC's decision to call off subsequent missile exercises in the strait, and preventive diplomacy seemed to be effective in terms of persuading both sides of the Taiwan Strait to exercise restraint and return to the status quo.

In the case of a potential or near crisis, such as the 1996 missile exercises, multilateral government department efforts to deescalate the tension are necessary to break away from brinkmanship. However, it is absolutely crucial to secure efficient and accurate intelligence assessments about the situation so as to avoid miscalculation and to initiate proper rules of engagement (ROE) of military forces when attempting to defuse military tension.

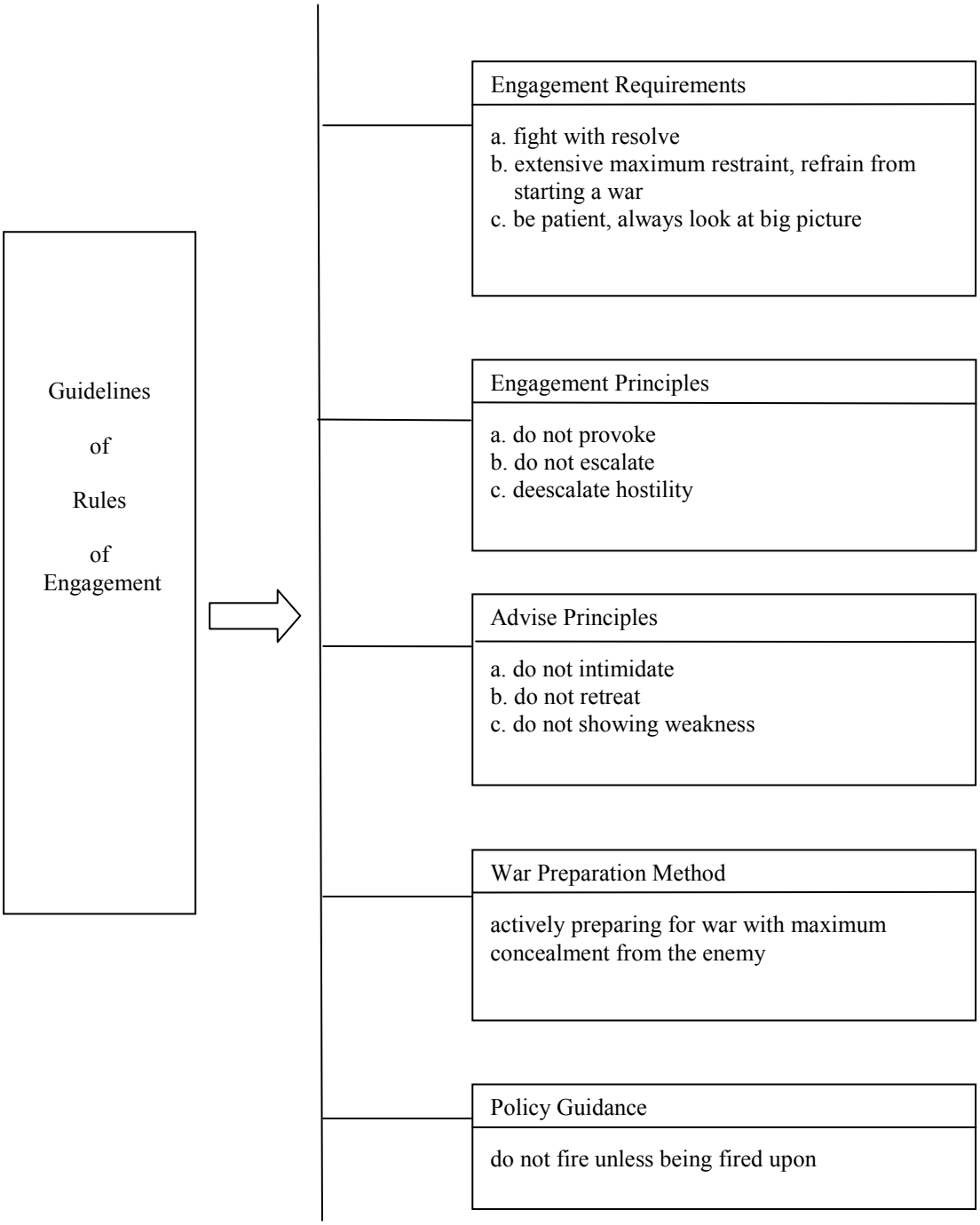
In order to cope with the prospect of rapidly changing threat scenarios based on specific assessments of PLA strike capabilities, Taiwan's MND revised its three-phase (i.e., regular, alert, and combat) combat readiness regulation and replaced it with two-phase (regular readiness and emergency reaction readiness) regulations in late 2003. At the same time, three new regulations dealing with peacetime emergency reaction procedures, wartime defensive operation readiness, and combat operation procedures were also issued. The ROE in confronting a real military threat (see Figure 2) were also issued. The fundamental principle of ROE in a real military threat became "in the absence of orders, do not return fire if fired upon." In other words, the order to engage the enemy must be directly passed down by the president via the minister of national defense.

This improved approach to crisis management was demonstrated in 1999. At that time, the PRC responded to former President Lee's July 9, 1999 statement of "special state to state relations" between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait by ordering PLA fighter aircraft patrolling PRC's southwest coastal airspace to cross the center line. The ROC Air Force fighter jets patrolling the area were placed on high alert during the crisis. To manage such a potentially volatile and sensitive situation requires very precise intelligence assessments about provocative or hostile maneuvers and the provision to the pilots of precise ROE. Had it not

been for the issuance of the fundamental ROE of "in the absence of orders, do not return fire if fired upon," a serious incident and perhaps rapid escalation could have occurred between pilots from both sides.

Fig. 2: Rules of Engagement[3]

[3] Source: MND, 2004



11. Use of Offensive Countermeasures

While continuously enhancing its defense capabilities and war-fighting/war prevention crisis management mechanisms, Taiwan is also putting some efforts into developing offensive countermeasures in an attempt to destroy or degrade PLA war-fighting facilities on the mainland. This is primarily intended to enhance deterrence and, if deterrence fails, to

significantly decrease the likelihood of a successful PLA attack, thus forcing the Chinese to adopt an exit strategy and end the conflict.

The MND has submitted a letter of request for price and available data to the U.S. Department of Defense for the AGM-88C high-speed anti-radiation missile (HARM) and the GBU-31 joint direct attack munition (JDAM). Such weapons and munitions are often characterized as offensive in nature and could be controversial in terms of Taiwan Relations Act restrictions on the type of weapon systems that the United States can sell to the ROC. Despite the sensitivity of selling offensive weapons to Taiwan, the track record of U.S. arms sales to the island clearly indicates that the ROC has acquired offensive weapon systems from the United States in the past; the United States has sold F-16 fighter aircraft, GBU-12 500-lb paveway, and 2,000-lb GBU-10 bombs to the ROC. In 1999, the United States released the AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missile to the ROC Air Force and the software and hardware necessary to convert the ROC's existing inventory of Harpoons into LACMs. This capability, called coastal target suppression, puts precision global positioning system (GPS) receivers onto each missile, allowing it to go after targets in the southwest coastal regions of PRC provinces facing Taiwan.

There are clear defensive reasons for the ROC's need for HARM. First, it would enable the suppression of PLA ship-based radar systems and provide the ROC Navy's future P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft more freedom to operate. Without the ability to suppress PLAN air defense, such as the naval version of the HQ-9 air defense missile, Taiwan's P-3s would operate in a very dangerous threat environment. Second, HARM would enable the suppression of PRC radars that are supporting air strikes against Taiwan. PLAAF and PLAN air operations are highly centralized and dependent on ground air command and control for coordination and direction of complex strike missions. This air control depends upon radar relays for situational awareness. By disrupting the air controller's source of information, it can disrupt the PLA's ability to conduct strikes against Taiwan.

Third, suppression of PLA air defenses would be necessary to enable the ROC to conduct strike operations against key installations of PLA SRBM batteries with minimal losses. Key installations would include command and control centers and logistical support stations. Going after SRBM's support systems is far more cost-effective and would achieve better effects than going after missile launchers. In addition, HARM would enable the suppression of surface-to-air missile systems operating along the PRC's southeast coast. For example, during Taiwan's annual military exercise, Han Guang 18 in 2002, the ROC Air Force, after surviving simulated PLA missile and air strikes, attempted to conduct a major air campaign against key targets on the PRC's coast, employing about 90 percent of its surviving F-16 fleet. They lost 70 percent of these F-16s to PLA air defenses due to an inability to suppress enemy air defense capabilities via such means as HARM, land-attack cruise missiles, and airborne SIGINT platforms that could provide operating parameters of radars operating along the coast.

ROC's interest in JDAM is twofold. First, ROC would reduce the risk of collateral damage by using precision-guided bombs. JDAM kits would enable the bombs to hit their target instead of hitting innocent people and facilities. Second, using smart bombs would mean that the ROC Air Force would only have to make one mission over a specific target, hence reducing the risks.

Other domestic efforts to enhance Taiwan's offensive countermeasures against PRC's strikes are also in progress. The CSIST is in the process of upgrading the Shung-Fong II anti-

ship missile to the Shung-Fong 2E LACM and Shung-Fong III supersonic anti-ship and anti-land missile systems. Their objective is to suppress and retaliate against the PLA's key coastal installations, command and control centers, and SRBM systems with long-range precision-guidance munitions, and reduce the risk of air strike operations. Shung-Fong 2E LACM and Shung-Fong III supersonic anti-ship and anti-land missiles would probably have a range exceeding 300 km, and would be launched by air, sea, and land platforms. At the same time, the National Science Research Council also confirmed that it is collaborating with CSIST in the research and development of medium-range ballistic missiles (exceeding 1,000km) which will enhance the ROC's offensive operations against key PLA targets inside China.

Conclusions

It is abundantly clear that preventing outright military confrontation in the Taiwan Strait is in the best interest of not only China and Taiwan but also the entire Asia-Pacific region. The primary objective of Taiwan's military is to deter and/or suppress any possible PLA attacks. Taipei's defense strategy is designed to send a clear and unmistakable message to Beijing that the people and the armed forces in Taiwan are determined to confront PLA military pressure or attacks with whatever means available. Taiwan's defense policies and war-fighting doctrine are also designed to send a message that Taipei will not initiate a war against Beijing, but that Beijing would encounter a devastating setback should it decide to do so.

In order to achieve these goals, Taiwan's defense modernization puts an increasing emphasis on building both defensive and offensive capabilities, as discussed above. This derives from the belief that, assuming Taipei's military assets largely survive an all-out PLA attack, the Taiwan military must have the capacity to launch offensive operations to regain control over the Taiwan Strait. Such capabilities are necessary to frustrate Beijing's wish for a short war and will thus provide an opportunity for the international community to intervene.

In deterring the types of possible PLA attacks listed above, the ROC armed forces and NSC are continuing to make improvements in a variety of military areas. Many of these advances have come about as a result of the annual "Han Guang Exercise" held since 2001. This war game is designed to improve Taipei's existing crisis management procedures when confronted with various possible PLA attacks. The exercise has helped enormously in strengthening political-military coordination and intramilitary operability.

Despite these advances, Taiwan's defense construction and military modernization remain hampered by the inability of the executive and legislative branches of government to agree on the most appropriate level and type of budget allocations and force structure. Without a clear agreement, observers in the United States and elsewhere will continue to fear the emergence of a significant military imbalance across the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, such a perception might eventually encourage China to use force to achieve its political objectives.