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CHINA'S NEW STYLE WARFARE

SPECIAL SECTION

The response to *Military Review's* call for papers on China as a peacetime competitor and adversary, as well as a potential wartime enemy of the United States, was exceptionally positive. In the following special section, we highlight several of those submissions. Look for more on China in subsequent issues of *Military Review* and future *Military Review* online exclusive articles at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil>.



(Photo by Manuel Joseph at Pexels; flag graphic courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Extract from the Annual Report to Congress “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2019”

Office of the Secretary of Defense

“The report shall address the current and probable future course of military-technological development of the People’s Liberation Army and the tenets and probable development of Chinese security strategy and military strategy, and of the military organizations and operational concepts supporting such development over the next 20 years. The report shall also address United States-China engagement and cooperation on security matters during the period covered by the report, including through United States-China military-to-military contacts, and the United States strategy for such engagement and cooperation in the future.”

What Is China’s Strategy?

China’s leaders have benefited from what they view as a “period of strategic opportunity” during the initial two decades of the 21st century to develop domestically and expand China’s “comprehensive national power.” Over the coming decades, they are focused on realizing a powerful and prosperous China that is equipped with a “world-class” military, securing China’s status as a great power with the aim of emerging as the preeminent power in the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2018, China continued harnessing an array of economic, foreign policy, and security tools to realize this vision. Ongoing state-led efforts, which China implements both at home and abroad and which often feature economic and diplomatic initiatives, also support China’s security and military objectives:

- China continues to implement long-term state-directed planning, such as “Made in China 2025” and other industrial development plans, which stress the need to replace imported technology with domestically produced technology. These plans present an economic challenge to nations that export high-tech products. These plans also directly support military modernization goals by stressing proprietary mastery of advanced dual-use technologies.
- China’s leaders seek to align civil and defense technology development to achieve greater efficiency, innovation, and growth. In recent years, China’s leaders elevated this initiative, known as Civil-Military Integration (CMI), to a national strategy that incentivizes the civilian sector to enter the defense market. The national CMI strategy focuses on hardware

modernization, education, personnel, investment, infrastructure, and logistics.

- China's leaders are leveraging China's growing economic, diplomatic, and military clout to establish regional preeminence and expand the country's international influence. China's advancement of projects such as the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative (OBOR) will probably drive military overseas basing through a perceived need to provide security for OBOR projects.
- China conducts influence operations against media, cultural, business, academic, and policy communities of the United States, other countries, and international institutions to achieve outcomes favorable to its security and military strategy objectives. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seeks to condition foreign and multilateral political establishments and public opinion to accept China's narrative surrounding its priorities like OBOR and South China Sea territorial and maritime claims.

Recognizing that programs such as "Made in China 2025" and OBOR have sparked concerns about China's intentions, China's leaders have softened their rhetoric when promoting these programs without altering the programs' fundamental strategic goals.

A Comprehensive Approach to Managing Regional Disputes

China seeks to secure its objectives without jeopardizing the regional stability that remains critical to the economic development that has helped the CCP maintain its monopoly on power. However, China's leaders employ tactics short of armed conflict to pursue China's strategic objectives through activities calculated to fall below the threshold of provoking armed conflict with the United States, its allies and partners, or others in the Indo-Pacific region. These tactics are particularly evident in China's

pursuit of its territorial and maritime claims in the South and East China Seas as well as along its borders with India and Bhutan. In 2018, China continued militarization in the South China Sea by placing anti-ship cruise missiles and long-range surface-to-air missiles on outposts in the Spratly Islands, violating a 2015 pledge by Chinese President Xi Jinping that "China does not intend to pursue militarization" of the Spratly Islands. China is also willing to employ coercive measures—both military and nonmilitary—to advance its interests and mitigate opposition from other countries.

Building a More Capable People's Liberation Army

In support of the goal to establish a powerful and prosperous China, China's leaders are committed to developing military power commensurate with that of a great power. Chinese military strategy documents highlight the requirement for a People's Liberation Army (PLA) able

to fight and win wars, deter potential adversaries, and secure Chinese national interests overseas, including a growing emphasis on the importance of the maritime and information domains, offensive air operations, long-distance mobility operations, and space and cyber operations.

In 2018, the PLA published a new *Outline of Training and Evaluation* that emphasized realistic and joint training across all warfare domains and included missions and tasks aimed at "strong military opponents." Training focused on war preparedness and improving the PLA's capability to win wars through realistic combat training, featuring multi-service exercises, long-distance maneuvers and mobility operations, and the increasing use of professional "blue force" opponents. The CCP also continued vigorous efforts to root out corruption in the armed forces.

The PLA also continues to implement the most comprehensive restructure in its history to become a force capable of conducting complex joint operations. The PLA strives to be capable of fighting and winning "informatized



local wars”—regional conflicts defined by real-time, data-networked command and control (C2) and precision strike. PLA modernization includes command and force structure reforms to improve operational flexibility and readiness for future deployments. As China’s global footprint and international interests have grown, its military modernization program has become more focused on investments and infrastructure to support a range of missions beyond China’s periphery, including power projection, sea lane security, counterpiracy, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and noncombatant evacuation operations.

China’s military modernization also targets capabilities with the potential to degrade core U.S. operational and technological advantages. China uses a variety of methods to acquire foreign military and dual-use technologies, including targeted foreign direct investment, cyber theft, and exploitation of private Chinese nationals’ access to these technologies, as well as harnessing its intelligence services, computer intrusions, and other illicit approaches. In 2018, Chinese efforts to acquire

sensitive, dual-use, or military-grade equipment from the United States included dynamic random access memory, aviation technologies, and antisubmarine warfare technologies.

Reorganizing for Operations along China’s Periphery

China continues to implement reforms associated with the establishment of its five theater commands, each of which is responsible for developing command



strategies and joint operational plans and capabilities relevant for specific threats, as well as responding to crises and safeguarding territorial sovereignty and stability. Taiwan persistently remains the PLA's main "strategic direction," one of the geographic areas the leadership identifies as having strategic importance. Other strategic directions include the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and China's borders with India and North Korea. China's overall strategy toward Taiwan continues to incorporate elements of both

persuasion and coercion to hinder the development of political attitudes in Taiwan favoring independence. Taiwan lost three additional diplomatic partners in 2018, and some international fora continued to deny the participation of representatives from Taiwan. Although China advocates for peaceful unification with Taiwan, China has never renounced the use of military force, and continues to develop and deploy advanced military capabilities needed for a potential military campaign.

For those interested in examining the entire report, please visit https://media.defense.gov/2019/May/02/2002127082/-1/-1/1/2019_CHINA_MILITARY_POWER_REPORT.pdf. ■

Soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army march 30 July 2017 during a military parade to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the foundation of the army at the Zhurihe military training base in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. (Photo courtesy of Voice of America)

