

Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission
Hearing on “*China’s Military Diplomacy and Overseas Security Activities*”

China’s Military Diplomacy: Trends and Implications

Dr. Phillip C. Saunders¹

Director, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs,
National Defense University

January 26, 2023

Co-Chairs Bartholomew and Schriver, distinguished Commissioners and staff, thank you for the opportunity to participate in today’s hearing on China’s military diplomacy and overseas security activities. It is an honor to be here alongside esteemed experts on this panel. I’ve been researching China’s military diplomacy for almost twenty years and have published a variety of previous studies.¹ My testimony today will draw heavily on the NDU database on Chinese military diplomacy, which originated with Ken Allen’s pioneering research and has been updated and maintained by the hard work of a string of talented research assistants and interns, including Ms. Melodie Ha, who will testify later in this hearing.

My testimony today focuses on painting the big picture of how the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) conducts military diplomacy, including its political objectives, types of activities and trends, the implications for the United States, and areas for future research. I’ve structured my testimony around the questions put forward by the commission staff.

What activities does China consider part of its military diplomacy? What purposes does the Chinese leadership seek to accomplish through overseas military activity?

The PLA defines military diplomacy as “external relationships pertaining to military and related affairs between countries and groups of countries, including military personnel exchange, military negotiations, arms control negotiations, military aid, military intelligence cooperation, military technology cooperation, international peacekeeping, military alliance activities, etc.”² Chinese military writings describe military diplomacy as a component of China’s broader diplomatic efforts and stress that military diplomacy “must always take the overall diplomatic goals of the country as its goal and always grasp the right direction.”³

Chinese military writings highlight the growing importance of military diplomacy. Stated objectives are derived from broader PLA missions and include supporting overall national foreign policy, protecting national sovereignty, advancing national interests, and shaping the international security environment.⁴ Xi Jinping cited several specific goals for Chinese military diplomacy in a January 2015 speech to the All-Military Diplomatic Work Conference [全军外事

¹ Phillip C. Saunders is Director of the National Defense University’s Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs and a Distinguished Research Fellow at the NDU’s Institute for National Strategic Studies. The views expressed are his alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

工作会议], including supporting overall national foreign policy, protecting national security, and promoting military construction (e.g. military force-building). Xi also highlighted the importance of protecting China's sovereignty, security, and development interests.⁵

Military academics reiterate these goals; a lecturer at the PLA Nanjing Political College notes that a major role of Chinese military diplomacy is to “support overall national foreign policy and the new era military strategic direction,” and other scholars highlight “shaping the international security environment and promoting military modernization” as additional objectives.⁶ In addition to these openly acknowledged objectives, the PLA uses military diplomacy to gather intelligence, learn from more advanced militaries, and benchmark PLA capabilities against other militaries.⁷

For analytic purposes, Chinese military diplomacy objectives can be divided into strategic and operational categories. Strategic objectives include supporting overall PRC diplomacy by providing public goods and engaging key countries and shaping the security environment by displaying or deploying PLA capabilities. Operational goals include collecting intelligence on foreign militaries and potential operating areas, learning new skills and tactics, techniques, and procedures, and benchmarking PLA capabilities against other militaries, as the PLA has no recent combat experience. Table 1 summarizes how different types of military diplomacy activities advance different Chinese objectives.

Much of the PLA's current military diplomatic activity is focused on protecting and advancing specific Chinese strategic interests and managing areas of concern.⁸ Chinese foreign policy emphasizes managing strategic relations with great powers, such as the United States and Russia, maintaining good relations with countries on China's periphery, and engaging developing countries.⁹ Chinese military diplomacy similarly emphasizes interactions with the United States, Russia, countries in the Indo-Pacific region, and engaging developing countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.¹⁰ China is increasingly dependent on oil and natural gas imported from the Middle East and Africa; the PLA Navy's counterpiracy presence in the Gulf of Aden facilitates strategic ties in the Middle East and Africa, helps guarantee China's energy security, and provides operational experience relevant to protecting China's sea lines of communication. Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy contribution is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); PLA interactions with militaries in Europe, Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia reinforce this effort.¹¹

Military diplomacy is a means of strengthening bilateral relationships, not an end in itself. Because military diplomacy serves China's overall foreign policy, trends in military-to-military relations can indicate the relative priority China places on particular countries and regions. The PLA's military diplomatic engagements also serve as an indicator of the overall health of relationships between China and other countries. When bilateral relations are good, military diplomatic engagements tend to increase; when relations are bad, engagements decrease or stop. Military diplomacy is a two-way street: both China and its partners must agree on what activities to conduct and can leverage engagements as foreign policy tools. Willingness of both sides to increase the frequency and substance of military diplomatic engagements indicates an improving bilateral relationship; cancellations or refusals to engage are signs of trouble.

Table 1: Chinese Military Diplomatic Activities and Objectives

Activity	Strategic Goals		Operational Goals	
	Support PRC Diplomacy	Shape Security Environment	Collect Intelligence	Learn New Skills and Benchmarking
Senior-Level Visits				
Hosted	x	x	x	
Abroad	x	x	x	
Dialogues				
Bilateral	x	x	x	
Multilateral	x	x	x	
Military Exercises				
Bilateral	x	x	x	x
Multilateral	x	x	x	x
Naval Port Calls				
Escort Task Force (ETF)	x	x	x	x
Non-Escort Task Force	x	x	x	
Functional Exchanges	x		x	x
Non-Traditional Security Operations				
HA/DR	x	x	x	x
Peacekeeping	x	x	x	x

What are the activities in which China participates most often and the regions to which it dedicates the most attention? Has this approach changed over the past two decades, and if so, to what would you attribute this change?

Figure 1 draws upon the NDU China Military Diplomacy database to show the total volume of military exercises, PLA Navy port calls, and senior-level visits in the years 2002-2021. An examination of the available data yields several observations. First, senior-level meetings represent the overwhelming majority of PLA military diplomatic engagements. Beginning in 2009, naval port calls and international military exercises start to make up a growing share of total interactions, but senior-level meetings still represent the bulk of Chinese military-to-military interactions. Second, total interactions peak in 2015, and start to decline over the subsequent years. This can be attributed to the fact that Xi Jinping’s military reforms started in 2016, and the PLA dedicated more time and resources to internal matters than to outside engagements. Third, China’s five-year political cycle can be observed through this data by comparing engagement levels in years with CCP party congresses (2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017) with off-cycle years; the volume of senior-level visits usually drops in years with a party congress. Finally, with the global Covid-19 pandemic, all interactions drop precipitously in 2020 and 2021 due to restricted travel and closing borders.

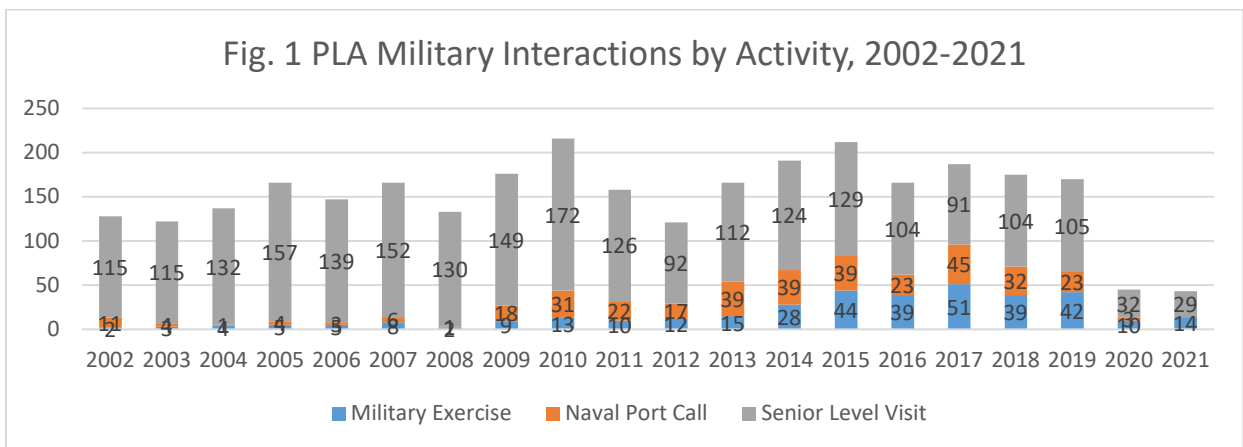


Figure 2 breaks out PLA military diplomatic engagements by geographic region. The data shows that Asia is the highest priority region for Chinese military diplomacy, with Europe in second place and Africa a distant third.¹²

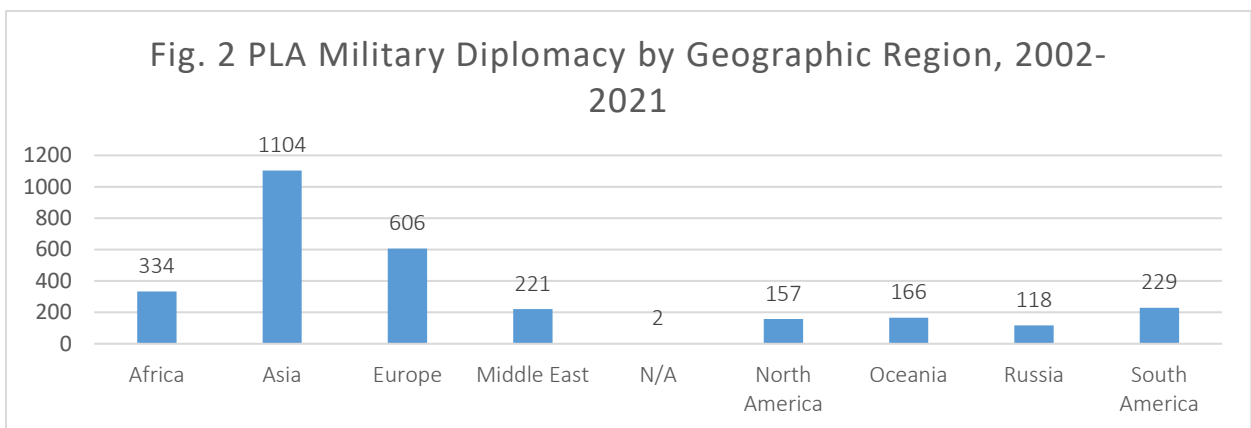
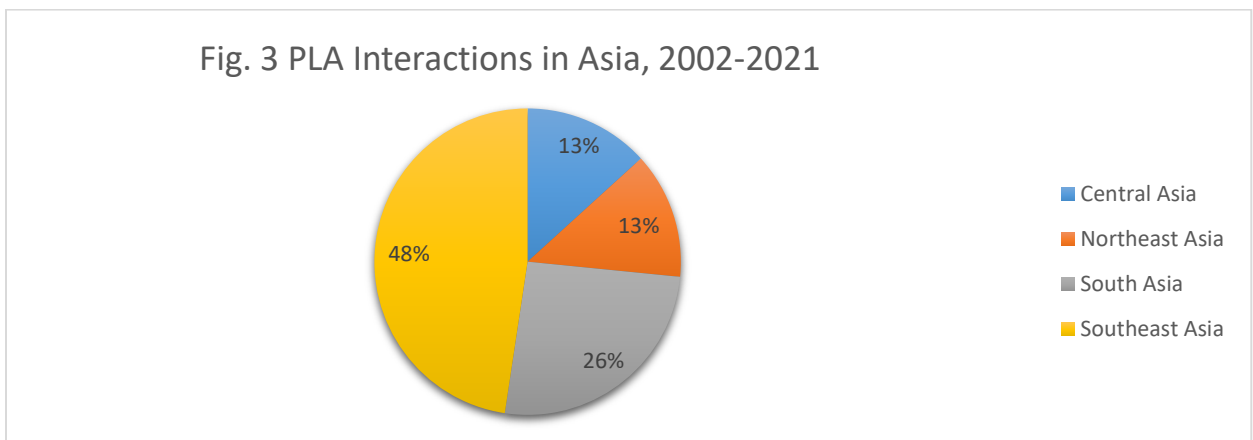


Figure 3 breaks out PLA military diplomatic interactions in Asia by sub-region. Southeast Asia is the top priority for China, despite – or perhaps because of – its territorial disputes with numerous countries in the sub-region. South Asia is the second priority, with Pakistan making up a large percentage of the interactions. Pakistan depends on China for security assistance to balance India and has a military with extensive combat experience, leading China to see Pakistan as a useful partner. China’s sea lines of communication to the Middle East and Africa pass through the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, giving Southeast Asia and South Asia additional strategic importance in terms of China’s imports of oil and natural gas. Despite Northeast Asia’s strategic importance, the PLA has limited interactions with this sub-region due to historical strains in relations with Japan, South Korea’s reluctance to engage in military exercises with China, and a cautious PRC approach toward military activities with North Korea.



In addition to the military diplomatic activities described above, the PLA maintains 130 military attaché or military representative offices abroad and hosts 116 foreign military attachés in Beijing. China has established 54 defense consultation and dialogue mechanisms with 41 countries and international organizations.¹³ The PLA regularly participates in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, conducts Human Assistance/Disaster Relief operations, and has maintained a three ship escort task force in the Gulf of Aden to conduct counter-piracy operations since December 2008. The PLA describes these activities as providing public goods that contribute to regional and global security, but the PLA’s presence when conducting these operations provides numerous opportunities to interact with foreign militaries in the form of exercises and port calls.

Has this approach changed over the past two decades, and if so, to what would you attribute this change?

As Figure 1 shows, the percentage of exercises and port calls in the PLA’s military diplomacy has gradually increased over time, and the percentage of senior-level visits has gradually decreased. This likely reflects increasing PLA confidence that it can conduct exercises with foreign militaries without embarrassment and its desire to learn lessons from foreign militaries that can improve PLA operational capabilities. The PLAN’s Gulf of Aden counter-piracy deployments (and the establishment of a replenishment base in Djibouti in 2017) also made it easier and cheaper for the PLAN to conduct port calls after each escort task force’s operational deployment.

The decline in senior-level engagements likely reflects tighter CCP control of the military and regulations that place strict limits on the ability of senior PLA leaders to travel abroad unless their portfolios explicitly include engagement of foreign military counterparts. (Such officers include the Minister of Defense, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Department, and the leaders of the CMC Office of International Military Cooperation.) This has been exacerbated by anti-corruption regulations and campaigns that limit and dis-incentivize foreign travel. The state of U.S.-China relations is also a factor; the volume of U.S.-China military interactions has dropped dramatically since its peak in 2015.¹⁴ The net result has been less overseas travel by senior PLA officers; this has been partially offset by increased hosting of foreign military counterparts in China.

Another change is that after initial suspicion, the PLA now participates in many more senior-level multilateral dialogues and meetings. This includes regular participation in high-level meetings organized by ASEAN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and BRICS, along with attendance at the Shangri-la Dialogue organized by the International Institute of Strategic Studies. PLA leaders will typically conduct short bilateral meetings with foreign counterparts on the margins of these meetings and will often conduct bilateral visits with the host nation and several neighboring countries on the same trip. China has also initiated its own multilateral dialogue mechanisms such as the Beijing Xiangshan Forum (upgraded to include participation of government officials in 2014), the China Africa Peace and Security Forum (in 2019), and the China-Latin America Senior Defense Forum (four meetings since 2012).

The COVID pandemic has also had a major impact on Chinese military diplomacy. PLAN port calls essentially ceased after March 2020 and the volume of senior-level visits and exercises also declined dramatically. PLA leaders have attempted to substitute phone calls and video meetings with foreign counterparts for face-to-face interactions, with some success.¹⁵ As China begins to open more fully from its “zero-COVID” lockdown, military diplomacy activities are likely to increase, but the PLA is likely to continue to employ phone calls and video meetings as a more convenient complement to face-to-face encounters.

Which organizations and actors within the PLA and CCP leadership are responsible for planning and coordinating military diplomacy?

The primary organization involved in formulating and executing PLA military diplomacy is the Central Military Commission (CMC)’s Office for International Military Coordination (OIMC; 国际军事合作办公室).¹⁶ The OIMC is a corps-leader grade organization that reports to Xi Jinping through the Defense Minister. Its operations are guided by the Regulations on International Military Cooperation (国际军事合作工作条例) that entered into force on March 1, 2021, which reflect Xi’s broad political guidance and specific instructions on how military diplomacy should be conducted and the contributions it should make to broader national goals. The OIMC is organized along both regional and functional lines, including bureaus that manage PLA relations with Asia, North America and Oceania, Eurasia, probably West Asia and Africa, and possibly Latin America.¹⁷ Major General Ci Guowei (慈国巍), a Russia-Eurasia specialist, became Director of the OIMC in December 2018, though it is unclear whether he still holds that position. Major General Huang Xueping (黄雪平) has been the OIMC deputy director with the U.S. portfolio since November 2017; Major General Song Yanchao (宋延超) has also been an OIMC deputy director since 2017.

The Defense Minister has an important role in formulating and executing Chinese military diplomacy, including responsibility for overseeing the CMC/OIMC and for coordinating with other parts of the Chinese foreign affairs system. The Defense Minister also holds the PLA seat on the CCP Central Foreign Affairs Commission, which coordinates overall Chinese foreign policy. Despite having more limited authority in the Chinese system than most of his foreign counterparts, the Defense Minister meets regularly with foreign civilian ministers of defense and senior military leaders and usually represents the PLA in high-level international meetings. General Wei Fenghe (魏凤和) is the current defense minister and state councilor but will be replaced by General Li Shangfu (李尚福) at the 14th National People's Congress meeting in March 2023.

The CMC/Joint Staff Department also plays an important role in executing military diplomacy, even though it no longer directly supervises the OIMC. Chief of the Joint Staff Liu Zhenli (刘振立) represents the PLA at some counterpart dialogues, including with the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. One of the Deputy Chiefs of General Staff typically holds the foreign affairs and intelligence portfolio, with responsibilities for leading some security dialogues and other engagements with foreign counterparts. Lieutenant General Shao Yuanming (邵元明) has been the Deputy Chief of Staff with this portfolio since August 2017.

PLA military service commanders sometimes participate in military diplomacy by visiting foreign countries and hosting foreign counterparts. This can include participation in international meetings, such as the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, and hosting service specific events, such as the PLA Navy's celebration of its 70th birthday in 2019. However, the role of service commanders and the two CMC vice chairs in military diplomacy appears to have declined in recent years. Conversely, Theater Commanders are beginning to play a role in military diplomacy with some countries, especially ones relevant to contingencies in their respective areas of responsibility. For example, South Korea has military hotlines with the air and naval components in Northern Theater Command. Deputy Theater Commanders are also often present at China-Russia military exercises.

What are the implications of China's military diplomacy for the United States and its allies? To what extent does China's military diplomacy aim to undermine the United States' and other countries' relative position abroad?

Military diplomacy has emerged as an important arena of U.S.-China strategic competition. This competition is most intense in the Indo-Pacific, a region of critical importance to both the United States and China. However, it is also evident in other regions of the world such as Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Most countries have some kind of military-to-military relationship with China in parallel with their military ties with the United States.

The United States and China will increasingly use the tools of military diplomacy—security assistance, military training, opportunities to participate in professional military education programs, senior-level engagements, security dialogues, and military exercises—to strengthen military ties and increase their influence with third countries. It is possible for countries to have good relations with both the United States and China, but if U.S. and Chinese demands on third countries are irreconcilable, then influence will have a zero-sum character.

The United States brings important strengths to the competition—U.S. weapons are generally superior to their Chinese counterparts (although more expensive) and the quality of U.S. military training and educational courses outpaces their Chinese competitors. China often counters with lower prices and the ability to train larger numbers of foreign soldiers, albeit to a lower standard of performance.

The United States has another advantage that is harder to quantify. The CCP's tight control over the PLA forces senior PLA officers to mouth talking points (and sometimes speak obvious falsehoods) and limits their ability to talk frankly and form personal relationships with foreign counterparts. Moreover, China is generally reluctant to bear costs and risks on behalf of its foreign partners; there is a reason why Beijing prefers nonbinding strategic partnerships to binding alliance commitments. With many countries, these factors place a ceiling on what China can accomplish via military diplomacy.

China appears to sometimes try to use military diplomacy to undermine U.S. alliances and partnerships, but generally has had little success. Beijing is unwilling to replace U.S. security guarantees (and is sometimes viewed as a direct threat to the sovereignty and security interests of its foreign partners). This is a huge obstacle to overcome. The U.S. military has significant advantages in both style and substance when engaging foreign militaries; it will need to capitalize on its strengths and seek to address its areas of weakness.

U.S. policymakers should not seek to dissuade allies and partners from engaging with the PLA as a part of their broader China policy. Instead, U.S. policy should focus on limiting the PLA's ability to use military diplomacy to improve its operational capabilities or to build strategic relationships that give it access to overseas ports and bases. The United States should also insist that allies and partners be careful to not teach the PLA tactics, techniques, and procedures that they have learned from the United States and to be cautious about conducting combat exercises with PLA counterparts.

Many countries on China's periphery are concerned about balancing their economic relations with China and their security relations with the United States. Engagement with the PLA is often part of their broader strategy for managing a complicated relationship with China; many countries would be reluctant to cut off engagement with the PLA due to U.S. pressure. Washington should allow countries like Australia and Singapore to use symbolic military engagements with the PLA to balance their substantive security cooperation with the United States. In that vein, the United States should continue to build partner capacity and stress interoperability with allies and partners. These are areas where the United States has a substantial comparative advantage over the PLA and should be emphasized as Washington considers how best to leverage its own military diplomacy as an asset in strategic competition with China.

What are the biggest remaining knowledge gaps on this topic? Are there areas that policymakers should pay greater attention to?

In the open-source world, there are major gaps in knowledge of how many foreign students the PLA educates and trains from each country. Overall numbers of students educated and trained in PLA institutions are reported in summary form, but not individual totals from each country or what foreign military students are studying. Much of this information could be collected from China's foreign partners with appropriate research and engagement efforts and

compared with the number of students and content of U.S. educational and training programs aimed at foreign militaries.

The United States should also seek qualitative assessments from third country militaries about the relative value of military education and training at U.S. institutions and PLA institutions. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many foreign military officers have attended training courses in both the United States and China. Systematic efforts to learn about their perceptions of U.S. strengths and weaknesses compared to China could be useful in helping U.S. military training and educational institutions raise their game.

Finally, although SIPRI systematically collects and analyzes information about PRC arms sales¹⁸, there is less information and recent analysis of the PRC arms sales process and the PLA's role in arms sales decisions and support to foreign militaries that purchase Chinese weapons. Although there are some good earlier studies, these do not fully account for major changes in the PRC defense industry and the PLA's major reorganization in 2016. Similar research could be done to systematically examine the content, methods, and effectiveness of Chinese security assistance programs. A better understanding will be increasingly important as China becomes more competitive in international arms markets and engages in more ambitious security assistance efforts in the future.¹⁹

The Commission is mandated to make policy recommendations to Congress based on its hearings and other research. What are your recommendations for Congressional action related to the topic of your testimony?

Chinese military diplomacy is relatively tractable to open-source analysis, especially because the PLA likes to tout its cooperation with foreign militaries and China's foreign partners are often an accessible source of information about Chinese activities. That said, this work is relatively laborious and often involves cross-checking sources in English, Chinese, and other languages. Increased U.S. government efforts to systematically collect and translate reports on Chinese military diplomacy activities—and creative ways to make such information available to a wider range of researchers inside and outside the U.S. government—could translate into better quality research.

Relatedly, although the U.S. government has greatly strengthened efforts to engage foreign partners on China issues over the last two administrations, it could make a particular effort to discuss the specific challenges and opportunities involved in military relations with China with third countries. This could include discussions of Chinese military diplomacy objectives, best practices for negotiating with the PLA, counter-intelligence and operational security training, and comparison of national experiences in engaging the PLA, including in security dialogues and on issues such as crisis communications and confidence-building measures. Helping other militaries learn to engage the PLA more effectively while protecting sensitive information would be a useful addition to other forms of U.S. diplomatic engagement on China issues.

¹ Phillip C. Saunders, *China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2006); Kenneth Allen, Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen, *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003-2016: Trends and Implications*, China Strategic Perspectives 11 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, July 2017); Phillip C. Saunders and Jiunwei Shyy, "China's Military Diplomacy," in Scott D. McDonald and Michael C. Burgoyne, eds., *China's*

Global Influence: Perspectives and Recommendations (Honolulu, HI: Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, September 2019), 207-227; Phillip C. Saunders, “China’s Global Military-Security Interactions,” in David Shambaugh, ed., *China and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 181-207; and Phillip C. Saunders and Melodie Ha, “China’s Military Diplomacy,” paper presented at “The PLA in a World of Strategic Competition with the United States,” CAPS-RAND-NDU-USIP PLA Conference, Arlington, VA, November 18-19, 2022.

² All-Military Military Affairs Management Committee [全军军事管理委员会], *PLA Military Terminology* [中国人民解放军军语] (Beijing: Academy of Military Sciences Press, 2011), 1063.

³ Deng Bibo [邓碧波], “Major Achievements and Basic Experience in China’s Military Diplomacy in the New Era” [新时代中国军事外交的重大成就及基本经验], *China Military Science* [国军科学] 182 (February 2022), 54-63.

⁴ See Allen, Saunders, and Chen, *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003-2016: Trends and Implications*.

⁵ Yang Lina and Chang Xuemei, eds., “Xi Jinping: Start a New Phase of Military Diplomacy [习近平：进一步开创军事外交新局面],” *Xinhua*, January 29, 2015, available at <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2015/0129/c64094-26474947.html>>.

⁶ Jin Canrong and Wang Bo, “On Theory of Military Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics [有关中国特色军事外交的理论思考],” *Pacific Studies Report* [太平洋学报] no. 5 (2015), 22, available at <www.cssn.cn/jsx/201601/P020160104312124234558.pdf>; Chu Yongzheng, “New Ideas and Changes in China’s Military Diplomacy” [中国军事外交的新理念新变化], *International Studies Reference* [国际研究参考], no. 8 (2018), 30-46; Wan Fayang, *Chinese Military Diplomacy—Theory and Practice* [中国军事外交理论与实践] (Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2015), 294–309; Chen Zhiyong, “Retrospect and Thinking of the 60 Years of Military Diplomacy in New China [新中国 60 年军事外交回顾与思考],” *China Military Science* [中国军事科学] 5 (2009), 35–36; “Chinese Military Diplomacy and Military Messaging to the Outside [中国军事外交中的军事对外传播],” *PLA Daily*, January 2, 2014, available at <www.81.cn/jkhc/2014-01/02/content_5716684.htm>.

⁷ See Allen, Saunders, John Chen, *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003-2016*.

⁸ For an overview of the geographical distribution of Chinese foreign policy interests, see Phillip C. Saunders, *China’s Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2006). Also see U.S. Department of Defense, *Assessment on U.S. Defense Implications of China’s Expanding Global Access* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 2018), available at <<https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jan/14/2002079292/-1/-1/1/EXPANDING-GLOBAL-ACCESS-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>>.

⁹ See Xi Jinping, “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects,” Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, October 16, 2022.

¹⁰ For a treatment of Chinese military diplomacy that follows this schema and explicitly connects military diplomacy to foreign policy goals, see Chu, “New Ideas and Changes in China’s Military Diplomacy.” China’s 2019 Defense white paper gives a similar priority ranking but reverses the order of the United States and Russia and places defense relations with European countries after relations with countries on China’s periphery. *China’s National Defense in the New Era* (Beijing, State Council Information Office, 24 July 2019). China’s Asia-Pacific white paper provides numerous examples of the role of military diplomacy in advancing China’s regional policy and relations with the United States and Russia. See State Council Information Office, *China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, January 11, 2017, available at <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-01/11/c_135973695.htm>.

¹¹ Peter Cai, *Understanding China’s Belt and Road Initiative* (Sydney: Lowy Institute, 2017), available at <www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/understanding-belt-and-road-initiative>; Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative: Strategic Rationales, Risks, and Implications*, China Strategic Perspectives 12 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, October 2017); and Jonathan E. Hillman, *The Emperor’s New Road: China and the Project of the Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

¹² The two N/A entries in Figure 2 are with the United Nations on peacekeeping issues.

¹³ *China’s National Defense in the New Era*, 44. DOD says the PLA has attachés in “over 110 offices worldwide”; the difference may reflect attachés accredited to multiple countries. *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China, 2022* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2022), 136.

¹⁴ See Saunders and Ha, “China’s Military Diplomacy.”

¹⁵ See Kenneth Allen, “Early Warning Brief: The PLA’s Military Diplomacy Under COVID-19,” *China Brief* 21, No. 13 (June 21, 2021).

¹⁶ Chad Sbragia and Kenneth W. Allen, “Managing the PLA’s Military Diplomacy: Key Institutions and Personnel,” *China Brief* 22, No. 21 (November 18, 2022), 6-17. Technically speaking, there is also a Ministry of National Defense organization with the same title and personnel.

¹⁷ See Sbragia and Allen, “Managing the PLA’s Military Diplomacy” and compare with the pre-reform organization of the MND/FAO described in Eric Hagt, “The Rise of PLA Diplomacy,” in Phillip C. Saunders and Andrew Scobell, eds., *PLA Influence on China’s National Security Policymaking* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 223-224.

¹⁸ See Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database*, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>

¹⁹ One illustration of what is possible is Jonah Victor, “China’s Security Assistance in Global Competition: The Case of Africa,” in Joel Wuthnow, et al, *The PLA Beyond Borders: Chinese Military Operations in Regional and Global Context* (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2021), 263-293.