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China's activities abroad, including the military and security aspects, are diverse, varying widely from contrary to U.S. interests to advantageous developments. Indeed, how one characterizes China's military and security influence is often a function of one's leaning, either toward "China bashing" or "Panda hugging." I have tried in this examination of several aspects of China's military and security activities outside China to be evenhanded, to explore selected actions by China to see what should cause concern, what we might ignore, and, perhaps most important, what we want to foster or encourage in a wider role in the world for emerging China.

Unquestionably, there is danger from China's exploitation of its contacts with the world so as to gain military advantage, obtain intelligence, and expand influence in objectionable ways. There are also dangers, risks and missed opportunities stemming from neglect by the U.S. and others to draw China more closely into the orb of nations that are responsible stakeholders, from failure to reinforce, encourage and influence China so that it is not inclined to be a threat to its neighbors and the U.S., and from an insufficient innovation in emphasizing the interests we share with China and to manage well the areas where we have differences.

It is not enough to identify and decry areas of expanding Chinese military and security influence. We must, as difficult as it might be, attempt to transform challenges into opportunities, competition into cooperation, and encounters into reciprocal engagement. Our goal is not to confirm troublesome factors but to make them less troublesome—to shift the negatives to the positive, as best we can. Of course, in some areas, we are likely to have to counter Chinese influence. This is a complex endeavor but one upon which the future of our countries depends.

Will the Panda, grown wealthy, be a threat or partner? I start with a tough question. Will China, emerged, prosperous, and more powerful, be a more dangerous China—a threat to its neighbors, to us, and to its citizens or, alternatively, be a key constructive member of the community of nations, a strategic partner of the U.S., an example of competent (albeit not democratic) governance, and a responsible stakeholder in the region and the world? These stark alternative outcomes—a dangerous China as a potential adversary or a cooperative China as a potential partner—are not preordained but rather outcomes that evolve as China modernizes and reforms (in its own way). The outcome is something that *we can influence*—even if we cannot expect to *determine* the outcome and may wish to avoid suggesting that we are *shaping*¹ China to our purposes, just as Americans do not want to feel China is shaping U.S. security policy. *Influence* may be the better, the more diplomatic, choice of word—a good choice as long as we recognize that influence is a two-way street, including U.S.-PRC relations.

¹ Use of the term *shaping* smacks, for some observers, of American hubris.

I offer two highly relevant assertions concerning our approach to China's expanding influence:

- (1) The most important national transformation underway today anywhere on the globe is that of China and its military.
- (2) The most important bilateral relationship in the world today is that between the U.S. and China: the richest and the most populous countries on Earth.

I have not heard others make the first assertion. The second one, I first made in late 2000, drawing the wrath of some who were about to become key members of the NSC and State Department for the first George W. Bush administration. Incidentally, then presidential candidate and now Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton included the second in an article in *Foreign Affairs*².

The point is that whatever we call our involvement with that country, we want to be involved; we want to be a part of China's strategic development; we want to be *engaged*—implying, of course, Chinese engagement with the U.S. and concomitant expanded influence. We do not wish to be spectators, snipers, or just distant critics. We know that complications in the relationship will persist. For example, we disagree on arms and support for Taiwan, on trade and human rights issues, and on methods of governance and jurisprudence. We know that countries spy on each other, especially if there is much to be learned and that military conflict between them is a prospect. Nevertheless, can we envision, despite all complications, a cooperative future? Might there be a measure of reality in what I have come to call my “bumper sticker,” employed whimsically in a campaign to encourage Sino-U.S. maritime cooperation? It reads optimistically: PLA Navy and US Navy: Partners on the High Seas. Was the PLA Navy's unprecedented deployment in January to the Gulf of Aden a first step? The U.S. Commander of forces in the Pacific seems enthusiastic. Admiral Keating said in February, "It's our desire to have more exchanges with the Chinese. We want to do more with them."³ Admiral Keating seems clearly to favor an expansion of Chinese military activities with U.S. forces.

Weighing Contradictions in Relations with China

Rollercoaster bilateral relations. U.S.-China relations, in addition to the major differences concerning Taiwan (as well as the less volatile areas of trade and human rights), have featured some significant ups and downs over the decades since the opening to China in 1972. To start with the downs, all of us will remember Tiananmen Square in 1989 (especially today's vice chairman, retired Colonel Wortzel, who was there in Beijing on the scene). Most of us might recall PLA Second Artillery short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) impacting off the coast of Taiwan in the mid-90s, the precision bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the

² Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Security and Opportunity for the Twenty-first Century,” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, p. 13. Clinton wrote: “Our relationship with China will be the most important bilateral relationship in the world in this century.” I would quibble only with the verb tense; it has already become the most important bilateral relationship. I was guilty of the same error when I wrote in the Autumn 2007 edition of *China Security*: “...the Sino-U.S relationship... will undoubtedly be America's most important strategic relationship in the 21st century.” The article is entitled “China and the United States on the High Seas,” p. 9.

³ Mark McDonald and Keith Bradsher, “Optimism Grows for U.S.-China Talks,” *New York Times*, February 18, 2009; http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/19/washington/19pacific.html?_r=1 [The article was available online and was dated Feb. 18, despite the date in this URL.]

mid-air collision off Hainan in 2001 of a PLA Navy fighter and a U.S. Navy EP-3, the awkward denial by Beijing in 2007 of U.S. Navy requests for port calls in Hong Kong, and the severing of military contacts in October 2008 after Washington announced impending arms sales to Taiwan. Some of us also recall the peaks of the rollercoaster ride; for example, innumerable exchanges of visits by senior military officers and officials, the four significant pre-Tiananmen Foreign Military Sales cases, the USAF Thunderbirds performing over the Great Wall in the 1980s, highly successful PLA Navy ship visits in the 1990s to Hawaii, San Diego, and Seattle, and many visits to Chinese ports by U.S. Navy ships, extraordinary cooperation in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear weapon program, and 2006 PLAN-USN exercises at sea together. This incomplete list chronicles only some key military and security aspects of the bilateral relationship; ignored prominently, for example, are the strategic dialogue and senior economic dialogue. This list does, however, amply demonstrate that the relationship has been stunningly and repeatedly punctuated by these events and many others like them, creating a rollercoaster effect and making it difficult for either side to develop trust and confidence in the other and to play a positive role in influencing the other in mutually desirable ways.

Engage but hedge. The U.S. and China both appear sincerely to want to cooperate and engage; yet we both must *hedge* in order to be militarily ready to deter or defeat each other. The ancient septuagenarian observers of my generation have become inured or at least accustomed to the seeming contradiction of simultaneously engaging with a modernizing China and hedging against an emerging China obsessed with Taiwan. What is new is an influential China that now increasingly must be taken seriously militarily—as is dramatically illustrated by the existing submarine-launched cruise-missile threat to U.S. Navy forces and the impending ballistic missile designed to hit ships at sea, as I have described in detail to the commission in previous testimony.

Engaging: in general and with a Congressional imprimatur. However, the other component of the relationship, bilateral cooperation, also is supported by solid—and, in this case—encouraging examples. The Six-Party Talks and the strategic economic dialogue are prime examples of beneficial expanding Chinese clout or influence, but engagement and cooperation should not be limited to these areas. As my bumper sticker suggests, I advocate sweeping maritime cooperation, including the Global Maritime Partnership of U.S. Navy origin that would encompass naval cooperation. Some suggest that naval cooperation may run afoul of the FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act. I will turn to that issue below, but one form of cooperative military and naval effort is specifically permitted by this act: humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) exercises and operations. Thus, a window was intentionally and specifically left wide open.

PLA-PaCom talks but PLAN hesitant. Representatives of the U.S. Pacific Command have met several times with the PLA to discuss cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, an idea that originated with Presidents Clinton and Jiang Zemin. I must leave it to PaCom to speak to the status of those talks, involving land operations, but, when I posed the question of PLA involvement in such operations in other countries to a well-informed Chinese flag officer, he said the PLA excelled in providing assistance and relief domestically and that the U.S. excelled abroad. The PRC naval attaché in Washington said the PLA Navy was both inexperienced and not well equipped to carry out such missions. I suggest that the PLAN is now well suited to these tasks, having recently acquired a large amphibious warfare ship and a

hospital ship, both capable of helicopter operations. The PLAN also has numerous helicopter-carrying destroyers and frigates and many medium-sized and large amphibious ships (e.g., LSTs) that could be utilized. I have seen no PLAN enthusiasm to undertake such missions alone or in cooperation with the U.S. Navy. For those who favor cooperative efforts in this area, as Admiral Keating indicated he does, it seems that our task is not to curb some expansive Chinese effort to garner influence but rather to overcome PLAN reluctance and trepidation to join the experienced and vaunted U.S. Navy. I recommend when circumstances permit that we propose a bilateral HA/DR maritime exercise with the PLAN to build confidence and overcome any apprehension.

Dual purpose: providing aid and building trust. Humanitarian assistance operations and the more general and overarching category of maritime cooperation, significantly encompassing anti-piracy operations such as China joined in January in the Gulf of Aden, provide succor, support, and even direct protection to the devastated, threatened, and victimized, but there is another critical aspect to such engagements. They also serve as building blocks in constructing a framework of trust and confidence between the countries and navies that has the further potential for reducing the need to hedge, of replacing or at least diminishing the hedging component of the relationship with added engagement. In short, engagement and cooperation have the bonus effect of possessing the potential for developing understanding and building confidence and trust that can make conflict less likely. Former Pacific Commander and now Director of National Intelligence Admiral Blair has referred to this as building habits of cooperation.

Does cooperation serve our interests? It is understandably troubling to some that China, a potential adversary in some scenarios, would benefit from U.S.-China maritime cooperation, especially in sea-lane security and anti-piracy. In addition to the direct benefits of such collaboration (learning from the U.S. Navy, protection of ocean commerce, and relief from tasks that could exceed PLAN capabilities), substantive cooperation with the United States would confer on China further prestige and legitimacy as a regional, even global, player. Benefits might accrue in other ways; e.g., Beijing's successful use of soft power in the region would likely be strengthened by PLA Navy good work in aiding victims of disasters. We should ask seriously whether we want these benefits to accrue to China. If China's strategic intentions are suspect, with the possibility of detrimental effects to U.S. interests, then how should we approach cooperation?

China will likely emerge as a global power regardless of our concerns. There is, of course, no guaranteed, wholly satisfying answer to this nettlesome question of how to approach cooperation. But it is important to remember the positive factors in engagement and the opportunities through engagement to alter worst-case scenarios even if they prove to be realistic. Although cooperation in general and maritime cooperation in particular may serve Beijing's interests, such cooperation is highly unlikely to determine the success or failure of China's emergence, which depends far more on China's own comprehensive national development than cooperation with a United States that is considered a questionable partner. Absent large-scale domestic upheaval, China's rise is likely to be essentially inexorable—certainly not dependent on engagement and the doling out of American support. One might turn this issue on its head and suggest that failure to be genuinely supportive of an emerging China could redound against U.S. interests. To choose a vivid current example, China, holding huge amounts of the U.S. debt, could in this time

of economic difficulty be antagonistic and even tangibly harmful to the U.S. Yet neither Beijing nor Washington is contemplating ways to bring further economic woes down on the other.

Cooperating despite differences over Taiwan issue. Even with the Taiwan issue unresolved, cooperation while hedging makes sense. Maritime engagement with China and the PLAN would give the U.S. Pacific Command and Pacific Fleet an added link for operational cooperation in the region and a means in this sensitive arena to maintain personal contacts and close communications both routinely and during a crisis. It would reinforce the idea of cooperation despite continuing differences across the Strait. Beijing and Washington would demonstrate that China and the United States have common interests that go beyond this limited sphere. Put another way, the Taiwan issue is not the whole story. The macro-view of U.S.-PRC relations encompasses many areas of strategic alignment and cooperative efforts on profoundly important international security issues—where expanded Chinese influence is not feared but welcomed.

American engagement with more expansive China across the spectrum from regional security to maritime issues, including the ripe area of cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA-DR), would provide connections to facilitate far better comprehension of China's national and maritime strategy, intentions, and ambitions. It bears repeating that this also affords the potential for favorably, as a partner in the region and world, influencing their direction. In other words, the United States might be able to exercise some influence on China's future decisions and do so, not as a threatening superpower (or worse a blustering former superpower) but rather as a partner or fellow responsible stakeholder among the community of nations.

If China is a winner, do we wish to be on the winning or losing side? From an economic and political perspective, China and the United States are bound together: deeply interdependent in trade and societal matters (education, immigration, human rights, intellectual property rights) and inextricably linked with respect to security and related areas including proliferation, regional stability, protection of ocean commerce, pollution and climate change, etc. Although many in the United States may harbor doubts about the desirability of a strong and more influential China, if that status is to be achieved by China in any case, it would seem preferable for the ascent to have occurred with the U.S. and China as partners in maritime cooperation and other areas. We do not wish to be seen for the remainder of this new century as an opponent of the emergence of China—as China has viewed many Western countries for most of the last century and a half.

PRC-U.S. Military Ties Disrupted and the PLA Navy Goes Abroad in Anger

Severed military ties. Washington announced in October 2008 impending arms sales to Taiwan. Beijing replied by severing military contacts, which, as a practical matter, meant cancelling several visits by senior PLA officers and U.S. officers and officials. Beijing's reaction was seen by most observers as moderate. The author was first told in mid-January by well-informed Chinese that Beijing was awaiting "the proper time" to end the disruption.

An opportunity to exercise the engagement option. Amidst this latest "diplomatic" disruption, Beijing surprised Washington and the world in December with a decision to send three PLA Navy ships on an anti-piracy mission across the Indian Ocean to the Gulf of Aden—off Somalia—where U.S. Navy ships and those of other navies were already

operating. Chinese spokesmen emphasized the international (rather than wronged-China) aspects of the decision and ignored the severance of military ties with the U.S., raising hopes for prompt restoration. Possibly most important for the commission's interest, a senior colonel from the National Defense University in Beijing offered a rationale for what a China Institute of International Studies think-tanker described as the first time in modern history that the nation's navy carried out a mission outside Chinese waters.

Our future military cooperation with other countries will still be limited to attacking pirates and terrorists or non-battle tasks such as medical service and rescue work.... Before, China didn't have an externally oriented economy, so the Chinese navy just needed to stay in Chinese waters. Now, the externally oriented economy has developed so well, the sea interests of China have expanded to other places, so the power of the Chinese navy should reach those places, too.⁴

Whether one takes the Chinese statement at face value, emphasis is placed on limiting the PLAN ships to anti-piracy, counter-terrorism, and non-combat roles that include humanitarian operations and exercises. (Even for those most cynical about Chinese moral pronouncements, I suggest the more often they are repeated the more they are accepted as real policy in the Party, the government, and elite.) So limits remain, but the PLAN assumes a new role—protecting distant sea lanes that carry the ocean commerce on which the Chinese economy depends. The 19th century concept of the use of naval power to safeguard commercial shipping associated with Alfred Thayer Mahan are now, I am told, taught in the naval colleges of China.

Understandably there are questions and apprehension across the Asian littoral: Will this lead to the establishment, as rumored for almost 20 years, of Chinese naval bases or at least support facilities dotted across the Indian Ocean? This deployment of two destroyers and a replenishment ship will, for example, test the assumption of some that the Pakistani port of Gwadar, developed over recent years with substantial Chinese aid, is a component of a “string of pearls” (naval bases) stretching from Myanmar (Burma) to the West to support PLA Navy operations in the Indian Ocean. Many knowledgeable specialists dismiss the “string of pearls” concept; so there is particularly intense interest in how the deployed ships will be supported.

It is worth noting that there has in the past been a big difference between a naval base to support ships in combat (capable of providing comprehensive weapon reloads, repair, fuel to satisfy high combat consumption rates, defense against attack, etc.) and a port where a ship simply could be refueled and re-provisioned. That distinction may be much diminished when the mission is against pirates and terrorists rather than supersonic cruise missiles and lethal air attacks.

The government-sponsored *China Daily* addresses some of the issues and questions.⁵ It is acknowledged that this is an unprecedented deployment of vessels on a potential combat mission, a major shift in security thinking, and a decision of consequence. The director of the anti-terrorism center at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations is quoted as describing the decision as “a huge breakthrough.” This represents a shift in dealing with a non-

⁴ Maureen Fan, “China to Aid in Fighting Somali Pirates,” *Washington Post*, December 18, 2008, p. A-20

⁵ Wu Jiao and Peng Kuang, “Sailing to strengthen global security,” *China Daily*, 2008-12-26 available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-12/26/content_7342612.htm

traditional threat from a non-state actor, a form of threat of increasing concern to China. It is recognized that the PLAN lacks experience in this mission and in operating with other navies.

All that said, other voices insist that China's naval strategy will still focus on off-shore defense and that the PLAN is not a blue-water navy simply because it can transit an ocean. However one views these Chinese comments, the implications of the unprecedented decision by Beijing are undeniably recognized. The Chinese are fully aware of the big step they have taken: a move into the international naval arena that goes far beyond port visits to Pearl Harbor, Everett, and San Diego and cruises to Europe. The PLA Navy has taken a bold step into the naval arena dominated for decades by the U.S. Navy: deploying combatant and support ships for an extended period far from home with a mission other than goodwill and showing the flag.

However, the prompt deployment of a combatant and support force, complete with a special forces unit, suggests an additional, and unmentioned, implication. The PLAN was ready for a rapid response. It is no small matter for a navy to be able to react effectively and confidently to such a crisis. I do not assign sinister motives to every report I hear or see about modernization of the PLA, but, were I the commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, I would have noted that the PLAN responded impressively to a crisis an ocean away. That reflects in the PLA Navy an unexpected deployment mindset and, in turn, a measure of maturity in the important hedging component of U.S.-PRC relations.

Rekindling the GMP idea. At least equally important is the fact that these Chinese ships have joined at least geographically with an international task force and that Beijing is emphasizing the international responsibility to act against piracy. Two positive factors are presented: (1) Chinese interlocutors said in mid-January, as mentioned above, that Beijing was looking for the "proper time" to restore military contacts, and Secretary of State Clinton said in mid-February that mid-level military talks would resume during the month, apparently removing this prominent but temporary obstacle to maritime cooperation. (2) Beijing, in sending these ships on a mission to protect the sea lanes along with a multinational naval force, has taken a step toward participation in the rudiments of the U.S. Navy concept of a Global Maritime Partnership, originally referred to as the Thousand-Ship Navy. At a minimum, we should be alert and receptive to Chinese overtures. The PLAN presence for anti-piracy operations off Somalia could be used [or may have been used by the time this testimony is made on March 4] as a touchstone to explore other steps in improved relations. Moreover, if the PLAN ships achieve good operational coordination with the various other navies, this could set a precedent for future operations and enhance prospects for Chinese participation in the Global Maritime Partnership. Admiral Keating, as reported in the *New York Times* on February 18, said that U.S. naval forces would be willing to work with Chinese aircraft carriers, just as they have cooperated with a small Chinese task force that has been operating in the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden. "They're doing a good job," he said of the two Chinese destroyers and a supply ship. "I congratulate them on a successful deployment," Admiral Keating concluded, seemingly confirming that the PLAN force has coordinated its operations with the international force.⁶

Reconsider some constraints of the FY 2000 NDAAA? It would seem reasonable then to use the PLAN participation in the Gulf of Aden as a reason and opportunity to reengage

⁶ Mark McDonald and Keith Bradsher

with Beijing on the matter of China's participation in the Global Maritime Partnership raised by Admiral Mullen when he was Chief of Naval Operations with the PLA Navy commander Admiral Wu Shengli. There is, as explained previously, more to this than cooperation in providing sea-lane security; the grander effort is to build trust, to take a first step down a path leading to broader maritime cooperation. If the provisions of the FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act--the legislation that constrains our relations with the PLA—are foreseen as an obstacle to this form of coordination between the U.S. and Chinese navies, Congressional reconsideration of at least those aspects of the constraints that might affect maritime cooperation seems warranted.

Might We Prefer China's Space Program to Have International Links?

It may seem unusual to mention China's space program here, but China wants other nations to know that the U.S. is not the only country to be taken seriously in space. And that, of course, means the PLA is a serious and increasingly influential player in the international space arena just as are the U.S. Air Force and other U.S. armed services. China shocked the world in January 2007 with its anti-satellite demonstration that destroyed an old Chinese satellite and left a debris field in space. U.S. observers considered this test to be reckless, while some Chinese officials, according to the author's Chinese interlocutors, wanted silently, if not subtly, to demonstrate first that its threats to go after U.S. C4ISR in the event of a U.S. intervention in a PLA attack on Taiwan are real and second that China and the PLA are world-class members of the small group of nations that are defining the future of man's use of space—including the militarization, if not weaponization, of space.

It is in this latter aspect, China's membership in the international space club, that the topic of China and space is appropriate to this USCC hearing. Our concern should not be directed only toward China's use of its space program to enhance ties to countries from which it may acquire technology or gain other advantage but also toward drawing China into an alliance of nations, formal or otherwise, concerned with the security implications of space. I have heard this referred to as an international security space alliance.⁷

One might ask what would draw China to consider joining such an alliance. At least some in China were stung by loss, after the A-Sat launch, of the coveted moral high ground with respect to space. Many countries and several components of the Chinese government were dismayed at China's ASAT shot and reportedly said so. This sort of external and internal pressure could serve as the glue to put together such an alliance, which, it should be noted, would also have implications for the U.S. and other countries with respect to the weaponization of space—something that would serve China's interests in stopping or retarding what Beijing regards as U.S. moves toward putting weapons in space. Moreover, the incentives for joining would likely include the prospect of shared technology and provision of security for the space assets of member countries.

⁷ The author was introduced to the idea of an international security space alliance by Lt. Col. Anthony Mastalir's presentation at a conference in December 2008 at the Naval War College. Mastalir's paper will appear in a forthcoming book edited by the China Maritime Studies Institute of the college. He is a squadron commander in the U.S. Air Force Space Innovation and Development Center.

For those from all countries who wish to exert leverage to avoid weaponization of space, this alliance would provide a vehicle to monitor and influence any efforts in that direction by member nations. For those who consider the weaponization of space as inevitable or necessary, the alliance might be seen as resembling the Geneva Convention, where future wars were not prevented but that certain aspects of the conduct of those wars were favorably influenced—or at least provisions were established to hold violators of the laws of war accountable for misdeeds. From our perspective, here, again, the goal is not to curb Chinese influence but rather, through China’s wider role in the world, to influence China and thereby, among other things, curb further irresponsible acts in space.

China and Africa

China’s influence in Africa cannot be ignored; however, my experience is not first hand. I think it best to limit my comments to quoting the words I provided for the back cover of the Jamestown Foundation 2008 book *China in Africa*. In so doing, I can both direct the attention of this commission to that book and offer the concise conclusion that “neo-colonialist” China is making mistakes in Africa but progressive China is learning from those mistakes.

China in Africa provides a fulsome, balanced examination spanning past to future of oil-thirsty, mineral-hungry China’s potentially limitless constructive and disruptive, often high-risk, activities—some successful, others not. As to China’s complex evolving motives in Africa, the book astutely probes beyond resource needs—seldom engaging in exaggeration and “China bashing.” Many chapters are gems of clarity and brevity.⁸

Military Diplomacy⁹

I looked at one more area of Chinese military influence that I have termed *military diplomacy*. An examination of the reported major Chinese military exchanges with other countries over the last two years proved unremarkable with the exception of repetitive visits by PLA general officers to seven Latin American countries. Officers from Latin America visited China far less frequently than the Chinese visited their countries. An overview of visit statistics puts these repetitive visits in perspective. Senior PLA officers made 87 visits to foreign countries worldwide and received 71 senior foreign visitors to China in 2007. The PLA made 79 such visits globally and received 59 visitors in 2008.

With respect to evidence of inordinate attention to Latin America, in the year 2007, 18 visits were made by senior PLA officers to 8 countries of that region—more than 20 percent of all such visits abroad. Similarly in 2008, 14 visits were made to the region—almost 20 percent of the total visits abroad by senior PLA officers. Senior visitors from Latin America to China totaled 7 and 4 in 2007 and 2008, respectively—only 10 percent and 7 percent of the total of senior foreign visitors to the PLA. None of these countries made more than a single visit *to China*. However, senior PLA officers were repetitive visitors; during these two years they made 8 visits

⁸ The book is edited by Arthur Waldron.

⁹ The statistics in this section were compiled from the table in Appendix I of the Chinese Defense White Paper for 2008, available at http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2009-01/21/content_17162779.htm.

to Chile, 5 to Argentina, 5 to Mexico, 4 to Venezuela, 4 to Cuba, 3 to Brazil, and 2 to Ecuador. (While the frequent visits to these countries are certainly noteworthy, in the interest of full disclosure, it should also be noted that PLA general officers visited both the U.S. and ROK 5 times over the two years. Nevertheless, the 18 visits to Latin America and the pattern of repetitions stood out amongst otherwise unremarkable data.)

I have not found it practical working independently to research the specific purposes of these visits and have heard only a little speculation and hearsay. Nothing definitive was revealed by the positions held by the most senior PLA visitors, who were largely very senior command and policy people and political commissars rather than slightly less senior people who might be suspected of hammering out details of technical agreements. Only one of the reported visits smacked of a possible nuts-and-bolts reason: a 2007 visit to Cuba by the Deputy Chief of the General Logistics Department. Two 2008 visits, one by the Political Commissar of the General Logistics Department to Mexico and the other by the Political Commissar of the General Armaments Department to Chile, arouse curiosity along these lines, although the senior person was a political commissar in both cases. In all cases, other delegation members were not identified.

The PLA Navy made 12 port visits abroad and welcomed 8 visits by foreign navies to China in 2007. For 2008, the PLA Navy made 5 visits to foreign countries and welcomed 13 visits to China, one of which was a U.S. Navy visit. The absence in these two years of PLA Navy visits to the U.S. and the fact of only one U.S. visit to China apparently reflect the ups and downs in the relationship.

Conclusion

The issue of troublesome frequency of PLA generals' traveling to Latin America is a good one to end on, as it illustrates how we might handle other instances of PLA expansive conduct that concern us. Our most effective means is not to demarche either China or the visited country with demands certain to be ignored. A far better way to cope is to build the Sino-U.S. military-to-military relationship in constructive areas along positive lines so that we are not apprehensive about visits in our hemisphere—and that our relationship with China is one where we could raise concerns and get reasonably candid answers.

With respect to the exercise of other Chinese military and security influence around the globe, we are not going to stop or greatly diminish other Chinese activities abroad. We can, however, work to transform our bilateral relations so that much of the PLA's activity away from home would foster trust and confidence—something that serves the interests of both countries. We should expect to discover and have to live with some Chinese activities we do not like, and China will not agree with all Washington does. But we should see many activities, like the prospect of combined efforts in sea-lane security, where we are encouraging China's expanded role in the world, welcoming rather than fearing Chinese expanded influence, and, as I am advocating, seeing our navies as partners on the high seas—as my imaginary bumper sticker suggests.

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