

**USCC REPORT: China's Incomplete Military Transformation**  
February 11, 2015**USCC-Sponsored Report: China's Incomplete Military Transformation: Assessing the Weaknesses of the People's Liberation Army**

Washington, DC - Today, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission released a report prepared for the Commission by Michael S. Chase, Jeffrey Engstrom, Tai Ming Cheung, Kristen A. Gunness, Scott Warren Harold, Susan Puska, and Samuel K. Berkowitz with the RAND Corporation. The report entitled *China's Incomplete Military Transformation: Assessing the Weaknesses of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)* examines many of the weaknesses in the PLA's human capital and organization realms, its combat capabilities across various domains, and China's defense research and industrial complex. Furthermore, the report analyzes how these weaknesses affect the PLA's performance of missions tasked by Beijing.

Since the mid-1990s the capabilities of the PLA have grown dramatically. But after years of double-digit increases in defense spending and an impressive expansion of capabilities, serious weaknesses and vulnerabilities persist within the PLA. This report outlines and examines these shortcomings and their impact on China's ability to successfully conduct the information-centric, integrated joint operations Chinese military strategists see as required to fight and win future wars.

The report identifies critical PLA weaknesses as falling under two categories. The first category is primarily organizational, whereby the PLA is saddled with outdated command structures, lacks quality personnel, and faces widespread corruption. For example, the report identifies ongoing concerns about insufficient educational accomplishments and levels of technical proficiency among soldiers and officers.

The report's second category of PLA weaknesses focuses on combat capabilities. Key capability shortcomings include pervasive logistical weaknesses and ongoing deficiencies in fleet air defense and antisubmarine warfare. These and other combat shortfalls are identified as contributing to China's challenges in projecting combat power beyond its immediate region. Additionally, the PLA continues to face obstacles in incorporating complex modern platforms with systems from multiple generations, a problem that is exacerbated by a lack of sufficient training for personnel who thus remain ill-equipped to operate or maintain these systems.

According to this report, the PLA is well aware of these weaknesses and is expected to address them. By analyzing the PLA's own assessments of its organizational and combat capability shortfalls, this report can provide U.S. policymakers insight into the PLA's future modernization paths, which can support the production of tailored deterrence strategies, and, if deterrence fails, facilitate the exploitation of PLA weaknesses to ensure the United States and its allies are able to prevent China from using force to achieve its policy objectives. Read the full report [here](#).

**DISCLAIMER:** This report was prepared at the request of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission to support its deliberations. Posting of the report to the Commission's website is intended to promote greater public understanding of the issues addressed by the Commission in its ongoing assessment of U.S.-China

*economic relations and their implications for U.S. security, as mandated by Public Law 106-398 and Public Law 108-7. However, it does not necessarily imply an endorsement by the Commission or any individual Commissioner of the views or conclusions expressed in this commissioned research report.*

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