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The Chinese Military's Role in Overseas Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: Contributions and Concerns

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Executive Summary

- In recent years, the PLA has increased its involvement in overseas HA/DR missions. Through its contributions to HA/DR, Beijing has provided important assistance to disaster-stricken populations and sought to burnish its image as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system.
- Despite these contributions, Beijing routinely allows political considerations to guide its participation in HA/DR missions, violating the humanitarian spirit of these operations. In some cases, China’s approach to HA/DR has undermined the effectiveness of multinational operations and possibly contributed to the avoidable loss of life.
- Beijing also exploits HA/DR-related exchanges to learn combat skills from and gather intelligence on advanced militaries, particularly the United States and its allies and partners. During HA/DR-related exercises with the U.S. military, Beijing has routinely sought—and on a number of occasions successfully gained—access to training that would directly or indirectly improve the PLA’s ability to carry out combat operations, such as force projection or a blockade of Taiwan.
- Although the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 prohibits military exchanges that provide China with “inappropriate exposure” to advanced U.S. military capabilities, it contains an exception clause permitting the two to carry out “any search-and-rescue or humanitarian operation or exercise.” Since the law’s passage, the United States and China have engaged in a variety of exchanges nominally focused on HA/DR that the PLA has leveraged to gain exposure to a range of U.S. military tactics and procedures.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has expanded its involvement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) missions outside China’s borders. During this time, the PLA has increased both the range of HA/DR operations it performs and the number of personnel and types of assets it deploys, as well as its involvement in HA/DR exchanges with other militaries. In speeches, Chinese government officials frequently highlight the PLA’s HA/DR operations as an important contribution to the international community and evidence of China’s role as a “responsible stakeholder.” At the same time, the PLA has cooperated haltingly with international partners during these missions and at times willfully disregarded best practices for military participation in HA/DR. Moreover, Beijing has proven willing to allow political considerations to outweigh humanitarian needs, suggesting Chinese leaders may view HA/DR less as a global good than an instrument of influence. This report examines the drivers behind the PLA’s increasing participation in HA/DR abroad, including Beijing’s desire to promote a positive image of China and enhance the PLA’s operational capabilities. It then assesses the impact, both positive and problematic, of the PLA’s involvement in several recent multinational HA/DR operations. The report concludes with an analysis of the implications of the PLA’s involvement in and approach to HA/DR for the United States.

HA/DR Missions Burnish Image, Enhance Operational Capabilities

The PLA conducted one of its first HA/DR missions abroad in 2002 and expanded its involvement in these missions as Beijing provided guidance to the PLA that broadened its orientation to include nontraditional security tasks.*¹ Today, the PLA regularly delivers relief supplies to disaster-afflicted countries, including direct distribution of

* Although two PLA helicopters deployed to Bangladesh in response to a typhoon in 1991, for purposes of examining the current trend of increasing PLA HA/DR deployments abroad this report focuses on deployments since 2002. In 2002, the PLA delivered relief materials to Afghanistan after an earthquake.

supplies to disaster sites, and deploys a wider range of capabilities and a larger number of assets and personnel on HA/DR missions than it did 15 years ago.² (See Appendix I for a map of the PLA's HA/DR deployments abroad since 2002.) Several motives beyond purely humanitarian concerns have driven Beijing's growing involvement in HA/DR.

First, Beijing seeks to use participation in HA/DR operations to construct an image of China as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system.³ Although authoritative PLA documents discuss the utility of China's HA/DR involvement for purposes other than providing disaster relief, most Chinese discussion of its HA/DR contributions for foreign audiences and the Chinese public is aimed at enhancing China's prestige on the world stage and supporting the legitimacy of its ruling Chinese Communist Party at home. In one typical example, during the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue, a prominent international security conference held in Singapore, the head of China's delegation cited the PLA's HA/DR efforts as evidence of “China actively fulfill[ing] its international responsibilities and obligations and play[ing] a constructive role in safeguarding regional and international security and stability.”⁴ Similarly, following China's response to the April 2015 earthquake in Nepal, China's State Council lauded Beijing's contribution by posting a *People's Daily* article entitled “A Responsible Major Power's Promise Can Pass the Test.”⁵

Second, the PLA—a military that last engaged in major combat operations in 1979—views HA/DR as a means to test and enhance its operational proficiency and ability to operate overseas. HA/DR operations are not combat, nor are they a near substitute for combat, but they do provide the PLA with opportunities to practice and improve capabilities that could be applied to future combat operations, such as command and control, small unit leadership, engineering, helicopter operations, and the logistics capabilities necessary to project and sustain forces abroad (especially strategic lift, medical aid, and long-range supply and sustainment).⁶ Like combat operations abroad, HA/DR missions abroad require operational flexibility; the transport of troops, equipment, and materials; and the sustainment of the deployed force.⁷ Reflecting this view, the 2013 edition of *The Science of Military Strategy*, an authoritative book published by the PLA's Academy of Military Science, states, “Military operations other than war are an important means to enhance the military's operational capabilities.” The publication further explains that there are many similarities between the requirements for these operations, which include HA/DR, and combat operations, including in information and logistics support, and argues the PLA can use them as an opportunity to test its organizational and command capabilities and examine and enhance its combat readiness.⁸ These themes are echoed by other authoritative textbooks published by the PLA on military operations other than war and joint operations.⁹

Finally, the PLA uses HA/DR exchanges and exercises with foreign militaries to help achieve Beijing's broader diplomatic and national security objectives. In particular, these exchanges help Beijing strengthen its bilateral relations with other countries, collect intelligence, and enhance its military capabilities by learning from other militaries. Meanwhile, participation in HA/DR exercises supports China's efforts to project an image of itself as a contributor to regional security and stability.¹⁰

In recent years, bilateral and multilateral HA/DR exchanges and exercises have provided the PLA rare opportunities to learn from and gather intelligence on advanced militaries, including the United States and its allies and partners. Although U.S. law prohibits exchanges that would enhance PLA combat capabilities, the PLA has sometimes been able to practice skills that are directly applicable to combat operations during HA/DR exercises with other countries, which occasionally have included U.S. participation. Since 2011, the PLA has expanded its network of HA/DR exchange partners, conducting bilateral exercises with Australia, Cambodia, Germany, India, Malaysia, and New Zealand.¹¹ Multilaterally, the PLA participates in the biannual Indonesia-hosted Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo, and has taken part in the exercise's aerial reconnaissance, underway replenishment, cross-deck helicopter

landing, and maritime interdiction components—all key operational competencies that would be applicable to a blockade of Taiwan. The United States, Australia, and Japan are among the more than 30 militaries that participate in this exercise.¹² In 2018, China, Malaysia, and Thailand held their first combined military exercise, which involved cooperation in HA/DR operations, but also included hand-to-hand combat, jungle survival, and sharpshooting.¹³

Do U.S.-China HA/DR Exchanges Present a National Security Risk?

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65) prohibits the U.S. military from engaging in any exchange or contact with the PLA that “would create a national security risk due to an inappropriate exposure” to any of 12 areas such as force projection, advanced combined arms and joint combat operations, and advanced logistics.¹⁴ However, the law allows for search and rescue and humanitarian operations and exercises.¹⁵

Since the passage of this law, the United States and China have engaged in a variety of exchanges and exercises related to HA/DR or with a humanitarian focus that have increased in frequency and scope in recent years. While the United States has rejected PLA requests for training on more advanced skills, senior U.S. military leaders have approved exchanges that “push the envelope” on the operational content permissible in U.S.-China military cooperation.¹⁶ A key bilateral exchange is the U.S.-China Disaster Management Exchange, held once a year between U.S. Army Pacific and the PLA, which has evolved since its first iteration in 2005 from classroom presentations to now include table top and field exercises including medical assistance, clearing debris, and search and rescue operations.¹⁷ Between 2012 and 2014, the U.S. military and the PLA conducted counterpiracy drills in the Gulf of Aden that involved cross-deck helicopter landing, and visit, board, search, and seizure exercises; they also carried out a search and rescue drill during which the United States demonstrated joint operations between navy and army helicopters.¹⁸ The PLA has also participated in HA/DR components of the 2014 and 2016 U.S.-led Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise and the U.S.- and Thailand-led Cobra Gold exercise, which have included engineering, search and rescue, and medical assistance activities.¹⁹ During RIMPAC, the PLA also conducted naval gunnery and counterpiracy exercises, with the latter involving the crew of a PLA ship boarding a U.S. Coast Guard cutter with a PLA helicopter practicing air alert and fire support above them.²⁰

As required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) reports to Congress annually on contacts between the U.S. and Chinese militaries, including a summary of questions asked by Chinese participants and a description of what China expects to gain from these contacts. Since the reporting requirement was established, DOD has not identified these contacts as “creating a national security risk.”²¹ Regardless, the PLA almost certainly treats these exchanges as valuable opportunities to acquire skills relevant for combat operations and force projection, and has routinely requested the U.S. side include information or drills, such a rapid runway repair, that have direct combat applications.²² According to U.S. military participants in HA/DR exchanges and exercises with the PLA, PLA interlocutors are at least as interested in learning traditional military training and capabilities through these exercises as they are in building humanitarian capability.²³

Political Considerations Undermine Cooperation and Humanitarian Spirit

Beijing also has allowed political considerations to guide its participation in HA/DR missions, violating the humanitarian spirit of these operations and in some cases undermining the effectiveness of the multinational operations in which it participates. China’s approach to HA/DR has at times reduced the effectiveness of the international response, increased friction between responding nations, and possibly contributed to the avoidable

loss of life. For example, during the PLA's 2015 HA/DR mission in Nepal, the PLA refused to allow other foreign military responders access to its area of operations out of concern that doing so might damage China's image, effectively treating its response sector like "sovereign territory."²⁴ In another case, the PLA refused to participate in a Japanese-led HA/DR component of the 2014 RIMPAC, further demonstrating Beijing's inability to set aside concerns over politics and image during humanitarian exchanges.²⁵

Informed by its political considerations, Beijing has been reluctant to accede to, and in some cases appears to have willfully disregarded, essential international principles for military participation in HA/DR such as the timely deployment of military assets and multilateral coordination with other foreign militaries and civilian organizations.²⁶ Beijing's deviation from these principles has meant that humanitarian needs may not have been met in disaster areas. In addition to its hesitation to coordinate with other militaries, Jesse Wolfe, a then DOD regional civil-military coordination and humanitarian assistance advisor, told Commission staff the PLA had declined to participate in several UN-sponsored conferences and training courses on civil-military coordination for HA/DR missions.²⁷ Partly for this reason, Mr. Wolfe assessed the PLA's knowledge of how to coordinate its HA/DR activities with vital components of the humanitarian response architecture, such as national disaster management offices, UN agencies, and nongovernmental organizations, is underdeveloped. This deficiency "will handicap the overall professionalism, added value, and contribution of their response," he stated.²⁸

Finally, Beijing has consistently proved willing to allow political tensions to outweigh humanitarian needs, suggesting Chinese leaders may view HA/DR less as a global good than an instrument of influence. In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (discussed in greater detail below), Beijing initially withheld much-needed disaster assistance, likely due to tensions related to a territorial dispute. China also has used humanitarian crises to politicize the issue of its relationship with Taiwan. For instance, in the aftermath of a massive earthquake in Taiwan in 1999, the Chinese government pressured humanitarian actors to request Beijing's permission before deploying to Taiwan and refused to allow a Russian emergency team en route to Taiwan to fly through Chinese airspace, delaying efforts to help the victims.²⁹ In 1997 and 1999, Beijing vetoed approval for UN peacekeeping missions to Guatemala and Macedonia due to those countries' diplomatic relations with Taiwan despite the critical humanitarian need for the missions in both countries.³⁰ After the April 2015 earthquake, Nepal rejected an offer from Taiwan to send search and rescue teams, although it is unclear whether Beijing pressured Kathmandu to do so.³¹

Case Studies: Mixed Results in Nepal, Ebola, and Philippines Responses

The following case studies illustrate some of the PLA's positive contributions during several of its recent HA/DR deployments and also highlight instances where Beijing's participation has complicated the broader international effort. (See Appendix II for a comparison with other militaries of the PLA's contribution to several major multinational HA/DR efforts in the Indo-Pacific.)

Nepal Earthquake: Refusal to Coordinate Detracts from Robust Response

Although the PLA responded to the April 2015 Nepal earthquake with a large force and performed a wide range of disaster relief activities—a clear net public good—it also initially refused to coordinate with other militaries, violating international best practices and potentially contributing to avoidable loss of life. China dispatched more than 500 PLA personnel to the Himalayan country to conduct disaster relief operations, one of the most sizable PLA contingents ever deployed abroad on a humanitarian aid mission.³² And, in what was its largest deployment of aircraft on an HA/DR mission abroad to date, the PLA deployed eight fixed-wing transport aircraft and three helicopters, which were particularly significant due to the high demand for vertical lift capabilities to help people

trapped in mountainous areas inaccessible by road.³³ PLA personnel engaged in the delivery and distribution of relief supplies, transport of relief personnel and equipment, search and rescue, transport of people who were injured or trapped, medical assistance, and disease prevention.³⁴

Despite this contribution, which was robust in comparison to its previous deployments, the PLA's limited number of helicopters, failure to coordinate laterally, and concerns over its image resulted in a failure to provide necessary assistance in a key disaster area. Although the PLA was represented in the Multinational Military Coordination Center—a standard mechanism for coordinating the foreign military forces deployed on a HA/DR mission—established by the Nepal Army, the PLA only proved willing to coordinate bilaterally with the Nepal Army, which went against international best practices.³⁵ According to a retired U.S. military officer with extensive experience in U.S.-China military-to-military relations, after Nepal divided the affected areas into separate sectors for China, India, and the United States, the PLA “treated their sector like sovereign territory, rather than an area where they would lead the coordination of response.”³⁶ During the response effort, civilian aid organizations approached the U.S. military describing a critical shortage of vertical lift needed in the Chinese sector—a shortage U.S. military assets in Nepal would have been uniquely equipped to fill, given the U.S. deployment of vertical takeoff and landing-capable helicopters and tiltrotor aircraft. However, when the U.S. side offered both bilaterally and through the multinational coordination center to contribute the necessary capabilities, the PLA denied any shortage, contradicting the credible claims of the civilian aid organizations. According to a former official in the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. officials in Nepal had to seek assistance from officials in Washington and Beijing to break through coordination problems on the ground due to the difficulty in gaining cooperation from the Chinese in-country responders who U.S. officials in Nepal judged were more concerned with the potential poor reflection on Beijing of U.S. aircraft operating in their sector than with saving lives.³⁷

Ebola Epidemic: Chinese Media Lauds Significant Aid Rendered

The PLA's involvement in the international response to the West Africa Ebola virus epidemic that began in 2014 was a notable success and its largest ever medical assistance mission abroad. In response to requests for assistance by the affected countries' governments and the UN World Health Organization, Beijing deployed approximately 500 PLA personnel to Sierra Leone and Liberia between 2014 and 2015. Their activities included treating Ebola patients, establishing an Ebola diagnosis and treatment center, and training local medical personnel.³⁸ The PLA also was involved in gathering and transporting humanitarian aid materials.³⁹ Challenges due to language and cultural differences initially impacted the PLA's clinical performance, but it quickly overcame these problems.⁴⁰ Beyond the PLA deployment to Sierra Leone and Liberia, Beijing's response included providing aid valued at more than \$120 million, dispatching 500 additional civilian medical personnel, and training medical personnel in six other countries.*⁴¹

The Chinese government promoted its response to the Ebola epidemic as demonstrating China's status as a responsible major power and a “true friend” to Africa, including by publishing a series of articles in official media lauding the significance and timeliness of China's contribution. For example, government websites carried Chinese media articles highlighting praise for Beijing's efforts from West African leaders and the UN.⁴² According to one article, the leaders of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea said Beijing's response provided their countries with “huge moral encouragement and precious material support.”⁴³ Regarding the Chinese response, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, “China's support exemplifies the Sino-African brotherhood sharing weal and woe, through

* U.S. military efforts involved the deployment of more than 2,300 personnel who built 11 facilities for treatment of patients, formed six mobile laboratories for testing of patient samples, trained health care workers, and provided airlift for medical materials and personnel using several types of aircraft. The British military deployed around 900 personnel to build treatment centers, train and treat local medical workers and staff, and provide security.

thick and thin, and gives testimony to China’s policy of ‘sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith’ towards Africa.”⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Beijing has allowed political considerations to influence its response to other epidemics: during the 2018 African swine fever outbreak in China, the Chinese government refused multiple requests from Taiwan to provide information on the epidemic, which has since spread more broadly throughout the region.⁴⁵

Typhoon Haiyan: Political Dispute Slows Response

After Typhoon Haiyan (also referred to as Typhoon Yolanda) struck the Philippines in 2013, Beijing’s response included dispatching the PLA’s *Peace Ark* hospital ship, although it initially only offered a small aid contribution and waited until international pressure mounted before extending any offer of relief personnel or equipment. Most observers linked the minimal and delayed response to tensions with Manila over South China Sea sovereignty claims.⁴⁶ The deployment of the *Peace Ark*, with its 300 hospital beds and more than 120 medical personnel, was the first time China had sent any naval ship on a disaster relief mission abroad.⁴⁷

Beijing’s delay in offering to send support to the Philippines slowed the provision of aid to typhoon victims. Despite the 1,700 deaths and 615,000 people displaced within four days from the typhoon, Beijing initially pledged only \$100,000 in aid, far less than it had offered in other recent natural disasters and well below the level donated by other responding countries.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, normally strictly-censored Chinese social media gave voice to domestic opposition to helping the Philippines, with citizens posting messages such as: “The Chinese government should not have offered aid in the first place to a country that’s unfriendly or even hostile to China.”⁴⁹ Although domestic and international criticism subsequently led China to increase its aid contribution and later send manpower and material support, including the *Peace Ark*, Beijing did not formally offer to deploy the ship for ten days; the ship arrived more than two weeks after the typhoon made landfall.⁵⁰ In contrast, U.S. military personnel were on scene supporting search and rescue operations two days after Typhoon Haiyan first struck, Japanese military personnel arrived in the Philippines four days after landfall, and the Australian military began providing support on the fifth day.⁵¹

Implications for the United States

Beijing’s growing contribution to international responses to humanitarian crises is encouraging. Constructive participation in relief efforts is an important responsibility for countries in the Indo-Pacific that wish to play a role in building a stable and prosperous region. Beijing’s contributions to HA/DR operations demonstrate an increasing willingness to work alongside other countries carrying out this important responsibility, even when it falls short in capability or struggles to place humanitarian needs above political priorities.

Nevertheless, the enduring influence of political considerations on Beijing’s provision of humanitarian aid raises questions over the PLA’s ability and willingness to act as a cooperative partner during future multinational HA/DR missions. Prioritizing China’s image over humanitarian needs, allowing political tensions to adversely impact the provision of aid, and imposing conditions on aid to Taiwan or possibly even preventing Taiwan from itself providing aid all violate global humanitarian norms and detract from the international community’s ability to render assistance to the greatest number of people. Beijing’s disregard for international best practices for military participation in

* For instance, after a major earthquake struck Pakistan—a close Chinese ally—several months earlier, Beijing offered supplies and other aid totaling more than \$5 million. In response to Typhoon Haiyan, the United States offered \$20 million and Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom each offered approximately \$10 million in aid.

† Among other foreign medical responses to the typhoon, Japan deployed its military by helicopter and amphibious ship to provide medical assistance, conduct epidemic prevention activities, and transport relief supplies, and Australia deployed a civilian medical assistance team to set up a field hospital that became a surgical hub for the surrounding area.

HA/DR abroad is a troubling trend that could become even more consequential if China is placed in a leading or coordinating role during future relief efforts.

The potential for U.S.-China HA/DR exchanges and exercises to build Chinese military capacity may be limited, but it is still problematic, particularly in an era of U.S.-China strategic competition. Given that the PLA likely views these exchanges as an opportunity to improve its warfighting capabilities and collect intelligence, a distinct possibility exists that the PLA will use bilateral and multilateral HA/DR exercises to build capabilities and gather information that could be used against the United States or its allies and partners in a future regional conflict. U.S. law requires annual reporting from DOD on whether military-to-military contacts create a national security risk by contributing to China's military modernization. While the importance of separating security concerns from cooperation on humanitarian relief is unquestioned, it is unclear whether a comprehensive risk assessment and review of HA/DR exchanges and exercises has been undertaken to date, or whether DOD has clearly defined appropriate boundaries or constraints on these types of contacts.

Finally, some of the benefits the United States has hoped to derive from HA/DR exchanges with the PLA may ultimately be unattainable. Despite years of focused efforts to encourage the PLA to adopt international best practices in humanitarian relief and facilitate bilateral cooperation during HA/DR deployments, the political considerations guiding PLA participation in disaster relief missions may continue to generate fundamental obstacles to achieving these objectives. Furthermore, while HA/DR exchanges may engender some trust between militaries—another laudable aim of these contacts—it is unlikely they will be sufficient to overcome the broader differences between China and other countries, including the United States, over the more sensitive issues that might lead to a conflict. For example, despite years of HA/DR exercises and other confidence-building measures between the PLA and the Indian Army to ease tensions related to the China-India border dispute, the two sides came to the brink of armed conflict in 2017 in the China-India-Bhutan border area.⁵² The enduring differences in national interest and approach to humanitarian aid between Washington and Beijing suggest the potential for HA/DR cooperation to overcome these differences may be similarly limited.

Appendix I: PLA HA/DR Operations Abroad, 2002–2015



Note: The PLA searched for MH370 in the Gulf of Thailand, off the coast of Vietnam, the Strait of Malacca, waters west of the Andaman Islands, off the coast of Sumatra, and in the Southern Indian Ocean. In addition to the operations on this map, in 2015 PLA aircraft also delivered relief supplies to Malaysia and Burma (Myanmar) in response to flooding.

Source: Various⁵³

Appendix II: Reported Military Contributions by Select Countries to Major Multinational HA/DR Efforts in the Indo-Pacific, 2010–2015

Affected Country/Type of Disaster	Year	China Military Involvement	U.S. Military Involvement	Japan Military Involvement	Australia Military Involvement
Nepal (Earthquake)*	2015	3 helicopters, 8 transport aircraft; more than 500 PLA personnel; delivery (at least 449 tons) and distribution of relief supplies, transport of relief personnel and equipment, search and rescue, transport of people who were injured or trapped, medical assistance, and disease prevention ⁵⁴	4 tiltrotor aircraft, 3 helicopters, 12 transport aircraft, ground and aviation command and control assets; approximately 300 personnel; delivery of relief supplies (about 120 tons), transport of personnel, search and rescue, and casualty evacuations ⁵⁵	1 transport aircraft; approximately 274 personnel; medical assistance, delivery of relief supplies, epidemic prevention activities, and lecture on mental health ⁵⁶	2 transport aircraft; delivery of relief supplies (about 17 tons) and evacuation ⁵⁷
Missing Malaysia Airlines Aircraft Flight MH370	2014	2 destroyers, 2 frigates, 2 amphibious ships, 1 survey ship, 1 submarine rescue ship, 2 replenishment ships, 2 helicopters, 3 transport aircraft, 1 surveillance aircraft ^{† 58}	2 destroyers, 1 replenishment oiler, 1 logistics ship, 1 autonomous underwater vehicle, 3 maritime patrol aircraft, 1 helicopter ⁵⁹	2 maritime patrol aircraft ⁶⁰	2 frigates, 1 replenishment ship, 1 airborne early warning and control aircraft, 4 maritime patrol aircraft ⁶¹

* The Indian military sent 14 helicopters and 13 transport aircraft to Nepal and conducted transport of relief materials and personnel, search and rescue, and casualty evacuations. Ratindra Khatri, “Civil-Military Coordination after the Nepal Earthquake: Role of the HuMOCC,” *Liaison* 8 (Spring 2016): 22; Amrit Sharma, “India Has Wrapped up Operation Maitri, But Nepal Still Needs Our Help,” *Huffington Post*, June 16, 2015. https://www.huffingtonpost.in/amrit-sharma/india-wraps-up-operation-_b_7546868.html; NDTV, “India’s ‘Operation Maitri’ in Earthquake-Hit Nepal Ends,” June 4, 2015. <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/indias-operation-maitri-in-earthquake-hit-nepal-ends-768795>.

† These numbers include the destroyer, frigate, and replenishment ship that composed the PLA’s 17th antipiracy naval task group. The ships participated in the search for MH370 before proceeding to the Gulf of Aden for antipiracy operations.

Philippines (Typhoon)	2013	1 hospital ship, 1 amphibious ship, 1 helicopter; medical assistance, and aid delivery ⁶²	1 aircraft carrier, 2 amphibious ships, 1 oceanographic survey ship, 4 maritime patrol aircraft, helicopters, 1 logistics aircraft, tiltrotor aircraft (12 ships and 66 aircraft in total); almost 1,000 personnel; delivery (more than 2,495 tons) and distribution of relief supplies, transport of relief workers, and evacuation of displaced persons ⁶³	1 helicopter destroyer, 1 amphibious ship, 1 transport ship, 1 escort vessel, 1 supply ship, 9 transport aircraft, 5 helicopters; approximately 1,180 personnel; transport of supplies and people, medical assistance, and epidemic prevention ⁶⁴	1 amphibious ship, 2 transport aircraft; delivery of relief supplies (more than 2,600 tons), evacuation of displaced persons, transport of officials and medical workers, clearing debris, and making repairs at schools ⁶⁵
Japan (Earthquake/ Tsunami/ Nuclear Disaster)	2011	15 China International Search and Rescue Team (CISAR) personnel; search and rescue ⁶⁶	189 aircraft (including transport aircraft), 122 vehicles, 24 ships (including 2 aircraft carriers); 24,538 personnel; transport of relief supplies and personnel, search and rescue, debris removal, restoration of airfields, radiation monitoring, training for Japanese military personnel operating at nuclear reactor site, and data and imagery collection at nuclear reactor site ⁶⁷	About 540 aircraft, about 50 ships; approximately 107,000 personnel; search and rescue, transport of relief supplies (about 15,329 tons) and personnel, decontamination and radiation monitoring ⁶⁸	3 transport aircraft; transport of relief supplies and equipment (more than 490 tons), and relief personnel ⁶⁹
Pakistan (Floods)	2010	4 helicopters, 3 transport	30 helicopters, 2 transport aircraft;	3 helicopters, 7 transport	1 transport aircraft; 180

		aircraft; more than 130 personnel; delivery (33 tons) and distribution of relief supplies, search and rescue, and medical assistance ⁷⁰	600 personnel; delivery and distribution of relief supplies (more than 7,000 tons), and evacuation ⁷¹	aircraft, 1 amphibious ship; at least 200 personnel; delivery and distribution (240 tons) of relief supplies, and medical assistance ⁷²	personnel; delivery of relief supplies (99 tons), and medical assistance ⁷³
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Note: All weights are in short tons, which is the unit of measure used in the United States. Numbers in metric tons in the source were converted to short tons by the author.

Endnotes

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