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China's Assertive Behavior

Part Three: The Role of the Military in Foreign Policy

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In examining the origins, characteristics, and likely future course of a more “assertive” China, many analysts point to the supposedly growing role of the Chinese military (or People’s Liberation Army—PLA) in Beijing’s overall foreign and foreign-related policy process. For such observers, the PLA—as a conservative, highly nationalistic, and increasingly capable and confident actor in the Chinese political system—is the main, if not sole, force behind a range of more assertive and/or confrontational actions undertaken by the Chinese government in recent years, from the deployment and sustainment of large numbers of ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan to widespread cyber attacks on the U.S. government to official PRC criticism of U.S. military exercises in the Western Pacific, more vigorous challenges to U.S. military surveillance activities along China’s maritime periphery, and the testing of new weapons during visits to China by U.S. officials. In addition, some observers view the PLA as an interest group that pressures the civilian Chinese leadership to adopt a more assertive stance toward Washington overall, and in this way allegedly influences the leadership succession process.¹

As previous CLM articles in this series have indicated, at least some senior PLA officers have probably played an important role in instigating or intensifying several of these actions. However, clear and conclusive evidence of the precise role of the PLA in China’s foreign policy formulation and implementation processes remains elusive.

Indeed, very little is known about China's military-related policy decision-making structure and process in general, both in normal times and especially during political-military crises. Most of the available information on civil-military relations and the policy process relates to the formal organizational structures involved, and less to those internal formal and informal processes and activities that produce decisions and actions throughout the process. Also, more is known about interactions between major bureaucratic players at the ministerial level and below than about interactions among the most senior civilian and military leadership and their staffs.²

Moreover, it is extremely difficult to verify what little information is obtained about such policy processes. Some sources (such as many Hong Kong and Taiwan media) are notoriously unreliable; others (such as interviewees) are highly subjective and possibly biased in their interpretation, and in many cases are relating information or rumors obtained from other unverifiable sources.³

In this article, we will attempt to summarize and assess what is reliably known, on an unclassified level, about the role of the PLA in China's foreign policy and foreign policy-related policy processes. We begin with a background overview of the changing relationship of the PLA to the overall PRC leadership system and political power structure in China. The Chinese military would presumably play a significant role in any major policy process if it wields significant power at the apex of China's political system. This is followed by a look at the organizational and procedural relationship of the PLA to the foreign policy process in particular. This includes an examination of both senior-level interactions and those occurring at subordinate, operational levels. The article concludes with a summary and some general observations. The next CLM will examine what is known in unclassified circles about the role of the PLA in the decision-making process involving foreign political-military crises.

Elite Power Relations: A Limited Military

China's leadership system today is centered on a party-based oligarchic collective structure that traces its origins to the mid/late-1950s.⁴ From a power perspective, this collective system originally emerged for two major reasons: 1) to prevent the general secretary of the Chinese

Communist Party (CCP) from acquiring dictatorial power; and 2) to prevent senior party leaders from establishing power bases with outside constituencies and thereby splitting the leadership into contending, vertically organized factions. During the past 15 years, and largely due to the influence of Deng Xiaoping, this system has developed five key features.

First, the CCP general secretary is no longer a clearly dominant power-wielder (as was the case with Mao Zedong and, to a lesser extent, Deng Xiaoping). Instead, he has become “first among equals” in a largely consensus-oriented decision-making system.

Second, members of senior CCP decision-making bodies (i.e., the Politburo (PB) and Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC)) are now selected primarily on the basis of their loyalty to the party and expertise in particular policy areas, and exercise their power on an *ex officio* basis, i.e., by virtue of the formal position they hold in the power structure. Each member of the PBSC is responsible for a specific policy area, including: 1) foreign policy/military affairs; 2) the government and major economic policies; 3) propaganda; 4) the party apparatus; 5) party discipline issues; 6) internal security affairs; 7) most economic issues; 8) united front work; and 9) legislative affairs. The first two, arguably most important, policy areas are held by the CCP general secretary and PRC premier, respectively.

Third, within the larger PB, membership reflects a balance of “constituencies” among the party, government, geographical regions, public security organs, and the military. Most PB members are associated with the first three areas. As a result, the PB is now to a large extent an arena for balanced and rational decision-making centered on formalized government structures and functions, not primarily a reflection of personal factions.

Fourth, leadership promotion and succession at the top is increasingly routinized on the basis of established rules and procedures and hence is more predictable. Age, expertise, loyalty to the party, and professional and political competence primarily determine whether and when both civilian and military leaders are promoted or retired.

Fifth, politics in this system is primarily interest-driven, with leaders more clearly representing those major constituencies and institutions necessary for balanced decision-making. Senior leaders with responsibility for a particular functional policy arena seek to advance the interests of

that arena and its constituent members within the policy process. Although informal personal relationships and backgrounds still undoubtedly influence the actions of such individuals, there is far less solid evidence today that interactions at the senior leadership level are driven primarily by personal factions vying for power, or by competing ideological groupings. In other words, while leadership competition continues, it now largely occurs within an increasingly established web of institutions and processes and according to a specific set of norms.⁵

Within this top leadership system, the power of the PLA as a political actor has clearly declined over time. In 1982, under Deng Xiaoping, 20 of 25 PB members had military experience, with seven serving in military posts at the time of membership. By 1997, under Jiang Zemin, 21 of 24 PB members had *no* military experience whatsoever, while only two were professional military officers (the two vice-chairmen of the CCP's Central Military Commission (CMC)—this key body is discussed below). There has been no PLA member on the PBSC since 1997 and there was no “regular” PLA representative on that body before that time (PLA membership on the PBSC was sporadic in the sixties and seventies, reflecting events occurring in the larger political environment, such as the Cultural Revolution). And no PLA officer has served on the CCP Secretariat since 2002.⁶

Within the much larger CCP Central Committee (CC), about 20 percent of the full membership (approximately 40 of 200 members) are PLA-affiliated—a level that has remained fairly stable at each party congress since the mid-1980s.

This overall pattern of PLA representation in senior party bodies has generally continued to the present. In recent years, the interests of the PLA within the PBSC have been represented primarily by the CCP general secretary, in his capacity as chairman of the CCP CMC, and via his leadership of those key external policy-related CCP leading small groups (LSGs) that include senior PLA officers (these bodies are discussed below). And the interests of the PLA within the PB are directly represented by the two CMC vice chairmen and senior PLA officers who serve on that body.⁷

Such a pattern of PLA representation within the senior party leadership structure is obviously not a reflection of PLA power over the CCP. Rather, it results from a deliberate decision to remove

the military from elite politics and the most powerful decision-making councils, and to regularize and institutionalize its role in the policy process as a professional force. Indeed, maintaining the two most senior PLA officers as PB members ensures that professional military views are communicated to that important party body while also guaranteeing party control over the senior PLA leadership and keeping the PLA away from the ultimate source of political power in China, the PBSC.⁸

Despite this fact, some analysts have speculated that the growing strength and allegedly rising influence of the PLA within the Chinese power structure and policy process will eventually result in the reintroduction of PLA membership onto the PBSC.⁹

This is highly unlikely, however—in the absence of major leadership conflict—as such a move would: 1) weaken the position of the CCP general secretary in providing oversight and coordination on military affairs; and 2) re-insert the military into top-level policy decision-making and power relations, thus reversing the clear trend of the past 15 years and drawing it away from its main professional defense duties while possibly exacerbating elite power rivalries.¹⁰ The naming of a senior PLA officer to the PBSC at the upcoming 18th Party Congress next year would therefore signify a major breakdown of intra-party norms and party controls over the PLA, and likely herald a period of leadership instability.

The Overall Policy Process: Civilian Party Control and a Professional Military

Despite its highly limited position of power within the elite leadership structure, as indicated above, some outside analysts believe that the PLA is today a major source of hyper-nationalist views and a strong, increasingly influential proponent of a tougher, more confrontational policy stance toward the U.S. and any other power that might threaten China's major security and foreign policy interests.¹¹

In truth, there is little doubt that the PLA, along with the militaries of most other nations, is a highly nationalist organization committed to a vigilant defense of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. And military figures have apparently exerted sporadic influence over

specific foreign policy-related issues by expressing their views publicly—as indicated above and described in earlier CLMs. However, it is far from clear that such views translate into a cohesive, widespread, and explicitly enunciated institutional “interest” distinct from those of other PRC organizations, or result in concerted, autonomous pressure on the senior civilian party leadership on an ongoing basis.

Both civilian and military elites in China remain unified by a common commitment to regime survival and increasingly institutionalized norms of policy formulation and conflict resolution. They also commonly support pragmatic, development-oriented policies designed to sustain or expand social order, regime unity, social prosperity, and national power and prestige.¹²

More importantly, as suggested above, on fundamental national security-related policy issues—both civilian and military—the civilian CCP leadership makes the final decisions, by virtue of their predominant political power in the Chinese party-state system. The PBSC defines China’s basic security interests and the PLA’s basic defense mission and political line, albeit no doubt with significant input from senior military leaders.¹³

Moreover, the CCP leadership exercises ultimate control over the deployment of PLA forces in wartime, and determines the PLA’s budget and resource base.¹⁴ It even controls the peacetime movement within China of forces above a certain size. Some recent examples of the party’s ultimate authority over fundamental military-related policy issues include its decisions to divest the PLA from its involvement in profit-making business activities; to pursue a non-coercive approach toward Taiwan and other territorial disputes; to reduce the overall size of the PLA; to make military modernization subordinate to overall economic development in China’s reform strategy; and to restructure China’s defense industry complex.¹⁵

As part of this decision-making system, the PLA undoubtedly advocates its professional interests, within the definition of its missions, e.g., ensuring national defense, preserving territorial integrity, attaining national reunification, achieving great power status, and maintaining domestic social order. But there is little if any evidence that it dictates *basic* strategy or policy outcomes, including those relating to national security. Today, most party-military interactions over key policy issues, whether foreign or domestic, almost certainly occur

through institutional channels, and possibly on occasion via a small number of personal interactions. This is certainly true in the foreign policy realm.

The PLA and the Foreign Policy Process

As suggested above, at senior levels, civil-military interactions of relevance to PRC foreign policy occur primarily through the CCP's Central Military Commission (CMC) and several CCP leading small groups (LSGs) associated with foreign policy issues. The CMC is the supreme party body responsible for overseeing military and defense affairs and is the major high-level channel for providing military input into relevant areas of the PBSC-led policy process, including military-related aspects of foreign affairs. Within the PRC party-state structure, the CMC enjoys a level of authority above that of all ministries and similar to the State Council or CCP Central Committee (CC) Commission. The CMC's chairman is always the CCP general secretary. The only other civilian leader of the CMC is the party leader designated as the putative successor to the CCP general secretary. That individual (currently Xi Jinping) is appointed a CMC vice-chairman, in order to provide him with experience regarding high-level military issues.¹⁶

Thus, policy contacts between the senior military and the PBSC usually occur via the CCP general secretary and his putative successor (when present), as leaders of the CMC. There is no equivalent in China to the civilian U.S. secretary of defense—and the larger Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)—to determine and oversee basic elements of defense policy and facilitate interactions with the top civilian political leadership. In China, the CCP general secretary combines the roles of both the commander-in-chief and the secretary of defense, albeit without the same level of power that would accrue to such an individual in the U.S. system—given the collective nature of the Chinese party leadership. Moreover, most of the duties of the U.S. defense secretary are performed not by the CCP general secretary, but by the two most senior PLA officers, as vice chairmen of the CMC.

According to some informants, those two military leaders usually enjoy particularly close access to the CCP general secretary on many military-related policy issues, most likely including those

relating to foreign policy. Equally important, both figures also no doubt exert some influence on foreign policy matters via their membership in the PB, to the extent that body addresses such matters. However, the exact nature of these high-level civil-military interactions is unknown to outside observers.¹⁷ To a considerable extent, as in any system, such interactions probably depend on the personalities and relationships of the individuals involved.¹⁸

Despite its high level of authority and senior membership, the CMC is by all accounts not a final decision-making body regarding the formulation of any *fundamental* national strategy or policy (as opposed to the creation and implementation of lower-level civil-military-related—or purely internal military—policies). Regarding basic issues of foreign policy line and direction, it usually functions as a “de facto” LSG, providing policy advice and recommendations on key *military-related* foreign policy topics to the civilian leadership (primarily via the CMC chairman), coordinating basic policy views and actions among its constituent members and their subordinate organs, and generally serving as a consensus-building apparatus within the senior military leadership.¹⁹

Military input into the foreign policy process at senior levels of the party leadership also occurs via those several relevant LSGs that oversee both foreign policy and military-related issues. Foremost among these are the Foreign Affairs LSG, the National Security LSG, and the Taiwan Affairs LSG. Each is presided over by a PBSC member (as is the case with virtually all other major LSGs) and includes high-level representatives of all relevant organizations and functional units within its specific policy arena of responsibility. Hence, given their connection to military issues, all three of these LSGs contain senior PLA officers.²⁰ These PLA representatives usually consist of at least one senior CMC member (possibly the minister of defense or a CMC vice chairman) and the senior PLA officer responsible for military intelligence and foreign relations.²¹

As suggested above, the LSGs do not make final decisions regarding most fundamental policy matters. As with the CMC, they usually function as senior-level advisory, communication, coordinating, supervising, and consensus-building bodies *on major national policy issues*.²² In many cases, according to knowledgeable informants, the policy recommendations offered to the PBSC by both the LSGs and the CMC are accepted with little debate. This is in part apparently due to the fact that the other members of the PBSC possess a very limited level of knowledge

regarding the specific areas of expertise managed by each LSG. Nonetheless, the PBSC retains final authority on all major decisions.²³

Thus, given the primarily advisory and coordinating role of LSGs in general, the PLA representatives on foreign policy-related LSGs likely represent military expertise and viewpoints concerning aspects of policy implementation and as part of the overall foreign policy coordination process, provide intelligence, and at times offer military-related policy recommendations to the LSG. In light of this, “the FALSG is not intended to serve as *the* forum for military input into critical foreign policy decisions.”²⁴ On a formal, institutional level, as indicated, such high-level input is likely provided first and foremost via the CMC, through the CCP general secretary, and to a likely lesser extent via the PB, through the two most senior PLA officers and CMC vice chairmen.²⁵

Finally, an administrative organization that might serve as a basis for some civil-military coordination on foreign affairs-related issues is the General Office of the CCP Central Committee (CCP CC GO). According to informants, the CCP CC GO reportedly has responsibility for maintaining constant contact and continuously coordinating information between the leading civilian party organs and various party bodies within the military, including the party CMC, various subordinate CMC departments, and party committees within the PLA regional commands. Thus, the CCP CC GO probably coordinates and facilitates routine bureaucratic information flows between party organizations within the foreign affairs and defense sectors (via the CMC and the FALSG *xitong*), as well as higher-level contacts among senior members of both organizations, in their capacity as PB members. Whether such information contains policy-relevant issues is unclear, however.²⁶

Subordinate Foreign Affairs-related PLA Activities: Considerable Autonomy

While the senior CCP leadership exercises ultimate power over basic foreign and defense policy issues, it apparently does not exert clear and decisive control over military actions of foreign policy relevance occurring at subordinate levels of the policy process. Two overlapping areas are especially notable in this regard:

- Civilian-military coordination regarding specific types of military-related activities that impinge on foreign policy
- Civilian oversight of military operations beyond China's territorial borders.

The former area includes a wide array of actions undertaken by the Chinese military that, while purely military in nature, could nonetheless exert a significant impact on Beijing's foreign relations. Examples of such actions would include many of those mentioned in the introduction, such as the testing of critical weapons systems or military-related capabilities, or other military actions that might cause concern among or offend other nations.²⁷ The latter actions include deployments of Chinese warships into or near the territorial waters of other countries, interceptions by PLA ships and aircraft of foreign surveillance vessels operating near China, and various types of military exercises occurring outside China's borders.²⁸

In the United States and many other Western countries, such potentially disruptive, foreign policy-related military actions are usually coordinated beforehand with (and in some cases approved by) senior civilian national security or diplomatic officials, as part of a well-established inter-agency vetting and oversight process usually administered—in the U.S. case—by the President's National Security Council (NSC). In contrast, according to discussions with knowledgeable officials, scholars, and PLA officers, no clear, explicit, codified regulations or executive orders exist in China today to ensure such coordination between civilian and military authorities.²⁹

In the past, the lack of formal regulations in this area did not pose a major problem. Paramount party leaders such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping possessed a clear and detailed knowledge of how the PLA operates, knew the top PLA leadership personally, and held the authority to demand—and receive—consultation by military authorities on important foreign policy-related military activities.³⁰

Today, even though senior civilian party leaders in all likelihood formally approve all major military-related policies and programs and issue general policy guidelines, as noted above, such individuals almost certainly do not possess the personal authority and contacts, knowledge of military issues, qualified staff, or institutional mechanisms to ensure Mao- or Deng-like control

over the *details* of military activities in many areas that pose implications for foreign policy. Moreover, the CMC and LSGs reportedly do not routinely address lower-level military issues of implementation unless they have already caused political problems for the leadership. In other words, although the PLA conducts operational activities under previously approved programs or general policy guidelines laid out by the central civilian leadership, it exercises considerable latitude in this process.

While the CCP general secretary, as CMC chairman, is almost certainly kept informed of major PLA weapons, training, and exercise programs and perhaps even the outlines of some important operational issues, it seems unlikely that he is routinely told beforehand of specific military actions, such as individual weapons tests and exercises, small-scale military “patrols” or naval training exercises outside of China’s borders, or the specific “rules of engagement” guiding interceptions of foreign surveillance vessels. CMC meetings reportedly do not address such “purely military” issues of an operational nature.³¹ That said, the central leadership almost certainly has the authority to fine tune operational policies implemented by the PLA and issue additional implementing orders, after the fact.

Moreover, we also do not know, on an unclassified level at least, the extent to which the party general secretary and other PBSC members have in the past demanded information beforehand regarding *specific* PLA operations, exercises, and training practices occurring outside of China’s borders. It is quite possible, even likely, that in the apparent absence of a *requirement* for the PLA to provide such information, and given the general separation that exists between the military and civilian systems, such information is rarely requested and rarely provided to senior party leaders, including those responsible for foreign affairs. As a result, the PLA probably enjoys considerable latitude in all these areas. Again, this is not to say that the senior civilian leadership does not ask the military for information after the fact, when PLA activities create a crisis or incident with other powers.

In addition, the military system itself is apparently not structured to ensure that such matters are brought to the attention of the PLA’s foreign affairs system. Many of the activities undertaken by the military that pose potential problems for the United States—including both the testing of

major weapons and deployments of PLA assets beyond China's borders—come under either the Operations Department (作战部) or the Military Training and Service Arms Department (军训与兵种部) of the PLA General Staff Department (GSD). According to one very knowledgeable Chinese officer, these departments are senior in the PLA hierarchy to those GSD units in charge of foreign affairs (外事办公室) and intelligence (情报部). As a result, they routinely do not consult with such units when deploying assets or conducting military tests or exercises. In addition, the GSD's foreign affairs office is primarily responsible for military exchanges with foreign countries, not assessments of the civilian diplomatic impact of military actions. In other words, no organization within the PLA has the authority and responsibility to routinely demand and receive notice of PLA activities that might impact China's foreign relations.³²

One possible avenue of coordination between the PLA and the CCP leadership on such matters resides in the staff secretary or assistant to the CMC chairman, mentioned above. This individual is reportedly responsible for keeping the CMC chairman informed of PLA policies and actions, among other duties.³³ However, the specific nature of his responsibilities in this area remains unclear to outsiders. In particular, it is not known for certain whether he, or anyone else within the military system, is charged with informing the CMC chairman of any specific PLA activities that might impinge on China's diplomatic relationships. Even less is known about the extent of interaction, if any, that might exist between the CMC secretary and senior staffers within the foreign affairs system.

It is quite possible that little if any regular contact occurs between any parts of the Chinese military and China's foreign affairs system regarding military activities of relevance to foreign policy, given both the absence of a NSC-type system and the generally secretive and insular nature of the military in China. Also, while the CMC is the equal of the State Council in the leadership structure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is *at most* equal only to the General Staff Department in bureaucratic ranking. As a result, the Foreign Ministry has no formal authority to demand information from leading PLA organs. Indeed, the often condescending manner of PLA officers toward Foreign Ministry officials suggests that they owe them little.

It is also possible that even senior party leaders, including the general secretary, have little inclination to alter those long-standing structures and practices that serve to sustain the current separation that exists between the military and foreign affairs systems in China, despite the arguably increasing need to provide for coordination between the actions of a growing military and China's foreign diplomatic relationships.

Undertaking such a task would require considerable political clout, a strong motivation, and a willingness to take on entrenched bureaucratic interests, and perhaps even to expose oneself to political attack for allegedly seeking to strengthen the power of the foreign affairs apparatus relative to the military. An indication of the hesitancy of the senior leadership to address this problem is suggested by the fact that, after more than a decade of PLA activities that have sometimes created major incidents with foreign powers, there is no hard evidence that they have made meaningful changes in the policy coordination system. Indeed, Chinese officials often tell their American counterparts that the system works well and requires no adjustment (while some academic counterparts have stated otherwise at times).

Summary and Conclusions

Many aspects of the interaction between the military and China's foreign policy decision-making process remain unknown or only dimly understood by outsiders. For example, we know almost nothing about the scope, frequency, and policy impact of any personal interactions that might occur between the most senior civilian party and military leaders regarding foreign policy issues. We also know very little about the possible role, if any, of individuals such as the secretary to the CMC chairman and the director of the CCP CC GO in coordinating between specific military actions and elements of PRC foreign policy and diplomatic relations. And we do not know to what degree or how regularly the CCP general secretary or other senior civilian party leaders are kept informed of the progress of military programs that might pose significant implications for China's foreign relations. However, several more general observations can be made with a fairly high level of certainty, based on interviews and written sources.

First, China's leadership system is centered on a party-based, oligarchic, consensus-driven structure that reflects a balance of "constituencies" among the party, government, geographical regions, public security organs, and the military. Within this system, senior leadership bodies such as the PB are organized to serve as arenas for balanced and rational decision-making among various institutional and geographic interests. Although leadership competition continues, it is not based, as during the Mao and Deng eras, on largely informal, personal, and vertically organized factions, but instead on an increasingly established lattice of institutions and processes that operate on the basis of largely consensus-oriented, codified norms.

Second, at the top of this system, the PLA today wields far less political power than it did during the Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping eras. Moreover, ultimate decision-making authority regarding fundamental foreign and defense policies resides in the CCP Politburo Standing Committee, which contains no military representative. While some influence on major foreign policy decisions might be exerted by the PLA's two most senior officers, in their capacity as members of the PB, such influence is no doubt diluted by the fact that the PB as a body usually contains over 20 full members and clearly wields far less power over basic policy decisions than the PBSC. The extent to which these two PLA leaders might exert informal influence over foreign policy issues via their personal relationships with senior civilian party leaders such as the CCP general secretary would likely depend on the specific personalities and relationships of the individuals involved.

Third, individual senior PLA officers most likely express their views on specific defense-related aspects of foreign policy primarily via the CMC-centered system. However, senior PLA officers (both serving and retired) have at times exerted influence over the stance taken by the Foreign Ministry on specific foreign policy-related issues, largely by expressing their views publicly or writing articles for the unofficial Chinese press. Some well-respected retired PLA "elders" might also express their views on foreign policy behind the scenes, as occurred during the Mao and Deng eras. Indeed, as suggested above, there is little doubt that many PLA officers (both retired and serving) often have little regard for what they view as the excessively accommodating stance toward other countries (and especially the United States) taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, it is important to stress that such views do not necessarily constitute a cohesive, clearly defined, and widely supported military “interest” distinct from and opposed to those of civilian organizations; nor do such views necessarily translate into a pattern of autonomous and continuous pressure on the senior civilian party leadership. Unlike the military in many developing countries, the PLA does not behave as a separate institutional force in Chinese power politics and within senior policy channels. Its mandate today is almost exclusively defined by its professional responsibilities and it operates under the ultimate control of the CCP leadership.

Fourth, those entities that provide regularized institutional channels between the senior military leadership and senior civilian officials with authority over foreign policy (i.e., the CMC and relevant LSGs) perform primarily advisory, coordinating, and consensus-building functions regarding major national policy issues (whether foreign or domestic-related). In carrying out these functions, the PLA serves as one organization among many, under the leadership of civilian party figures. That said, such organizations can also at times exert substantial influence over both major and (especially) lesser types of foreign policy-related decisions made by the PBSC. Of these organizations, as indicated, the CMC offers the strongest avenue for military influence on aspects of foreign policy, albeit largely via the civilian CCP general secretary.

Fifth, despite its ultimate authority over all major aspects of foreign policy, China’s civilian party leadership most likely does not exert clear and decisive control over two interrelated types of operational military activities that can pose significant implications for PRC foreign relations: specific military tests and other actions (regardless of location) and military operations undertaken outside of China’s territorial borders. The PRC party-state system has not developed the NSC-type structures and processes to consistently coordinate such activities with China’s foreign affairs and diplomatic structures.

These conclusions indicate that it is incorrect to suggest that the Chinese military today wields decisive, or even significant, influence over fundamental aspects of PRC foreign policy on an ongoing basis. Those few official avenues of high-level influence on foreign policy the PLA does enjoy—via the CMC, the PB, and the LSGs—are highly limited in nature, and largely dependent on a single figure, the CCP general secretary. Although informal influence at senior

levels is undoubtedly exerted via the two military vice chairmen of the CMC, little is known of such interactions, especially with regard to foreign policy. However, any such influence is almost certainly either based on limited personal ties with senior party figures or mediated and diluted by the formal processes of the CMC and the PB.

In contrast, the military is undoubtedly able to exert significant influence over specific foreign and diplomatic actions at lower levels of the system, via its access to public media and as a result of the lack of coordinating mechanisms between specific military actions and foreign policy.

Overall, the absence of a NSC-type system in China will almost certainly present a growing problem for PRC foreign policy and for the civilian party leadership, as the PLA expands its activities and extends its presence beyond its territorial borders. Beijing will increasingly confront the need to establish clear and authoritative procedures for effectively coordinating foreign and defense policy at both senior and lower levels of the policy process. At high levels, policy coordination on all but the most major issues is weak and excessively dependent on the CCP general secretary and his relationship with the two uniformed CMC vice chairmen. At lower levels, coordination between military actions and foreign policy or diplomacy is virtually non-existent. Moreover, the obstacles to creating greater coordination, at both lower and higher levels, are significant, and to a great extent reflect the problems involved in creating a NSC-type structure and inter-agency policy coordination process in China.³⁴ Many of these issues and problems are also evident in China's crisis decision-making process, albeit arguably to a somewhat lesser degree. The PLA's role in that process is discussed in the next CLM.

¹ For a general discussion of such allegedly growing PLA activism, see Cheng Li, "China's Midterm Jockeying: Gearing Up for 2012 (Part 3: Military Leaders)," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 33 (Fall 2010). Li states, "The Chinese military... remains a very important interest group in the country. The PLA's need to advance its own bureaucratic interests makes the Chinese military, collectively and on an individual basis, an influential powerbroker that may carry enormous weight in Chinese politics generally and especially in CCP leadership transitions."

² David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 46-47; Alice Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 26 (Fall 2008), <http://www.hoover.org/publications/china-leadership-monitor/article/5689>, p. 6; Qi Zhou, "Organization, Structure and Image in the Making of Chinese Foreign Policy since the Early 1990s," dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, March 2008, introduction, p. 109.

³ Hence, for each observation, every analyst must always ask: how do we know what we know? Is information based on specific evidence, or logical inference, derived from experience, impressions, historical analogy or theoretical notions? And how might the decision process vary, based on the type of action involved (e.g., anticipated or unanticipated, external or domestic, with major or minor powers), its duration, etc.? In other words, almost everything about China's decision-making process requires ongoing confirmation and reconfirmation over time.

⁴ Much of the following description of the Chinese leadership structure derives from the work of Alice Miller of Stanford University. However, many of her observations are shared by other specialists on the Chinese political system. See Alice Miller, "The PLA in the Party Leadership Decision-Making System," prepared for the CAPS-RAND-NDU-CEIP International Conference on PLA Affairs, Taipei, Taiwan, November 3, 2011; Alice Miller, "The Politburo Standing Committee under Hu Jintao," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 35 (Fall 2011), <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM35AM.pdf>; Alice Miller, "The PLA in the Party Leadership Decisionmaking System," unpublished briefing prepared for a conference, *The Role of the PLA in National Security Policymaking: Is Change Underway?* Center for Naval Analyses, April 7, 2011; Alice Miller, "Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics of Chinese Leadership Politics," in Cheng Li, ed., *China's Changing Political Landscape* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008), pp. 61-79; Miller, *CLM*, no. 26; and Alice Miller, "The Political Implications of PLA Professionalism," in David M. Finkelstein & Kristen Gunness, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Today's China* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), pp. 131-145. For similar assessments of various parts of Miller's viewpoint, see Cheng Li, "The Chinese Communist Party: Recruiting and Controlling the New Elites," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, vol. 38, issue 3, 2009, pp. 13-33; Cheng Li, "Intra-Party Democracy in China: Should We Take It Seriously?" *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 30, November 19, 2009, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/china-leadership-monitor/3585>; David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008; Zheng Yongnian, *The Chinese Communist Party as Organizational Emperor: Culture, Reproduction and Transformation*, Taylor & Francis, Jan 30, 2010, pp. 40.

⁵ As Miller states, "Institutionalization of elite politics and policy-making over the past two decades has produced a system in which competition for power among the top leadership is increasingly shaped by institutional structures created to constrain and limit it and to provide incentives for cooperation and compromise. The system was intended to eliminate the unbridled free-for-all faction-driven for power that the anti-institutional politics of the later Mao years provoked... new appointments to the Politburo and its Standing Committee are likely to be made on the basis of considerations of competence, representation and personality, in addition to calculations of factional loyalty. If past trends continue, selections for appointment will take into account the balance of representation among organizational constituencies evident in the last four Politburo slates." See Miller, *CLM*, no. 26, p. 6.

⁶ In any event, the overall importance of the CCP Secretariat has declined in recent years relative to the PBSC. See Alice Miller, "The PLA in the Party Leadership Decision-Making System," prepared for the CAPS-RAND-NDU-CEIP International Conference on PLA Affairs, Taipei, Taiwan, November 3, 2011; and Alice Miller, "The PLA in the Party Leadership Decision-making System," unpublished briefing prepared for a conference, *The Role of the PLA in National Security Policymaking: Is Change Underway?* Center for Naval Analyses, April 7, 2011. The former paper is based on the latter briefing.

⁷ Gong Li, Men Honghua, and Sun Dongfang, "China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution since 1949," *World Economics and Politics*, November 2009, http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-SJJZ200911006.htm; Qi Zhou, "Organization, Structure and Image," pp. 109-122 (on military involvement in foreign policy, CMC) and pp. 131-188 (on Leading small groups in Chinese foreign policy); Nan Li, *Chinese Civil-Military Relations: The Transformation of the People's Liberation*

Army (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 2; Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decision-making in China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); David Bachman, "Structure and Process in the Making of Chinese Foreign Policy," in Samuel Kim, ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); Michael D. Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 1998); Carol Lee Hamrin, "The Party Leadership System," in Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton, eds., *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), p. 114; Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p. 11; and Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), p. 213.

At present, the putative successor to CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao (PBO member Xi Jinping) is also a possible avenue of PLA influence within the senior CCP leadership. Xi has extensive experience as a party operative within the military regional command system, mostly in Fujian and Zhejiang. He also served on a series of National Defense Mobilization Committees and was a military officer in active service when he worked as a secretary in the CMC General Office from 1979-1982. In addition, his wife is a senior PLA non-ranking civilian (*wenzhi ganbu*) and head of the PLA song and dance troupe, which would likely have exposed Xi to senior PLA leaders. He currently serves as a vice chairman of the CCP CMC, as discussed below. See James Mulvenon, "Xi Jinping and the Central Military Commission: Bridesmaid or Bride?" *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 34 (Winter 2011). I am also indebted to Dennis Blasko for some of the above information on Xi's PLA ties.

⁸ Alice Miller, "The PLA in the Party Leadership Decisionmaking System," unpublished briefing prepared for a conference, *The Role of the PLA in National Security Policymaking: Is Change Underway?* Center for Naval Analyses, April 7, 2011.

⁹ Alice Miller, "The Politburo Standing Committee under Hu Jintao," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 35 (Fall 2011), <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM35AM.pdf>. Miller states, "some foreign and Hong Kong observers have speculated that addition of a PLA leader to the Politburo Standing Committee is being considered in the run-up to the 18th Party Congress."

¹⁰ Alice Miller, "The Politburo Standing Committee under Hu Jintao," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 35 (Fall 2011), <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM35AM.pdf>. Miller states, "On one hand, addition of a PLA leader to the Standing Committee would constitute a severe criticism of the ability of the general secretary to reflect PLA interests in the collective leadership and likely elevate concerns among what has been an almost completely civilian Politburo leadership about PLA intrusiveness in party politics. On the other hand, if the added PLA general were perceived to be closely associated with the general secretary, it would immediately raise anxieties among the rest of the leadership about the ambitions of the general secretary."

¹¹ In addition to Cheng Li, *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 33 (Fall 2010), see Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 9, 66-77. Shirk states, "The military's perspective on Japan, Taiwan, and the United States generally is more hawkish than that of civilian officials, according to interviews, and military voices constrain China's policies on these controversial issues. The PLA typically takes a tougher line on these issues than the civilian press."

¹² See David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); and David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), p. 165. Shambaugh states, "If anything, the Chinese military has become more of a national military—defending the nation's and state's interests—and relatively less of

a classic party-army. Recognizing this, the PLA can still be counted on to uphold the ruling position and power of the CCP and obey the national command structure—which runs directly from the CCP Politburo Standing Committee to the Party’s Central Military Commission. Also for these reasons, a coup d’état is not a possibility.” Also see Dennis Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹³ See David Shambaugh, *China’s Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008); and Dennis Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Military involvement in such decisions was significantly greater in the 1980s and early/mid-1990s, when senior PLA officers such as Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen held highly influential party positions (Liu was the last PLA member of the PBSC) and enjoyed great authority as elder PLA officers charged by Deng Xiaoping with smoothing the transition of the civil-military system to the successor generation under Jiang Zemin. At that time, basic national security-related strategy and policy were determined by a national security directorate composed of the most senior civilian and military leaders involved in national security affairs. This group included individual party and military elders who, while nominally retired, nonetheless continued to exert considerable influence over basic policy decisions. See Michael D. Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 1998), pp. 14-16. That civil-military structure apparently no longer exists today. And of course, the party and military elders of that period are now gone.

¹⁴ David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Dennis Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁵ Qi Zhou, 2008, pp. 115-116 (on subordination of military modernization to economic development and the reduction of the size of the PLA), pp. 117-118 (on ending profit-making activities); Alice Miller, “The Political Implications of PLA Professionalism,” in David M. Finkelstein & Kristen Gunness, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Today’s China* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), pp. 131-145; Blasko, 2006, pp. 6-8; James C. Mulvenon, “PLA Divestiture and Civil-Military Relations: Implications for the 16th Party Congress Leadership,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 2, (Spring 2002); David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 31, 230-241; James C. Mulvenon, *Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001); Tai Ming Cheung, “The Influence of the Gun: China’s Central Military Commission and Its Relationship with the Military, Party, and State Decision-Making Systems,” in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 86-89; and David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 72, 73.

¹⁶ The other members of the CMC include two other vice chairmen (invariably the two highest ranking members of the PLA officer corps), the heads of all the major PLA departments, including the General Staff Department, the General Political Department, the General Logistics Department, the General Armaments Department, the Second Artillery Corps, the commanders of the Chinese navy and air force, and the minister of national defense. See Shambaugh, 2002, pp. 33-51, for a general discussion of the CMC. Also see Swaine, 1998, pp. 40-44, 52-55, for information on the role, functioning and position of the CMC; Blasko, 2006, pp. 26-32, for information on the CMC, especially the role of CMC leadership and the CMC chairman; and Qi Zhou, pp. 50-53, 109-110. Zhou states, “[Although] the Ministry of Defense is under the State Council... management of the PLA has nothing to do with the State Council. It is completely under the jurisdiction of the CMC and the Politburo.” Qi Zhou states, “Although

the four general departments constitute the second level in the organizational hierarchy of the PLA, the General Staff Department (GSD) is seen as ‘the first among the equals,’ standing out from the other general departments because it is the agent through which the CMC exercises operational command of the seven military regions.”

For more on the CMC and its membership, see Su Zhirong and Mu Xiankui, *Guofang tizhijiaocheng* (Textbook on National Defense Institutions) (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1999), p. 125; David Finkelstein, “The General Staff Department of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army: Organization, Roles, and Missions,” in James C. Mulvenon and Andrew N.D. Yang, eds., *The People’s Liberation Army as Organization* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2002), pp. 122-144, at pp. 125-126; Ka Po Ng, *Interpreting China’s Military Power: Doctrine Makes Readiness* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), p. 28.

¹⁷ Swaine, 1998, p. 41. In this work, I refer to the CMC chairman and the two uniformed CMC vice chairmen as constituting an informal executive committee of the CMC, “exercising sole decisionmaking authority over the most critical military (including defense) policy issues, usually with the concurrence of the remaining members of the PBSC.” This observation was based on personal interviews conducted at the time with Chinese military analysts. Also see David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 117. Shambaugh discusses the role of these two CMC vice-chairs as of 2001-2: “In terms of actual power and decision-making authority, the two senior vice chairmen and serving officers—Zhang Wannian and Chi Haotian today—enjoy overall authority within the CMC. No doubt, Jiang Zemin and, certainly, Hu Jintao defer to the judgment of these men on most matters. It is not clear if Generals Zhang and Chi divide the responsibilities of overseeing different elements of defense policy and the military establishment, as did their predecessors, General Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen: Liu oversaw weapons production, defense industries, and military diplomacy, while Zhang was in charge of doctrine, training, deployments, and military education. The other members of the CMC constitute an informal executive committee, with functional responsibilities for their respective bailiwicks...”

¹⁸ In addition, it is possible that a secretary or assistant for military affairs within the CMC also plays a significant role in shaping policy interactions between the CCP general secretary—whom he apparently serves—and the senior PLA leadership. This figure is discussed further below.

¹⁹ See footnote 16 above for sources on the CMC.

²⁰ The other major LSGs, include: Hong Kong and Macao; Finance and Economy; Ideology and Propaganda; Party-Building; and Politics and Law. For an excellent discussion of the history and composition of the LSGs, see Alice Miller, *CLM*, no. 26. Also see Qi Zhou dissertation, pp. 131-171; and Lu Ning, “The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies, State Council Ministries, and Party Departments,” in David Lampton et al., ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 415, n. 40.

²¹ On the FALSOG, the PLA representatives include the senior officer in charge of military intelligence (usually a GSD deputy director) and the minister of defense. The inclusion of PLA representatives on the FALSOG reportedly began in the mid-1980s under Zhao Ziyang and was intended to strengthen civilian government oversight of the military on issues that impinged on foreign relations. See Swaine, 1998, p. 32, citing Hamrin (1995), p. 90. On the TALSG, PLA representatives also usually include the senior officer in charge of military intelligence and a CMC vice chairman. The NSLSG was apparently established in September 2000, and its membership has been identical to that of the FALSOG. As a result, its significance within the party-state system is unclear. Some analysts regard it as a weak or moribund institution. See Michael Swaine, “Chinese Decision-Making Regarding Taiwan: 1979-

2000,” in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 289-336; Alice Miller, *CLM*, no. 26; Qi Zhou dissertation; and Lu Ning, “The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies, State Council Ministries, and Party Departments,” in David Lampton et al., ed., *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 45-49.

²² As noted in Swaine, 1998: “Leading small groups... are sometimes referred to by the leadership as ‘advisory bodies’ for the PB or Party Secretariat, and their decisions are often issued in the name of those bodies. However, they can also bring finished policy packages to the party leading organs at times and can sometimes issue orders and instructions directly to line departments and units.” Also see Qi Zhou dissertation, pp. 131-171. Zhou states, “The LGs provide a forum for bargaining and compromise, or rather ‘consultation and reconciliation,’ as it is preferred to be referred to by the Chinese, and for policy analysis and assessments to reach a consensus. In this way, it is easy for the Politburo or its Standing Committee to make final decisions based on the consensus and policy recommendations reached at the LG level. ... Prior to Zhao Ziyang being purged during the 1989 Tiananmen tragedy, the FALSG contained all organizations concerned with foreign affairs. In a meeting with A. Doak Barnett in 1986, Zhao referred to it as an ‘advisory rather than a decision-making body.’ Its principal function was ‘to exchange views, to study problems, and to communicate.’ It met as often as once a week, but without a regular schedule...” See also A. Doak Barnett, *The Making of Foreign Policy in China* (SAIS Papers in International Affairs, no 9, 1985). Other sources include Alice Miller, *CLM*, no. 26; Carol Lee Hamrin, “The Party Leadership System,” in Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton, eds., *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), p. 103; and Wei Li, *The Chinese Staff System: A Mechanism for Bureaucratic Control and Integration* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1994), pp. 33-34.

²³ As stated in Swaine, 1998, p. 22: “On the formal level, the PBSC as a body exercises ultimate decisionmaking authority over foreign policy, as it supposedly does over defense policy. However, in reality, most members of the PBSC do not wield decisive influence in this subarena. Many initiatives or elements of China’s diplomatic or overall foreign policy strategy are either undertaken directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) or, in the case of key policy actions, recommended by the MoFA and/or the FALSG...and formally approved by the PBSC as a body, often with little deliberation. Yet one should not conclude from this statement that the PBSC today serves merely as a rubber stamp in the foreign policy subarena...As mentioned above, each PBSC member is responsible for an area of the party-state system, and some areas likely impinge on one or more foreign policy issues.... [In theory at least,] in extreme cases, a majority of PBSC members could seek to alter or reverse a key foreign policy decision.”

²⁴ Swaine, 1998, p. 32.

²⁵ As Qi Zhou states (p. 122), “The Chinese military must speak in one voice even though it comprises many departments. When a policy is under deliberation, representatives are encouraged to voice opinions at the meetings of the various agencies. Thus different voices can be heard. But when the military reports on intelligence analysis or provides policy recommendations, there is only one channel through which the military can reach the Standing Committee of the Politburo, that is, the CMC. The CMC unifies the voice of the military before it reports to the Politburo. On any decision related to the armed forces, the final decision is dominated by the Politburo. The military is merely one of several different bureaucracies whose voice can be heard by the top leaders through reports, though on strategic issues, the voice of the military is considered extremely important.”

²⁶ Also, it must be stressed that, as with other important party, state, and military organs, the precise extent of influence exerted on policy issues by the CCP CC GO will depend to a considerable extent upon the personal stature and influence of its top leader. Historically, the CCP CC GO has been led by very influential party figures such as Wen Jiabao and Zeng Qinghong. See Swaine, 1998, p. 33.

²⁷ For examples, see James Mulvenon, “Rogue Warriors? A Puzzled Look at the ASAT Test,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 20 (Winter 2007), <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/clm20jm.pdf>; and Andrew Scobell, “The J-20 Episode and Civil-Military Relations in China,” testimony before the U.S.–China Economic and Security Review Commission, March 10, 2011, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2011/RAND_CT357.pdf

²⁸ For specific examples of such activities, see Mark Valencia, “The Impeccable Incident: Truth and Consequences,” *China Security*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring 2009), <http://www.chinasecurity.us/pdfs/Valencia.pdf>; Jonathan G. Odom, “The True ‘Lies’ of the Impeccable Incident: What Really Happened, Who Disregarded International Law, and Why Every Nation (Outside of China) Should Be Concerned,” Michigan State University College of Law *Journal of International Law*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2010, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1622943; Shane Osborn with Malcolm McConnell, *Born to Fly: The Untold Story of the Downed American Reconnaissance Plane* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001); Shirley A. Kan, “China-U.S. Aircraft Collision Incident of April 2001: Assessments and Policy Implications,” Congressional Research Service, October 10, 2001; Stacy A. Pedrozo, “China’s Active Defense Strategy and its Regional Impact,” prepared statement before the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission, United States House of Representatives, First Session, 112th Congress, January 27, 2010, http://i.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/China%20Testimony_Pedrozo.pdf; Christopher D. Yung et al., “China’s Out of Area Naval Operations: Case Studies, Trajectories, Obstacles, and Potential Solutions,” National Defense University, Washington, D.C., Institute for National Security Studies, December 2010, <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA535138>.

²⁹ For references to such a lack of policy coordination by a well-known Chinese scholar, see Wu Xinbo, “Managing Crisis and Sustaining Peace between China and the United States,” *United States Institute of Peace*, 2008, pg. 25, http://www.usip.org/files/resources/PW61_FinalApr16.pdf Wu Xinbo, “Understanding Chinese and U.S. Crisis Behavior,” *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 31, issue 1, Winter 2007-2008, pp. 72, http://www.twq.com/08winter/docs/08winter_wu.pdf. According to Qi Zhou (dissertation, pp. 264-268) and discussions held by the author in China in the mid-2000s with knowledgeable individuals, in the wake of the 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, a PLA-related think tank made concerted efforts with other agencies to set up “an inter-agency, crisis management-oriented ‘national security council’” under the Politburo. This effort apparently contributed to the subsequent formation of the above-mentioned NSLSG. However, as indicated above, this unit has not actually become a genuine NSC-type structure nor even taken a role in the policy making process as significant as that of the FALSG.

³⁰ Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1987); Michael Swaine, “The Military & Political Succession in China: Leadership, Institutions, Beliefs,” RAND, 1992, pp. 16-21, 28-33. See also Swaine, 1998, pp. 35-36, 77-78.

³¹ Discussions with Chinese scholars and military analysts.

³² Discussion with a senior PLA officer.

³³ Swaine, 1998, p. 43. Also see David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 121. Shambaugh states, "The [CMC] General Office is known to have a director... and a number of deputy directors. The General Office also contains a number of administrative secretaries (*mishu*), although each [CMC member] has his own personal *mishu* as well."

³⁴ As indicated above, many knowledgeable Chinese observers have long recognized the need to establish a more institutionalized and thorough process for coordinating China's foreign and defense policies at all levels. For major policy issues, one basic obstacle is presented by the existence and makeup of the PBSC as the supreme decision-making body in China. Any new, NSC-type structure for deciding basic national security-related policy issues in the foreign and defense realms would presumably involve only a subset of PBSC members (perhaps only the CCP general secretary and one or two others), while including senior PLA officers and other foreign policy leaders, such as the State Council member in charge of foreign affairs (currently Dai Bingguo). Would such a body supplant the PBSC's formal decision-making authority in this area? If not, how would it differ from the FALSG, or the CMC? Secondly, there is no strong support for establishing a NSC-type structure among most relevant bureaucracies. The military would likely resist ceding its freedom of action and authority on many issues to a civil-military body. Similarly, civilian foreign affairs officials would likely not welcome military input on every major foreign policy decision. Discussion with Bonnie S. Glaser.