China as a Maritime Power in the Post-Cold War Asia-Pacific Region: Implications for Regional Security*

Renato De Castro

The end of the cold-war witnessed a major shift in East Asia's power relations. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet naval forces in the region, the reduction in the forward deployment of American naval and military forces, and the end of the Vietnamese military occupation of Kampuchea, have created the notion that the People's Republic of China (PRC) is an emerging power poised to fill a 'power vacuum.'

More recently, China's rapid economic growth, its acquisition of advanced weapons systems from Russia, and the restructuring of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into a well-balanced conventional force have transformed this notion into a regional concern -- that China will challenge the region's

hegemons (the United States and, to a certain degree, its major client state, Japan) and upset regional order and stability.

This view is inaccurate and even alarmist. China is not an emerging regional power. With its geography, natural resources, civilization, and population, China has always been the region's traditional and foremost power. Its power lies in its ability to affect any major regional development. As one Singaporean scholar wrote:

> China is one major power in the Asia-Pacific to have left the longest historical imprint on the security equation of the region... Whether an economically weak, unstable, and factionalized China, or a modernized, economically strong, politically cohesive, and assertive China, its impact on security concerns in the region is inescapable.[1]

Current international concern over China may not have something to do with its emergence as a regional power since it has always been a power to contend with. It has something to do with the transformation of China's military capability and defense concerns in relation to the region. Prior to 1985, China's primary security concern was a Soviet invasion, which it intended to counter by a 'People's War' based on guerrilla warfare. However, since the mid-1980s, China's defense concern has changed with its defense doctrine now being geared on maneuverability, mobility, firepower, and a balanced conventional capability. The pre-1985 defense doctrine has given way to a forward defense orientation directed towards smaller-scale conflicts along China's periphery. Consequently this led to the development of the PRC's power projection capability. This capability is made possible by the growth and expansion of the PLA's navy and air force.

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This paper looks into the factors that have led to the

transformation of Chinese military capability and the effect of this transformation on regional order. Specifically the paper discusses: (a) China' maritime interests; (b) the change in China's defense concern and doctrine; (c) the development of its power projection capabilities; and (d) the implication of the transformation of China's military capabilities on regional order and stability.

China's Maritime Interests

Given its long coastline and natural access to Southeast Asia, the PRC enjoys the topographic 'overarching massif' advantage enabling it to dominate the northern reaches of the Asia mainland, and just to the east, the continent's inland sea.[2] It is for this reason that China ostensibly sees, for all intents and purposes, the region's inland sea as its lake.[3] On the basis of its geographic position and what it calls historic rights, the PRC practically claims the entire South China Sea.

Maps published by the PRC show its maritime border running to the south pass the Western coast of the Philippines and up to the coast of Sarawak.[4] Within China's maritime border is the Zengmu Reef (Zengmu Ansha), which lies only 130 kilometers off Sarawak. From that point, China's maritime border turns west and runs past the Indonesian Natuna Islands in a northerly direction and then along the Vietnamese coast to the Gulf of Tonkin. The islands in the South China Sea are also regarded as Chinese territories. These islands are the Spratlys (Nansha), the Paracel Islands (Xisha), the Pratas Islands (Dongsha), and the Macclesfied Bank (which is submerged at medium high tide and cannot be classified as land by international law) which, taken together, practically encompass the entire South China Sea including the islands, the sea-bed, the adjacent waters, and the air space.[5]

Despite access to its maritime environment and its claim of a huge maritime zone, however, the PRC has not given much attention to maritime environment until very recently. This was because of its erstwhile concern with the land-based threat emanating from the continent. When the PRC was established in 1949, it adopted the traditional land-based threat orientation of its predecessor (Imperial China) and adapted it to the post-

revolutionary conditions in the form known as the 'People's War.' The 'People's War' was based heavily on Mao Ze Dong's peculiar model of the military which is characterized by multifunctionality, structural diffuseness, and politization.[6] Exhibiting the essential features of the Red Army guerrillas of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the subsequently renamed People's Liberation Army was tasked to perform essentially land-based military functions.[7]

The ascendancy of Deng Xiaopeng into power in the mid-1970s marked the development of China's maritime interests and the development of the PLA into a conventional force with air and naval capabilities. Deng's program of reforms, the so-called 'four modernizations,' had an important impact on Chinese maritime interest and force modernization. Moving away from the traditional Soviet style command economy, the modernization program made bold moves which highlighted the growing importance of maritime issues to China's long-term economic development. For example, one of the earliest decisions involved the rapid build-up of the merchant marine. The PRC had two important considerations for doing so: first, as the economy moved toward a market-oriented system, it found that it was almost dependent on an expensive charter system run by European shipping firms; and second, modernization in the highly populated, industrial regions required more ships and efficient ports to move goods.[8]

Underlying the effort to modernize China's ports and shipping system was Beijing's decision to establish special economic zones in various coastal sites. Several of these sites are now operating and have absorbed huge amount of foreign investments. Given the need of these special economic zones for raw materials, power and labor, offshore oil and gas developments have become a paramount concern of the PRC. Wells have been sunk and are successfully extracting petroleum in the Gulf of Bohai, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea. To provide food supplies to the increasingly populated coastal areas, aquatic food production was also increased. Thus, more efficient fishing boats and equipment have been acquired enabling the Chinese fishing fleets to fish at a greater distance from the coast.[9]

Aside from developing China's maritime interests, modernization also provided for the restructuring of the PLA into a conventional force with air and maritime capabilities. Under the modernization program, the PLA was envisioned to develop its conventional capabilities through the establishment of a national defense industry that should produce conventional and strategic weapons.[10] Through the modernization program, the PLA was able to improve its mobility and logistics. With some assistance from other countries, China was able to upgrade its J-8 interceptors, large caliber ammunition, artillery locating radars, anti-submarine torpedoes, helicopter, naval gas turbine engines, coastal defense radar, and range of communications equipment.[11] Modernization of the PLA has enabled it to acquire limited power projection capabilities making it possible to develop its air and naval components.

People's War to 'Rapid Response': Evolution of China's Power Projection Doctrine

An important factor in the evolution of China's maritime security policy was the Soviet naval activities in the South China Sea, Malacca, Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf in the late 1970s. In 1979, when the Chinese launched a military operation against Vietnam, vessels of the Soviet Pacific Fleet stepped up their activities in the South China Sea in an effort to show Soviet support for their Vietnamese allies and to intimidate China. Later, the Soviet Pacific Fleet was able to gain access to naval and air bases in Vietnam. This enabled the Soviet navy to increase its naval activities along China's adjacent seas which, in turn, caused considerable concern to Beijing. These developments caused the PRC to put a great deal of attention to reassessing its traditional coastal defense doctrine.

Various developments in the mid-1980s would further push the PRC to give more concern to its maritime environment. The most crucial perhaps was the change in the PRC's defense orientation. The development of strategic parity between the US and the former USSR in the 1970s led to a change in Beijing's assessment of global politics. Seeing that the balance of power between the two superpowers has remained stable while regional powers are emerging in the late 1970s, Beijing concluded that

the probability of a major war is minimal. Beijing's perception of a superpower stalemate led it to conclude that China will not be faced with major military threats from the superpowers but may have to deal with military threats from local and regional powers.[12]

Hence, in 1985, Deng announced that the threat of a major war no longer existed and that China must occupy its rightful position in the world. Thus, in the spring of 1985, the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) ordered the PLA to draft a new defense doctrine. The CPC directed the PLA to refocus their strategic doctrine away from a major nuclear war and toward local limited war around China's borders.[13] Reviewing major local wars over the past 10 years, the PLA concluded that the principal potential cause of wars is territorial dispute.[14]

The PLA is gearing itself for the likelihood of local, limited conflict in the south which necessitates a greater emphasis on offensive capability. The new Chinese defense doctrine, which has been labelled as the 'doctrine of rapid response,' is thus intended to deal primarily with local and limited threat. In contrast to the 'people's war' doctrine, this doctrine does not involve protraction nor mass mobilization and is no longer passive or defensive in nature.

Instead, the doctrine of rapid response relies on quick, existing forces and is basically offensive in orientation.[15] It envisions the deployment of combined air, sea, and land forces in what the doctrine sees as a potential conflict along China's periphery. As such, operations will be limited in time, space, and intensity.[16] Hypothetically, such conflict would start suddenly and should end quickly. This would require active duty forces trained for a wide range of missions and climatic conditions and a high degree of strategic mobility.

This new defense doctrine led to an eventual change in the force structure and priorities of the PLA. This further caused a shift of emphasis away from the PLA's armored and infantry units to the People's Liberation Army's Navy (PLAN) and the People's Liberation Army's Air Force (PLAAF) which can be strategically deployed along with light infantry units. A strategy of general war focusing on large-scale ground forces equipped

with simple and durable weapons system has given way to a quest for weapons of far greater complexity and sophistication, mainly in the air and naval arena.[17] Apparently, this new doctrine has further elevated the PLAN and the PLAAF into a position of prominence with respect to planning and budget.

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Various developments in the late 1980s provided favorable conditions for the acceptance and adoption of this new doctrine by the PLA which, in turn, led to the further modernization of the PLAN. Sino-Soviet *detente* resulted in a decline of direct Soviet threat from the north. This left the PLA without a viable and credible threat to justify a defense strategy based on land threat along with its consequent force structure and operational orientation. Then a series of events in China's periphery provided further justification for the new doctrine and consequent force structure and budget priority, namely: the Sino-Indian border issues and, more importantly, the dispute with Vietnam over islands and reefs in the South China sea.

China's claims and subsequent actions in the Spratlys provided the PLAN with an opportunity to put this doctrine of rapid response into practice and justify its *raison d'etre*. Since 1986, Chinese warships have begun to sail into and around the Spratlys in the course of their routine patrol.[18] In the following year in July, Beijing declared the Spratlys as constituting part of the strategic border of the newly established Hainan province. Then from mid-October to November 1987, the PLAN conducted a series of naval exercises to "enhance the navy's capacity to carry out medium and long distance operation and demonstrate China's capability to wage battle fairly far from Chinese coast."[19] Chinese naval activities consequently alarmed its traditional rival, Vietnam. Thus, in February 1988, Hanoi accused Chinese troops of having landed on two reefs in the Spratlys and warned

China of disastrous consequences. But China reaffirmed its sovereignty over the entire island group and in effect, ignored Hanoi's warning. In 14 March 1988, the inevitable clash between Vietnamese and Chinese forces occurred. In a matter of 28 minutes, the PLAN was able to reaffirmed not only Beijing's determination to assert its sovereignty over the Spratlys but also its ability to conduct a major naval and amphibious operation relatively distant from the Chinese shore.

After the 11 March clash with the Vietnamese, the PLAN consolidated the PRC's claim over the Spratlys. In July 1988, China completed its base in Yongsu, thereby significantly increasing its military presence in the Spratlys.[20] Then in February 1992, the National People's Congress (NPC) passed a maritime territorial law affirming China 'indisputable sovereignty' over the Spratlys, the northern Paracels Islands, and the disputed Diaoyutai in the East China Sea.

China's growing interest in the South China Sea Islands could be attributed to the economic importance given by Beijing to maritime resources. Some Chinese studies, for example, estimate that oil deposit under the South China Sea bed vary from 11 billion barrels of reserves to almost 160 billion barrels.[21]

Evidently, Chinese security leaders since the late 1980s have began to see the surrounding seas as crucial not only to China's security interest but also to its economic interest. Since August 1990, China has in fact offered to hold the sovereignty question in abeyance while supporting joint economic exploration and exploitation of oil and gas reserves believed to be located under the sea bed. In May 1992, Beijing actually awarded an oil exploration concession between the Spratlys and the southern Vietnamese coast to an American Company and reserved the right to use force to protect the drilling expedition.[22]

Moreover, maritime routes are essential to China's growing international trade, with some 85 per cent of the country's external trade transported by sea.[23] Potential offshore oil and mineral deposits can also provide China with much needed fuel for the country's rapidly developing economy. It is even predicted that by the year 2000, maritime products could account for more than two per cent of China's gross national product.[24]

Emergence of the PLAN as an Instrument of National Policy

When the PLAN was established in 1949, it was little more than a coastal appendix of the ground forces. It was made up of a ragtag collection of warships left by the retreating Nationalist Forces, which consisted of some 183 vessels weighing a little more than 43,000 tons.[25] From the 1950s to the mid-1970s, the PLAN ranked low in military priorities, although it did receive funds and assistance from the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s for a modest expansion.

Prior to the late 1970s, most of the PLAN's ships and aircraft were given local defense responsibilities and were tasked to defend the sea region not much beyond land range, that is, about 50 nautical miles. By the end of that decade, however, in the light of Soviet naval activities in the region, the PLAN began to see itself as a combined service made up of a main surface force, a submarine force, a naval air force, and a coastal force. In the 1980s, the PLAN undertook some missions to show its transformation from a brown water fleet to a viable navy with some, albeit limited, blue water capability. Nevertheless, the PLAN was still plagued by budget constraints. At that time, China's defense strategy was still focused on a land-based threat emanating from the former Soviet Union.[26]

The changes in Chinese force structure are reflected in the prominent position occupied by the PLAN and the formation of several new autonomous organizations in the PLA, which include an army aviation corps (PLAAF), a marine corps, and a nuclear submarine force. The creation of a marine corps is a clear indication of the PLA's effort to develop its power projection capability to secure China's interest in the periphery.[27]

The best indication, however, of China's effort to develop maritime capabilities is the modernization of the PLAN's surface and submarine units. Since the late 1980s, at the height of the Spratlys dispute, there has been a marked increase in the attention given to naval modernization as reflected in (a) the construction of new ships and submarines; (b) the development of improved heavy caliber gunnery system; and (c) the attempt to develop the PLAN's fleet air arm.

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China's rapid economic growth in the 1990s has enabled Beijing to increase defense spending and acquire advanced arms and technology necessary for long-range power projection capability.[28] To secure China's expanding national security interest, Beijing has given the PLAN and the PLAAF the priority in obtaining funds for weapons procurement or development.

A major indication of the PLAN's ongoing modernization is the acquisition of major surface combatants with ocean-deployment capability. Since the start of the decade, a new generation of surface vessels has become operational. Notable is the deployment of the *Luhu* class destroyers and *Jianguei* class frigates which represent a marked improvement, respectively, over the current fleet of *Luda* class destroyers and *Jinghu* frigates developed in the 1970s.[29] The 4,500-ton *Luhu* destroyer has improved guns and missile system, a satellite navigation system, a helicopter deck, and a hangar. Like *Luhu*, the *Jianguie* represents a shift in Chinese naval thinking away from ships that operate close to the shore, and towards ocean-going vessels. The PLAN is also modernizing its light surface combatants. The first *Hoijian*-type 520 missile FAC and the *Houxin* class show a marked improvement over the old FAC modelled after the Soviet Navy's *Osa* and *Komar* types.[30]

Perhaps the best indicium of China's intention to develop a blue water capability was its earlier interest in acquiring an aircraft carrier in the early 1990s.[31] In 1991, Russia offered to sell a number of carriers to China. The high costs and the complex logistic burden involved in maintaining a carrier, however, inhibited China from acquiring one. This was also complicated by the fact that Chinese inspectors found the Russian ships in poor condition.[32]

Unable to acquire an aircraft carrier, the PLAN has turned instead to the acquisition and deployment of conventional submarines. Last November 1994, China signed an agreement with Russia for the purchase of four Russian-made *Kilo* class diesel submarines.[33] The agreement provides for the delivery of one *Kilo* at the end of 1995, and three more by 1996. Prior to the *Kilo* deal with the Russians, China also launched a new design of the diesel-electric powered submarine after almost 20 years.[34] China's recent purchase of *Kilo* class submarines will substantially increase and improve the PLAN's submarine fleet.

Another indication of the PLAN's effort to develop blue water capability is the attempt to improve its logistics and mobility. The PLAN has recently introduced the *Dayan* class resupply vessels. The PLAN has also more than doubled the size of its support fleet since the 1980s; however, there are just still a handful of ocean-going vessels, including three *Fuqing* class replenishment tankers.[35]

To provide air cover to the PLAN's surface combatants, the Naval Air Force (NAF) has about three anti-surface attack and five fighter divisions. However, a large number of the NAF's aircrafts are mainly for offshore operations (about 50 miles from the coast), not for blue water deployment. Only a number of aging S-H 5s (maritime) bombers and a new dozen H-6s (old Soviet-made Badgers) are deployed for maritime operations in the Spratlys.[36] To make up for the inadequacy of the PLAN's fleet air arm, the PLAAF is being modernized. In 1994, the deal with Russia was finalized for the PRC's acquisition of 72 SU 27B Flanker fighters and a facility to license produce 200 MIG-31 FoxHound strategic interceptors, and several Ka-28 Helix anti-submarine weapon/maritime strike helicopters, among others.[37]

Despite the aforementioned indications, whether China intends to develop a blue water fleet or not is something that could not be conclusively answered by recent developments. Nevertheless, that recent efforts to build the maritime capability of the PLAN reflects China's new offshore maritime policy is definite. Intended to replace the passive coastal defense approach that previously dominated China's maritime security policy, this new policy aims to enable China to control its 320-kilometer exclusive economic zone, including the Spratlys which lies some 1,600 kilometers further.[38]

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It is assumed that this offshore defense strategy will eventually evolve into an ocean defense strategy, with the protection of China's seaborne trade beyond China's immediate maritime boundaries as one of its tasks.[39] More importantly, the emergence of the PLAN as a viable naval force should enable the PRC to become a regional power capable of affecting regional affairs in the emerging multi-polar world. It will also enable China to gain the strategic initiative in resolving potential disputes in the South China Sea with both military and non-military means.

China: The Emerging Regional Hegemon?

In the 1970s, a modified form of the realist theory emerged to explain the role of national power and order in international politics. Called neo-realism, this theory has two central propositions.[40] The first is that order in world politics is typically created by a single dominant power. Since regimes constitute elements of an international order, this implies that the formation of international regimes normally depends on a hegemon. The second proposition is that the formation of international regimes requires the continued exercise of hegemony by a hegemonic state.

A state can exercise hegemony if it is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing inter-state relations and is willing to do so.[41] For a state to assume this responsibility, it must possess the following properties: (1) preponderance of material resources; (2) sufficient military power to be able to protect the international political economy, which the hegemonic state dominates, from incursion by hostile adversaries; and (3)

capacity to act as a stabilizer, i.e., the ability to manage mutual adjustment of state policies for the maintainance of order and stability within the regime.[42]

China's rapid economic advancement and the development of its power projection capability have been interpreted as indications of Beijing's aspiration for regional hegemony. According to this view, with the decline of the United States and Russia, China intends to assert itself as the regional hegemon. This view projects China as an aspiring hegemon bent on changing the current regime and challenging the United States as the region's hegemonic power. This move is expected to upset the existing regional order and create serious security problem in the Asia-Pacific region.

As pointed out earlier, this perspective of China's ascendancy is simplistic and alarmist. It should be noted that despite its rapid economic growth and the development of its power projection capability, China is still a *status quo* power. Current Chinese economic development and defense spending spree are made possible by China's active participation in the international political economy. Thus, China's dependence on international markets, foreign investments, and trade, acts as brakes to China's perceived move to alter or dominate the regional order. Moreover, although China has developed a relatively large and powerful naval and air forces, it is still absolutely inferior to the United States in terms of the quality and quantity of naval and air power.[43]

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Ironically, instead of viewing US military presence in the region as a threat to its interests, China still views American military presence in the region as necessary. Despite some irritants in US-China relations, Beijing recognizes (albeit reluctantly and with some ambivalence) that US military

presence in the region serves an important stabilizing role -- a check on possible re-militarization of Japan and a guarantor of peace in the Korean Peninsula.[44]

While China may not aspire for regional hegemony, it might be naive to view the development of its power projection capability as an essentially benign phenomenon. As the region's traditional and foremost power, China has an interest in maintaining a certain freedom of action and the capability to affect regional developments to suit its interests.

In order to maintain its freedom of action as it simultaneously influences regional developments, China needs modern and strong maritime and air forces as instruments of its national policy. While not intended for the unabashed pursuit of regional hegemony, these national instruments are still crucial in allowing China to exercise a kind of 'strategic initiative' in the Asia-Pacific region. Strategic initiative is defined as possessing the capability to take positive actions to force Beijing's will upon its [potential] adversaries and destroy their ability to resist China's actions.[45] Thus, this means China's unilateral ability to affect current and future developments in the region.

Concretely, 'strategic initiative' for China means the development of its capabilities to alleviate or resolve its concerns regarding national security and territorial integrity. These concerns include: asserting an independent foreign policy free from external (specifically superpower) constraints; restraining Taiwan's independence movement and possibly effecting unification; curtailing the re-arming of Japan and its possible re-militarization; and asserting its sovereignty over the South China Sea islands in the face of other claimants.

China's unilateral resolution of these national security concerns can be effected without rocking or altering the overall regional order nor directly challenging the region's predominant hegemon, the United States. In a way, China's effort to develop a strategic initiative is consistent with its overall effort, since 1985, to accelerate the process of decoupling its local and regional disputes away from global superpower politics.[46] Freedom from superpower politics, in particular US constraints, will give China more leverage and opportunities to affect regional developments for its own interest as a regional power.

Conclusion

Current efforts by Beijing to develop its power projection capability cannot be viewed merely as an indication of its aspiration to change the regional order and assume a hegemonic role. For one, through access to the regional political economy and influx of foreign investments, China has benefited from the existing regional order. For another, China is in no position to challenge the United States; this despite the transformation of its military power through the development of its power projection capabilities.[47] Rather, China's moves should be viewed as primarily intending to improve its position *within* the order and not changing it. The development of Beijing's naval and air forces is primarily aimed at providing China with the capacity for 'strategic initiative' in the region.

Beijing's exercise of its 'strategic initiative' is perhaps shown when it was able to force the Philippines to negotiate bilaterally with China for a joint economic development of the Spratlys. This was after Chinese forces were discovered on a reef 200 miles off Palawan. Through forward deployed naval forces and construction activity in the South China Sea, China was able to convey its message to the Philippines: "Negotiate with us on our terms or we will take possession of the territory."[48]

While it is still very early to conclude how China will use its power projection capability or whether China could sustain the development of this capability in the face of uncertain economic growth and possible political crisis, current Chinese power projection capability will undoubtedly bouy up China's 'rightful position' in regional affairs.

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Notes

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[1]Chin Kim Wah, "Changing Global Trends and their Effects on the Asia-Pacific," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (June 1991), p. 5.

[2]See Stephen Whalley Jr., "China and the Pacific Basin: Questions and Apprehensions," in *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (March 1987), p. 298.

[3]Ibid., p. 298.

[4]Hans J. Buchholz, *Law of the Sea Zones in the Pacific Ocean* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987), p. 43.

[5]Ibid.

[6]See June Teufel Preyer, "Reorganizing and modernizing the Chinese military," in *China in the Era of Deng Xiaopeng: A Decade of Reform.* Michael Ying Mao Kau, et. al., eds. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1993), p.330.

[7]Prior to the late 1970s, the PLA was designed mainly as a ground force without any significant equipment to staff a navy and air force. This is because the strategic precept of the 'people's war' calls for a highly mobile and lightly equipped infantry-based PLA that will lure the enemy deep into their largely rural based areas and then disperse the opposing force and disrupt its supply line. Like its guerrilla predecessor, the PLA was expected to utilize harrassment, hit-and-run tactics, and other techniques characteristic of guerrilla, rather than conventional, warfare.

[8]Bruce Swanson, "Naval Forces," in China Defense Policy (ed) Gerald Segal (Hong Kong: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1984), p. 86.

[9]Ibid.

[10]See Joyce K. Kallgren, "China 1978: The New Long March," in *Asian Survey* (January 1979), p. 13.

[11]See Barry G. Gelber, "China's New Economic and Strategic Uncertainties and the Security Prospects," *Asian Survey* (July 1990), p. 665.

[12]Paul H. B. Godwin, "Force and Diplomacy: Chinese Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the Post Cold War Era.* Samuel S. Kim, ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), p. 172.

[13]Ibid.

[14]See "Soldiers and Statesmen: Chinese Defense and Foreign Policies in the 1990s" in *China and the World: New Directions in Chinese Foreign Relations.* Samuel Kim, ed. (Colorado, USA: Westview Press, Inc., 1989), p. 188.

[15]Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 1484.

[16]Ibid., p. 1484.

[17]Amitav Acharya and Paul Evans, "China's Defence Expenditures: Trends and Implications." *Eastern Policy Papers* (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto-York University, 1994), p. 17.

[18]Events leading to and during the March 1988 Sino-Vietnamese clash in the Spratlys were taken from Chang Pao-Min, "A New Scramble for the South China Sea," in *Contemporary South East Asia* (June 1990), pp. 24-27.

[19]Ibid., p. 25.

[20]Ibid., p. 27.

[21]Jing-Dong Yuan, "China's Defense Modernization: Implications for Asia-Pacific Security," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (June 1995), p. 79.

[22]Bonnie S. Glaser, "China's Security Perceptions: Interest and Ambitions," *Asian Survey* (3 March 1993), p. 264.

[23]See "China adopts a new stance," in *Jane Defense Weekly* (26 February 1994), p. 19.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[26]For a discussion on the changes in China's defense concern and doctrine and their impact on the PLAN's force structure, see Jean V. Dubois, "New Directions in Chinese Strategy," in *International Defense Review.* (November 1989), p. 1484.

[27]See Bradley Hahn, "China: A Naval Transition," in *Journal of Defense and Diplomacy* (November 1988), p. 6.

[28]Country Briefing: "China: Chasing the 20th Century," in *Jane's Defense Forum* (19 February 1994), p. 26. For a comprehensive discussion on China's defense budget, see Amitav Acharya and Paul Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-15.

[29]This new generation of surface combatants is currently replacing the old *Luda* class destroyer and *Jinghu* class frigates, which were designed primarily for coastal defense. China has spent enormous efforts and resources to develop these new surface combatants for blue water deployment. In these new ships, the reliance on big guns has been substituted by long range, precision-guided over-the-horizon anti-ship missiles. Fire and navigational control systems have also been upgraded and helicopters deployed on board ships to improve these ships' anti-submarine capabilities. Also, see You Ji, "A Test Case for China's Defense and Foreign Policies," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (March 1995), p. 381.

[30]Tony Preston, "Navies of the Asia-Pacific Region," in *Asia-Pacific Military Balance, 1994/95* (Kuala Lumpur: ADPR Consult (M) SDN. BHD., 1994/95), p. 73.

[31]This is not actually new. As early as 1973, the late Zhou En-Lai proposed the building of aircraft carriers to recapture *Hisha* and *Nansha* Islands, which were then occupied by South Vietnamese forces. See You Ji, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

[32]Last year, the issue of China's plan to acquire an aircraft carrier was again raised. In an article published in the July issue of *Shidian* (published by

the semi-official China's News Service), the author made an exposition on why China needs an aircraft carrier. Along with the strategic arguments based on the projection of China's strength, the article revealed deep resentment on the part of Southeast Asian countries which contest China's claims in the South China Sea. See Nayan Chanda, "Aiming High," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (20 October 1994), pp. 14-15.

[33]Robert Karniol, "China to buy Russian Kilo Submarines," *Jane Defense Forum* (19 November 1994), p. 1.

[34]Barbara Starr, "Designed in China: a new SSK is Launched," in *Jane Defense Forum* (13 August 1994), p. 3.

[35]Country Briefing, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[36]Ji, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.

[37]Parsun Sngupta, "Force Modernization Continues for Asia-Pacific Force," in *Asia Pacific Military Balance 1994-1995.* (Kuala Lumpur: ADPR Consult (M) SDN., 1994-1995), p. 80.

[38]See "China adopts new stance," *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[39]Ibid.

[40]See Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 3.

[41]Ibid., p. 34.

[42]Ibid., pp. 32-41.

[43]For example, despite the acquisition of ocean-capable destroyers and frigates, the PLAN is relatively weak compared to the US Navy's 12 aircraft carriers, 13 carrier air wings, 87 attack submarines, 52 cruisers, and 38 destroyers. See The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1993-1994* (London: Brassey Ltd., 1993), pp. 22-24.

[44]James A. Winnefeld, et. al., *A New Strategy and Fewer Forces: The Pacific Dimension* (Santa Monica, CA USA: Rand, 1992), pp. 51-52.

[45]See Chang Ya-Chun, "Beijing's Asia-Pacific Strategy in the 1990s," *Global Issues in Transition* (Makati: US Information Agency, January 1994), p. 42.

[46]Samuel S. Kim, "China and the Third World in the Changing World Order," in *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Relations in the Post Cold War Era.* Samuel S. Kim, ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), p. 142.

[47]The PRC's naval and air forces are still technologically inferior even to Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force and Air Self-Defense Force. China's power projection capabilities might also meet its match in the Republic of China's relatively modern navy and air force. See David Arase, "New Directions in Japan's Security Policy,' *Post Cold War Security Issues in the Asia Pacific region.* Colin McInnes, et. al., eds. (Great Britain: Frank Class and Co. Ltd., 1994), pp. 49-51 and Gary Klintworth, Developments in Taiwan's Maritime Security," in *Issues and Studies* (January 1994), pp. 66-67.

[48]Chanda Nayan, et. al., "Territorial Imperative," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (23 February 1995), p.15.