

Executive Summary

In time another power will supersede America in technology, wealth and power. At the moment China is building a high-seas fleet that one day may challenge America's ability to influence events in the Far East. The trick will be to manage competition, and bring China ever closer into our accepted system of international norms rather than indulging in counterproductive hostility. The Navy is an indispensable guarantor of peaceful, strategic order, and because it doesn't require a physical presence ashore it can, in Theodore Roosevelt's words, "speak softly" but still "carry a big stick."

—H.D.S. Greenway

In *On Protracted War*, Mao Tse-tung famously observed that men and politics, rather than weapons and economic power, are the determining factors in war. This early revolutionary maxim was later reduced to the metaphor "paper tiger" by Mao in 1946 and applied to stronger countries and their powerful capabilities through the 1960s. Though mostly attributable to the Marxist-Leninist dialectic, Chinese leaders then and now clearly subscribe to the view that what people believe is more important than facts—inspiring them to labor as Sisyphus to control Internet access, regulate the exchange of ideas, and inhibit social criticism.

In his National Defense University Occasional Paper, *China's Global Activism: Strategy, Drivers, and Tools*, Dr. Phillip Saunders emphasizes that China is pursuing a long-term grand strategy based on maintaining an international environment conducive to building the economic and technological foundations necessary to become a rich and powerful country. Chinese President Hu Jintao insists that "the key to solving all of China's problems is economic development." The fundamental imperative for Chinese leaders is to preserve Communist Party rule, and, ironically, this effort—in the context of global economic interdependence, human rights, and the information age—is creating a paper dragon.

This issue of *Joint Force Quarterly* takes a look at China and Sino-U.S. engagement, as well as the contextual elements of Chinese security developments, from force modernization to managing internal dissent. We begin with the past and the Middle Kingdom's Confucian social ethics and move to contemporary behavior in a rapidly changing global environment

replete with a burgeoning human population, dwindling resources, environmental damage and climate change, Malthusian disease vectors, weapons of mass destruction, the information revolution, and Muslim extremism. Within this complex tapestry, a range of authors exhibits significant variance of comfort with the intentions of a political regime whose deliberations are secretive and arguably Machiavellian. The final author then takes a critical view of the U.S. Defense Department's annual evaluation of Chinese military modernization, after which follows our Special Feature section, focusing on the largest American regional combatant command in the world: U.S. Pacific Command.

Our first installment in the Forum traces modern Chinese behavior, both foreign and domestic, to a philosophical grounding in political unity and the assessment that co-equal sovereign states produce instability and war. Dr. Christopher Ford begins his argument with the observation that China as a nation is more conscious of its history than any other and is predisposed to navigate foreign and domestic policy using historic reference points. Traditional Chinese authoritarian rule is socially buttressed by the teachings of Confucius, which have been internalized over time as a stabilizing, secular religion. Dr. Ford reinforces this point by walking the reader through Chinese history, from before the culturally significant Warring States period to the Communist Party-state. He concludes with an interesting observation: "As China's strength grows, the Middle Kingdom may well become more assertive in insisting on the sort of Sino-centric hierarchy that its history teaches it to expect and its traditional notions of power and legitimacy will encourage it to demand."

Our second Forum article is a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Essay Competition finalist whose author laments U.S. strategic neglect of Africa. Colonel Philippe Rogers, USMC, argues, as did Colonel Gordon Magenheimer, USAR, in the 2^d Quarter 2007 *JFQ*, that China's strategic behavior in Africa is tailored both to "increase its influence and limit [the influence] of the United States." Pointing to the 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States, Colonel Rogers asserts that the U.S. Government has no coherent overarching strategy for Africa. He further underlines the relative disadvantage of the United States in the competition for influence by arguing that China is willing and able to offer financial aid with no moral strings attached. This behavior undercuts international incentives to induce reform and gains China access to resources and influence. It also serves to perpetuate conditions that fuel the war on terror, with Sudan and Zimbabwe as prime examples. The author outlines a number of steps to counter Chinese influence in Africa and concludes with three key benefits of such a strategy.

The third Forum offering focuses on what many consider the most technologically demanding branch of any country's armed forces, in this case, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF). The PLAAF's modernization campaign has been under way for 15 years, but it still has far to go before it can fight and win against a high-tech enemy. Dr. Phillip Saunders and Erik Quam attempt to predict the future force structure of the PLAAF by exploring various ways of thinking about its role within overall Chinese military modernization plans and the part that it will play in future People's Liberation Army missions. They begin with a breakdown of the current PLAAF order of battle and how it is evolving to meet future requirements. They subsequently examine the potential influences and missions that the Party-state will weigh in the course of this iterative modernization effort. As in the air forces of all militarily significant countries, the future PLAAF will be smaller but more capable.

The fourth Forum entry comes from a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation. Dr. Evan Medeiros argues that China's

activism is altering but not transforming the conduct of its international relations. Moreover, China's claim that it is committed to a harmonious world is "insufficient to explain the multiplicity of Chinese diplomatic strategies, interests, and actions." The author models China's international behavior by describing five layers of interest and perceptions, which are informed by three strategic priorities and three historic lenses. He paints a picture of increased reliance on foreign sources of economic resources to fuel domestic growth and promote social stability for the ultimate purpose of ensuring oligarchic rule. He concludes with four implications for U.S. policymakers and the view that there is time and space to influence Chinese thinking.

Our fifth Forum entry is a review of the internal Chinese campaign against a predominantly Muslim separatist group in the northwestern Xinjiang (pronounced *shin-jong*) Uyghur Autonomous Region. Dr. Martin Wayne argues that the Party-state's deep sensitivity to internal criticism of the "ideologically bankrupt and locally corrupt" government precipitated an initially harsh and counterproductive counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign. After a brutal military reaction, China embarked upon a comprehensive effort to address the threat with the efficiency that only a totalitarian state can impose: it directed change in local governance, education, and economic development while placing pressure on all extra-national means of support—both countries and organizations—with spies to monitor compliance. Internally, China is able to control information and exhort reporting against resistance activity with the full, albeit uninformed, backing of the growing Han Chinese population relocated to this region from points east. Although the Chinese effort is contextually very different from international counterinsurgency campaigns, Dr. Wayne suggests five lessons for crafting COIN policies.

The final installment in the Forum is a critique of the Pentagon's annual report on the "probable development of Chinese grand strategy, security strategy, and military strategy, and of the military organizations and operational concepts" of the People's Liberation Army. Dennis Blasko is a former U.S. Army Attaché who served in Beijing. He dismisses mistrust of Chinese strategic intentions (referred to in the current report as a "lack of transparency in China's military affairs") as mirror-imaging about force protection. He explores 10 topics for a "more balanced and complete evaluation



of Chinese military modernization" and minimizes the problem of China's frequent public threats against an independent, free Taiwan.

Questioning conventional wisdom and the continued efficacy of traditional practice is healthy, as is debate over movements to change time-tested approaches to military art. Over the past 2 years, *JFQ* has actively solicited submissions from the field emphasizing both the successes and failures of joint forces engaged in the war on terror. The case study that has precipitated the most contributions to date is Operation *Anaconda*, the March 2002 effort to kill or capture Taliban and al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan's Shahi-Kot Valley. One excellent manuscript was coauthored by USAF colonels Robert Hyde and Mark Kelly. These authors used a counterfactual history approach to relate how the operation *could* have been successfully conducted with established joint tactics, techniques, and procedures. In the end, however, *JFQ* decided to present only two articles on this subject in our Features section for the exclusive purpose of fostering debate and improving the way U.S. forces do business jointly. The first of these is an academic analysis directed by the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force and cowritten at Air University by Dr. Richard Andres and Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Hukill, USAF (Ret.), and the second is based on the personal

experience of Colonel Michael Isherwood, USAF (Ret.), who integrated air operations with ground maneuver in Afghanistan during 2005–2006. The battle of Shahi-Kot Valley evokes strong emotions among U.S. air and ground warfighters, but as Colonel Isherwood points out, "reopening this discussion can help us examine the progress made and opportunities ahead to improve air and ground integration." These articles are presented in this spirit, and counterpoints from ground warfighters continue to be solicited.

At 164 pages, this issue presents more content than any previous *JFQ*, and we are grateful for the superb contributions received from national security professionals worldwide. Please consult page 2 for planned focus areas to be examined in the next four issues. This volume includes a fold-out poster inside the back cover to assist joint professional military education institutions in advertising the 2008 Secretary of Defense and CJCS Essay Competitions. The National Defense University Foundation has generously budgeted for next year's cash awards in recognition of the value and influence of this kind of scholarship. Congratulations to the 2007 winners whose work appears in this issue. **JFQ**

—D.H. Gurney