

No. 135

**The PLA's Role in China's
Regional Security Strategy**

Qi Dapeng

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Singapore

30 July 2007

With Compliments

This Working Paper series presents papers in a preliminary form and serves to stimulate comment and discussion. The views expressed are entirely the author's own and not that of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) was established in January 2007 as an autonomous School within the Nanyang Technological University. RSIS's mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. To accomplish this mission, it will:

- Provide a rigorous professional graduate education in international affairs with a strong practical and area emphasis.
- Conduct policy-relevant research in national security, defence and strategic studies, diplomacy and international relations.
- Collaborate with like-minded schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence

Graduate Training in International Affairs

RSIS offers an exacting graduate education in international affairs, taught by an international faculty of leading thinkers and practitioners. The Master of Science (MSc) degree programmes in Strategic Studies, International Relations, and International Political Economy are distinguished by their focus on the Asia Pacific, the professional practice of international affairs, and the cultivation of academic depth. Over 120 students, the majority from abroad, are enrolled in these programmes. A small, select Ph.D. programme caters to advanced students whose interests match those of specific faculty members. RSIS also runs a one-semester course on '*The International Relations of the Asia Pacific*' for undergraduates in NTU.

Research

RSIS research is conducted by five constituent Institutes and Centres: the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS, founded 1996), the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR, 2002), the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS, 2006), the Centre for the Advanced Study of Regionalism and Multilateralism (CASRM, 2007); and the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in ASIA (NTS-Asia, 2007). The focus of research is on issues relating to the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and their implications for Singapore and other countries in the region. The S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies brings distinguished scholars and practitioners to participate in the work of the Institute. Previous holders of the Chair include Professors Stephen Walt, Jack Snyder, Wang Jisi, Alastair Iain Johnston, John Mearsheimer, Raja Mohan, and Rosemary Foot.

International Collaboration

Collaboration with other professional Schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence is a RSIS priority. RSIS will initiate links with other like-minded schools so as to enrich its research and teaching activities as well as adopt the best practices of successful schools.

ABSTRACT

National development has gradually replaced national survival as the focus of China's national security strategy. Accordingly, the PLA has been assigned the new mission of ensuring China's development interests. Compared to the emphasis on the means of military confrontation and conflict in safeguarding China's national survival in the past, the PLA's new mission emphasizes the strengthening of military confidence building and regional security cooperation with others. Over the past 15 years, the PLA has played a role in shaping a security environment for peaceful development, which has focused mainly on three tasks: (i) building military trust with its neighbouring counterparts; (ii) participating in regional security cooperation processes; and (iii) improving its ties with the United States and other players. At the same time, there are several factors that pose challenges to the PLA's success in its new mission, including: (i) mutual apprehension between China and its neighbours; (ii) strategic suspicions between China and the United States; and (iii) the potential Japan-China rivalry. This paper concludes with a discussion on how the PLA can carry out its mission while managing these potential challenges at the same time.

Colonel Qi Dapeng is an Officer of the People's Liberation Army of China. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), National Defense University (NDU), Beijing. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from the People's Republic of China, Military Academy in Dalian and a Masters in Military Arts from the NDU. His research interests include: military strategy, national security theory, Taiwan-China relations, and security and politics of Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. In 2004, he was an Associate at Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. That same year, he also spent some time at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University as a Visiting Senior Fellow.

The PLA's Role in China's Regional Security Strategy

Introduction

Even in the long run, it is difficult for China to become a genuine global military power. More likely, the deployment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) will not go beyond China's territory and its outreach will generally fall within the Asia-Pacific region. In other words, China will remain a regional military power for the foreseeable future. However, with the PLA's modernization getting more support from China's rapid economic growth, how the PLA will play its role still matters a great deal. This study attempts to explore the historical evolution of China's national security strategy and how it has changed the PLA's role accordingly. Then it traces the possible future direction of the PLA by examining its past practices and the challenges it has faced.

This article consists of five sections. The first section briefly examines the changing focus of China's security strategy and the PLA's role in the strategy, providing a foundation for subsequent discussion. The second section outlines the PLA's new thinking that defines its new (regional) role. The third section discusses the latest development of the PLA's regional role and assesses the result from which the PLA has exercised its new thinking. The fourth section analyses key problems and challenges the PLA has to deal with in the future. The fifth section explores how the PLA can carry out its mission while managing potential challenges.

The Evolution of the PLA's Role in China's National Security

In the first two decades after its founding in 1949, the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) faced blockades and embargoes imposed by the United States and its military alliances, as well as potential invasions by Kuomintang (KMT) forces from Taiwan. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet Union deployed over one million mechanized troops along the Sino-U.S.S.R. border to prepare for a swift and deep invasion of China. In addition, both the United States and the Soviet Union plotted to attack China with nuclear weapons. In sum, almost until the end of the Cold War, China faced clear and present security threats. Naturally, such a security environment made preserving national survival the focus of China's national

security strategy. Not surprisingly, the task of PLA during this period was to fight for national survival, with its war against Vietnam in 1979 being the sole exception.

After the Cold War, national survival is no longer an imminent problem for China, and its external security environment improved steadily. National development has replaced national survival as the focus of China's security strategy.¹ Accordingly, developing an environment for development has been the top objective of China's security strategy. As Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping put it, "The central objective of China's grand strategy in the past two decades can be captured in just one phrase: to secure and shape a security, economic and political environment that is conducive to China's concentrating on its economic, social and political development."²

The strategic doctrine of the PLA, however, has generally lagged behind this shift in the national security strategy. In light of a series of events such as the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, secessionist activities on Taiwan and the EP-3 incident in the South China Sea, as well as the U.S. intention to comprehensively contain China before the events of 11 September 2001³, even after more than 20 years since China's opening-up, PLA leaders had been continually reiterating PLA's anti-aggression mission in their lectures, as mandated by China's Constitution, "The armed forces' tasks are to strengthen national defence, resist aggression, defend the motherland, safeguard the people's peaceful labour, participate in national reconstruction, and do their best to serve the people."⁴

¹ Ge Dong-sheng (Ed.), *On National Security Strategy [Guojia anquan zhanlue lun]* (p. 2), Beijing: Military Science Press, 2006. Lt.-General Ge Dong-sheng is Deputy Commandant of the Chinese Academy of Military Science.

² Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, "China's Regional Strategy" in David Shambaugh (Ed.), *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics* (p. 48), University of California Press, 2005. See also Liu Jing-bo (Ed.), *China's National Security Strategy in the Early 21st Century* (p. 100), Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2006. Liu Jing-bo is Deputy Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies of National Defense University, PLA.

³ The Pentagon's 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report says: "The possibility exists that a military competitor with a formidable resource base will emerge in the region. The East Asian littoral—from the Bay of Bengal to the Sea of Japan—represents a particularly challenging area." The majority of Chinese scholars argue that, before the events of 11 September 2001, containment rather than engagement took priority in George W. Bush administration's policy towards China. See Yan Xue-tong, "How about the Security Environment of China" [*Zhongguo de anquan huanjing zhinmo yang*], *World Affairs* (Beijing), No. 9, 2002; Wu Xin-bo, "The Orientation of American Asia-Pacific Security Strategy", *Fudan Journal* (Social sciences edition), No. 2, pp. 1–8, 2005.

⁴ See, for example, Xiong Guangkai, *International Strategy and Revolution in Military Affairs* (p. 207, pp. 218–219), Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2003; "Constitution of the People's Republic of China", available at english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html.

This sluggishness in adjusting to China's new security strategy has kept the PLA from changing its way of thinking. In essence, the PLA has for some time failed to recast its strategy according to the major shifts in China's security strategy.

Since the mid 1990s, the increase of China's national power and self-confidence in the international arena, as well as steady improvements in China's foreign relations (, including relations with the United States after September 11), the growing economic integration and interdependence with regional states has come together to propel China to fundamentally reassess the role of its military in its national strategy. It was within this context that Chinese President Hu Jintao called for new missions for the PLA in late 2004. The new doctrine mandates PLA with three core tasks: (a) to provide a solid security guarantee for sustaining the important period of strategic opportunity for national development; (b) to provide a strong strategic support for safeguarding national interests; and (3) to play a major role in maintaining world peace and promoting common development.⁵

Experts and officials in and outside of the PLA have interpreted that the new doctrine amounts to one single focus: to ensure China's developmental interests. Fundamentally, President Hu's remarks demand the PLA to put preservation of national development interests at the top of its agenda while ensuring national survival.

The PLA welcomes this fundamental shift in its missions. General Xu Cai-hou, Deputy Chairman of the Central Military Commission, emphasized that PLA's new missions fit with the new changes of China's security environment and reflect new needs of the national development strategy.⁶ The PLA has now firmly departed from the old strategy that centered upon national survival to a new one that centers upon national development. The PLA has finally achieved harmony with the shift of the focus of China's national security strategy.

⁵ Besides the three missions, the PLA was also assigned an internal task of providing an important source of strength for consolidating the ruling position of the Communist Party of China. See "China's National Defense in 2006", issued by the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. On web at: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/194421.htm>. Accessed March 20, 2007.

⁶ Xu Cai-hou, "The Significance of Implementing the President Hu's Important Thoughts on PLA's New Missions", *PLA Daily [Jiefangjun Bao]*, 21 September 2005; "Developing and Implementing New Concepts in Accordance with the New Missions", *PLA Daily [Jiefangjun Bao]*, 3 November 2005.

The PLA's New Thinking on its New Regional Role

The following points of China's security strategy are most relevant for understanding the PLA's emerging new thinking about its role.

First, China emphasizes that force cannot bring about peace and prosperity, nor can it ensure security. As such, China rejects the possibility of "rising through war" and accepts that the peaceful development of China is its only viable option. Hence, China strives to build a "democratic, harmonious, just and tolerant" world based on the deepening mutual interdependence among states under regional integration and globalization.

Second, drawing from "common security", "mutual security" and "cooperative security", China now emphasizes mutual trust and coordination, aiming to build a fair and effective cooperative security mechanism that can prevent conflict and war and minimize non-traditional security threats.⁷

Third, attaching great importance to relations with its neighbouring states, China rejects the possibility of an exclusive sphere of influence in the region. China should continue to firmly observe the guideline of "being friends and partners with neighbours" and the policy of "fostering an amicable, tranquil and prosperous neighbourhood", and work hard with its neighbours to build a new political-economic structure of open cooperation. Under such a structure, while states still compete and have conflicts of interest, they do not have to fight each other.

Fourth, in dealing with territorial disputes (land or maritime), China's basic position is that it has indisputable sovereignty over those areas. China, however, emphasizes the principle of "putting aside differences and developing the disputed area jointly" through consultation on an equal footing and on the basis of universally accepted international law. With the increase of mutual interests and mutual understanding from joint development, any hostile resentment among the relevant parties can be defused, mutual trust can be increased, and a more conducive environment to a mutually agreeable final resolution of the disputes can emerge.

⁷ The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, "China's Peaceful Development Road", *Beijing Review*, No. 3, pp. 4-5, 19 January 2006.

Along with the shift in the focus of China's security strategy, the PLA has gradually formulated a "new thinking" on its role. Contrary to its old position of solely emphasizing war-fighting and mutual deterrence, the PLA's new thinking now places more emphasis on cooperation among states, reflecting the reality of mutual interdependence among states and the ever-increasing regional integration.

First of all, contrary to the old emphasis on military confrontation and war fighting in safeguarding national survival, the PLA's new thinking now emphasizes protecting national development based on military confidence building and security cooperation with others. The PLA believes that it should actively participate in bilateral and multilateral security cooperation and make more effort to achieve regional security and stability through enhancing mutual trust and equal consultation. These can lay a strong foundation for further improving regional security order for common development.

Second, as a guiding principle on how to deal with crises, conflicts and wars, the PLA, in order to reduce any impact on national development, considers that deterrence, rather than the combating function of military forces, should be the first option.⁸ China should prevent and deter conflicts and wars with close coordination between military struggle and political, economic, diplomatic, cultural and legal endeavours. The PLA will continue to adopt a purely defensive and non-aligned policy and pursue a defensive nuclear strategy.⁹ China will not follow the path of the historical colonialists who upheld the idea that where their forces go is where their businesses go.¹⁰

Third, in respect of military-to-military relations, the PLA advocates that the new style of military ties, which are open, non-confrontational and not directed against any third party, should replace the outdated style of military alliance characterized by Cold War mentalities. As mutual interests expand, military relations should gradually keep pace with overall relations between countries. Otherwise, mutual suspicions in military and security fields can become obstacles or threats against broader cooperation.

⁸ Peng Guang-qian, "Stress on Development Rather than Survival: A Shift of Security Strategic Guideline", available at news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2007-01/18/content_5622595.htm. General Peng Guang-qian is from the Chinese Academy of Military Science.

⁹ "China's National Defense in 2006".

¹⁰ Zhang Qin-shen, "China's Peaceful Development Road and Its National Defense Modernization", *Xue-xi Daily [Xuexi Shibao]*, 14 November 2006. Zhang Qin-shen is Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA.

Fourth, despite still facing traditional military threats, the PLA will not engage in any arms race. For instance, in 2006, an international debate on whether the United States had broken out of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) and obtained a dominant position caused little repercussion in China.¹¹ Almost all experts in the PLA argue that it is impossible for China to achieve a favourable regional military balance against the United States. Furthermore, any effort by the PLA for such purpose could stimulate the United States and other regional states to further strengthen their armaments, which could lead China into a security dilemma. Hence, the PLA should not enter into a nuclear arms race with any other armed forces.

Fifth, the PLA thinks that emerging non-traditional security issues such as terrorist activities, natural disasters and trans-national organized crime provide opportunities for confidence building and security cooperation with other armed forces.

Sixth, PLA modernization should keep pace with national overall progress and trends of world revolution in military affairs, meet the need of safeguarding territorial integrity, and match international responsibilities in peace-keeping, countering terrorism and safeguarding sea lanes through multilateral cooperation.

Of course, while working hard to promote regional military cooperation, the PLA still needs to ensure that it is well prepared for military conflict posed by possible threats from Taiwan secessionists and others. This remains a basic mission of the PLA.

The PLA's Role in China's Regional Strategy: The Latest Development

In the early 1990s, military-to-military (mil-to-mil) cooperation was a small part of China's cooperation with other states. As China moves toward a more proactive regional strategy, however, the PLA has also moved toward more extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation with its regional counterparts, emphasizing three fronts.

¹¹ Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press: "The Rise of U.S. Nuclear Primacy", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006, p. 42. This article evoked a series of responses. See Peter C. W. Flory, et al, "Nuclear Exchange: Does Washington Really Have (or Want) Nuclear Primacy?" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006.

Building military trust with neighbouring counterparts

For a very long time, a number of complicated territorial disputes have been longstanding obstacles to China's security cooperation with its neighbours. Since 1991, however, China has resolved a series of border disputes with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam. China has also reached several agreements on territorial dispute management with India and ASEAN countries (Table I). These developments have greatly facilitated PLA's proactive engaging its relevant counterparts in military confidence-building measures, disarmament and defence cooperation in border areas. The advancement in military confidence building has also turned tense frontiers in the past into today's frontiers of economic development. For example, China and Vietnam are currently implementing their bilateral programme "Two Corridors, One Circle".¹² The China-Philippines-Vietnam joint development of the South China Sea is now entering a substantive phase. China and India also reopened a border trade route at Nathu La Pass, which links China's Tibet with Sikkim of India in 2006.

At the same time, the PLA has gradually built more trust with its regional counterparts through other channels such as defence consultations, high-level visits, military technology assistance, joint exercises, naval ship visits, and personnel training and exchanges.

The PLA has respectively held a series of defence consultations with Thailand, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, the United States and Japan in recent years. Senior PLA delegations have visited more than 60 countries, while defence ministers, commanders-in-chief of the services, chiefs of the general staff and other high-ranking officers and military-related officials from more than 90 countries have visited China in 2005 and 2006. Malaysia and China signed a technology transfer agreement in July 2004, and Indonesia and China signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on defence technology cooperation during the course of President Yudhoyono's state visit to Beijing in July 2005. In the field of joint military exercise, in 2005 and 2006 alone, the PLA has held sixteen joint military exercises with eleven countries, sent observers to military exercises held by Thailand, Pakistan, India, the United States and Australia, and invited military observers

¹² The Two Corridors refers to the transport links between Hanoi and Kunming, and between Hanoi and Nanning, while the One Circle refers to the Beibu Gulf (Gulf of Tonkin) economic area.

from a number of nations to take part its own military manoeuvres. In the same period, the PLA dispatched over 500 military personnel to study in more than 20 countries while 2,000 military personnel from more than 140 countries came to China's military schools.

Participating in regional security cooperation processes

After the end of the Cold War, China has also gradually shifted its attitude towards regional security cooperation from being passive to being proactive. Today, the PLA is an integral part of China's participation in multilateral regional cooperation. Specifically, the PLA attaches great importance to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), viewing them as the main platforms for building regional security cooperation.

In 2003, China proposed an initiative to convene the ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference (ASPC), with a first draft of the ASPC Concept Paper, which was then adopted at the Eleventh ARF Foreign Ministers' Meeting after revision. The first ASPC was convened in Beijing in November 2004, and has now become the highest-level event involving national defence officials within the framework of the ARF. The ASPC can further beef up the process of the ARF, effectively strengthening the cooperation of confidence-building measures in the military sphere and opening new channels of dialogues and exchanges among defence officials.

While promoting cooperation in non-traditional issues such as anti-terrorism, non-proliferation and maritime security in the ARF, the PLA has also supported the central government in holding multilateral talks with relevant ASEAN countries on traditional issues like maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

In the Joint Statement of China-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, "Towards an Enhanced China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership" adopted on 30 October 2006, the two sides expressed confidence that they would soon agree on activities and projects to implement the "Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea" and work towards the conclusion of a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea. In July 2006, the China-ASEAN regional security seminar was held in Beijing and inaugurated the process of

institutionalizing China-ASEAN defence and security dialogue.¹³ The fact that China has agreed to multilateral negotiations with a relatively strong organization rather than insisting on bilateral talks with each comparatively weak state signals China's sincerity in pursuing just and peaceful resolution of such traditional security issues.¹⁴ Under such friendly partnership, the PLA and its ASEAN counterparts have continuously reduced their mutual distrust, paving the way for further cooperation.

Military cooperation under the SCO framework is another important manifestation of the PLA's new security thinking. To deepen and expand the SCO's role in maintaining regional stability, the PLA has made efforts mainly in three areas. First, it proposed, with other SCO members, to create an SCO defence and security forum and held a series of bilateral strategic consultations with some members. These dialogues have facilitated a consensus among members in prioritizing security and economic cooperation and strengthening anti-terrorism capabilities. Second, the PLA, along with other armed forces of members of the SCO, has established regular meetings for ministers of defence and representatives of the general staff headquarters. To enhance the capability of the Regional Anti-terrorism Structure, the PLA has initiated and participated in several joint anti-terrorism military manoeuvres, bilaterally and multilaterally. Third, the PLA supports the idea that the SCO, being a Central Asian regional cooperation organization, is not an exclusive military group and it should be opened to the outside world. The PLA has supported the SCO's cooperation with other nations and organizations. For instance, in April 2005, the SCO, ASEAN and the Commonwealth of Independent States signed a memorandum of understanding on conducting cooperation in counter-terrorism. SCO emphasizes equality, consultation and partnership rather than an alliance, symbolizing a new kind of inter-state relationship for seeking peace and development that is different from the traditional military alliance.

These multilateral military cooperative initiatives under the SCO framework have

¹³ For background, see Premier Wen Jiabao, "Work Together to Open a New Chapter in China-ASEAN Relations", available at www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t290185.htm.

¹⁴ Michael A. Glosny, "Heading Toward a Win-win Future? Recent Developments in China's Policy Toward Southeast Asia", *Asian Security*, Vol. 2 No. 2006; Carlyle A. Thayer, "China's International Security Cooperation with Southeast Asia", *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 172, 2007.

contributed significantly to the stability and development of Central Asia and Chia's Western region. So far, the SCO has effectively contained on the "three forces" (i.e., terrorism, separatism and extremism) and trans-national organized crimes (e.g., drug trafficking, small arms smuggling, and illegal immigration).

Participations in ARF and SCO have certainly expanded the PLA's regional profile. Because the functions of the two organizations are transparent to the international community, however, the expansion of the PLA's role through these regional mechanisms has not triggered a fresh round of confrontation in Central and East Asia, but has actually contributed to regional peace and stability.

Fostering Sino-U.S. military exchanges and cooperation

Impacted by the collapse of the bipolar system and a series of events such as the U.S.-led arms embargo and other trade sanctions against China in 1989, the Yin-he cargo ship incident in 1993, the crisis across the Taiwan Strait in 1995 and 1996, the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the spy plane incident over the South China Sea in 2001, among others, Sino-U.S. military relations has continued its pattern of ups and downs for more than ten years.

Despite many obstacles and disagreements, however, the two parties have managed to find substantial mutual interests, including avoidance of military accident or miscalculation, conflict prevention, crisis management, counter-terrorism, weapons non-proliferation and mutual understanding.¹⁵ On 25 October 2002, President Jiang Zemin and President George W. Bush announced in Crawford, Texas, that the two armed forces would resume military exchanges. In subsequent strategic consultations, PLA leaders reiterated that Sino-U.S. military relations should fit the overall relations between the two countries.¹⁶ In April 2006, Chinese President Hu Jintao and U.S. President George W. Bush achieved some consensus on

¹⁵ Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, "U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress", available at www.ndu.edu/library/docs/crs/crs_r132496_10may05.pdf; Kurt Campbell and Richard Weitz, "The Limits of U.S.-China Military Cooperation: Lessons from 1995-1999", *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2005/06, pp. 169-186.

¹⁶ Cao Gang-chuan, Minister of the Defense Department of China, put forward this idea a few times when he met with U.S. delegations from Washington. See "Cao Gang-chuan meeting with the U.S.-China Working Group of U.S. House of Representatives", available at www.gov.cn/ldhd/2006-01/10/content_153713.htm; "Making Military Relations Fit Sino-U.S. Overall Relations", available at news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2005-10/19/content_3649272.htm.

enhancing military exchanges and cooperation. Today, the two armed forces have developed various mechanisms for regular defence consultation, visits of naval ships, high-level exchanges, and maritime security. The Chinese Navy and the U.S. Navy conducted joint maritime search and rescue exercises in the waters off San Diego and in the South China Sea in September and November 2006. Such activities have promoted their substantive cooperation in the non-traditional security field.

These mechanisms and exchanges have substantially helped the two militaries increase mutual trust and understanding, reduce disagreements, and minimize potential misjudgements on important issues like China's development strategy, China's military modernization, the Taiwan issue, and U.S. global strategic realignment. With the growth of mutual confidence and common awareness of Sino-U.S. strategic interests, it may be possible for the PLA and U.S. armed forces to develop a more stable and cooperative relationship with each other in the long run.

The PLA's Role in China's Regional Strategy: Problems and Challenges

The PLA's new thinking has provided new opportunities for security and defence cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The PLA, however, still faces several important challenges in implementing its new thinking.

Perception Gap and Mutual Apprehension between China and its neighbours

Though confidence-building efforts by China and its neighbours have improved the regional security environment, there remains a perception gap between them.

For instance, when it comes to history, many of China's neighbours are still apprehensive that China, which had a tribute system in East Asia when it was strong and prosperous, may aspire to recreate the tributary system. In contrast, most Chinese only remember that China brought trade, stability and prosperity to its neighbours through the tributary system. Some of China's neighbours argue that the China's military conflicts with India, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union, its occupation of Meiji Jiao (Mischief Reef), and military exercises over the waters off Taiwan in 1995–1996, show that China may use force to solve disputes

with them. In contrast, Chinese scholars argue that those conflicts were under the context of the Cold War or within China's sovereign territory, and China has already signed border agreements with many of its neighbouring states.

Partly due to their uncertainty and fear of China, some of China's neighbours have tried to develop robust security ties with extra-regional powers, while keeping security cooperation at a much lower level with China. For example, Mongolia has implemented a "third neighbour" policy to engage with the United States, Japan and the EU. Other countries like India, the Philippines and Vietnam all try to ally with the United States.

Regional states' distrust of China and their hedging policies, though being conducive to a balance of regional power structure, have made confidence-building measures between China and regional states less productive and hindered closer security cooperation between them. Traditional geopolitical thinking may ultimately limit security cooperation between China and its neighbors.

Under the shadow of geopolitical considerations, the PLA and its regional counterparts have been cautious in developing their relations. Today, while most of the regional armed forces have conducted high-level visits with China, their military technological exchanges, personnel exchanges and training, and operational cooperation with the PLA remain rather limited, with the exception of Russia, Pakistan and Central Asian states within the SCO

Strategic Suspicions between China and the United States

Since the end of Cold War, the United States has viewed China as the most likely military foe. While the United States came to value security cooperation with China after the events of 11 September 2001, it still holds the idea that China can be a possible strategic threat in the long run. For example, the U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review Report in 2006 says, "Of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages absent U.S. counter strategies."¹⁷ Some American scholars have insisted, "A great challenge for the United States and the world lies not in terrorism or even in regional

¹⁷ See "Quadrennial Defense Review Report", 6 February 2006.

conflict. Instead, it lies in the longer-term collision of interests between the United States and emerging, powerful China.”¹⁸ Such a U.S. orientation towards China has kept the PLA vigilant on the possibility that the United States may try to contain China after finishing its job in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, many China analysts believe that the United States tends to intentionally exaggerate China’s military capability and hostility to blockade China’s military modernization.¹⁹ They also view the United States as the greatest obstacle to achieving China’s reunification.

Under such a strategic setting, the two armed forces have been deeply suspicious of each other, and their efforts for confidence building have remained limited.

A Potential Japan-China Rivalry

In recent years, China’s proactive behaviour in East Asian has caused much concern among some Japanese analysts. Almost all measures promoted by China to enhance regional cooperation have been interpreted by some Japanese analysts as moves to impose a leading position in the region.

For instance, one policy report warns, “The East Asian community might turn into an order dominated by China, so Japan should consider the dangerousness of the Chinese consciousness of China’s world order left over from its ancient history”.²⁰ Likewise, a Japanese expert argues that despite China’s emphasis on ASEAN’s leading role, it has been China that has made all the waves. Initiatives such as the FTA with ASEAN, the creation of the SCO, the six-party consultations on North Korea and the proposal for a Northeast Asian security organization, are aimed to push its own initiatives for the promotion of regional cooperation.²¹

¹⁸ Ronald L. Tammen and Jacek Kugler, “Power Transition and China-U.S. Conflicts”, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 1, p. 35, 2006.

¹⁹ Yang Yi, “Could Military Exchanges Promote Sino-U.S. relations?”, available at news.xinhuanet.com/world/2006-06/03/content_4640179.htm. Yang Yi is Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, PLA.

²⁰ Japan “Council on East Asian Community” Policy Report, August 2005, available at www.ceac.jp/j/index.html/.

²¹ Amako Satoshi, “The Idea of New International Order China is Seeking an East Asian Community”, 7 June 2006, available at www.ceac.jp/e/commentary/060616.pdf. Amako Satoshi is Professor of Waseda University and a member of the Council on East Asian Community.

In response, Japan has not only negotiated the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries in the region. but also tried to convinced East Asian countries (including China) to recognize the U.S.-Japan alliance as the foundation of regional order. Some Japanese analysts have also promoted the “China threat” theory in the region and actively advocated to put the Taiwan issue on the list of common objectives of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

In contrast, some Chinese experts view Japan’s interpretations of China’s efforts for regional economic cooperation reflects its own political thinking and Cold War mentality. They feel that Japan’s real purpose in initiating disputes over the natural gas fields in the East China Sea in recent years (actually, China’s exploration of the East China Sea dates back to 1974), sensationalizing the death of a member of staff at the Japanese Consulate General in Shanghai in 2004, linking the problem of North Korea’s kidnapping of Japanese citizens with the six-party talks and so on, is to manipulate its domestic opinion in favour of the revision of the peace constitution.

Because of these strategic differences, it has been very difficult for the two nations to establish benign security relations. Today, the PLA and the Self Defense Forces (SDF) has great difficulties in jump-starting cooperation between them. Worse, the possibility of a military confrontation over natural gas field disputes in the East China Sea and a possible Taiwan Strait crisis between the two countries cannot be completely ruled out.

Looking Ahead: Reconciling the Opposing Pulls

The fact that China has begun to see itself as a rising power with no imminent threat to its own survival should be a welcome development to East Asia. According to the theory of the security dilemma, a state that feels more secure is more likely to be cooperative. In this sense, the shift of the focus of China’s national security strategy provides a conducive environment for China and regional states to build a more cooperative regional security environment.

Achieving such a goal, however, requires concrete actions that may be different from traditional geopolitical thinking. As far as the PLA is concerned, with its advancement of modernization, it should continue to reassure not just the big powers but, more importantly, also the medium and small neighbouring countries. The PLA should consider the different

perceptions and feelings of China's neighbours on its development. The PLA should make its modernization and strategic doctrines more transparent. It should also continue to push forward military exchanges with other regional armed forces at all levels to provide a solid foundation for mutual confidence building. With regard to complicated territorial disputes, the PLA should support the central government to conclude agreements that can ensure peace and stability in the region.

Improving Sino-U.S. military ties will be beneficial to military relations between China and its neighbours. There will always be strategic disagreements and suspicions between China and the United States. As such, it is very important for the two countries to reassure each other. China and the PLA has made it clear that driving the United States out of the region is not on its an agenda, as State Councilor Tang Jia-xuan stated: "China welcomes the American presence in the Asia-Pacific region as a stabilizing factor, and China would like to work with the United States to preserve peace and security of the region".²² Since t hen, high-ranking PLA generals have also expressed the same position. PLA Air Force General Zheng Shen-xia, Commandant of the Chinese Academy of Military Science, told an international audience at a conference in Hangzhou that "China by no means seeks to replace America's position in the Asia-Pacific region".²³ "This was an important statement at the time because it contrasted sharply with the prevalent view among many in the new administration that China's principal strategic goal was to evict the United States from East Asia and extend its hegemony over the region."²⁴

The United States should also reassure China that it sincerely welcomes China's peaceful development and does not perceive China to be a threat. The U.S. 2006 National Security Strategy explains that "if China keeps this commitment (peaceful development), the United States will welcome the emergence of a China that is peaceful and prosperous and that cooperates with us to address common challenges and mutual interests".²⁵ The United States

²² "Tang Jia-xuan addressing the Eighth Foreign Ministers Conference of ARF," available at www.china-embassy.org.ph/chn/c8985.html.

²³ Dennis J. Blasko, "Rumsfeld's Take on the Chinese Military: A Dissenting View", *Current History*, September 2006, p. 265.

²⁴ David Shambaugh, "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order", *International Security*, Vol. 29 No. 3, p. 91, Winter 2004/05.

²⁵ "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", March 2006.

has also tried to take China as “a responsible stakeholder” in the international system,²⁶ indicating that the United States may be finally beginning to respect China’s role in Asia and the rest of the world, and recognize the expanding mutual interests of both powers.

These encouraging developments can serve as a foundation for building a more robust cooperative relationship between the two states. If they can do so, then the armed forces of the two countries can also forge a more robust relationship.

Realizing a genuine reconciliation between China and Japan is another key issue for East Asia. Besides a consensus on the history issue, the two sides should understand that it is unrealistic for them to struggle for a leading role simply because the United States has important interests in the region and ASEAN is officially in a leading position in the process of East Asian cooperation. Thus, a struggle for mastery between Japan and China is very unlikely to materialize. The PLA and the SDF should step out the shadows of these illusions and start a confidence-building process.

Mutual reassurance alone may not be enough to solve the complicated security problems facing China, Japan, the United States and other regional states. An effective way for them is to bring their mutual assurances into multilateral security cooperation mechanisms at appropriate times in the future. On the one hand, China can exert its strength and influence under multilateral frameworks and, in doing so, reduce the suspicion by its neighbours and the United States that China attempts to predominate East Asia. On the other hand, it also means the United State and Japan need to attach greater importance to multilateral mechanisms and view them as the main platforms for playing their roles rather than just supplements to their military alliances or tools to contain China. From such a perspective, it is very important for China, Japan, the United States and the relevant regional states to work hard to enhance the functions of the ARF and develop the six-party talks into a regional security mechanism. If they do, it may not be too unrealistic for China, Japan, the United States and other regional nations to establish a fair and effective cooperative security mechanism in the region.

Stabilizing the military situation across the Taiwan Strait is another important factor in

²⁶ Robert B. Zoellick, Deputy Secretary of State, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?”, available at www.state.gov/s/d/rem/53682.htm.

reconciliation between the PLA and other relevant armed forces. Under the guideline of the peaceful development strategy and the “one China” principle, China has proposed a series of measures to achieve peace across the Taiwan Strait, such as jointly building a stable and peaceful framework between the two sides, maintaining the status quo and establishing a mechanism of mutual trust in the military field. These proposals have also promoted mutual trust between the PLA and other armed forces in the West Pacific region.²⁷

Conclusion

Sustaining economic development and promoting a win-win regional system is at the heart of China’s regional strategy, and the PLA’s efforts in regional security cooperation reflect China’s regional strategy. Despite facing numerous obstacles and challenges, the PLA has played an active role in supporting China’s core national strategy. The PLA, however, will need more wisdom to fully realize its role in China’s proactive regional strategy.

Table I: Military Cooperation Initiatives between China and Regional States (1994-2005).

Year	Agreements
1994	Agreement on Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities (Russia and China)
1996	Agreement on Confidence-Building in the Military Field along the Border Areas (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China)
1996	Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control (India and China)
1997	Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).
1999	Agreement on Frontier Defense Cooperation (Mongolia and China)
2005	Agreement on Joint Patrols in the Beibu Gulf (Gulf of Tonkin)
2005	the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Affairs Cooperation (the Philippines and China)
2005	Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Cooperation (Indonesia and China)

²⁷ For example, Dennis J. Blasko noted that China’s policy is “preventing Taiwan’s separation rather than forcing reunification” and “the PLA sees itself more as a deterrent force than a war-fighting force”. Blasko, “Rumsfeld’s Take on the Chinese Military: A Dissenting View”, *Current History*, September 2006, p. 269.

IDSS Working Paper Series

1. Vietnam-China Relations Since The End of The Cold War (1998)
Ang Cheng Guan
2. Multilateral Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Prospects and Possibilities (1999)
Desmond Ball
3. Reordering Asia: “Cooperative Security” or Concert of Powers? (1999)
Amitav Acharya
4. The South China Sea Dispute re-visited (1999)
Ang Cheng Guan
5. Continuity and Change In Malaysian Politics: Assessing the Buildup to the 1999-2000 General Elections (1999)
Joseph Liow Chin Yong
6. ‘Humanitarian Intervention in Kosovo’ as Justified, Executed and Mediated by NATO: Strategic Lessons for Singapore (2000)
Kumar Ramakrishna
7. Taiwan’s Future: Mongolia or Tibet? (2001)
Chien-peng (C.P.) Chung
8. Asia-Pacific Diplomacies: Reading Discontinuity in Late-Modern Diplomatic Practice (2001)
Tan See Seng
9. Framing “South Asia”: Whose Imagined Region? (2001)
Sinderpal Singh
10. Explaining Indonesia's Relations with Singapore During the New Order Period: The Case of Regime Maintenance and Foreign Policy (2001)
Terence Lee Chek Liang
11. Human Security: Discourse, Statecraft, Emancipation (2001)
Tan See Seng
12. Globalization and its Implications for Southeast Asian Security: A Vietnamese Perspective (2001)
Nguyen Phuong Binh
13. Framework for Autonomy in Southeast Asia’s Plural Societies (2001)
Miriam Coronel Ferrer

14. Burma: Protracted Conflict, Governance and Non-Traditional Security Issues (2001)
Ananda Rajah
15. Natural Resources Management and Environmental Security in Southeast Asia: Case Study of Clean Water Supplies in Singapore (2001)
Kog Yue Choong
16. Crisis and Transformation: ASEAN in the New Era (2001)
Etel Solingen
17. Human Security: East Versus West? (2001)
Amitav Acharya
18. Asian Developing Countries and the Next Round of WTO Negotiations (2001)
Barry Desker
19. Multilateralism, Neo-liberalism and Security in Asia: The Role of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (2001)
Ian Taylor
20. Humanitarian Intervention and Peacekeeping as Issues for Asia-Pacific Security (2001)
Derek McDougall
21. Comprehensive Security: The South Asian Case (2002)
S.D. Muni
22. The Evolution of China's Maritime Combat Doctrines and Models: 1949-2001 (2002)
You Ji
23. The Concept of Security Before and After September 11 (2002)
 - a. The Contested Concept of Security
Steve Smith
 - b. Security and Security Studies After September 11: Some Preliminary Reflections
Amitav Acharya
24. Democratisation In South Korea And Taiwan: The Effect Of Social Division On Inter-Korean and Cross-Strait Relations (2002)
Chien-peng (C.P.) Chung
25. Understanding Financial Globalisation (2002)
Andrew Walter

26. 911, American Praetorian Unilateralism and the Impact on State-Society Relations in Southeast Asia (2002)
Kumar Ramakrishna
27. Great Power Politics in Contemporary East Asia: Negotiating Multipolarity or Hegemony? (2002)
Tan See Seng
28. What Fear Hath Wrought: Missile Hysteria and The Writing of “America” (2002)
Tan See Seng
29. International Responses to Terrorism: The Limits and Possibilities of Legal Control of Terrorism by Regional Arrangement with Particular Reference to ASEAN (2002)
Ong Yen Nee
30. Reconceptualizing the PLA Navy in Post – Mao China: Functions, Warfare, Arms, and Organization (2002)
Nan Li
31. Attempting Developmental Regionalism Through AFTA: The Domestic Politics – Domestic Capital Nexus (2002)
Helen E S Nesadurai
32. 11 September and China: Opportunities, Challenges, and Warfighting (2002)
Nan Li
33. Islam and Society in Southeast Asia after September 11 (2002)
Barry Desker
34. Hegemonic Constraints: The Implications of September 11 For American Power (2002)
Evelyn Goh
35. Not Yet All Aboard...But Already All At Sea Over Container Security Initiative (2002)
Irvin Lim
36. Financial Liberalization and Prudential Regulation in East Asia: Still Perverse? (2002)
Andrew Walter
37. Indonesia and The Washington Consensus (2002)
Premjith Sadasivan
38. The Political Economy of FDI Location: Why Don't Political Checks and Balances and Treaty Constraints Matter? (2002)
Andrew Walter

39. The Securitization of Transnational Crime in ASEAN (2002)
Ralf Emmers
40. Liquidity Support and The Financial Crisis: The Indonesian Experience (2002)
J Soedradjad Djiwandono
41. A UK Perspective on Defence Equipment Acquisition (2003)
David Kirkpatrick
42. Regionalisation of Peace in Asia: Experiences and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership (2003)
Mely C. Anthony
43. The WTO In 2003: Structural Shifts, State-Of-Play And Prospects For The Doha Round (2003)
Razeen Sally
44. Seeking Security In The Dragon's Shadow: China and Southeast Asia In The Emerging Asian Order (2003)
Amitav Acharya
45. Deconstructing Political Islam In Malaysia: UMNO'S Response To PAS' Religio-Political Dialectic (2003)
Joseph Liow
46. The War On Terror And The Future of Indonesian Democracy (2003)
Tatik S. Hafidz
47. Examining The Role of Foreign Assistance in Security Sector Reforms: The Indonesian Case (2003)
Eduardo Lachica
48. Sovereignty and The Politics of Identity in International Relations (2003)
Adrian Kuah
49. Deconstructing Jihad; Southeast Asia Contexts (2003)
Patricia Martinez
50. The Correlates of Nationalism in Beijing Public Opinion (2003)
Alastair Iain Johnston
51. In Search of Suitable Positions' in the Asia Pacific: Negotiating the US-China Relationship and Regional Security (2003)
Evelyn Goh

52. American Unilateralism, Foreign Economic Policy and the 'Securitisation' of Globalisation (2003)
Richard Higgott
53. Fireball on the Water: Naval Force Protection-Projection, Coast Guarding, Customs Border Security & Multilateral Cooperation in Rolling Back the Global Waves of Terror from the Sea (2003)
Irvin Lim
54. Revisiting Responses To Power Preponderance: Going Beyond The Balancing-Bandwagoning Dichotomy (2003)
Chong Ja Ian
55. Pre-emption and Prevention: An Ethical and Legal Critique of the Bush Doctrine and Anticipatory Use of Force In Defence of the State (2003)
Malcolm Brailey
56. The Indo-Chinese Enlargement of ASEAN: Implications for Regional Economic Integration (2003)
Helen E S Nesadurai
57. The Advent of a New Way of War: Theory and Practice of Effects Based Operation (2003)
Joshua Ho
58. Critical Mass: Weighing in on Force Transformation & Speed Kills Post-Operation Iraqi Freedom (2004)
Irvin Lim
59. Force Modernisation Trends in Southeast Asia (2004)
Andrew Tan
60. Testing Alternative Responses to Power Preponderance: Buffering, Binding, Bonding and Beleaguering in the Real World (2004)
Chong Ja Ian
61. Outlook on the Indonesian Parliamentary Election 2004 (2004)
Irman G. Lanti
62. Globalization and Non-Traditional Security Issues: A Study of Human and Drug Trafficking in East Asia (2004)
Ralf Emmers
63. Outlook for Malaysia's 11th General Election (2004)
Joseph Liow

64. Not *Many* Jobs Take a Whole Army: Special Operations Forces and The Revolution in Military Affairs. (2004)
Malcolm Brailey
65. Technological Globalisation and Regional Security in East Asia (2004)
J.D. Kenneth Boutin
66. UAVs/UCAVS – Missions, Challenges, and Strategic Implications for Small and Medium Powers (2004)
Manjeet Singh Pardesi
67. Singapore’s Reaction to Rising China: Deep Engagement and Strategic Adjustment (2004)
Evelyn Goh
68. The Shifting Of Maritime Power And The Implications For Maritime Security In East Asia (2004)
Joshua Ho
69. China In The Mekong River Basin: The Regional Security Implications of Resource Development On The Lancang Jiang (2004)
Evelyn Goh
70. Examining the Defence Industrialization-Economic Growth Relationship: The Case of Singapore (2004)
Adrian Kuah and Bernard Loo
71. “Constructing” The Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist: A Preliminary Inquiry (2004)
Kumar Ramakrishna
72. Malaysia and The United States: Rejecting Dominance, Embracing Engagement (2004)
Helen E S Nesadurai
73. The Indonesian Military as a Professional Organization: Criteria and Ramifications for Reform (2005)
John Bradford
74. Martime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: A Risk Assessment (2005)
Catherine Zara Raymond
75. Southeast Asian Maritime Security In The Age Of Terror: Threats, Opportunity, And Charting The Course Forward (2005)
John Bradford

76. Deducing India's Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives (2005)
Manjeet Singh Pardesi
77. Towards Better Peace Processes: A Comparative Study of Attempts to Broker Peace with MNLF and GAM (2005)
S P Harish
78. Multilateralism, Sovereignty and Normative Change in World Politics (2005)
Amitav Acharya
79. The State and Religious Institutions in Muslim Societies (2005)
Riaz Hassan
80. On Being Religious: Patterns of Religious Commitment in Muslim Societies (2005)
Riaz Hassan
81. The Security of Regional Sea Lanes (2005)
Joshua Ho
82. Civil-Military Relationship and Reform in the Defence Industry (2005)
Arthur S Ding
83. How Bargaining Alters Outcomes: Bilateral Trade Negotiations and Bargaining Strategies (2005)
Deborah Elms
84. Great Powers and Southeast Asian Regional Security Strategies: Omni-enmeshment, Balancing and Hierarchical Order (2005)
Evelyn Goh
85. Global Jihad, Sectarianism and The Madrassahs in Pakistan (2005)
Ali Riaz
86. Autobiography, Politics and Ideology in Sayyid Qutb's Reading of the Qur'an (2005)
Umej Bhatia
87. Maritime Disputes in the South China Sea: Strategic and Diplomatic Status Quo (2005)
Ralf Emmers
88. China's Political Commissars and Commanders: Trends & Dynamics (2005)
Srikanth Kondapalli

89. Piracy in Southeast Asia New Trends, Issues and Responses (2005)
Catherine Zara Raymond
90. Geopolitics, Grand Strategy and the Bush Doctrine (2005)
Simon Dalby
91. Local Elections and Democracy in Indonesia: The Case of the Riau Archipelago (2005)
Nankyung Choi
92. The Impact of RMA on Conventional Deterrence: A Theoretical Analysis (2005)
Manjeet Singh Pardesi
93. Africa and the Challenge of Globalisation (2005)
Jeffrey Herbst
94. The East Asian Experience: The Poverty of 'Picking Winners' (2005)
Barry Desker and Deborah Elms
95. Bandung And The Political Economy Of North-South Relations: Sowing The Seeds For Revisioning International Society (2005)
Helen E S Nesadurai
96. Re-conceptualising the Military-Industrial Complex: A General Systems Theory Approach (2005)
Adrian Kuah
97. Food Security and the Threat From Within: Rice Policy Reforms in the Philippines (2006)
Bruce Tolentino
98. Non-Traditional Security Issues: Securitisation of Transnational Crime in Asia (2006)
James Laki
99. Securitizing/Desecuritizing the Filipinos' 'Outward Migration Issue' in the Philippines' Relations with Other Asian Governments (2006)
José N. Franco, Jr.
100. Securitization Of Illegal Migration of Bangladeshis To India (2006)
Josy Joseph
101. Environmental Management and Conflict in Southeast Asia – Land Reclamation and its Political Impact (2006)
Kog Yue-Choong

- 102 Securitizing border-crossing: The case of marginalized stateless minorities in the Thai-Burma Borderlands (2006)
Mika Toyota
- 103 The Incidence of Corruption in India: Is the Neglect of Governance Endangering Human Security in South Asia? (2006)
Shabnam Mallick and Rajarshi Sen
- 104 The LTTE's Online Network and its Implications for Regional Security (2006)
Shyam Tekwani
- 105 The Korean War June-October 1950: Inchon and Stalin In The "Trigger Vs Justification" Debate (2006)
Tan Kwoh Jack
- 106 International Regime Building in Southeast Asia: ASEAN Cooperation against the Illicit Trafficking and Abuse of Drugs (2006)
Ralf Emmers
- 107 Changing Conflict Identities: The case of the Southern Thailand Discord (2006)
S P Harish
- 108 Myanmar and the Argument for Engagement: *A Clash of Contending Moralities?* (2006)
Christopher B Roberts
- 109 TEMPORAL DOMINANCE (2006)
Military Transformation and the Time Dimension of Strategy
Edwin Seah
- 110 Globalization and Military-Industrial Transformation in South Asia: An Historical Perspective (2006)
Emrys Chew
- 111 UNCLOS and its Limitations as the Foundation for a Regional Maritime Security Regime (2006)
Sam Bateman
- 112 Freedom and Control Networks in Military Environments (2006)
Paul T Mitchell
- 113 Rewriting Indonesian History The Future in Indonesia's Past (2006)
Kwa Chong Guan

- 114 Twelver Shi'ite Islam: Conceptual and Practical Aspects (2006)
Christoph Marcinkowski
- 115 Islam, State and Modernity : Muslim Political Discourse in Late 19th and Early 20th century India (2006)
Iqbal Singh Sevea
- 116 'Voice of the Malayan Revolution': The Communist Party of Malaya's Struggle for Hearts and Minds in the 'Second Malayan Emergency' (1969-1975) (2006)
Ong Wei Chong
- 117 "From Counter-Society to Counter-State: Jemaah Islamiyah According to PUPJI" (2006)
Elena Pavlova
- 118 The Terrorist Threat to Singapore's Land Transportation Infrastructure: A Preliminary Enquiry (2006)
Adam Dolnik
- 119 The Many Faces of Political Islam (2006)
Mohammed Ayoob
- 120 Facets of Shi'ite Islam in Contemporary Southeast Asia (I): Thailand and Indonesia (2006)
Christoph Marcinkowski
- 121 Facets of Shi'ite Islam in Contemporary Southeast Asia (II): Malaysia and Singapore (2006)
Christoph Marcinkowski
- 122 Towards a History of Malaysian Ulama (2007)
Mohamed Nawab
- 123 Islam and Violence in Malaysia (2007)
Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid
- 124 Between Greater Iran and Shi'ite Crescent: Some Thoughts on the Nature of Iran's Ambitions in the Middle East (2007)
Christoph Marcinkowski
- 125 Thinking Ahead: Shi'ite Islam in Iraq and its Seminaries (*hawzah 'ilmiyyah*) (2007)
Christoph Marcinkowski
- 126 The China Syndrome: Chinese Military Modernization and the Rearming of Southeast Asia (2007)
Richard A. Bitzinger

- 127 Contested Capitalism: Financial Politics and Implications for China (2007)
Richard Carney
- 128 Sentinels of Afghan Democracy: The Afghan National Army (2007)
Samuel Chan
- 129 The De-escalation of the Spratly Dispute in Sino-Southeast Asian Relations (2007)
Ralf Emmers
- 130 War, Peace or Neutrality: An Overview of Islamic Polity's Basis of Inter-State Relations (2007)
Muhammad Haniff Hassan
- 131 Mission Not So Impossible: The AMM and the Transition from Conflict to Peace in Aceh, 2005–2006 (2007)
Kirsten E. Schulze
- 132 Comprehensive Security and Resilience in Southeast Asia: ASEAN's Approach to Terrorism and Sea Piracy (2007)
Ralf Emmers
- 133 The *Ulama* in Pakistani Politics (2007)
Mohamed Nawab
- 134 China's Proactive Engagement in Asia: Economics, Politics and Interactions (2007)
Li Mingjiang
- 135 The PLA's Role in China's Regional Security Strategy (2007)
Qi Dapeng