

White Papers of the Chinese Government (2009-2011)

Information Office of the State Council of
the People's Republic of China



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China's National Defense in 2008

(January 2009)

Preface

- I. The Security Situation**
- II. National Defense Policy**
- III. Reform and Development of the PLA**
- IV. The Army**
- V. The Navy**
- VI. The Air Force**
- VII. The Second Artillery Force**
- VIII. The People's Armed Police Force**
- IX. National Defense Reserve Buildup**
- X. The Armed Forces and the People**
- XI. Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense**
- XII. Defense Expenditure**
- XIII. International Security Cooperation**

XIV. Arms Control and Disarmament

- Appendix I Major International Exchanges of the Chinese Military (2007-2008)
- Appendix II Joint Exercises and Training with Foreign Armed Forces (2007-2008)
- Appendix III China's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations (As of Nov. 30, 2008)
- Appendix IV Imports and Exports of Seven Major Types of Conventional Arms of the PRC (2007)
- Appendix V Defense Expenditure of the PRC (1978-2007)
- Appendix VI Major Military Regulations Issued in 2007 and 2008

Contents

• China's National Defense in 2008 (January 2009)	1
• Fifty Years of Democratic Reform in Tibet (March 2009)	81
• China's Actions for Disaster Prevention and Reduction (May 2009)	113
• Development and Progress in Xinjiang (September 2009)	141
• China's Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups (September 2009)	181
• The Internet in China (June 2010)	227
• China's Human Resources (September 2010)	249
• Progress in China's Human Rights in 2009 (September 2010)	277
• China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (December 2010)	305
• China's Efforts to Combat Corruption and Build a Clean Government (December 2010)	325
• China's National Defense in 2010 (March 2011)	357

• China's Foreign Aid (April 2011)	437
• Sixty Years Since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (July 2011)	469
• China's Peaceful Development (September 2011)	501
• The Socialist System of Laws with Chinese Characteristics (October 2011)	525
• New Progress in Development-oriented Poverty Reduction Program for Rural China (November 2011)	561
• China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change (2011) (November 2011)	587
• China's Foreign Trade (December 2011)	623
• China's Space Activities in 2011 (December 2011)	649

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(January 2009)

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Preface

The year 2008 was an extraordinary one in the history of the People's Republic of China (PRC). In that year China overcame a devastating earthquake, with the epicenter in Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province; successfully hosted the 29th Olympic Games and Paralympics in Beijing; and greeted the 30th anniversary of the adoption of reform and opening-up policies.

Historic changes have taken place in the relations between contemporary China and the rest of the world. The Chinese economy has become an important part of the world economy, China has become an important member of the international system, and the future and destiny of China have been increasingly closely connected with the international community. China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world enjoy prosperity and stability without China.

Starting from this new historical turning point, China is unswervingly taking the road of peaceful development, unswervingly carrying out its policies of reform and opening-up and socialist modernization, unswervingly pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and a national defense policy solely aimed at protecting its territory and people, and endeavoring to build, together with other countries, a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.

China adheres to taking the Scientific Outlook on Development as an important guiding principle for national defense and armed forces building; is actively adapting itself to new trends in world military development, taking it as its fundamental purpose to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development, taking reform and innovation as its fundamental driving force, and advancing the modernization of its national defense and armed forces from a higher starting point.

I. The Security Situation

With the advent of the new century, the world is undergoing tremendous changes and adjustments. Peace and development remain the principal themes of the times, and the pursuit of peace, development and cooperation has become an irresistible trend of the times. However, global challenges are on the increase, and new security threats keep emerging.

Economic globalization and world multi-polarization are gaining momentum. The progress toward industrialization and informationization throughout the globe is accelerating and economic cooperation is in full swing, leading to increasing economic interdependence, interconnectivity and interactivity among countries. The rise and decline of international strategic forces is quickening, major powers are stepping up their efforts to cooperate with each other and draw on each other's strengths. They continue to compete with and hold each other in check, and groups of new emerging developing powers are arising. Therefore, a profound readjustment is brewing in the international system. In addition, factors conducive to maintaining peace and containing war are on the rise, and the common interests of countries in the security field have increased, and their willingness to cooperate is enhanced, thereby keeping low the risk of worldwide, all-out and large-scale wars for a relatively long period of time.

World peace and development are faced with multiple difficulties and challenges. Struggles for strategic resources, strategic locations and strategic dominance have intensified. Meanwhile, hegemonism and power politics still exist, regional turmoil keeps spilling over, hotspot issues are increasing, and local conflicts and wars keep emerging. The impact of the financial crisis triggered by the US subprime mortgage crisis is snowballing. In the aspect of world economic development, issues such as energy and food are becoming more serious, highlighting deep-seated contradictions. Economic risks are manifesting a more interconnected, systematic and global nature. Issues such as terrorism, environmental disasters, climate change, serious epidemics, transnational crime and pirates are becoming increasingly prominent.

The influence of military security factors on international relations is mounting. Driven by competition in overall national strength and the development of science and technology, international military competition is becoming

increasingly intense, and the worldwide revolution in military affairs (RMA) is reaching a new stage of development. Some major powers are realigning their security and military strategies, increasing their defense investment, speeding up the transformation of armed forces, and developing advanced military technology, weapons and equipment. Strategic nuclear forces, military astronautics, missile defense systems, and global and battlefield reconnaissance and surveillance have become top priorities in their efforts to strengthen armed forces. Some developing countries are also actively seeking to acquire advanced weapons and equipment to increase their military power. All countries are attaching more importance to supporting diplomatic struggles with military means. As a result, arms races in some regions are heating up, posing grave challenges to the international arms control and non-proliferation regime.

The Asia-Pacific security situation is stable on the whole. The regional economy is brimming with vigor, mechanisms for regional and sub-regional economic and security cooperation maintain their development momentum, and it has become the policy orientation of all countries to settle differences and hotspot issues peacefully through dialogue. The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have signed the *Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation*, and practical cooperation has made progress in such fields as security and economy. The conclusion of the *ASEAN Charter* has enabled a new step to be taken toward ASEAN integration. Remarkable achievements have been made in cooperation between China and ASEAN, as well as between ASEAN and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Cooperation within the framework of the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) continues to make progress. The Six-Party Talks on the Korean nuclear issue have scored successive achievements, and the tension in Northeast Asia is much released.

However, there still exist many factors of uncertainty in Asia-Pacific security. The drastic fluctuations in the world economy impact heavily on regional economic development, and political turbulence persists in some countries undergoing economic and social transition. Ethnic and religious discords, and conflicting claims over territorial and maritime rights and interests remain serious, regional hotspots are complex. At the same time, the US has increased its strategic attention to and input in the Asia-Pacific region, further consolidating its military alliances, adjusting its military deployment and enhancing its military capabilities. In addition, terrorist, separatist and extremist forces are running rampant, and non-traditional security issues such as serious natural disasters

crop up frequently. The mechanisms for security cooperation between countries and regions are yet to be enhanced, and the capability for coping with regional security threats in a coordinated way has to be improved.

China's security situation has improved steadily. The achievements made in China's modernization drive have drawn worldwide attention. China's overall national strength has increased substantially, its people's living standards have kept improving, the society remains stable and unified, and the capability for upholding national security has been further enhanced. The attempts of the separatist forces for "Taiwan independence" to seek "*de jure* Taiwan independence" have been thwarted, and the situation across the Taiwan Straits has taken a significantly positive turn. The two sides have resumed and made progress in consultations on the common political basis of the "1992 Consensus," and consequently cross-Straits relations have improved. Meanwhile, China has made steady progress in its relations with the developed countries, strengthened in all respects the good-neighborly friendship with its neighboring countries, and kept deepening its traditional friendship with the developing countries. China is playing an active and constructive role in multilateral affairs, thus notably elevating its international position and influence.

China is still confronted with long-term, complicated, and diverse security threats and challenges. Issues of existence security and development security, traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats, and domestic security and international security are interwoven and interactive. China is faced with the superiority of the developed countries in economy, science and technology, as well as military affairs. It also faces strategic maneuvers and containment from the outside while having to face disruption and sabotage by separatist and hostile forces from the inside. Being in a stage of economic and social transition, China is encountering many new circumstances and new issues in maintaining social stability. Separatist forces working for "Taiwan independence," "East Turkistan independence" and "Tibet independence" pose threats to China's unity and security. Damages caused by non-traditional security threats like terrorism, natural disasters, economic insecurity, and information insecurity are on the rise. Impact of uncertainties and destabilizing factors in China's outside security environment on national security and development is growing. In particular, the United States continues to sell arms to Taiwan in violation of the principles established in the three Sino-US joint communiqués, causing serious harm to Sino-US relations as well as peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits.

In the face of unprecedented opportunities and challenges, China will hold high the banner of peace, development and cooperation, persist in taking the road of peaceful development, pursue the opening-up strategy of mutual benefit, and promote the building of a harmonious world with enduring peace and common prosperity; and it will persist in implementing the Scientific Outlook on Development in a bid to achieve integration of development with security, persist in giving due consideration to both traditional and non-traditional security issues, enhancing national strategic capabilities, and perfecting the national emergency management system. At the same time, it will persist in pursuing the new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination, and advocating the settlement of international disputes and hotspot issues by peaceful means. It will encourage the advancement of security dialogues and cooperation with other countries, oppose the enlargement of military alliances, and acts of aggression and expansion. China will never seek hegemony or engage in military expansion now or in the future, no matter how developed it becomes.

II. National Defense Policy

China pursues a national defense policy which is purely defensive in nature. China places the protection of national sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, safeguarding of the interests of national development, and the interests of the Chinese people above all else. China endeavors to build a fortified national defense and strong military forces compatible with national security and development interests, and enrich the country and strengthen the military while building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects.

China's national defense policy for the new stage in the new century basically includes: upholding national security and unity, and ensuring the interests of national development; achieving the all-round, coordinated and sustainable development of China's national defense and armed forces; enhancing the performance of the armed forces with informationization as the major measuring criterion; implementing the military strategy of active defense; pursuing a self-defensive nuclear strategy; and fostering a security environment conducive to China's peaceful development.

According to the requirements of national security and the level of economic and social development, China pursues a three-step development strategy to

modernize its national defense and armed forces step by step in a well-planned way. This strategic framework is defined as follows:

Promoting the informationization of China's national defense and armed forces. Taking informationization as the goal of modernization of its national defense and armed forces and in light of its national and military conditions, China actively pushes forward the RMA with Chinese characteristics. It has formulated in a scientific way strategic plans for national defense and armed forces building and strategies for the development of the services and arms, according to which it will lay a solid foundation by 2010, basically accomplish mechanization and make major progress in informationization by 2020, and by and large reach the goal of modernization of national defense and armed forces by the mid-21st century.

Overall planning of economic development and national defense building. Sticking to the principle of coordinated development of economy and national defense, China makes overall plans for the use of its national resources and strikes a balance between enriching the country and strengthening the military, so as to ensure that its strategy for national defense and armed forces building is compatible with its strategy for national development. It makes national defense building an organic part of its social and economic development, endeavors to establish scientific mechanisms for the coordinated development of economy and national defense, and thus provides rich resources and sustainable driving force for the modernization of its national defense and armed forces. In national defense building, China makes it a point to take into consideration the needs of economic and social development and insists on having military and civilian purposes compatible with and beneficial to each other, so as to achieve more social benefits in the use of national defense resources in peacetime.

Deepening the reform of national defense and armed forces. China is working to adjust and reform the organization, structure and policies of the armed forces, and will advance step by step the modernization of the organizational form and pattern of the armed forces in order to develop by 2020 a complete set of scientific modes of organization, institutions and ways of operation both with Chinese characteristics and in conformity with the laws governing the building of modern armed forces. China strives to adjust and reform the systems of defense-related industry of science and technology and the procurement of weapons and equipment, and enhance its capacity for independent innovation in R&D of weapons and equipment with better quality and cost-effectiveness. China endeavors to establish and improve the systems of weaponry and

equipment research and manufacturing, military personnel training and logistical support that integrate military with civilian purposes and combine military efforts with civilian support. In addition, China makes an effort to establish and improve a national defense mobilization system that is centralized and unified, well structured, rapid in reaction, and authoritative and efficient.

Taking the road of leapfrog development. Persisting in taking mechanization as the foundation and informationization as focus, China is stepping up the composite development of mechanization and informationization. Persisting in strengthening the military by means of science and technology, China is working to develop new and high-tech weaponry and equipment, carry out the strategic project of training talented people, conduct military training in conditions of informationization, and build a modern logistics system in an all-round way, so as to change the mode of formation of war-fighting capabilities. Persisting in laying stress on priorities, China distinguishes between the primary and the secondary, and refrains from doing certain things, striving to achieve leapfrog development in key areas. China persists in building the armed forces through diligence and thrift, attaching importance to scientific management, in order to make the fullest use of its limited defense resources.

China implements a military strategy of active defense. Strategically, it adheres to the principle of featuring defensive operations, self-defense and striking and getting the better of the enemy only after the enemy has started an attack. In response to the new trends in world military developments and the requirements of the national security and development strategy, China has formulated a military strategic guideline of active defense for the new period.

This guideline aims at winning local wars in conditions of informationization. It takes into overall consideration the evolution of modern warfare and the major security threats facing China, and prepares for defensive operations under the most difficult and complex circumstances. Meeting the requirements of confrontation between war systems in modern warfare and taking integrated joint operations as the basic approach, it is designed to bring the operational strengths of different services and arms into full play, combine offensive operations with defensive operations, give priority to the flexible application of strategies and tactics, seek advantages and avoid disadvantages, and make the best use of our strong points to attack the enemy's weak points. It endeavors to refine the command system for joint operations, the joint training system and the joint support system, optimize the structure and composition of forces, and speed up the building of a combat force structure suitable for winning local