

# **China's System of Strategic Leadership\***

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Topics covered in this chapter:

- The Central Military Commission's dominant role as a state and party body;
- Defense Minister's place in the Central Military Commission;
- Significance of the "large military districts";
- Functions of the Main Political Directorate of the People's Liberation Army (PLA);
- Specifics of the PLA's General Staff and how it compared to the General Staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army [RKKA] during the Great Patriotic War;
- The lack of a unified command in the PLA;
- Unique features of the Chinese armed forces as an institution of the party and the state;
- Importance of Mao Zedong's military-political legacy and the way in which he used military force;
- Creation of a modern Chinese armed force starting in the late 1990s.

The strategic leadership system of the People's Republic of China differs significantly from that of the United States and other Western countries (and from India's, whose strategic leadership system is externally analogous to the British system), and also from the system that existed in the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

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\* Chapter 13 from the book by A.A. Kokoshin, Strategic Leadership: Theory, Historical Experience, Comparative Analysis, and the Challenges for Russia [*Strategicheskoye Upravleniye – Teoriya, istoricheskiy opyt, sravnitel'nyy analiz, zadachi dlya Rossii*] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 279-292.

Officially, the central position in China's strategic leadership system is occupied by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CC CPC), specifically, by the Politburo's Standing Committee and the Secretariat of the CC CPC. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of November of 2002, the Standing Committee has consisted of nine members. All three of the basic components of China's strategic leadership system are subordinate to the country's top Party leadership. The three components are military, diplomatic (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and intelligence (primarily the political intelligence in the system of China's Ministry of State Security and military intelligence in the system of the General Staff of the PLA). China's Central Military Commission (CMC) plays a very important role in the strategic leadership system.<sup>2</sup> The CMC determines China's top-level and military strategy and directs the day-to-day activities of the Chinese Armed Forces. The structure, composition and functions of this council are not well known outside China, including in Russia.

Until recently the Central Military Commission was a deeply Party body, since the Armed Forces themselves were considered primarily an instrument of the Party. After the 14 Mar 97 All-China Conference of Peoples' Representatives passed a special law "On Defense," the CMC also became a government body simultaneously.<sup>3</sup> The same people run both the state and party body of China's strategic leadership.

Since the mid-1990s Jiang Zemin has been Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC). Until November of 2002 he was simultaneously the Secretary General of the CC PRC and the President of China.

When Deng Xiaoping left all of China's top leadership positions, he kept only one post for himself, i.e., chairmanship of the Central Military Commission, which indicates the CMC's importance and the special role it plays in China's state strategic leadership system.

In 2000, a member of the Standing Committee of the CC CCP, Hu Jintao, was added to the Central Military Commission as its Deputy Chairman. At the 16<sup>th</sup> CCP Congress, Hu Jintao became Jiang Zemin's successor as Secretary General of the CC CCP. Hu Jintao was given an early opportunity to be "inducted" into the subtleties of the top-echelon strategic leadership of the Chinese state.

Not only is the Central Military Commission a top-level military body, it is also a top-level body for overall state strategic leadership, particularly during periods of crisis and whenever a threat to China's internal political stability arises. It is a sort of "reserve body" of the country's top power echelon in the event of various crises in which the system that operates in non-crisis periods stops working. Both the People's Armed Police Force (the equivalent of the Internal Troops of the Russian Federation's Interior Ministry) and the home-guard troops are subordinate to the Central Military Commission. But neither organization is subordinate to the CMC via the Minister of Defense. Rather, they report directly to the CMC Chairman, *de facto* to his First Deputy.<sup>4</sup> By law, the PLA, the People's Armed Police Force, and the home-guard troops together comprise the Armed Forces of China.

A very limited number of people are members of the Central Military Commission. It is comparable to the number of permanent members of the Russian Federation Security Council and the number of members of the US National Security Council. In addition to its Chairman, sitting on China's CMC are the First Deputy, the Minister of Defense, the Chief of the General Staff of the PLA, and the Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the PLA.<sup>5</sup>

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> CPC Congress the hierarchy on the CMC has been the following: the Chairman, who is the Secretary General of the CC CPC; then two deputies, both of whom are members of the Politburo, including the Defense Minister; all the others, including the Chief of the General Staff, are members of the CC CPC. As a minimum, they all have the approximate status of a Minister of the "First Rank," (or to a vice premier) of the government of China -- the State Council. The PLA's weapons chief, the rear-services chief, and the chief of the PLA's Main Political Directorate all occupy a position in the CMC equal to the Chief of the General Staff.\*

China's Defense Minister does not wield as much authority specifically over his country's military machine as do, for example, the Defense Ministers in the United States, Great Britain and France. He is primarily a representative political figure holding a high position in the political hierarchy as a member of the Politburo of the CC CCP (the

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\* In the post-war Soviet system and in today's Russian system the Chief of the General Staff's position is a notch higher than those of his colleagues in analogous positions. That has also become inherent in the system that arose after some transformations in Russia's Defense Ministry in early 2001.

Defense Minister is also concurrently a member of China's State Council -- of the cabinet of ministers). In China, these powers [that defense ministers enjoy Western countries] are concentrated both *de jure* and *de facto* in the hands of the Central Military Council Chairman himself, who is free to delegate them to his deputies in varying degrees. Thus, according to some sources, after the 16<sup>th</sup> CCP Congress the role of the Defense Minister will be greater than it has been in previous years.

Quite a lot of information indicates that the structure of the PLA's General Staff does not have a body analogous to the Soviet or Russian General Staff's influential Main Organization and Mobilization Directorate. It appears that such functions are carried out by the corresponding subsection of the PLA's Main Political Directorate. Thus, one could rightly consider that the Main Political Directorate is the CMC's most powerful body, the body that makes it possible to achieve huge results while also working out "bureaucratic compromises." In contrast to the Soviet or Russian systems, the directorates are not the primary structural units of the PLA's General Staff; they are merely called directorates: the Operations Directorate and the Intelligence Directorate. But the status of these directorates is a bit higher than, for example, the PLA's Rear Services Directorate or the Armaments Directorate.

The "large military districts" are one of the most important echelons of China's strategic leadership. They report directly to the CMC, bypassing the General Staff. Despite the ground forces' obvious dominance in the PLA, there is no Ground Forces Main Command in the command-and-control structure.<sup>6</sup>

It is obvious, both from a domestic political standpoint and a military-political standpoint, that running the "large military districts" is considered too serious a matter in China to "lock in" their command and control at some intermediate level between the country's top leadership and the district itself.\*

China currently has seven "large military districts," as follows: Shenyang; Beijing; Lanzhou; Jinan; Nanjing; Chendu; [and Guangzhou]. The commands of the PLA's military districts have the role of commands in theaters of military operations.

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\* China's PLA has a four-part structure: ground forces; air force; navy; and strategic missile forces ("the second artillery.") The latter include not only intercontinental ballistic missiles (capable of reaching US territory), but also intermediate- and medium-range missiles (capable of striking American military objectives in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan, India, Russia and a number of other countries).

Subordinate to them are a number of combined-arms armies, regiment-size and division-size units of various service branches (including the Air Force), rear-support divisions, as well as province-level commands (most of which have been created on the basis of the commands of the old “small military districts”), or commands of individual garrisons.<sup>7</sup>

The commanders of the “large military districts,” each of whom has several provinces as his own zone of responsibility, are also an important component of Beijing’s central political power. These commanders are under the stringent control of the PLA’s Chief Political Directorate, which, as mentioned earlier, reports directly to the CMC Chairman.

The functions of the PLA’s Main Political Directorate (MPD) are much broader than were those of the MPD of the Armed Forces of the USSR. In addition to the subunits that handle political work and propaganda, as well as those that carry out the “classic” activity of political commissars, there are also additional personnel subordinate to the PLA’s MPD. They include staff personnel who in the Soviet Armed Forces were outside of the MPD system, as well as “security” subunits (military counterintelligence) analogous to the special detachments of the Red Army and the Soviet Armed Forces. Neither the Ministry of State Security, which has counter-intelligence organs, nor the Ministry of Public Security, which contains bodies analogous to the KGB’s Fifth Directorate (which fought “ideological subversion”), have the authority to interfere in security issues within the PLA -- that security rests entirely within the system of the CMC via a directorate such as the Main Political Directorate. The fact that the PLA’s MPD has subordinate military counter-intelligence bodies (independent from the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Public Security), as well as personnel organs, makes the PLA’s MPD significantly stronger in the event of “celestial shocks” than was the MPD of the Soviet Army or Navy, which lacked such bodies and powers.

Judging by all available information, the General Staff does not give orders. It develops plans for using the armed forces, plans operational and combat training, and is in charge of military intelligence.\*

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\* In China, as in the [former] Soviet Union, foreign political intelligence falls within the system of state security organs and is one of the subdivisions of China’s Ministry of State Security.

As noted earlier, the PLA's General Staff has no analogy to the Main Organization and Mobilization Directorate of Soviet Armed Forces' General Staff in post-war period (and for a while before the Great Patriotic War), or to the Soviet Armed Forces General Staff with its "vertical power" all the way down to the military commissariats of the *rayons*, who handled the draft and kept track of reservists. In this respect the PLA's General Staff is closer to the Soviet General Staff during the Great Patriotic War and to the Joint Chiefs of the US Department of Defense than it is to the Soviet General Staff after the Great Patriotic War or of the Russian Federation after 1991.

During the Great Patriotic War, as discussed in the corresponding chapter of this book, I.V. Stalin removed the Organization and Mobilization Directorate from the General Staff, creating on its basis a Main Forming and Staffing Directorate headed by the deputy people's commissar [narkom] for defense, as well as a Communications Directorate, creating the position of USSR deputy narkom for communications.

"Stalin removed from the General Staff the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the Rear Services, and the Transport Services, which was headed by one (rear-services) deputy *narkom*, who was for a time concurrently the *narkom* of the USSR's Lines of Communications. Stalin moved the Decoding Service of the General Staff (the Main Political Directorate of the General Staff) to the NKVD (which significantly weakened military intelligence to the advantage of political intelligence). The autonomous section of the People's Commissariat [*narkomat*] for Defense also became the military censorship section, which was removed from the General Staff.<sup>8</sup>

"During the Great Patriotic War, Stalin essentially allowed the General Staff to retain only the Main Operations Directorate, operations intelligence and troop intelligence, stripping strategic intelligence away from the General Staff."<sup>9</sup>

One reflection of the reduced role of the General Staff - and staffs in general - in China, as compared to the USSR and the Russian Federation, is the following. In the Chinese system of military leadership, the chiefs of staff of the "large military districts"

are not first deputy commanders of the military districts, as they are here in Russia, nor do they even have the rank of deputy commander at all. Thus, in the Chinese system the command and staff functions are distributed; in our system they intersect in many ways.

It is worth reiterating at this point that the PLA lacks a unified command, even though more than 50 years have elapsed since the victory in the civil war and the creation of the Chinese People's Republic (in 1949). At the level of the districts, the armies, the corps, divisions and below, all the way down to the company level, all orders are given on the signature of two people, the commanding general (or commander) and the commissar. Unity of command exists only at the lower tactical levels of the platoon and squad.

Today every company still has a CPC party cell, as was implemented under Mao Zedong in the 1930s. Nearly all PLA privates are members of the Chinese communist youth league, something that is achieved by means of a certain system of draftee selection.\* It is thought that the activities of the party organization and the communist youth organization deter unauthorized attitudes and relations, including the hazing that is such a very serious problem in the Russian army and which first appeared in Soviet times.

The Army in China is a unique institution. It differs radically from what is found in Europe and even from what existed in the Soviet Union. The army in China rarely conducted large-scale combat actions using front operations or operations of groups of fronts (or their analogues), which was characteristic of the Soviet Union, Germany, Japan, Great Britain and the United States during World War II. China's army conducted primarily guerilla-style wars and was reserved mainly for protecting political power. When Mao Zedong formed China's Red Army he emphasized the thesis that "the rifle gives birth to power."<sup>10</sup> The CPC's leading role vis-à-vis the Chinese armed forces is underscored in China's written guidelines. So, for example, in his 1 July 2001 speech at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the forming of the Chinese Communist Party, Chinese President and CPC Chairman Jiang Zemin stressed that the people's army in China is under the "absolute leadership of the party."<sup>11</sup>

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\* This kind of selection is possible because China's annual draftee contingent is 25-26 million, according to several estimates, which exceeds by more than an order of magnitude the needs of the PLA and the People's Armed Police Force of China's Ministry of Public Security.

Today's Chinese army arose long before the People's Republic of China came into being. The army's creation date is considered to be 1 August 1927, when revolutionary forces in Nangan, led by Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Hu Lun and Lu Bochen rose up against the supporters of the Kuomintang. Today the Central Military Commission's majestic building in Beijing is named the "August 1<sup>st</sup> Building" in honor of that event.

Prior to 1937 the PLA was called the Worker Peasant Red Army of China (similar to the Worker Peasant Red Army of the USSR). During the resistance against Japanese aggressors (1937-1945), it was called the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the New 4<sup>th</sup> Army. Its current name of PLA came into being during the National Liberation War of 1945-1949.

In the most recent period of China's history, the army's role in the country's domestic political life has grown significantly, as seen in situations that have arisen more than once.

Mao himself was a genuinely original military thinker and the author of a unique concept of guerilla warfare, the application of which brought many victories, and not only in China. Mao Zedong tried never to put the Chinese Red Army (and later the PLA) at risk of a defeat that would have led to a loss of its authority at home and abroad.\*

During WWII the Chinese leadership always tried to avoid large-scale military clashes, despite, for example, Stalin's persistent efforts to get Mao to conduct active military operations against the Japanese during WWII. Mao preferred to preserve the forces of the Chinese Army until decisive battles with the Kuomintang forces led by Chiang Kaishek in order to secure victory in the battle for winning political power in China.<sup>12</sup> Many Chinese political and military officials believed that it was nevertheless necessary to move actively against the Japanese in order to prevent them from joining Hitler in the war against the U.S.S.R., among other reasons. In this connection they also

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\* China's PLA, like the Red Army of the USSR, did not escape repression, particularly during the "Cultural Revolution." Many highly placed military leaders found themselves among the repressed, including as major and bright a figure as Marshal Peng Dehuai. However, in the course of the repression, the scale of direct physical destruction of the PLA's command staff was immeasurably less than in the USSR in 1937-1938. The great majority of the PLA's military cadres kept their positions during the "Cultural Revolution," as a result of which the Chinese armed forces during that period lost almost no combat potential.

undertook fairly large-scale actions -- chiefly the “battle of the 100 regiments” in 1940, for which Peng Dehuai later stood accused during the “Cultural Revolution.”\*\*

The 1950-52 Korean War was an exception. Faced with the threat of complete defeat, China was forced to send a significant military contingent of “Chinese national volunteers” to North Korea under no less a figure than Peng Dehuai. Despite their high combat morale, the Chinese soldiers often found themselves facing a difficult situation with the American army, which was superior in all regards -- technical equipment; command and control; and their recent extensive combat experience of World War II.<sup>13</sup> Only significant deliveries of Soviet hardware and the air cover provided by Soviet fighter divisions made it possible for the Chinese national volunteers to avoid far-heavier losses and failures.<sup>14</sup>

The 1979 Chinese-Vietnamese armed conflict was an additional exception. The Chinese leadership decided to “teach Vietnam a lesson,” since Vietnam had been trying to win independence for four years. Three PLA armies with a total strength of 300,000 were sent in for the campaign, which was relatively limited in its missions (to date nothing is known about any more specific missions). The action ended in total failure for China: the Vietnamese armed forces did not even let the Chinese get deeply into Vietnamese territory in the disputed zone. As the legendary Vietnamese military leader Vo Nguyen Giap later told me, the Vietnamese forces fully utilized Soviet rules for preparing for and conducting operations, as well as their own wealth of combat experience.

The events of 1979 confirmed the assessment that the PLA’s organization, and strategic and operational culture was not ready for any sort of serious combat advances.\*

At the same time, the PLA played a huge role in the “cultural revolution.” At certain times Mao practically used the PLA in place of state or party bodies of power.<sup>15</sup> Subsequently the army played a nearly decisive role in eliminating the “gang of four” and in establishing the system of power that is still functioning in China today.<sup>16</sup>

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\*\* Later, in the late 1940s, Stalin displayed analogous restraint in response to Mao’s calls for participation in liberating Taiwan from the Kuomintang. See A.M. Ledovskiy, *SSSR i Stalin v sud’bakh Kitaya* (Moscow: *Pamyatniki istoricheskoy mysli*, 1999): 125.

\*General M.A. Mil’shteyn reached this sort of conclusion in the 1960s at the peak of the worsening Soviet-Chinese relations (Mil’shteyn at that time was the director of the General Staff Academy’s Department of Intelligence). He had analyzed primarily all of Chinese military doctrine, focusing on Mao’s writings and his theory of a “people’s war.” It followed from Mil’shteyn’s assessments that we had no need to fear large-scale offensive actions from the PLA and that, therefore, we did not need to place several dozen divisions along our border with China.

However, the Chinese military did not regain the level of political influence it had enjoyed at the end of the “cultural revolution” and immediately thereafter. In recent years, with the emphasis on economic development and the politics of reform and openness, the military’s influence has declined somewhat: since the retirement of Liu Huatsin in 1997 at age 83, there are no military people among the members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP.<sup>17</sup>

In many ways that remained the nature of the Chinese Armed Forces until the late 1990s.<sup>18</sup> In the last two to three years, important changes have been occurring in the PLA that point toward transformation into a completely new combat force.<sup>19</sup> In this process, since 1998 the PLA has been shedding many economic functions, freeing itself from the task of contributing to the economy, as Deng Xiaoping had tasked them to do in his day (partially in his speech before the 1 Nov 1984 session of the Central Military Commission of the CC CPC).<sup>20</sup>

The Chinese leadership has clearly embarked on a path toward creating a contemporary armed force, something it had not had until recent times, aside from individual and relatively narrow segments. Judging by many widely available publications, the spirit of military thinking within the PLA is beginning to change toward greater activeness, offensiveness, and decisiveness of actions -- but within the framework of limited, stringently verified political and military-strategic goals.<sup>21</sup> As a part of this process, one should expect maximal pragmatism on the part of Chinese leaders when making any decisions involving the use of military force.<sup>22</sup>

Many foreign sources note an increase in Chinese defense expenditures over the past two to three years.

Officially an 18% rise in defense spending was noted in China in 2001; according to official statements, most of this increase was needed for larger military and civilian salaries. The material status of military personnel in recent years has been considered extremely unsatisfactory, not meeting the same standards as in the civilian sector.\*

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\* Unlike Russian officers, Chinese officers do not have the right by law to receive from the state a *gratis* personal residence, which they could then privatize. At the beginning of 2001 their pay is roughly equal to that of the Russian army.

The process of transforming the PLA and creating a new, modern force to meet the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will take 20-25 years, if not longer, if no cataclysms occur to interrupt the process, cataclysms that China may not manage to avoid despite its achievements of recent years. By the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one can expect to see groupings of modern armed forces on a whole number of axes in China.<sup>23</sup> If China's economy grows at 7% per year over the next 20 years, China will be able nearly to double its military expenditures during that period without increasing their portion of the gross national product.<sup>24</sup> But even given such an increase, China's defense budget would still fall significantly short of the current US military budget.

Overall one can say that China now stands at the threshold of large-scale military-political changes that will not be simple for the Chinese leadership. The previous military-political course conducted earlier within the framework of the general politics of reform "according to the precepts of Deng Xiaoping" has largely played itself out. This relates in many ways to the U.S.'s new policy toward China, which became very clear immediately after George W. Bush took office, when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said that China was a rival rather than a partner. It was quite clear that the U.S. intended to shift to a new version of the policy of "containment" of China (while the U.S. still had a window of opportunity to do so), as many officials and analysts of the new American administration believe.<sup>25</sup> But many in China's top political circles believe that in practice the U.S.'s strategic goal is not simply the containment of China, but rather the collapse of China as a fundamental geopolitical rival, as the only state that can compete with the U.S.A. since the disintegration of the USSR.

American plans to create a national missile defense, as well as a theater missile defense, pose a serious problem for China's defense readiness and its political status.

China's relatively small strategic nuclear forces (with 18-20 war heads deployed on monoblock ICBMs) will not look like a reliable means for a retaliatory strike on U.S. territory in the event of any unfavorable course of events. In materials published in 2001-2002 American agencies forecast the possibility that China will have about 100 warheads of intercontinental range. But even that amount (at least on the political-military level) could be neutralized by American anti-

missile defense systems, especially if the U.S. again, after a 30-year break, returns to the idea of equipping air-defense interceptor missiles with nuclear rather than conventional warheads, which increases the energy of anti-missile defense by six to seven orders of magnitude.

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In his writings on military issues Mao relied to a large extent on the great Chinese military thinker and ancient chieftain Sun Tsu.<sup>26</sup>

As already noted, the spirit of Sun Tsu's strategy is fundamentally different from that of Napoleon, Clausewitz, Moltke, Schliiffer, Tukhachevskiy, Sokolovskiy and others in Military Strategy, the book that was famous in the 1960s and 1970s and that has seen many editions in our country and abroad.

The strategic actions of a number famous people have something in common with Sun Tsu's ideas: Peter the Great's actions after the defeat of the Russian army by the Swedes led by Karl XII near Narva (in 1700), which later led to the huge strategic success near Poltava; M.I. Kutuzov's strategy against Napoleon in 1812; and the ideas of such 20<sup>th</sup>-century Russian and Soviet military theorists as A.A. Svechin, A. Neznamov, and L. Verkhovskiy.<sup>27</sup> Sun Tsu's ideas about "winning with the concept" remain current even today.<sup>28</sup> In many respects these ideas will form the basis for actions by the Chinese armed forces as they execute a number of other major political tasks for this "second superpower" of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (for the entire foreseeable future, the U.S. will remain the "first superpower").<sup>29</sup>

Sun Tsu's theory is studied in Chinese military schools and, moreover, Chinese academies are now studying Sun Tsu even more thoroughly than in the past.<sup>30</sup> Today, to a greater degree than ever before, our state and military officials, generals and commanders at various levels must be familiar with Sun Tsu, as well as the views of other Chinese military theorists and historians.<sup>31</sup>

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Russia and China are developing ever more constructive and friendly relations. One example was the 2001 treaty signed in Moscow that covered neighborly relations, friendship, cooperation, and developing interaction in many areas of international

relations, including in the context of the UN and its Security Council. Relations that are being called a strategic partnership have been established.<sup>32</sup>

The path leading to this point was complex for Russia and China after the events of the 1960s and '70s, when both sides were on the verge of an armed conflict.<sup>33</sup>

Russo-Chinese relations in the military and military-technical areas are being actively developed. China has become one of the most important consumers of Russian military-technical manufactured goods, primarily of complex and expensive weapons systems: combat aircraft; air-defense systems; major surface ships; diesel submarines, and more. France and Israel are also major vendors of weapons and hardware to the PLA, but Russia remains the dominant supplier of arms and hardware to China. The reason for that is the embargo that the U.S. and other NATO members imposed on military-technical cooperation with China after the events at Tiananmen Square, an embargo still in effect today. (In its cooperation with China, France overcomes this embargo with great difficulty and only within a very limited segment.)

Cooperation between Russia and China is also increasing within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose successful summit took place in St. Petersburg in 2002.

For nearly two decades China's economy has been demonstrating rapid growth, which is very impressive when compared to the world-wide recession other countries experienced during 2001-2002.\* Maintaining such rapid rates of growth will be a primary condition for realizing the goal that the Chinese leadership has formulated: "to modernize China by the middle of the current century and to transform it into a flourishing, powerful, democratic, socialist country, and to implement a rebirth of the Chinese nation."<sup>34</sup>

China's growing economic power will enable it to grow its military might, as well, in accordance with its increasing economic and political influence in the world,

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\* Over the past 10-12 years, a number of Western studies have noted many weak areas of the Chinese economy, particularly in the social arena (for example, the nearly total absence of a pension system in agricultural areas), and the widening gap between the robustly developing coastal regions and Chinese interior provinces, and so forth. More than once it has been suggested, and is still being suggested, that socialist China "will not withstand the test of a market economy" and the necessary and ever-growing openness of Chinese society, that China will collapse, just as the Soviet Union collapsed. But many such predictions about the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century failed to materialize, and there is no evidence that they will do so in the foreseeable future.

including its strategic nuclear power. For this reason, over the next 10-15 years China's importance as a military-political power could increase significantly, as compared to its status today. However, China's military power, even as it applies to the Asia-Pacific environment, will still fall appreciably short of U.S. military power. It will probably be another 40-50 years before China will be able to project its military strength on a global scale.

As a part of this process, military power could become a much more important component of China's foreign policy. That may require the restructuring of China's strategic leadership system, which has been operating in the country without significant changes for several decades.<sup>35</sup>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> For more detail see A.A. Kokoshin, *Voprosy strategicheskogo rukovodstva oboronoy Rossii* [Issues of the Strategic Leadership of Russia's Defense] (Moscow: IPMB RAN, 2001) 16-28, 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> The author very much appreciates the Russian China specialists and researchers I.A. Rogachev, M.L. Titarenko, S.N. Goncharov, A.N. Mel'nikov, Professor L.P. Delyusin, and academician S.L. Tikhvinskiy, for their valuable advice and recommendations, as well as their keen observations, all of which were so important in developing this section of the book.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese People's Republic law "On Defense" was enacted on 14 March 1997 by Order #84 of the President of China Jiang Zemin. Pursuant to Article 13 of this law, China's Central Military Council manages all armed forces and possesses the following powers:

- 1. Exercises unified command of all armed forces;
- 2. Develops military strategy and plans the conduct of military actions;
- 3. Directs the force structuring of the PLA, the development of plans and programs, and the organization of their execution;
- 4. Presents plans for defense construction to the All-Chinese Assembly of National Representatives (AANP) and the AANP Standing Committee for their consideration;
- 5. Enacts military laws, publishes directives and orders pursuant to the Constitution and the law;
- 6. Determines the structure and composition of the PLA, the tasks and functions of the organs of top military management, as well as of the military districts, the various armed services and branches of arms;
- 7. Makes appointment to leadership positions; manages issues of training, motivation and punishment of military personnel pursuant to the general civil and military law;
- 8. Presents plans for the development and modernization of types of weapons and military hardware; together with the State Council exercises leadership of military science and military production;
- 9. Manages, together with the PRC State Council, the expenditure portion of the military budget;
- 10. Exercises additional powers as defined by law.

<sup>4</sup> In 1998-2000 the strength of the People's Armed Police Force grew substantially through the downsizing of the PLA. Over the past one-and-a-half to two years the PLA has been cut back by more than 500,000 personnel, but the internal troops rose by an approximately equal proportion and began to take on the border-guarding function in many sectors, a function previously performed by the army in several sectors; the internal troops are also replacing the PLA in a number of parts of Xinjiang and Tibet.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to the XVI Congress of the CCP the following were also members of the Central Military Council of the CCP (and the CMC of China): two deputy chiefs of the PLA's political directorate and the first deputy of the Chief of the General Staff of the PLA.

<sup>6</sup> Several American authors note that since 1989, after the events on Tiananmen Square, the structure of military leadership in China was significantly recentralized in order to "lower the probability of defection on the part of commanding officers." The difference between the main regiment-size units under the CMC and the regional units under the individual military-district commanders was eliminated. A directive established that moving any unit larger than battalion-size can be done only by approval of the CMC. Stringent centralized control over all weapons and munitions was established. (See, for example: Michael E. Brown, Ed., *The Rise of China*, "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses," by David Shambaugh (MIT Press: 2000) 207-236.

<sup>7</sup> P. B. Kamenkov, *Oboronnoye stroitel'stvo v KNR*, China, Russia and Asia-Pacific Region countries and perspectives on inter-civilization relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century [*sic*]. Theses of presentations at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference "China, Chinese Civilization and the World: History, Modernity and Prospects," held in Moscow on 25-27 September 2001. Part I (Moscow: IVD, 2001) 82-83.

<sup>8</sup> See Kokoshin, *Voprosy strategicheskogo rukovodstva oboronnoy Rossii*, pp. 24-25. [Endnote #1]

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<sup>9</sup> See *Russkiy Arkhiv, Velikaya Otechestvennaya. Prikazy Narodnogo komissara oborony SSSR*, 22 June 1941-1942, (Moscow: Terra, 1992), p. 154, p. 348; and S.N. Mikhalev, *Strategicheskoye rukovodstvo, Rossiya/SSSR v dyukh mirovykh voynax XX stoletiya*, (Krasnoyarsk: RIO KPGU, 2000), pp. 282-284.

<sup>10</sup> See *40 Let KNR*, M.L. Titarenko, Ed., (Moscow: Nauka, 1989) p. 289; and *Gosudarstvennyy stroy Kitavskoy Narodnoy Respubliki*, L.M. Gudoshnikov, Ed., (Moscow: Nauka, 1989) pp. 196-197.

<sup>11</sup> Jiang Zemin, "Speech to a Formal Assembly on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Creation of the CPC" (1 July 2001), translated from the Chinese (Peking: Sinsin, 2001) 8.

<sup>12</sup> Mao substantially overstated his capabilities vis-à-vis Japan's Quanton Army's weapons and equipment, which capitulated in the face of the absolute advantage of the Soviet Army and as a result of the Manchurian operation of 9 Aug - 2 Sep 1945.

<sup>13</sup> Worth noting is how objectively and concisely Marshal Peng Dehuai sheds light on the correlation of the combat capabilities of the PLA and the American armed forces during the Korean War, writing in his memoirs. See Peng Dehuai, *Memuary Marshala*, translation from Chinese (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988) 356-357.

<sup>14</sup> See A.V. Torkunov, *Zagadochnaya vojna: Koreyskiy konflikt 1950-1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2000), pp. 123-162 and 238-271.

<sup>15</sup> During the "cultural revolution" (1966-1969) Mao came close to dismantling completely the state and party apparatus that had developed in China in the previous years, using detachments of "red guards," "xunvei" (student youth), and "buntar" and "sianfen" (worker youth) to attack the staffs. But the summer of 1968 PLA leaders started to come under attack by the xunvei, and most of those leaders had remained loyal to Mao throughout the "cultural revolution." The xunvei began stealing cargo intended for Vietnam, which was engaged in a major war with the U.S., attacking PLA institutions and units, stealing weapons, and attacking soldiers. As a result, Mao was forced to choose between supporting the ultra-left of his own creation, or preserving the loyalty of the army. He chose the latter.

After the "cultural revolution" (during which revolution committees were created all over the country, in place of the old party organs), the great majority of those committees ended up in military hands: 20 of the 29 provincial revolution committees were in military hands. But the top-level power over the provinces was concentrated in the party committees of 11 "large military districts" (there are seven now). The military held more than half the places in the CPC Central Committee. The top-ranking military man, Marshal Lin Bao, famous for his victories in the war with the Japanese occupiers and the Kuomintang, was officially recognized as Mao's "successor." After some time, the party "cadre" began to restore their positions. But even in the early 1970s, when the party committees were re-created, in the provinces at the *uyezd* [district] level, 60% of the committees were military; "cadre" representatives had 34%, and 6% had gone to nominees of the "cultural revolution." Mao saw a threat to himself in this growing military role, all the more so because Lin Bao's ambitions were becoming obvious as he sought the Chinese presidential post left vacant after the fall of Liu Shaochi (at the time Mao was still just chair of the CCP's Central Committee). Furthermore, Lin Bao did not support the policy of Mao or Zhou Enlai for improving relations with the U.S.A. with a strengthening of the anti-Soviet line.

In September 1971 Lin Bao and his family died under mysterious circumstances in a plane in Mongolian air space. Lin Bao was accused of planning a coup and then attempted to flee to the USSR. After the 1971 "September events," repressions began against members of the military who had been close to Lin Bao, which in general weakened the role of the military faction in the CPC Central Committee, and two other factions, the "leftists" and the "pragmatists" used this to their advantage. That was when Deng Xiaoping - and many other victims of the "cultural revolution" - were returned to political life on the initiative of Zhou Enlai.

In their battle against the "leftists," the "pragmatists" began to align themselves at all levels with the member of the military who had avoided repression after the "Lin Bao affair." See L.V. Simanovskaya and L.V. Yur'yeyev, *Istoriya Kitaya s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Moscow: Nauka, Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoy literatury, 1974) 510-514; and *Istoriya Kitaya*, A.V. Meliksetov (Moscow: MGU, 1998) 596-605.

<sup>16</sup> Military people led by Defense Minister Marshal Ye Jianying played a large role in bringing down the leftist "gang of four" led by Mao's widow Jiang Qing, which attempted to gain absolute power in the country after Mao's death. In 1976, Ye Jianying had a secret agreement with Deng Xiaoping to cooperate with the army and the "cadre."

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During the time of the battle with the “gang of four” under Jian Qing, Deng Xiaoping, along with the Guangzhou Military District, could count on the support of the Fuchow Military District and the Nanjing Military District.

On 5 October 1976 a meeting of the Politburo of the CPC CC, called by Hua Guofeng, took place in the PLA’s General Staff building. Marshal Ye Jianying, who, at that moment, was forced to go underground, played a decisive role in the meeting. The “gang of four” was not invited to the meeting. Wang Honwen [Van Khunvey] and Zhang Chunqiao were arrested when they were invited to the Politburo meeting. Ye Jianying played a role similar to that of G.K. Zhukov in intimidating L.P. Beriia and later in the routing of the group of Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich. Unlike Zhukov, Ye Jianying was not later removed from the political arena, but instead received additional posts.

Of the military people, Guangzhou Military District Commander Sui Shino played an important role in that period. A 1977 letter from that district’s command and from the party commission of Guandun province, written to the CPC Central Committee, demanded that Mao Zedong’s mistakes be acknowledged, especially those made during the “cultural revolution.” The letter noted the need to rehabilitate those who had been repressed in those years -- Liu Shaochi, Peng Dehuai, Deng Xiaoping, and even Lin Bao.

As a result, on the eve of the convening of the XI CPC Congress in August 1977, Deng was reinstated in all the positions he had held before his second removal from power in the spring of 1976: Deputy Chairman of the CC CPC; Deputy Premier of the State Council; and, Chief of the PLA General Staff. Many repressed “cadre” returned with him to leading party and state bodies.

<sup>17</sup> The military’s role was also great in a whole series of other moments of the most recent Chinese history.

Thus, after the defeat of the Japanese in the late 1940s in the areas liberated from the Kuomintang, PLA cadre became the main political power; power shifted not to civil CPC organs, but into the hands of the military administration; the military-control committees were subordinate to the military-administrative committees.

Defense Minister Marshal Peng Dehuai became Mao’s main opponent in the economic politics of the “big leap” in the late 1950s. Peng expressed his agreement with the policy of mobilizing the whole country for the cottage-industry smelting of steel, noted the urgency in communizing the economy, and criticized the situation that had arisen in the CC of the CCP Politburo, in which it had departed from the principles of collective leadership. Peng sent a private letter to Mao Zedong. He refrained from placing personal responsibility on Mao for the crisis that Chinese society found itself in because of Mao’s “great leap” policy. But the letter was a virtual accusation of Mao. Peng was named head of the “anti-party bloc” and removed from all posts. Marshal Lin Bao became defense minister. See *Istoriya Kitaya*, A.V. Meliksetov, editor (Moscow: MGU, 1998) 596-708.

<sup>18</sup> The March 1995 events around Taiwan were among the great confrontations of the past 10-12 years in Sino-American relations.

In response to the U.S. State Department’s issuing of visas to Taiwanese leaders and to their provocative speeches at Cornell University, Chinese leaders carried out a “demonstration of force” in the Taiwan area: between 8-15 March 1995 a PLA grouping was deployed, consisting of 150,000 personnel, 300 combat aircraft, and ships from all three fleets (per American assessments).

The American leadership (President Clinton, per a speech by Defense Secretary William Perry) decided on the largest deployment of forces in the area of Taiwan since 1958. Two aircraft-carrier groups were dispatched to the area, one led by the aircraft carrier Independence (plus two destroyers, a cruiser and a frigate), and then a second with the Admiral Nimitz (plus two destroyers, a cruiser, a frigate and a multi-purpose atomic submarine). See Allen S. Whiting, “China’s Use of Force 1950-96 and Taiwan,” *International Security* Vol. 26, No. 2, Fall 2001, pp. 122-123.

Both the Chinese and American leadership demonstrated a high degree of flexibility in this conflict, not escalating the matter to a high level. China stopped its demonstration of force vis-à-vis Taiwan before the American battle groups arrived, and the latter were recalled.

<sup>19</sup> Without doubt, selected writings of Mao on military issues deserve to be the object of study and teaching in the Russian Federation General Staff Academy and a number of other military educational institutions, as well as civilian educational institutions that prepare specialists. The following may be highlighted: “Strategicheskoye voprosy revolyutsionnoy voyny v Kitaye” (December 1936); “Voprosy strategii partizanskoy voyny protiv yaponskikh zakhvatchikov” (May 1938); “O zatyazhnoy voyne” (May 1938); “Voyna i voprosy strategii” (6 November 1938). See Mao Tse-Dung, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya*, translation from Chinese (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo inostrannoj literatury, 1953) v.1 and v.2.

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<sup>20</sup> See Deng Xiaopin, *Osnovnye voprosy sovremennogo Kitaya*, translation from Chinese (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988) 115.

<sup>21</sup> As late as 1999 within the PLA there was a huge number of all kinds of enterprises (according to some estimates about 20,000) -- and not all economic ones -- whose job it was to provide supplementary goods for the army. These included textile mills, coal mines, oil-processing plants, air-transport companies, and much more. In a number of Peking hotels a significant portion [*sic*] belonged not only to the PLA's Rear Services, but also to the General Staff of the PLA or to the Defense Ministry's Directorate of Foreign Relations, which was subordinate directly to the Minister. Obviously, saddled with such a burden (including having a constant corruption problem), the army has an extremely limited degree of combat readiness, even doubly so from a psychological point of view.

<sup>22</sup> The "cultural revolution" and the battle with the "gang of four" forged in China's political elite a pleiad of "pragmatists" (Deng, and others), who managed to formulate a firm course for reforms. These were pragmatists, but not petty ones. They were thinking pragmatists who had fought Mao's leftism way back in the early 1950s. But their appearance as a leading force was a consequence of the fact that Mao, unlike Stalin, did not physically destroy (did not sentence to be shot) top party leaders, although many were removed from their posts and subjected to defamation, humiliation and even beatings. Moreover, in a number of cases they were returned again to high leadership positions of the CCP and the state (as was Deng, after his first removal from the upper echelon of power).

<sup>23</sup> By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most of China's armed forces were equipped, physically and in terms of morale, with outdated equipment, two to three generations behind the weapons and hardware of the U.S. and a number of other countries. According to some assessments, the entire aggregate power of the Chinese PLA's Air Force is comparable to two or three aircraft-carrier strike groups of the U.S. This situation could change for the better for the PLA if they were to equip their air force with SU-27s and SU-30s, purchased from the Russian Federation and/or built in China through Russian licensing.

<sup>24</sup> See *Kitay v mirovoy politike*, A.V. Torkunov, editor (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001) 9.

<sup>25</sup> There are some indications that President Bush's 2002 inclusion of North Korea in the "axis of evil" may be seen in the context of this sort of "containment," where North Korea is known to be "under Chinese patronage" to a certain degree. Increasing pressure on Pyongyang, not to mention direct efforts by the U.S. leadership to forcibly replace the North Korean leadership with a pro-Western regime, could put China's leadership in an exceptionally difficult position, especially inside China itself, where a battle in the top echelons of power is becoming active.

<sup>26</sup> One of Sun Tsu's central concepts was to "have benefit" from a war: only if there is "benefit" does war make sense to him.

For Sun Tsu the goal of war was not victory. Victory is not needed in and of itself but only as a means for obtaining a benefit. If war is conducted to gain a benefit, then, in his opinion, it is much more advantageous to take the enemy's country without destroying it, and it's better to make the enemy's army subordinate to you than to destroy it: "according to the laws of war, the best option is to preserve the enemy's state intact; in second place is to destroy the state. The best option is to preserve the enemy's army in its entirety; in second place is to destroy it... To fight 100 times and win 100 times is not the best of all; best is to subjugate another person's army without fighting... The best war of all is to defeat the enemy's plans; in second place is to destroy his alliances; in third place is to destroy his troops. The worst thing of all is to besiege fortresses."

"The sovereign must not raise his weapon out of his own anger; the captain of war must not enter a battle out of his own malice. Movement should be made when it corresponds to a benefit; if it does not correspond to a benefit, the forces should stay where they are."

Sun Tsu's concept of benefit makes more than just military-political or economic sense; it also applies to more private situations in the course of armed warfare -- to tactical situations capable of influencing a military-strategic result, and through it, a higher political results.

For Sun Tsu the word "benefit" applies for purposes of war in general and for the purpose of every action on the tactical level.

If we follow the accepted chronology, Sun Tsu was primarily active in the Yu kingdom, when Ho Liu reigned (514-495 B.C.), or about 200-250 years before the before the great Chinese philosopher Confucius. See N.I. Konrad, *Sinologiya. Sun Tsy. Traktat o voyennom iskusstve*, Moscow, 1995 (reprint of the 1977 edition), pp. 27-29.

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My first acquaintance with Sun Tsu's military philosophy came about during a trip to China in 1986 through the USSR Academy of Sciences and meetings in the Chinese Institute of Strategic Research, a body close to the Central Military Council of the General Staff of China's PLA. A closer acquaintance with Sun Tsu's philosophy and its role in modern Chinese military thinking came about during official visits to China as first deputy Russian Minister of Defense, and then again later as the State Military Inspector -- the Secretary of the RF Security Council.

<sup>27</sup> See more detail in A.A. Kokoshin, "A.A. Svechin. O voyne i politike," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* 10 (1988): 133-142.

<sup>28</sup> Comparing the logic of Sun Tsu's military thought and other classical Chinese authors with the concepts of the classicists of military strategy and operational thought, would be, in my opinion, an exceptional and fruitful task that needs to be done in sufficient depth by our own Russian researchers.

<sup>29</sup> China might use military force, many experts believe, in some direct or indirect form or other (not necessarily by taking direct combat actions) not only in relation to Taiwan (where virtually no one disputes China's sovereignty), but also in relation to the Senkaku Islands (disputed Japanese territory) and the Spratly Islands (Parasel Islands disputed with Vietnam), as well as a number of other territories.

It is highly probable that after 2010 (the economic situation permitting) one could expect China to become a great maritime power, which has not happened in China's history for centuries. China's lack of a military and civilian ocean fleet had extremely negative effects on this great state's and civilizations' ability to defend itself. More than once in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Western colonizers with their own military-maritime advantage used their ships to intrude not only on coastal areas, but even fairly deeply inside China, carrying out in the crudest of manners not only "gunboat diplomacy," but direct armed intervention in China's internal affairs, trampling its sovereignty. Until recent times China had only a coastal fleet with insignificant sea-worthiness and autonomous sailing ability. China's land-based naval aviation was also weakly developed.

It should not be ruled out that as early as the current decade, due to decisions made by top-level Chinese leaders, the Chinese navy could get its own atomic submarine missile carriers with ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. Attesting to this are press reports that in January 2001 China successfully tested a long-range ballistic missile (more than 10,000 kilometers) with five separable warheads.

The fleet will be primarily for actions on various Pacific Ocean aquatoria. It will not be able to "challenge" the U.S. Navy in the world-wide oceans, but it will be capable of radically changing the operational-strategic and military-political situation in individual areas and in the most important areas of the Asia-Pacific region, from the standpoint of Chinese interests (areas of a Chinese "benefit," using the language of Sun Tsu). Again, this relates to the entire zone around Taiwan, including the distant maritime zone -- at distances at which Chinese ships and naval aircraft could respond to aircraft-carrier strike groups of "other states."

As it creates its own ocean-ready (Pacific) navy, for a long time (all the way to the final quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) China has a chance of clashing at sea with its great south-Asian neighbor, India. As India develops its naval forces, it will aspire to dominance primarily in the Bay of Bengal and then later in the northern portion of the Indian Ocean.

Like China, India may also come to have a naval component of its strategic nuclear forces, but probably some five to seven years later than China.

<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that Sun Tsu is being studied ever more intently in the U.S.'s military institutions of higher learning, from West Point to the National Defense University, which is the equivalent of our General Staff Academy. References to Sun Tsu appear in the U.S. Army's 1982 basic field manual FM 100-5.

<sup>31</sup> Without a doubt, in addition to the writings of Sun Tsu, other works also deserve attention, such as: "Shest' sekretnykh ucheniy Tay-Guna"; "Tri strategii Khuan Shi-Guna"; "Voprosy tanskogo Tay-Tszuna i otvety Li Vey-Guna." See U. Tsin, *Sem' voyennikh kanonov Drevnego Kitaya*, translation from English (St. Petersburg: Evraziya, 1998), 25-98, 243-271, 271-315.

<sup>32</sup> As E.M. Primakov notes, in the 1990s Russia, in its relations with China, traveled a "vast path." For the first time in the history of the border with China, landmarks were fixed, and documents were signed to strengthen military trust in the border area and for mutual maintenance of armed forces in the border zones. Permanent political consultations at all levels were agreed upon, and interaction in international organizations. Chinese President [predsedatel' KNR - p. 462] Jiang Zemin played a key role in all of this. See E.M. Primakov, *Gody v bol'shoy politike* (Moscow: Sovershenno sekretno, 1999) 195-196.

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<sup>33</sup> Academy member S.A. Tikhvinskiy notes that one of the most important landmarks in re-establishing relations between the USSR and China occurred in 1982, when there were four rounds of Sino-Soviet consultations. In the November 1982 Plenum of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, Yu.V. Andropov stressed the desire of the CPSU and the USSR to improve relations with its great neighbor -- the Chinese People's Republic. See S.A. Tikhvinskiy, *Kitay i vseмирnaya istoriya* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987) 67.

<sup>34</sup> See "Vместе sozidat' prekrasnoye budushchee kitaysko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy: Vystupleniye Presidatelya KNP Tszyan Tszeminya pered vidnymi obshchestvennymi deyatel'nyami Rossii i MGU," Moscow, 17 July 2001); "Material Posol'stva KNR v RF (Moscow: 2001) 14-15.

<sup>35</sup> There were discussions in China that concerned in particular the possibility of creating a body similar to the U.S. National Security Council or the Russian Security Council. Note that China's neighbor, India, has had such a body since 1998.