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WORKING PAPER

**The Ripple Effect:**  
*China's Responses to the Iraq War*

By Kurt M. Campbell, Nirav Patel, Richard Weitz



**Center for a  
New American  
Security**

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## About the Authors

**Dr. Kurt M. Campbell** is CEO and co-founder of the Center for a New American Security

**Nirav Patel** is the Bacevich fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

**Dr. Richard Weitz** is a non-resident fellow at the Center for a New American Security and a senior fellow and director of the Center for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

America's military intervention in Iraq has catalyzed major changes in the Middle East, but the ramifications of its military campaigns around the world, particularly in Asia, remain understudied. Throughout major capitals in Asia discussions relating to America's staying power and influence are becoming more pronounced.

This is most evident in China where strategists and policymakers are attempting to articulate how Chinese power and influence should be exerted in this strategic environment. Chinese officials, strategists, and academics have followed the Iraq war very carefully; however, their views have yet to be thoroughly explored.

Though the American undertaking in Iraq would appear to be a strategic benefit to the PRC, it has also carried other, less welcome, consequences. Mainly, the situation in Iraq raised in Beijing the possibilities of the limits of its non-interference strategy in its approach to foreign policy. This strategy is often referred to as the "win-win" approach because it eschews diplomatic consternation for rewards-based diplomatic engagement. China's Sudan policy is emblematic of this approach: Beijing will not pressure Khartoum on its genocidal policies in the Darfur and in return the central government will guarantee oil rights to China. While the PRC leadership considered the U.S. Iraq policy to be misguided, it revealed to them the effects of having to develop policies to advance what is deemed to be critical to the national interest (such as energy security), even if such policies run contrary to the stated interests of other nations. Such a divergence in respective national agendas on an issue of the magnitude of Iraq would deal a fatal blow to the win-win formula that the PRC has relied upon in recent years to guide its foreign relations; however, it remains unknown whether Beijing will change its reliance on the "win-win" formula. The key lesson for Beijing is that a nation as internationally engaged and with as many global strategic interests as the U.S. will often be forced to choose policy options that do not produce the best possible outcomes for every nation involved. Such a scenario would prove to be highly problematic for the PRC as it attempts to raise its soft power influence and maintain the impression of its 'peaceful rise.'

With its interests continuing to spread and



deepen in so many corners of the globe, Beijing's current win-win philosophy and doctrine of non-interference will be put to demanding tests. This is particularly likely as the PRC's economic (and security) interests keep stretching farther and farther from the nation's immediate periphery, and into regions and nations once considered far outside of Beijing's sphere of concern or influence. As China's strategic objectives grow because of its economic growth it will have to execute policies that may conflict with the interests of the international community. The PRC has largely been able to avoid any new major diplomatic or security disputes recently (aside from the traditional Taiwan issue, which has improved of late) and has thus been able to evade any significant challenges to the win-win formula. The adoption of the principles of multilateralism and noninterference has served the PRC well and promises to be the best way to "win hearts and minds" as the PRC continues to ascend.

The following lessons learned from the Iraq war will likely influence China's future strategic orientation, foreign policy doctrine and geostrategic behavior:

**Non-interference Doctrine:** The Iraq war legitimated Beijing's non-interference doctrine and hardened perceptions within the Standing Committee, and the greater Chinese strategic community, of the need to remain neutral in its foreign policy engagements.

**Win-Win:** China's ability to amass goodwill in the wake of America's military operations has further tilted the scale in the near-term toward Beijing's "win-win" approach to foreign policy.

**Energy Resources and the Iraq War:** China recognizes the need to diversify its energy sources, but also understands that it is a long-term process that requires significant investment in new technologies while maintaining domestic economic growth (which up to now has been dependent on

hydrocarbon resources) and stability.

**Multilateralism:** Corollary to China's non-interference doctrine has been greater strategic recognition of public commitment to the United Nations process.

**International Law:** OIF has impressed upon the PRC the influence that international law has had on war. The government is seeking to develop firm plans for how to address the issue of international law in the event of military action to unify Taiwan with the mainland.

**Counterterrorism Strategies:** On the domestic front there are indications that China shares many post-9/11 threat perceptions with America. Beijing has recognized the importance of "winning the hearts and minds" of disenfranchised peoples as a counterinsurgency strategy.

**Islam Studies in China:** Interviews with leading intellectuals and graduate students in China indicate a small but rich appreciation of the need to study Islam and its sub-sects. At China's Fudan University doctoral candidates are for the first time able to take independent study courses on Islam.

**Military Modernization:** The PRC has recognized that the PLA needs reform and policy alterations on a litany of fronts. Many of these reforms have been bred out of the American experience in Iraq and the conclusions that PRC and PLA leaders have drawn from OIF.

Figure 1

### China's Lessons Learned from the Iraq War

**Non-interference Doctrine:** The Iraq war legitimated Beijing's non-interference doctrine and hardened perceptions within the Standing Committee, and the greater Chinese strategic community of the need to remain neutral in its foreign policy engagements.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United States' decision to invade Iraq in March 2003 set in motion changes in the geostrategic tectonic plates that few, if any, could foresee at the time. The deployment of hundreds of thousands of American troops to liberate Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein's despotic regime has turned into a costly military operation with over 4,128 service men and women killed in action,<sup>1</sup> and approximately 30,000 wounded,<sup>2</sup> and the number of soldiers and families affected by psychological illnesses soaring over 300,000.<sup>3</sup> The war effort has cost over a trillion dollars and unraveled the delicate geopolitical balance both in the Middle East and around the world. The reverberations of the Iraq war are likely to permeate foreign policy decisions for the foreseeable future.

Thus, the Iraq War remains a centerpiece for foreign policy discussions in both Washington and around the world. A majority of the work about the geopolitical repercussions of the Iraq war effort focuses on America's decreasing global popularity and the correlating strain on its traditional allies, particularly in Europe. However, much of this large body of scholarship has overlooked – perhaps as a result of the strategic communities growing “Middle East” myopia – how China views the conflict. In particular, what remains to be determined is whether Beijing has learned from the military campaigns and whether or not the Iraq war will induce a strategic shift in China's foreign policies.

China is the world's most populous nation and the next likely peer competitor of the United States. It is a major driver for global commerce, accounting for 10.6 percent of all manufacturers in the world.<sup>4</sup> In Beijing and Shanghai this growth has helped create a middle class population that is propelling China's economy and national prosperity. The parallel to remarkable economic growth has been increased investment to modernize its military.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the Chinese Communist Party's main leadership arm, the Standing Committee, has gradually increased annual defense outlays from single

to double-digits.<sup>6</sup> This has caused tremendous anxiety in the Asia-Pacific region as Japan, South Korea, India and Australia remain wary of China's strategic intent. This is compounded by a lack of transparency over the production and acquisition of advanced weapons platforms and systems. Uncertainty, particularly in Asia, has historically spawned destabilizing arms races that increase the prospects for instability and conflict.

These trends are troublesome, but provide little in terms of understanding the depth of “over the horizon” changes taking place in China's strategic thinking. Chinese strategists and policymakers, for the first time, publicly acknowledge their appetite for carbon fuels is pushing them into regions of the world that are strategically perilous. For example, Chinese investment in oil fields in Southern Sudan and investment in natural gas pipelines that transverse the Iranian plateau through Pakistan's Baluchistan province are slowly bringing China into the heart of challenges surrounding America's struggle against radical Islamist terrorists.

China is no different in the eyes of these terrorist groups. Certainly, it is true that China is not a “Western” nation but that does not make it strategically immune from terrorists. Beijing's domestic policies against its own Muslim peoples in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and its appetite for resources are putting it on a collision course with radical Islamic groups. Immediately after September 11th, China – with political coverage from the U.S. – cracked down on the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)<sup>7</sup> which has apparent connections with Al Qaeda.<sup>8</sup> ETIM has long been an advocate for self-determination and has been labeled as a terrorist group by the Chinese and U.S. government. In particular, this Turkic-Uighur group desires the creation of East Turkestan – an independent nation-state.<sup>9</sup> During the run up to the Olympics and during the games, ETIM has been blamed for orchestrating multiple terrorist attacks in western China.<sup>10</sup>

Perceptions that Beijing supports authoritarian nations that repress Muslims are likely to pose strategic challenges to China. There is growing recognition in Beijing of the need to prepare for asymmetric security challenges—a sign of lessons learned from America's post 9/11 and Iraq war experiences. For example, China's decision to host a China-Arab Cooperation Forum not only sent a strong political signal of greater Chinese receptivity to strong ties with the Arab world but also hedged against potential challenges from radical Islamic groups who may view China's internal policies as anti-Muslim.<sup>11</sup> Beijing is also extending development assistance to its Muslim-dominated regions in hopes of “winning the hearts and minds” of its citizens.<sup>12</sup> Witness the construction of new manufacturing facilities and airports in Xinjiang meant to enhance economic productivity in central China. China is also cultivating goodwill in Southeast Asia where it is extending unconditional economic assistance to Indonesia – the world's most populated Muslim nation.<sup>13</sup>

China's ascent is not preordained, particularly if its military transformation and force structure modernization fails to take into account threats posed by violent extremism and non-traditional security challenges.<sup>14</sup> A lack of transparency in the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) over procurement and acquisition trends will continue to complicate assessments of its military intentions. This paper, however, does not seek to determine China's future rise. It seeks to provide an over the horizon assessment of subtle changes that are underway in Beijing and amongst its greater strategic community that may be useful for U.S. policymakers and analysts. It will build on these efforts and is composed of four parts. Part One assesses China's current trajectory to provide an analytic reference for Parts Two and Three. Part Two analyzes what lessons China and its strategic community has learned from American military operations in Iraq. Part Three attempts to bridge China's lessons

learned with an over the horizon assessment of what it means for the future of Chinese foreign and domestic policy.

## PART I: CHINA'S TRAJECTORY

China has entered the international stage. One has only to gaze at the remarkable multinational skylines overlooking the Bund in Shanghai to Guangzhou's multibillion dollar industrial base to Beijing's Olympic village to witness remarkable economic growth in China's urban areas. All the while, China is becoming a more forward-engaged nation with state interests spanning the globe from Caracas to Tehran to Canberra. Even as China ascends it is viewed with tremendous skepticism and distrust.<sup>15</sup>

In the past seven years few nations have profited as much from America's war efforts as China. Beijing's rise has been remarkable in every sense of the word. Double-digit economic growth, a burgeoning middle class that is likely to eclipse the aggregate American population,<sup>16</sup> and significant expenditures on military capabilities (particularly next-generation air and sea platforms) are slowly altering the international environment and ushering in a multi-polar era. Clearly, America's strategic preoccupation in Iraq did not directly contribute to China's rise but it has given Beijing greater diplomatic space to expand its influence both within and outside East Asia. In particular, Chinese officials are likely to grow more confident in their dealings in Asia. Chinese regional aspirations – though not officially stated – seem to be gravitating toward a role as regional hegemon.<sup>17</sup>

America's absence has allowed China to expand its military presence in ways that pose tremendous challenges to the United States. For example, China's "string of pearls" naval strategy, in which the PLA-Navy (PLA-N) has established sea ports from Burma to Pakistan, has created operational "lily pads."<sup>18</sup> They can be used to better execute denial and anti-access strategies, enhance power projection capabilities, and ensure the free flow of oil and natural resources through vital sea lines of communications. China is also developing so-called "assassins' mace" capabilities and anti-satellite missiles (highlighted by the 2007

ASAT test) that it can use to exploit asymmetrical vulnerabilities in adversaries' military defenses.<sup>19</sup> This progress has been made easier as a result of America's focus toward the Middle East and the inability to credibly threaten or slow China's modernization efforts.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has also increased its political legitimacy, both domesti-

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cally and internationally, through a sophisticated diplomatic "charm offensive" that has brought Chinese economic and diplomatic assistance to the most remote areas of the world.<sup>20</sup> Robert Sutter, a leading authority on China notes, "There was widespread agreement among ... Asian officials that Chinese leadership confidence in foreign affairs had grown with the increase in Chinese wealth and prominence and with growing Chinese international success in Asian and world affairs."<sup>21</sup> Signs of a fledging "soft interventionist" policy are growing; witness China's export of cell phones and unconditional development assistance to Africa. Soft interventionism is involvement through indirect means such as development assistance and diplomatic engagement, but it does not include the use of coercive violence. Reconciling China's growing "soft intervention" doctrine with Beijing's commitment to "non-interference" in other countries' foreign affairs is a difficult task. In the Chinese model, both of these views complement one another. Supporting China's non-interference doctrine is China's "win-win" foreign policy

formulation. This manifests itself as China getting oil from Sudan and not pressuring the Khartoum government to stop the genocide in Darfur. The win for China is oil and the win for Khartoum is money and de-facto impunity for its genocidal policies in the Darfur. Fundamental to this strategy is a strict Chinese adherence to non-interference.

Over the course of the last few years the “Beijing

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Consensus” – which eschews democratic governance but supports capitalism – has increased in popularity as developing nations see China’s ascent as both remarkable, and perhaps more desirable as it enables leaders in developing nations the ability to maintain power without undergoing the ardor of democratic transitions. This strategy represents the core tenets of China’s “soft interventionist” policy. However, it remains fraught with moral hazard. China’s lack of forthrightness on pressuring the Burmese government to allow aid workers into the Irrawaddy delta region in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis is just the most recent manifestation of the amorality of China’s foreign policy. Critics of the so-called win-win approach fear that China is promoting an ethically bankrupt and politically unsustainable model of governance that could endanger peace and stability.<sup>22</sup>

This view has been contested, in some accounts rather successfully, in the aftermath of the May 2008 earthquake that devastated parts of Sichuan province. Born out of this tragedy was a sense – that is very real in China, regardless of its merit – of a compassionate and legitimate government.<sup>23</sup> This perception was echoed by England’s Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Singapore’s President Hsien Loong Lee to name a few.<sup>24</sup> On a practical level, legitimacy is conferred by President Hu Jintao’s “harmonious society” moniker that serves as a convenient bumper sticker for the government to showcase its altruism and desire to help the people become more prosperous.<sup>25</sup>

Underpinning this policy and the central government’s new-found legitimacy is a sophisticated information operation (IO) campaign that controls the flow of information and knowledge. IO is a critical mechanism for the Chinese government to maintain legitimacy and power. Reconciling the control of information with the proliferation of information technology devices has not been an easy task for the CCP. The Chinese state has instituted a comprehensive internet firewall that restricts access to information critical of the government and websites that are viewed as morally questionable. China also has over 2,800 cell-phone surveillance stations scattered around the country that are meant to monitor phone conversations and text-messages.<sup>26</sup> In particular, China’s ability to mobilize its citizens against “torch protests” in the aftermath of the April, 2008 Tibetan resistance led to controlled riots by Chinese against the French Embassy in Beijing and private companies, such as Carrefour.<sup>27</sup> Failure of the CCP to control the political will of its people can pose direct consequences to the authoritarian government’s control. IO operations are instrumental to mobilize the will of the people toward a pro-government trajectory. The level of sophistication the central government has exhibited over the course of the past few years is impressive and critical to stability and state

security.<sup>28</sup>

Chinese foreign policy is likely to be guided by its “win-win” approach for the foreseeable future. In the last few years China has become more politically legitimate both domestically and internationally, which has further hardened perspectives within the Standing Committee of the importance of this diplomatically-neutral approach. The likely candidates for President and Premier in 2012 (18th CCP Congress) have been carefully selected by Hu Jintao and are likely to remain committed to the non-interference doctrine.



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## PART II: OBSERVATIONS &amp; LESSONS LEARNED

The war in Iraq has influenced China's two major policy attitudes. First and foremost, it has solidified perceptions in Beijing of the value of its non-interference doctrine. Second, it has further highlighted to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) the importance of information operations.

Chinese strategists and analysts closely follow the Iraq war. The reporting of the Iraq war in the PRC was tremendous in scope. Instead of shying away from Iraq to avoid inadvertent pro-American messages (as would be consistent with its traditionally conservative control of the media), the PRC sent numerous reporters to Iraq. In fact, for the first time China's leading network, Central China Television (CCTV), covered the initial days of the Iraq war in real-time.<sup>29</sup> During the early months of the Iraq war, CCTV was playing between 14 and 20 hours of daily live coverage.<sup>30</sup> The People's Daily, the CCP's information organ, gave front page coverage to the war while other Chinese papers made similar contributions.<sup>31</sup> Xinhua news agency also provided audio and pictures to millions of viewers in China.<sup>32</sup> *China Times* stories have intentionally critiqued and targeted coverage of American news reports, as witnessed by stories over the rescue of U.S. soldier Jessica Lynch.<sup>33</sup> The underlying purpose seems to have been to gather information on American military capabilities. Liu Dingping, a military researcher corroborates, "With each new conflict, we draw our lessons. The bigger the number of military actions with U.S. involvement, the smaller the gap between the American and the Chinese military."<sup>34</sup>

Chinese attentiveness serves two purposes. First, Operation Desert Storm impressed upon Chinese strategists American military power, dominance, and its political resolve to use coercive force. This has shaped perceptions in China about the direction of China's highly influential Central Military Commission's (CMC) military posture and the importance of net centric warfare. Second, it serves to shape popular opinion and nationalism in the

PRC that would be useful if China used military force against the United States.

Another consequence of the Iraq war is the blossoming of the Internet as a medium of public discussion. Dismayed by the media censorship on reporting of the 9/11 attacks, much of the Chinese public turned to the Internet to sound off their opinions.<sup>35</sup> This response has in part contributed to the unprecedented open reporting of the Iraq War, reflecting a new media recognition of the "citizen's right to know."<sup>36</sup> The reporting during the Iraq War may have nurtured this expectation. Furthermore, the Iraq War also marked the phenomenal growth of Internet forums as a venue for public opinion and often, public criticism. Although the People's Daily network only published anti-U.S. Internet postings, Chinese Internet forums actually reflected a wide variety of opinion on the Iraq war.<sup>37</sup> Chinese anti-terror experts understand how virtual internet communities are posing new challenges to their sovereignty. They view unregulated internet sites that recruit sympathetic youth to terrorist organizations with great concern. This is one of the main factors for increased control over the internet in recent years, "forcing" major companies like Yahoo and Google to submit to China's "Great Firewall" of censorship and control.

Moreover, Chinese IO officers have become more plugged into the blogosphere. In many instances blogs critical of the government are either shut down or positive, pro-government posts are made. The CCP, particularly the CMC, sees American news that is critical of its military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as counterproductive to the successful execution of America's military campaigns and the integrity of the state. This has led to further controls on state media in China and greater control over the movement of journalists, particularly those headed to China's Muslim-dominated autonomous regions. Even then, there is relative confusion in China over how best to

balance its control over information and its desire for more information. According to Elizabeth Economy, a senior fellow and China expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, “the Chinese government is in a state of ‘schizophrenia’ about media policy as it goes back and forth, testing the line, knowing they need press freedom—and the information it provides— but worried about opening the door to the type of freedoms that could lead to the regime’s downfall.”<sup>38</sup>

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Complementing the CCP’s control of information is a desire to be a “responsible stakeholder” in the international community. The 2004 Tsunami relief effort in Southeast Asia by the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India highlighted to the Chinese the importance of humanitarian assistance and putting the right image forward. On a strategic level

China has grown adept at minimizing cost and maximizing foreign policy gains as evidenced by public statements that inflated the dollar amount of relief assistance to nations devastated by the 2004 tsunami.<sup>39</sup> On the domestic front, this was recently on display in China’s response to the devastating earthquakes that destroyed many parts of Sichuan province. *The China Daily* and Xinhua news service were quick to take pictures of Premier Wen Jiabo consoling families whose lives were destroyed by the earthquake.<sup>40</sup> This picture is on display in Chinese subways and has even found its way to the front pages of the world’s most widely read and circulated news outlets in America and Europe. Media reports by the Chinese-controlled press overlooked stories of inefficient and unsuccessful execution – particularly, capability gaps in the PLA’s relief efforts.<sup>41</sup>

### **Non-interference Doctrine**

China’s non-interference doctrine remains dominant in the formulation of Beijing’s foreign policy.<sup>42</sup> In almost every discussion CNAS analysts had in China, and with China experts in America, the Iraq war legitimated Beijing’s non-interference doctrine and hardened perceptions within the Standing Committee and the greater Chinese strategic community of the need to remain neutral. For example, during an interview with a senior CICIR analyst on China’s influence in Burma CNAS analysts were told that the “Burmese people should decide the direction of their nation” and that China doesn’t interfere in other nation’s internal affairs. This statement, though indifferent to the plight of the Burmese people, represents a Chinese position that is manifest from its dealing with North Korea to Iran. Former Secretary of Defense William Perry and Assistant Secretary of Defense Ash Carter recently led a high-level American delegation to China. One particular interaction with senior Chinese officials on Iran led both Perry and Carter to conclude, “Both Chinese officials and scholars made it clear that China will not play

a stronger role in trying to curb Iran's nuclear program.<sup>43</sup> Chinese officials contended they had little leverage – despite being a veto-yielding member of the UN Security Council. Beijing's obstinacy highlights a greater degree of confidence in their non-interference approach to diplomatic negotiations, even on the gravest issues.

### **Energy Resources and the Iraq War**

The Iraq war has also exacerbated concerns in China over energy security and the PRC's relations with oil-rich states, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.<sup>44</sup> The rise in China's energy consumption has been well documented, as has the corresponding rise in global energy costs. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), China had negotiated and signed multi-billion dollar agreements with Saddam Hussein to exploit Iraq's vast energy resources. Chinese leaders are aware of the security dilemma that oil dependency poses to state security. America's precarious dealings with unstable, energy-rich regimes around the world have induced war and tremendous instability and that lesson has not been lost in Beijing. China recognizes the need to diversify its energy sources, but also understands that it is a long term process that requires significant investment in new technologies while maintaining domestic economic growth and stability.

One of the greatest concerns before, during, and after OIF for the PRC has been the issue of oil. The country stood to reap substantial benefits from the lucrative contracts it had with the Hussein regime before the fall of Baghdad.<sup>45</sup> The PRC's relationship with Iraq has flourished under the Kurdish Iraqi president's encouragement of Chinese development in the Kurdish territories.<sup>46</sup> The PRC has encouraged Iraq to build economic ties by forgiving some of the \$8 billion of debt incurred during the reign of the Saddam Hussein.<sup>47</sup> The PRC is currently attempting to establish an oil deal with Iraq, similar to the deal which PetroChina attempted to create prior to the 2003 invasion. Xinhua noted

that the Iraqi government has been supportive of the PRC's attempts to annex Taiwan, while China has been encouraging the expanded sale of Iraqi oil.<sup>48</sup>

The PRC has supported the International Compact with Iraq, which urges the diplomatic, non-violent restoration of a united, democratic Iraqi state. The PRC has joined the international community in its efforts to foster a stable Iraq, although China's own national interests are likely to be the driving force behind this support.<sup>49</sup> The PRC's economic pursuits in Iraq have targeted Iraq's oil reserves in the south where fighting is minimal and to the north near the Kurdish city of Kirkuk.<sup>50</sup> The development of an Iraqi oil industry by Chinese companies will cost an estimated \$20 billion. In March 2007, the PRC and the Iraqi government began to discuss a \$1.3 billion contract for the al-Ahdab oil field in Iraq. This field is part of a larger region which the PRC attempted to gain access to during the rule of the Hussein regime.<sup>51</sup> While the PRC is attempting to gain immediate access to Iraqi oil, some large international oil companies are seeking to sign lease agreements to wait to develop wells until violence decreases. Sabotage is still a concern, especially since British troops have been withdrawn from the south, where many large oil fields exist. To aid police forces and defend the flow of oil, the PRC has also agreed to sell weapons to the Iraqi police. Since the PRC's oil consumption has continued to grow, the PRC has also felt compelled to search for energy resources elsewhere. This has led the PRC leadership to establish closer ties to countries such as Russia, Iran, and Sudan.

### **Iran**

The PRC and Iran have enjoyed a close relationship for a number of years through the trade of oil and weapons. Oil flows from Iran to the PRC, and weapons flow from the PRC to Iran.<sup>52,53</sup> The importance of this relationship has only increased for each country, as oil is subject to higher demand, and Iran perceives greater threats to its security.

The effects of the Iraq war aggravated each of these factors, with the PRC feeling compelled to secure oil supplies and Iran to bolster its national defense.<sup>54</sup> These factors, along with the ever applicable natural counter-balancing of American power and presence, have pushed the PRC to enhance its relations with the Islamic Republic in the five years following OIF.

The PRC in concert with Russia, who also has lucrative arms deals with Iran, have been reliable advocates of Iran in forums such as the UN Security Council especially regarding Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program.<sup>55</sup> In the face of growing American-European cooperation to bring an end to Iran's alleged weapons program, the PRC and Russia have been the key roadblocks to a U.S. policy designed to enact tougher sanctions and penalties on Iran for not complying with other resolutions and treaties.<sup>56</sup> As both Iran and the PRC continue to feel that their interests are coming under fire from the U.S. presence in Iraq, it is expected that their collaboration will continue.

Even though China is not committed to current U.S./EU-Iran denuclearization negotiations they recognize the need to pressure Iran on the strategic direction of their program. China does not want a nuclear-armed Iran in the Middle East. A nuclear Iran would destabilize the region and jeopardize oil and natural gas flows to China as well as drive global oil and gas prices dangerously upward. At the same time, China does not want to interfere in Iran's domestic affairs and believes that Tehran has a right under Article 4 of the Nonproliferation Treaty to pursue nuclear energy. It is hard to determine if Chinese leaders, particularly in the PLA, believe that Iran is complicating American military operations in Iraq. However, Beijing is unlikely to support Iran's position out of fear that it would infuriate America and also draw China into a dangerous position as a supporter of Iran. China recognizes the sensitivities that Iran poses to the regional balance of power and will likely encourage

Tehran to take more moderate steps in regional politics.

### **Sudan**

In the same vein, the PRC has also pursued close relations with the African nation of Sudan, again largely due to its oil interests.<sup>57</sup> The PRC's close relationship with the Sudan has drawn international ire because of the Sudanese government's role in what the U.S. Congress has defined as genocidal actions in the Darfur region.<sup>58</sup> The PRC has steadfastly opposed any major action at the UN to bring an end to the genocide, including economic sanctions.<sup>59</sup> The Darfur issue, combined with the recent turmoil over Tibetan independence, reached a feverish pitch during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games' official worldwide torch relay.<sup>60</sup> Massive protests in Europe, the U.S., and other countries persuaded the PRC to at least begin to adopt a different line on Darfur in preparation for the Games, but as of yet, there has been no major shift in China's official foreign policy on the issue.<sup>61</sup>

Sudan's large oil reserves and its willingness to cooperate closely with the PRC have shielded the Sudanese government from any significant punitive action on an international scale. The PRC has even gone so far to provide the Sudanese with arms.<sup>62</sup> Despite the considerable negative press the Chinese government has encountered in recent years over the Sudan issue, the PRC has mostly maintained the status quo of its relationship with Sudan due almost entirely to its energy needs, and Sudan's ability to meet them.<sup>63</sup> Despite the hundreds of thousands dead, and growing horror of the international community, the PRC's post-Iraq energy policy has emphasized the need to locate energy suppliers and then protect their interests at almost all costs while maintaining a strict adherence to its non-interference doctrine.

### **North Korea**

One area where experts agree the Iraq war had a major impact on Chinese diplomacy is on the



North Korean nuclear crisis.<sup>64</sup> North Korea's nuclear program has been an area of major international concern dating back to the early 1990s, but the issue regained importance after September 11, when the threat of nuclear proliferation rose to the forefront of American (and international) concern. When President Bush used his 2002 State of the Union Address to name North Korea as a member of the now infamous "axis of evil," the country began to face the full scrutiny of the U.S. and the major players in the region (Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the PRC).

A little over a year after the President's State of the Union Address, America had captured Baghdad in a stunning display of military superiority. It was at around this point when the PRC began to pay more serious attention to the North Korean nuclear issue. Fearing a potential U.S. military strike to either disable the North's nuclear program, or seek outright regime change (as in Iraq), the PRC devoted itself to playing a vital role in negotiating a peaceful solution to the dispute.<sup>65</sup>

The PRC's primary fear was that the U.S. would precipitate, through military action or economic sanctions, the collapse of the North Korean regime. Such a collapse, the PRC feared, would lead to the massive migration of North Korean refugees into the PRC.<sup>66</sup> Such a humanitarian crisis could have proven to be politically, economically, and internationally devastating for the PRC. This, and other reasons, provided motivation for the Chinese to cooperate with the Americans to find a solution to the problem that also prevented the collapse of the Kim Jong-il regime.<sup>67</sup>

Another motivator for the Chinese was their desire to prove to the world that they were a "responsible stakeholder" in the security of both the region and the entire international community through its active work to combat nuclear proliferation, as well as improve relations with the U.S. and Japan.<sup>68</sup> North Korea provided the PRC with the perfect

opportunity to prove itself capable of successfully playing a major role in negotiating a major security agreement on an international stage.<sup>69</sup>

The PRC has thus far exploited the opportunity successfully.<sup>70</sup> Though there have been periodic setbacks, the most recent evidence of North Korea destroying one of its major nuclear facilities and the U.S. removing the country from its list of

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*"The PRC hopes to use the UN as a means of restricting the ability of the U.S. to pursue what is viewed as unilateral policies towards Iran and other key foreign policy issues."*

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terrorism-supporting nations signals that there has been significant progress.<sup>71,72</sup> U.S. diplomats and foreign policy experts have consistently argued the absolute importance of the PRC in the negotiations and have praised the Chinese for their diplomatic efforts in resolving the crisis.<sup>73</sup> It can be debated whether or not such progress could or would have been made regardless of OIF, but certainly America's actions in Iraq compelled the PRC to make a more forceful effort to help solve what was a long festering issue regional and international issue.<sup>74</sup>

### **Multilateralism and International Law**

Corollary to China's non-interference doctrine has been greater strategic recognition of public commitment to the United Nations (UN) process. The difficulties the U.S. faced after the initial invasion

of Iraq worked to bolster the argument of the PRC and others that the kind of military action that the U.S. undertook should only be done with the consensus of the international community. The PRC continues to push this line of argument, not only to support their earlier opposition to OIF, but also establish a strong position ahead of any possible future confrontation over Iran's nuclear program.<sup>75</sup> The PRC hopes to use the UN as a means of restricting the ability of the U.S. to pursue what is viewed as unilateral policies towards Iran and other key foreign policy issues. There are two reasons for this stance. First, the Iraq war displayed to China how unilateralism can generate animosity against the world's most powerful nation. Bypassing the UN has statistically – according to major polls – undermined America's influence and standing in the world. Allied-nations are forced to make policies in accordance with the popular will of their citizens -- many of whom have become disenfranchised with American unilateralism. China has witnessed first hand the importance of maintaining good standing in the world and has become more publically committed to international organizations, particularly the United Nations. Second, since the Cold War the United Nations has been hindered by derision and policy paralysis. Whether it was the U.S. versus the Soviet Union or the U.S., France, and United Kingdom verses Russia during the Balkan conflict, little has been achieved in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). China has historically contended that military decisions be made with the approval of the United Nations, which fundamentally cedes its authority and sovereign rights to an external body – a direct refutation of its “non-interference” doctrine. It is highly probable that China will continue to exploit this process by demanding UN approval for the use of force and other Article 5 issues.

Another effect of OIF on the PRC government has been the influence that international law has had on war. The PRC closely studied how the U.S., its

allies, and its diplomatic opponents dealt with the issue of international law both before and after the beginning of military operations in Iraq.<sup>76</sup> International law is of growing interest to the PRC for two major reasons. First, as China continues to grow it becomes a more integral part of the international community and a far more important power broker on the international stage. This fact means that the PRC has been, and will become, embroiled in international disputes that will often look to international law as a source of direction and jurisprudence. The PRC wants to more fully understand the impact that international law can have on various policies, particularly as they apply to foreign affairs.

This interest in the impact of international law on foreign relations is the basis of the PRC's second reason for developing a better comprehension of global law: the government seeks to develop firm plans for how to address the issue of international law in the event of military action to unify Taiwan with the mainland.<sup>77</sup> There is considerable evidence suggesting that the Chinese government is exploring various approaches in its attempt to create a legal battle plan to accompany the military battle plan for the unification of Taiwan by the use of force. The PRC has two main objectives in mind. First and foremost, the government wants to craft a plan that would establish legitimacy under international law for the use of force against Taiwan.<sup>78</sup> Conversely, and secondly, the government also wants to design a legal case for the illegitimacy of third-party or international intervention to combat Chinese efforts in Taiwan. This two-pronged approach hopes to allow for a more rapid conquest of the island through inhibiting international interference, while also establishing the legitimacy of international legality while hoping that such legitimacy would help to mitigate the substantial negative impact that military action would inflict upon China's image and international standing, perhaps resulting in crippling economic

sanctions.<sup>79</sup>

### Counterterrorism

On the domestic front there are indications that China shares many post-9/11 threat perceptions with America -- many of which have been solidified in America's dealings with terrorists in Iraq. As the host of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, China consulted governments around the world, including the United States, on how best to protect its homeland.<sup>80</sup> China curbed approval of visa applications in the run up to the games, and trained over 25,000 new professional security forces to help the People's Armed Police (PAP) and PLA deal manage terrorism issues. China has also instituted an air marshal program placing undercover armed officers in its commercial air fleet to guard against potential hijackings.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, Beijing has committed itself to the Container Security Initiative<sup>82</sup> and the International Maritime Organization's<sup>83</sup> efforts to combat sea piracy and terror. Beijing's commitment to anti-terror initiatives indicates a growing awareness of the 9/11 threat environment and adaptation by the central government to deal with these challenges.

In the months following the September 11th attacks on the U.S. homeland, the Chinese central government cracked down on its own Muslim population. Heavy-handed tactics are used to contain unrest in Xianjing and Tibet that could generate insecurity.<sup>84</sup> To understand China's domestic anti-terror campaign it is important to provide a historical sketch of China's complex ethnic composition. Historically, China has been rather ethnically homogenous dominated by the Han ethnic group. However, centuries of territorial expansionism have resulted in the annexation of multiple ethnic and religious groups. The Uighur Muslims -- one such group -- are an ethnic minority that resides almost exclusively in the western Chinese province of Xinjiang, known as the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Largely made up of immigrants from neighborhood Kazakhstan, the

Uighur population is yet another minority group in China whose grievances have attracted both domestic and international attention.<sup>85</sup> The history of the conflict between these the Uighur Muslims and the Chinese dates back hundreds of years, when the then-Turkic Muslims fought the Chinese for control over what they considered to be Eastern Turkistan.<sup>86</sup> The robust separatist sentiment that has dominated Uighur-Chinese relations for centuries remains active today. Such separatism has been cited by Beijing as the root cause of growing terrorist activities among Uighurs.<sup>87</sup> The PRC has launched an extensive effort to crack down on the alleged terrorism that the Uighurs in Xinjiang has been purportedly promoting.<sup>88</sup>

Earlier this year, Chinese authorities made international news by claiming to have broken up a Uighur terrorist hijacking plot in Xinjiang.<sup>89</sup> The claims of the alleged plot were met with an unusual degree of scrutiny and criticism internationally.<sup>90</sup> Very few details of the plot were made public, leading to international doubt about the claims of the Chinese government that the Uighur Muslims had attempted to explode a bomb on a flight from Xinjiang province to Beijing.<sup>91</sup> The PRC recently executed two Uighurs for alleged terrorist activities.<sup>92</sup> By and large, the Uighur people are the only ethnic group to be executed routinely on political charges.

China is also investing in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and other Central Asian states. Beijing seems more responsive and understanding of how "a single spark can start a prairie fire" within its own borders. China is helping build hospitals and schools in Kabul<sup>93</sup> and roads stretching from Tajikistan to Kyrgystan.<sup>94</sup> Beijing's recognition of the importance of "winning the hearts and minds" of disenfranchised peoples has also been on display in Xinjiang and Tibet whereby the CCP has directed major development and infrastructure projects meant to integrate western autonomous regions toward eastern China.<sup>95</sup> China sees

economic prosperity as a successful and important answer to countering potential radicalism. This has also created a greater recognition of the need to challenge extremism in every form. The idea of “nipping extremism in the bud” is gaining more traction in China and is manifest in the People’s Army Police’s clampdown in Tibet and Xinjiang against perceived insurgent forces.

Counterterrorism strategies in China are shaped around recognition of historical conditions. America’s intervention in Iraq highlighted to many Chinese strategists the importance of understanding historical dynamics before force is used.<sup>96</sup> In some interviews Chinese analysts commented on how American policymakers underestimated the tensions between Sunni and Shia groups in Iraq --- indicating an appreciation of the need to understand how history shapes conflict and strategy. Whether or not this appreciation has translated into the implementation of Chinese strategy is unknown. Interviews with leading intellectuals and graduate students in China indicate a small but rich appreciation of the need to study Islam and its sub-sects. For example, at China’s Fudan University doctoral candidates are able to take independent study courses on Islam.<sup>97</sup> China’s CICIR has an entire analytic department dedicated to ethnic and religious studies and prominent books on display in on Islamist terror and Al Qaeda; however, most of these books have not been translated into English. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has increased the number of grants to students and scholars wanting to conduct field research in Middle Eastern countries.<sup>98</sup> Even though many of these trends have yet to permeate the decision-making cycle in Beijing, they are an indication of a growing wariness in China of Islamist-based radicalism.

### **Exploiting America’s Destabilizing Policies**

At a fundamental level, America’s military operations in Iraq solidified views in China that American influence and presence is not always

stabilizing. Although the PRC is allowing for greater U.S. participation and influence in regional decision making, that fact does not mean that Beijing welcomes America’s presence in all its manifestations. A major source of tension in U.S.-China relations has been America’s involvement in Central Asia. As Washington defends its incursion into Central Asia as a vital component of its global war on terror, Beijing views such involvement as destabilizing, and a possible threat to the PRC’s security.

Following September 11, 2001, the United States committed itself to significantly enhancing its relations with nearly all Central and South Asian regimes concentrated in the areas surrounding the country that was the focus of Operation Enduring Freedom: Afghanistan.<sup>99</sup> However, in the process of cultivating relationships with regional regimes whose cooperation would be vital to the success of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), U.S. actions had the additional impact of creating suspicion in Beijing of America’s motives.<sup>100</sup> Combined with the close relationships with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Australia, the U.S. drive to improve relations with nations such as Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and others has caused consternation among Beijing officials who worry about an American “encirclement” strategy aimed at the PRC.<sup>101</sup>

Though the American effort to remove the Taliban regime was considered to be in China’s strategic interests, America’s Central Asian presence also poses a threat to regional stability in Beijing’s view.<sup>102</sup> While the PRC has sought to comfortably cooperate with authoritarian regimes in the region for the purposes of stability and influence, the U.S. threatens to undermine that stability through its promotion of democracy and human rights.<sup>103</sup> Central Asia is home to one of the most complex webs of alliances in the world, with Iran, Russia, China, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and others all possessing a unique set of interests regarding the

U.S. presence in the region that often puts them at odds with each other.<sup>104</sup> Given the increased military investment in Central Asia and the perpetual paranoia of some Chinese leaders, the continuation of hard and soft U.S. power in Central Asia will serve to buttress Beijing's fears of a broader anti-PRC Washington policy, though there is hope that common interests will provide the U.S. and the PRC with an opportunity to pursue a closer partnership on regional issues.<sup>105</sup>

### **American Foreign Policy Hypocrisy**

Another cause of the PRC's fundamental distaste for American-style government is the perception of rampant hypocrisy in U.S. policies. As a frequent recipient of U.S. criticism for its human rights record, Beijing has seized opportunities borne out of the wars in Iraq to condemn the United States – or to counter criticism – for human rights violations.<sup>106</sup>

The U.S. State Department is unique among most of its global counterparts in that it produces, annually, reports on nearly every nation's human rights record.<sup>107</sup> One of the perennial targets of these reports has been the PRC. Long criticized for violating some of the most basic of human rights by the U.S. and international community, the PRC has proved to be very sensitive to such criticism, which it views as an unprovoked affront to its sovereignty and right to manage its internal affairs.<sup>108,109</sup> Because of this, Beijing has actively sought to exploit opportunities to fire back at Washington for what it claims is hypocrisy on the issue of human rights.<sup>110</sup>

Specifically, the PRC has targeted America's treatment of POW's and the collateral damage that has been wrought on Iraq by American military operations. The Abu Ghraib scandal and the persistent controversy over prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay have provided ample fodder for the state-run Chinese media outlets. Such incidents have given the government a convenient avenue to strike back

at the U.S. government, which it views as meddling in China's internal affairs when it makes proclamations about China's human rights record. Charges against the US that are not tied to human rights abuses include manipulation of the press and of the new Iraqi government and unfair trials.<sup>111</sup>

Chinese strategists and commentators also seem to be displaying a more profound anti-Zionist

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perspective. In many conversations with senior analysts in China the American-Israeli Policy Action Committee (AIPAC) was referenced as a major contributor for America's military operations in Iraq and general bellicosity toward Muslim nations. Many Chinese strategists were unable to understand the strategic value of the U.S.-Israeli strategic partnership and viewed Washington's commitment to Jerusalem as an impediment to Middle East peace.



## **Military Modernization and Transformation**

Perhaps the single area in which the PRC has learned and applied the most lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) has been in the realm of military policy. The PRC has recognized that the PLA needs reform and policy alterations on a litany of fronts. Many of these reforms have been bred out of the American experience in Iraq and the conclusions that PRC and PLA leaders have drawn from OIF.

An all-encompassing lesson from Iraq that the PRC has begun to apply is a drastic budgetary increase for the armed forces. This belief has affected not only broad increases in military investment, but also significant changes in military strategy and doctrine. The scope of prescribed changes for the PLA ranges from enhanced humanitarian mission capabilities to advanced space and cyber-warfare systems.

The American and coalition missions in Iraq have underscored the need for the PLA to rapidly modernize and increase investment in new technology if it hopes to responsibly address non-state threats in the future. However, better technology and larger investment in weapons and equipment is not solely for the purpose of better preparing the PRC to vie for power with its strategic competitors. Military investment and modernization also has important domestic applications.

In 2005, the Asian tsunami disaster brought together every major world power to help deliver assistance to the afflicted people of Southeast Asia. One of the leading countries in the effort was the United States. With its unparalleled air and naval capabilities, the U.S. was able to quickly deploy substantial resources to the region.<sup>112</sup> As America was providing a constant wave of supplies and personnel via air and sea, the PRC was forced to mostly sit on the sidelines, lacking the capability to provide assistance, due to its deficiencies in air

and naval technology. As the PRC was aggressively attempting to provide assistance as a way of demonstrating its willingness to be a responsible stakeholder in global peace and prosperity, its ability to play an integral role in the relief effort was considerably hindered by its antiquated military assets.<sup>113</sup> The technological deficits of the PLA that were first exposed by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were reinforced by the tragic events of the Southeast Asian tsunami.<sup>114</sup>

The PRC also realized the importance of having modernized armed forces for domestic purposes as well. In the wake of the devastating Sichuan Province earthquake in June, 2008, the lessons of military modernization that were gleaned from OIF and OEF took on a new importance to the PRC. With the entire world watching, the PRC faced a number of difficulties in providing relief to its own citizens in affected areas.<sup>115</sup> Specifically cited was the PLA's lack of heavy-lift helicopters and other advanced aircraft to deliver supplies into areas of the country where the local ground-based travel infrastructure was decimated. The government even used rarely seen Blackhawk helicopters that were purchased from the United States more than two decades ago.<sup>116</sup> These factors contributed to the eventual decision to allow the U.S. military to collaborate with the PLA in the relief effort, a major shift from past PRC stances in which the government had steadfastly refused outside help in responding to domestic crises.<sup>117</sup>

In the disaster, approximately 7.8 million homes were destroyed and 24.5 million were damaged. The Chinese asked for assistance from the international community, such as the Pentagon's National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, to aid in the reconstruction, which is laudable.<sup>118</sup> With the presence of the earthquake, not only was the military tested, but deficiencies in the military were exposed. The clothes of young soldiers were tattered, the equipment of rescue soldiers was not advanced, and many soldiers were severely injured. To its credit,

the PRC had over 100,000 troops providing rescue services to the earthquake victims and used 100 helicopters to provide food and medical supplies to the region.<sup>119</sup>

Though the PLA was lauded by many for a generally effective response to the earthquake, the effort also exposed serious flaws in the military's response capability.<sup>120</sup> These flaws are important to the PRC not only for the purposes of providing an effective response to national disasters, but also for quelling any type of widespread popular discontent among the general population. In the aftermath of the quake, there were numerous massive protests against the government's policies prior to the quake, as well as the relief response.<sup>121</sup> By observing military operations in Iraq – particularly, the initial invasion and the massive logistical chain necessary to execute it – and through executing similar operations domestically itself, the PRC and PLA have identified a pressing need to modernize its technology, equipment, and force structure to better meet twenty-first century challenges.

The Iraq war likely triggered a steady acceleration in the PRC's military budget increase. The official Chinese military budget grew rapidly after the First Gulf War, culminating at around a 17% annual increase leading up to 2003.<sup>122</sup> In 2003, the budget increase decelerated to about 10%, then after the war, the budget increase steadily accelerated again up to an announced 18% in 2008.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the Pentagon estimates that actual Chinese military spending was underreported in 2007 by as much as \$94 billion in 2007.<sup>124</sup> In addition to causing this accelerated spike in military spending, the Iraq war has also provided the PRC with the rhetoric to justify its military growth. The U.S.-initiated Iraq war allows the PRC to point to the conflict and defend its military build-up as a way of offsetting American hegemony.<sup>125</sup>

### **Power projection capabilities are relatively weak**

The rapid U.S. defeat and seizure of Baghdad in 2003 provided a reminder of some of the lessons the Chinese government learned more than a decade before in the previous American war in Iraq.<sup>126</sup> In 1991, the PRC along with much of the rest of the world watched in awe as the U.S. deployed technologically-advanced weaponry to defeat a militarily respectable national power with stunning ease and quickness.<sup>127</sup> The demonstration of the full scope and capability of American hard-power led to a re-evaluation of the PRC's military strategy and military modernization.<sup>128</sup> The basic lessons learned from the Gulf War were reinforced by the second U.S. mission in Iraq in 2003. There is growing evidence to suggest that these lessons are being fully implemented in the form of policy by the Chinese government in their effort to pull the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into twenty-first century.<sup>129</sup>

A key lesson that the Chinese leadership has gleaned from America's efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan is the urgent need to modernize the Chinese military.<sup>130</sup> Still heavily reliant on dated Russian equipment, and lagging in technological prowess, the PLA recognizes the pressing need to integrate the newest technology into both its offensive and defensive capabilities.<sup>131</sup> As one commentator noted, the PRC does not have the historical support for dedicated military force or political advancement in the Middle East, therefore limiting its influence in Iraq and aiding the U.S. in other conflict regions, the PRC should utilize its strength to develop ties in the region, making influence in trouble regions more natural and advantageous. In order to have this impact, a level of surface, maritime, and air personnel and machinery is necessary—all of which are currently not possessed by the PRC.<sup>132</sup>

The Iraq war revealed to the PRC the growing American reliance on information technology to

successfully execute military operations. Chinese military thinking now views the ability to attack U.S. computers and satellites as an essential component to any military conflict that might be waged against America, with Taiwan as the most likely flashpoint.<sup>133</sup> This new thinking has manifested itself in the PLA's rising investment in, and focus on, technological warfare. In recent years, particularly after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the PRC has come under scrutiny for what is perceived to be its shift toward an emphasis on technological warfare.<sup>134</sup>

### **Anti-satellite weapons**

Perhaps the most notable event in the PRC post-Iraq war military strategy was the 2007 test of an anti-satellite weapon. In January of 2007, the PLA successfully tested an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon in an exercise that saw the Chinese utilize a ground-based missile to destroy an orbiting satellite.<sup>135</sup> The test was seen in large part to be an indirect response to the U.S. effort launched in Iraq four years earlier, showing the U.S. that China could exploit one of its core weaknesses.<sup>136</sup> The successful test communicated the message to the American government, media, and public that U.S. military capabilities were at risk given its heavy reliance on satellites for essential communication among all branches of the armed forces.<sup>137</sup>

In the aftermath of the ASAT test, the Communist government was conspicuously quiet despite being under increasing pressure from the international community to explain its actions.<sup>138</sup> The relative silence was seen as a fairly typical response by national officials who are not accustomed to speaking publicly about what was considered a "secret military exercises." Though the government eventually spoke out and pressed the need for the implementation of an international treaty banning arms in space, the prolonged silence led U.S. officials to come to their own conclusions regarding the PRC's motivations for such a provocative test of an offensive military capability. A widely

accepted conclusion was that the PRC was trying to test for them, in addition to demonstrating to the world that the PLA had offensive capabilities that carried the potential to strike accurate blows to America's defense apparatus.<sup>139</sup> Specifically considered was the possibility that such ASAT weapons could prove to be a critical component of military operations in the Taiwan Straits Theater.<sup>140,141</sup> A publication from the PLA National Defense University posits that ASATs could be used to deter an enemy from entering a conflict rather than having the opposite effect of provoking involvement.<sup>142</sup>

In Iraq, the PRC observed the full extent of U.S. reliance on satellites and space-based assets to communicate on the battlefield and coordinate operations with the U.K. and other coalition forces.<sup>143</sup> The role of satellites goes well beyond force-to-force communications, as it can range all the way to the GPS-guided bombs that were used in the "shock and awe" stage of the initial air campaign in Baghdad. The "shock and awe" effect was felt by the PRC and PLA leadership, as they concluded that the PRC was unprepared to fight a truly modern war.<sup>144</sup> One way to potentially neutralize the significant American technological advantage lies in the use of anti-satellite weapons, which the Chinese believe can allow the PLA to level the playing field in a high-tech war over Taiwan.<sup>145</sup>

### **Cyberwarfare**

Though the ASAT test has received the most media attention in the U.S. and around the world, the PRC has also engaged in a number of other military exercises that have since drawn attention to their newfound belief in the importance of high-tech war in the wake of the Iraq war.<sup>146</sup> In the previous two to three years, the Pentagon and other foreign defense agencies have begun to highlight what they view as China's growing ability to wage what is now termed as "cyber-warfare."

Pentagon assessments indicate that the PRC hopes to achieve "cyber superiority" over its primary

competitors (U.S., U.K., Russia, etc.) by 2050.<sup>147</sup> The PLA's cyber-war effort can be broken down into several categories that are designed to inflict maximum damage on an enemy's technological infrastructure and severely impede the ability of an enemy to communicate and transfer data or other information via cyber-based networks.<sup>148</sup> The PLA's focus ranges from malware and service denial attacks to hacking. These methods of attack aim to cripple anything from banking systems to power grids.<sup>149</sup>

The United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and France have all reported coming under heavy attack from what they believe to be Chinese hackers, affiliated with or working directly for the PLA.<sup>150,151</sup> Congressional testimony from Pentagon officials has indicated that the U.S. is under constant cyber attack from Chinese-based hackers.<sup>152</sup> The Pentagon has estimated that American computers come under at least 1,000 attacks per hour, with official government agencies being attacked hundreds of thousands of times a year.<sup>153</sup> Officials from the CIA and the Director of National Intelligence have indicated that a high volume of attacks against both American public and private industry are emanating from the PRC.<sup>154</sup> There have been repeated accounts of Chinese infiltration of Defense and State Department computer systems. Additionally, there has been a rise in cyber security breaches among some of America's largest corporations, a sign of the PRC's increased dedication to penetrating U.S. private corporations in search for either sensitive national security information or leverage in corporate negotiations.<sup>155</sup>

Like ASAT weapons, the rising cyber-warfare effort on behalf of China can be traced back in part to lessons the PRC leadership gained from both the Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>156</sup> Chinese officials watched with close attention as the United States swept through Iraq with stunning speed and agility. One of the implications for the Chinese leadership was that a U.S. offensive similar to the

type used in Iraq could be utilized against the PRC itself in the event of a conflict over Taiwan.<sup>157</sup> It is universally agreed upon that the PRC's military (particularly its ground-based assets) is decades behind the U.S. in terms of technology and overall capabilities.

In an attempt to close that advantage, the PRC has placed a much greater emphasis on information warfare, an area that the PRC not only believes is the next frontier of "combat" but also feels it can more efficiently close the gap of America's military advantage.<sup>158</sup> While the PRC has attempted to draw a number of long-term military lessons from the Iraq war, most of the lessons have been applied to a potential conflict over Taiwan. The Defense Department has noted the gradual shift in superiority in the Taiwan Straits in the past several years as the PRC continues to modernize and build-up its military power.<sup>159</sup> In light of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, much of the Chinese leadership holds serious doubt about the ability of the PLA to withstand, much less defeat, the U.S. military in a war over Taiwan. America's technological sophistication remains unparalleled but the PLA believes that China can develop the capability to exploit what could be America's greatest defense weakness: cyber and space security. The Defense Department's 2005 report to Congress on the power of the PLA notes how China has devoted itself to intense study of modern war, and how America's two operations in Iraq, and the effort in Afghanistan are being closely studied for lessons to apply to China's own defense and military modernization.<sup>160</sup>

Each of the Pentagon's annual reports to Congress on the PLA's power has devoted analysis to the PRC's study of OIF and the lessons that were being taken from America's operation. Additionally, the Pentagon has dedicated an increasing amount of attention to the PRC's space and cyber warfare capabilities. The 2004 report suggests that some PLA experts thought that the military needed to



rethink its contingency plans for a Taiwan conflict based on lessons from OIF.<sup>161</sup> The 2004 report also discusses Taiwan's desire to develop its own first-strike cyber-warfare capability in order to combat what it perceives as the PRC's growing attention to that area of conflict.<sup>162</sup>

It is revealing to note the steady increase in attention on the part of the Pentagon to the PRC's

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*“The PLA has also devoted attention to the use of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) in both Iraq and Afghanistan.”*

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anti-satellite and cyber-warfare capabilities in the years following the onset of combat in Iraq. In the 2004 report to Congress, there no mention of ASAT weapons and only brief consideration of information warfare. In the 2005 report, however, ASAT weapons are addressed as well as computer network operations (CNO) and information warfare.<sup>163</sup> The trend continues on in to 2006 and 2007, with entire sub-sections committed to concentrating on the PLA's space and cyber initiatives.

The 2005 DOD report makes the prescient observation that the PLA was researching ground-based methods of destroying orbiting satellites, which would become internationally known in 2007 with the controversial ASAT test.<sup>164</sup> It also explains in more depth than in any previous report the new emphasis on the PLA's CNO capability.<sup>165</sup> Chinese theorists call their information warfare initiatives “Integrated Network Electronic Warfare.”<sup>166</sup> The effort includes the development of viruses and other tactics to attack enemy computer systems, both of a military and government nature, and also

those of private corporations and infrastructure. Tellingly, the report notes how initial simulations run by the PLA were of a defensive nature, but there has since been a shift to exercises devoted to CNO activities of an offensive nature.<sup>167</sup> Given the speculation of other experts, it does not appear to be a coincidence that such a shift in focus has occurred after the Iraq war.

Aside from the increased investment and attention being devoted to cyber-warfare and anti-satellite weapons, the PRC has used America's time in Iraq to study other aspects of OIF and apply lessons to the PLA. The newfound investment in anti-satellite weapons and cyber-warfare reflect one component of what the PLA views as the new paradigm of modern warfare: war will increasingly be fought through asymmetrical and non-contact methods. This overarching conclusion is guiding PLA modernization and policies far beyond simply ASAT development and cyber-warfare capabilities.

As David Shambaugh notes in his comprehensive work, *Modernizing China's Military*, the PLA has been studying information and electronic warfare since the first Gulf War.<sup>168</sup> But America's return to Iraq in OIF has spurred an increased sense of urgency among PLA officials, leading to rapid development and testing of a variety of asymmetrical and IW capabilities. The Pentagon noted the shift in the official focus of the PLA in a 2004 Defense White Paper: “In its December 2004 Defense White Paper, the PRC replaced “local wars under high tech conditions” with “local wars under the conditions of informationalization.”<sup>169</sup> This new concept summarizes China's experiences and assessments of the implications of the revolution in military affairs – primarily the impact of information technology and knowledge-based warfare.”<sup>170</sup> The new language reflects the modification of Chinese military strategy and doctrine away from old norms, and toward the highly-modernized world of twenty-first century combat operations as demonstrated by OEF and OIF.



## Other Capabilities

Another key component of OIF that the PLA has studied was the coalition force's use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's). The PLA was particularly intrigued about the prospect of using UAV's for reconnaissance and strike operations, according to the DOD.<sup>171</sup> This view reflects the move of the PLA towards newer technologies that emphasize a decreased reliance on hard man-power. The use of UAV's in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan was of great interest to the PLA.

The PLA has also devoted attention to the use of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) in both Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the DOD, the PLA first began to place special emphasis on SOF after the Gulf War. After the commencement of OEF, the PLA in 2002 established an entire unit specifically assigned to study America's use of SOF in Afghanistan. This approach was also used to study the use of SOF in the eventual OIF.<sup>172</sup> The Pentagon suggests that based on their observations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the PLA considers its SOF to be a possible force-multiplier in a Taiwan Strait scenario.

Another impact of OIF on PLA policy has been the changes in its modular force structure (MFS). While the PLA still regards ground forces as an essential component of any successful military mission (particularly as it pertains to Taiwan), the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have produced what appears to be a shift away from the MFS that the PLA has maintained since the 1950s.<sup>173</sup> Having employed the Soviet model of army-division-regiment structure, the PLA has adopted a new MFS that features more mobile, independent, and technologically advanced brigades as part of a restructuring that seeks to create a lighter, more flexible force. In tandem with this restructuring project, the PLA has begun to adopt new operations models and has developed more sophisticated C4ISR networks that can be used to link various battle groups with remote battle command

headquarters.<sup>174</sup>

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## PART III: MAKING SENSE OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

China will remain relatively insular in its forward engagement (exclusive of petro-diplomacy, though) for the near future. Over the horizon trends indicate that Beijing is beginning to set gears in motion to address potential security challenges related to terrorism. The Iraq war and 9/11 have hardened perceptions in China that they are not immune from terrorist threats. Their energy demands will continue to push them into more dangerous and unstable regions – increasing the chance of being viewed as both a foreign occupier and a target for insurgent and terrorist groups. China is also seeking to enhance its ability to protect critical sea lines of communication that are essential for the transportation of goods and imports of valuable natural resources.

The Standing Committee is unlikely to deviate from its “win-win” foreign policy. The benefits of the current win-win approach to foreign affairs are two-fold: not only does it enable the PRC to expand its economic interests abroad and penetrate foreign markets, but it is also a potent tool in the soft-power profile of the PRC. By endearing itself to foreign leaders and populations through generous economic aid, trade, and investment deals (with no strings attached, unlike that from the west), the PRC has made significant inroads in portraying itself as a benevolent rising power, who poses no serious threat to any nation’s security or economic well being.

Given that the PRC is one of the world’s few remaining Communist regimes, and is often considered to be among the most brutal, soft power and image enhancement have become a crucial element in Beijing’s plan for the future. High profile international events such as the Olympics certainly help to bolster the PRC’s image, but the government also understands that government-to-government contact based on the principles of the win-win formula has the potential to produce invaluable results in terms of strengthening the PRC’s relationships with governments and peoples

that the PRC has historically had very limited interaction with. By purposely emphasizing points on which both sides agree and can benefit while avoiding any contentious issues, Beijing is able to leave governments and nations worldwide with a positive impression of the PRC government, the Chinese nation, and the nation’s willingness and ability to play the role of a responsible global stakeholder.

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The preexisting Chinese doctrine of non-intervention has been strengthened over the past five years by the events that have occurred during America’s occupation of Iraq, and to a lesser extent, Afghanistan. Witnessing the great difficulties the U.S. has encountered in its military operations, the enormous economic expense of the war and high diplomatic price the U.S. has paid for its actions has affirmed Beijing’s belief in a doctrine of non-intervention in the affairs of foreign nations, without a very clear, demonstrable threat to the

PRC's security and prosperity.

The central goal of the PRC is still to maintain or accelerate strong economic growth well into the future, with foreign engagements taking a backseat to economic matters (unless such engagements directly impact the economy). Despite the PRC's growing fear of becoming a target of international terrorism, Beijing views its efforts to combat terror primarily through the prism of law enforcement rather than foreign military intervention. Beijing believes such an approach is more effective, and far less risky in terms of the security, economic, and diplomatic costs of foreign military alternatives.

A crucial component of Beijing's calculation is its desire to maintain the global image of the PRC as one of a "peacefully rising power." It is critical for Beijing to preserve this image, as it allows the PRC to continue its rampant economic growth by discouraging protectionist or hedging measures by other world powers. Were the PRC to intervene militarily in a foreign nation, almost regardless of the justification, a serious blow could be dealt to the PRC's painfully cultivated image as a peaceful power whose rise poses no fundamental threat to any major nation. After observing the full global impact the Iraq War had on America's international standing with both governments and the general public, Beijing feels that it has much to lose by instigating a conflict that would likely entail significant international condemnation.

Beijing continues to protect its interests in the Middle East by fostering cordial relationships with many Middle Eastern regimes, regardless of factors such as the regimes' human rights records or policies towards Israel, two considerations that dominate decision-making in Washington. The specter of international terrorism, while a growing concern to the PRC, has not neared a point where Beijing would even contemplate undertaking a foreign engagement similar to America's in Iraq. By cultivating critical diplomatic and economic

relationships in the Middle East, Beijing hopes to sustain a climate that is conducive to the PRC's economic growth, while dealing with the secondary concern of terrorism principally through domestic measures.

Domestic priorities will remain paramount. With the economic prosperity and political stability of the nation its primary concern, the PRC's foreign engagement will center largely around how such engagement impacts those key concerns. Affirming the importance of those two concerns even further is the fact that the two are, by nature, highly intertwined. With economic prosperity impacting domestic stability, and vice versa, foreign policies to protect those major matters are of utmost importance to Beijing. In most of the major foreign issues that the PRC has been intimately involved in the past decade, economic considerations and domestic stability have played a key role in dictating the PRC's actions. As evidenced by its policies in North Korea, Iran, and Sudan, the PRC has in large measure been influenced by Beijing's domestic economic and political considerations.

With the central government still facing frequent internal uprisings, along with persistent foreign pressure to reform its governance, domestic politics and the preservation of the one-party state figure to remain at the forefront of Beijing's immediate agenda. As the PRC continues to transition from what was once a mid-level regional power to a potential global superpower, the focus of the government will shift over time to encompass a greater number of foreign policy priorities. This will, presumably, also lead to further engagement on behalf of Beijing with issues formerly considered outside of the scope of the PRC's interests or influence. However, even if the importance of foreign engagement increases over time, the overriding concern of the Chinese government will likely continue to be the advancement of economic growth and continued domestic political strength and stability.

## C O N C L U S I O N

As China expands its global reach, it will be forced to reconcile its “win-win” foreign policy and non-interference doctrine with external challenges to state security. The war in Iraq has been a mixed-blessing for China. On the one hand, it gave Beijing diplomatic breathing room to expand its sphere of influence. On the other hand, it awoke possibilities in China of the limits of its current foreign policy. One of the major effects of the Iraq war for the PRC has been that Beijing largely views the intervention in Iraq as a positive development for China. This belief exists for a number of reasons: (1) Iraq distracted American attention and resources; (2) the cost of the war drove the U.S. into further financial distress, especially relative to the PRC; (3) it severely strained a number of America’s traditional diplomatic and security alliances, some that worked against the PRC’s interests in the past; (4) it inflicted serious damage to America’s image around the world, isolating Washington and dealing a blow to its ability to execute other policies in a variety of areas; (5) it stretched the U.S. military very thin, and prevented further troop deployments in areas of the world that might have been deemed an encroachment on the PRC’s sphere of influence and security; (6) it provided Beijing with valuable insight into how to prosecute information-intensive modern warfare, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. to PLA officials.

Though overall the American undertaking in Iraq would appear to be a strategic benefit to the PRC, it has also carried other, less welcome, consequences. Mainly, the situation in Iraq raised in Beijing the possibilities of the limits of its win-win strategy in its approach to foreign policy. While the PRC leadership considered the U.S. Iraq policy to be misguided, it revealed to them the effects of having to develop policies to advance what is deemed to be critical to the national interest, even if such policies run contrary to the stated interests of other nations. Such a divergence in respective national

agendas on an issue of the magnitude of Iraq would deal a fatal blow to the win-win formula that the PRC has relied upon in recent years to guide its foreign relations; however, it remains unknown whether Beijing or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will change its reliance on the “win-win” formula. The key lesson for Beijing is that a nation as internationally engaged and with as many global strategic interests as the U.S. will often be forced to choose policy options that do not produce the best possible outcomes for every nation involved. Such a scenario would prove to be highly problematic for the PRC as it attempts to increase its soft power influence and maintain the impression of its ‘peaceful rise.’

The limits of America’s ability to generate win-win solutions to major international problems is a byproduct of the position of global preeminence in which it finds itself, a position to which the PRC aspires and envisions for itself in the not too distant future. As the PRC’s economy continues grow, its economic (and thus security) interests will keep stretching farther and farther from the nation’s immediate periphery, and into regions and nations once considered far outside of Beijing’s sphere of concern or influence.

With its interests continuing to spread and deepen in so many corners of the globe, Beijing’s current win-win philosophy and doctrine of non-interference will be put to demanding tests. As the strategic objectives of what will soon be the world’s largest economy conflict with the interests of other nations, Beijing will have to execute policies that run against the interests of other nations, or their own. The PRC has largely been able to avoid any new major diplomatic or security disputes recently (aside from the traditional Taiwan issue, which has even improved of late) and has thus been able to evade any significant challenges to the win-win formula. The adoption of the principles of multilateralism and noninterference has served the PRC well and promises to be the best way to “win hearts



and minds” as the PRC grows in power.

As the PRC expands its regional influence and international stature, Chinese foreign policy, like the rest of Chinese policy, remains focused on stability and regime survival. As the PRC takes on greater global responsibility, its ongoing relations with “rogue nations” such as Iran and Venezuela, which it depends on for oil, are drawing greater criticism and international condemnation. In the past, Chinese foreign policy has for the most part closely followed strong national opinion. The PRC distanced itself from Washington after the Embassy bombing in Belgrade and the aircraft collision incident, despite China’s strategic interest in avoiding endangering the Sino-U.S. relationship. After the Iraq invasion, the PRC also strengthened its criticism of U.S. interventionism to reflect strong Chinese sentiments against the war. Therefore, the PRC’s forward engagement is unlikely to go as far as to jeopardize contradicting domestic opinion or nationalist sentiments.

The Iraq War has brought forth an era of greater Chinese influence and engagement, but it has also revealed the limits of the PRC’s underlying win-win strategy. As the PRC took on greater global responsibility, its ongoing relation with “rogue nations” such as Iran and Venezuela, which it depends on for oil, conflict with its global outreach and draw greater criticism. As the PRC embraces noninterference and multilateralism, it faces limits to its ability to project an image as a “responsible stakeholder” as hundreds of thousands of innocent Darfurians die of hunger and conflict in the Sudan. Iraq has been a mixed blessing for the PRC. As the PRC’s influence expands, it will need to reconcile contradictions in its foreign policy in order to maintain internal stability while nurturing its “peaceful rise” to the upper echelon of global powers. The following sub-section provides a brief analytic summation of the key lessons that Beijing has observed and learned from America’s military operations in Iraq.

### **Non-interference Doctrine**

The Iraq war legitimated Beijing’s non-interference doctrine and hardened perceptions within the Standing Committee and the greater Chinese strategic community of the need to remain neutral. It is likely that China’s non-interference doctrine remains dominant in the formulation of Beijing’s foreign policy.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, at a fundamental level, America’s military operations in Iraq solidified views in China that American influence and presence is not always stabilizing. Although the PRC is allowing for greater U.S. participation and influence in regional decision-making, this fact does not mean that Beijing welcomes America’s presence in all its manifestations. China’s so-called “Charm Offensive” around the world has eschewed many of the abrasive elements of American foreign policy in favor of no-strings attached assistance. China’s ability to amass goodwill in the wake of America’s military operations has further tilted the scale toward Beijing’s “win-win harmonious” approach to foreign policy.

### **Energy Resources and the Iraq War**

The Iraq war has also exacerbated concerns in China over energy security and the PRC’s relations with oil-rich states, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.<sup>176</sup> The increase in China’s energy consumption has been well documented, as has the corresponding rise in global energy costs. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), China had negotiated and signed multi-billion dollar agreements with Saddam Hussein to exploit Iraq’s vast energy resources. America’s precarious dealings with unstable, energy rich regimes around the world have induced war and tremendous instability and that lesson has not been lost in Beijing. China recognizes the need to diversify its energy sources, but also understands that it is a long term process that requires significant investment in new technologies while maintaining domestic economic growth and stability.

## Multilateralism

Corollary to China's non-interference doctrine has been greater strategic recognition of public commitment to the United Nations (UN) process. The difficulties the U.S. faced after the initial invasion of Iraq worked to bolster the argument of the PRC and others that the kind of military action that the U.S. undertook should only be done with the consensus of the international community. The PRC continues to push this line of argument, not only to support their earlier opposition to OIF, but also establish a strong position ahead of any possible future confrontation over Iran's nuclear program.<sup>177</sup> The Iraq war displayed to China how unilateralism can generate animosity against the world's most powerful nation. Bypassing the UN has statistically – according to major polls – undermined America's influence and standing in the world. China has witnessed firsthand the importance of maintaining good standing in the world and has become more publicly committed to international organizations, particularly the United Nations.

## International Law

Another effect of OIF on the PRC government has been the influence that international law has had on war. The PRC closely studied how the U.S., its allies, and its diplomatic opponents dealt with the issue of international law both before and after the beginning of military operations in Iraq.<sup>178</sup> This interest in the impact of international law on foreign relations is the basis of the PRC's reason for developing a better comprehension of global law: the government seeks to develop firm plans for how to address the issue of international law in the event of military action to unify Taiwan with the mainland.<sup>179</sup> There is considerable evidence suggesting that the Chinese government is exploring various approaches in its attempt to create a legal battle plan to accompany the military battle plan for the unification of Taiwan by the use of force. Conversely, and secondly, the government also

wants to design a legal case for the illegitimacy of third-party or international intervention to combat Chinese efforts in Taiwan.

## Counterterrorism Strategies

On the domestic front there are indications that China shares many post-9/11 threat perceptions with America --- many of which have been solidified in America's dealings with terrorists in Iraq. As the host of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games China has consulted governments around the world, including the United States, on how best to protect its homeland.<sup>180</sup> China sees economic prosperity as a successful and important answer to countering potential radicalism. This has also created a greater recognition of the need to challenge extremism in every form. China is also investing in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and other Central Asian states. China is also helping build hospitals and schools in Kabul<sup>181</sup> and roads stretching from Tajikistan to Kyrgyzstan.<sup>182</sup> Beijing's recognition of the importance of "winning the hearts and minds" of disenfranchised peoples has also been on display in Xinjiang and Tibet where the CCP has directed major development and infrastructure projects meant to integrate western autonomous regions with eastern China.<sup>183</sup>

## ISLAM STUDIES IN CHINA

Interviews with leading intellectuals and graduate students in China indicate a small but rich appreciation of the need to study Islam and its subsects. For example, at China's Fudan University doctoral candidates are able to take independent study courses on Islam.<sup>184</sup> China's CICIR has an entire analytic department dedicated to ethnic and religious studies and prominent books on display on Islamist terror and Al Qaeda; however, most of these books have not been translated into English. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has increased the number of grants to students and scholars wanting to conduct field research in Middle Eastern countries.<sup>185</sup> Even though many of these trends have yet to permeate the decision-

making cycle in Beijing, they are an indication of a growing wariness in China of Islamist-based radicalism.

### **Military Modernization**

Perhaps the single area in which the PRC has learned and applied the most lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) has been in the realm of military policy. The PRC has recognized that the PLA needs reform and policy alterations on a litany of fronts. Many of these reforms have been bred out of the American experience in Iraq and the conclusions that PRC and PLA leaders have drawn from OIF.

An all-encompassing lesson from Iraq that the PRC has begun to apply is a drastic budgetary increase for the armed forces. This belief has affected not only broad increases in military investment, but also significant changes in military strategy and doctrine. The scope of prescribed changes for the PLA ranges from enhanced humanitarian mission capabilities to advanced space and cyber-warfare systems.

The American and coalition missions in Iraq have underscored the need for the PLA to rapidly modernize and increase investment in new technology if it hopes to responsibly address non-state threats in the future. However, better technology and larger investment in weapons and equipment are not solely for the purpose of better preparing the PRC to vie for power with its strategic competitors. Military investment and modernization also has important domestic applications.

#### **POWER PROJECTION CAPABILITIES ARE RELATIVELY WEAK**

The rapid U.S. defeat and seizure of Baghdad in 2003 provided a reminder of some of the lessons the Chinese government learned more than a decade before in the previous American war in Iraq.<sup>186</sup> In 1991, the PRC, along with much of the rest of the world, watched in awe as the U.S. deployed technologically-advanced weaponry to

defeat a militarily respectable national power with stunning ease and quickness.<sup>187</sup> The demonstration of the full scope and capability of American hard-power led to a re-evaluation of the PRC's military strategy and military modernization.<sup>188</sup> The basic lessons learned from the Gulf War were reinforced by the second U.S. mission in Iraq in 2003. There is growing evidence to suggest that these lessons are being fully implemented in the form of policy by the Chinese government in their effort to pull the People's Liberation Army (PLA) into twenty-first century.<sup>189</sup>

#### **CYBERWARFARE**

Though the ASAT test has received the most media attention in the U.S. and around the world, the PRC has also engaged in a number of other military exercises that have since drawn attention to their newfound belief in the importance of high-tech war in the wake of the Iraq war.<sup>190</sup> In the previous two to three years, the Pentagon and other foreign defense agencies have begun to highlight what they view as China's growing ability to wage what is now termed as "cyber-warfare."

#### **OTHER CAPABILITIES**

Another key component of OIF that the PLA has studied is the coalition force's use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's). The PLA is particularly intrigued about the prospect of using UAV's for reconnaissance and strike operations, according to the DOD.<sup>191</sup> This view reflects the move of the PLA towards newer technologies that emphasize a decreased reliance on hard man-power. The use of UAV's in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan was of great interest to the PLA.

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### **Center for a New American Security**

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 403  
Washington, DC 20004

TEL 202.457.9400  
FAX 202.457.9401  
EMAIL [info@cnas.org](mailto:info@cnas.org)  
[www.cnas.org](http://www.cnas.org)



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1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 403  
Washington, DC 20004

TEL 202.457.9400  
FAX 202.457.9401  
EMAIL [info@cnas.org](mailto:info@cnas.org)

[www.cnas.org](http://www.cnas.org)