



BRAZILIAN CENTER FOR  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ASIA PROGRAM, XIV MEETING, YEAR II

# ASIA PROGRAM

## XIV CHINA ANALYSIS GROUP MEETING

RIO DE JANEIRO, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

Videoconference connection hubs: Beijing, Brasília and São Paulo

Other connection point: Porto Alegre

Speakers: Andy Mok, Col. Durval Durães Neto, Marcos Azambuja

Commentators: Monica Herz and Col. Rafael Almeida

Coordinator: Tatiana Rosito

## MAIN THEME

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**China as a military power:**  
strategic vision and global  
action

## About CEBRI

The Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI) is an independent think tank that contributes to establishing an international agenda for Brazil. For over twenty years, the institution has engaged in promoting pluralistic and proposal-oriented debate on the international landscape and Brazilian foreign policy.

CEBRI prioritizes themes with the greatest potential to leverage the international insertion of Brazil into the global economy, proposing pragmatic solutions for the formulation of public policies.

CEBRI is a non-profit institution, headquartered in Rio de Janeiro and internationally recognized, that mobilizes a worldwide network of professionals and organizations. Its almost 100 members represent diverse interests and economic sectors. CEBRI has an active Board of Trustees composed of diplomats, intellectuals and businessmen.

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# China as a military power: strategic vision and global action

SUPPORT:



# ASIA

## PROGRAM

The Program promotes a systematic monitoring of matters relevant to international relations and Brazilian development, particularly those related to China.

Special attention has been given to monitoring the ongoing economic reforms and political transformations in China, considering their global effects and impacts in Latin America and Brazil. This continuous examination allows CEBRI to provide information and analysis to its members and partners and to the Brazilian government, contributing to the construction of Brazil's strategic position towards China, as well as helping increase knowledge about China within Brazilian society.

### PREVIOUS EDITIONS:



REPORT I, YEAR I  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2017



REPORT II, YEAR I  
OCTOBER 19, 2017



REPORT III, YEAR I  
NOVEMBER 22, 2017



REPORT IV, YEAR I  
JANUARY 24, 2018



REPORT V, YEAR I  
MARCH 14, 2018



REPORT VI, YEAR I  
APRIL 25, 2018



REPORT VII, YEAR I  
MAY 30, 2018



REPORT VIII, YEAR I  
JUNE 26, 2018



REPORT IX, YEAR I  
AUGUST 14, 2018



REPORT X, YEAR I  
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### SENIOR FELLOW

**Tatiana Rosito**

Ms. Tatiana Rosito is a diplomat and an economist, having worked over ten years in Asia, five of which at the Brazilian Embassy in Beijing, as Minister-Counsellor. She is currently Chief-Representative of Petrobras in China and General Manager for Business Development in Asia. At CEBRI, she is a Senior Fellow and the coordinator of the China Analysis Group. Previously, she was Executive Secretary at the Brazilian Foreign Trade Board (CAMEX) and Special Advisor to the Ministers of Finance and Planning, among other roles in the public service. She holds a Master in International Development degree from Harvard Kennedy School and an Executive MBA degree from INSEAD and Tsinghua University.



### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Julia Dias Leite**

Julia is CEBRI's executive director since 2015. Previously, she worked for 10 years at the Brazil-China Business Council (CEBC), where she occupied the position of executive secretary. Recently, she was chosen by the U.S. State Department to participate in the Young World Leaders program.

# Table of Contents

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## REPORT

GUIDING QUESTIONS	06
-------------------	----

XIV MEETING REPORT	07
--------------------	----

Which elements constitute the core of China's security strategy and how do they relate to the country's global geopolitical strategy?	07
---	----

The role of the USA in the security of the Pacific in Central and Southern Asia and its impact on China	10
---	----

What are the components of the Chinese strategy for the Asian continent (Russia, Japan and India, South China Sea, Belt and Road Initiative, North Korea and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, etc.)? How do they affect international cooperation and, in particular, the use of maritime trade routes and the exploitation of fishing resources, crude oil and natural gas in the South China Sea?	12
---	----

What role does Latin America play in China's geopolitical vision? Brazil-China cooperation in the defense area: update	13
--	----

BIOGRAPHIES	14
-------------	----

---

## ATTACHMENTS

THEMATIC GUIDELINES	16
---------------------	----

PRESENTATIONS	23
---------------	----

Col. Durval Durães Neto	23
-------------------------	----

Andy Mok	31
----------	----

XIV MEETING PARTICIPANTS	33
--------------------------	----

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

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Which elements constitute the core of China's security strategy and how do they relate to the country's global geopolitical strategy?

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## XIV MEETING REPORT

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### WHICH ELEMENTS CONSTITUTE THE CORE OF CHINA'S SECURITY STRATEGY AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE COUNTRY'S GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGY?

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At its fourteenth meeting, the China Analysis Group promoted insightful discussions on the goals and priorities of Chinese security and defense strategy, considering its regional and global implications – as well as opportunities for cooperation with Latin America and Brazil. Against the backdrop of China-U.S. geopolitical rivalry, China's more assertive foreign policy under Xi Jinping has often been perceived as a threat by other nations. However, one of the key messages conveyed by Chinese official documents and narrative is the peaceful nature of China's military ascent, based on a defensive modernization of its armed forces – even though a less conciliatory tone is adopted in regard to Chinese core interests, especially concerning territorial integrity.

Analyzed as a response to the latest U.S. National Defense Strategy, the Chinese “White Paper on China's National Defense in the New Era”, released on July 24, summarizes the main elements of the Chinese defense strategy and aspirations towards safeguarding a “community with a shared future for mankind”. From the outset, the document highlights the context of an international landscape marked by “increased hegemonism, power politics and unilateralism”, associated to the intensification of global military competition and the engagement of major powers in competitive tech innovation. Emphasizing territorial integrity and national sovereignty as central drivers, the document defines separatism in Taiwan/Tibet and the South China Sea dispute as key security risks, in addition to domestic terrorism.

In this respect, participants noted that Hong Kong is not mentioned as an international security risk, likely due to its treatment as a domestic issue, in line with the “one country, two systems” narrative. On the other hand, “containing and opposing” Taiwanese independence is explicitly cited as one of the aims of the defense strategy, constituting one of China's core security interests. Defeating separatist movements in Tibet and safeguarding China's maritime rights are also outlined as central aims, in addition to pursuing security interests in outer space and cyberspace. In relation to the latter, the People's Liberation Army's Strategic Support Forces (PLASSF) were noted as decisive in safeguarding information security and strategic communications, ensuring regional advantages in space and cyberspace warfare.

“One of the key messages conveyed by Chinese official documents and narrative is the peaceful nature of China's military ascent, based on a defensive modernization of its armed forces.”

Considering such priorities, Chinese defense strategy is overall aimed at fulfilling three main strategic goals: to generally achieve mechanization by 2020, through enhanced informatization and improved strategic capabilities; to complete the modernization of national defense and the military by 2035, focusing not only on weaponry and equipment, but also on modernizing military organizational structure and personnel; and, ultimately, to transform the People's Liberation Army into "world-class forces by the mid-21st century".

Among the missions underlying the modernization of Chinese armed forces, the document emphasizes the importance of maintaining combat readiness, particularly through military training in real combat conditions. Furthermore, particular attention is given to the PLA Navy, as China currently finances the construction of its third and largest aircraft carrier, relying solely on Chinese technology. According to participants, the PLA Navy has quickly transformed into one of the most powerful in the world in the past decade, challenging the U.S. strategic superiority in East Asia.

Nonetheless, Chinese defense strategy is strongly underscored by the narrative of "never seeking hegemony, expansion or spheres of influence", as supposedly corroborated by a comparative analysis of Chinese military expenditures. Since 1979, Chinese defense expenditure as a proportion of GDP (and of total government expenditure) has fallen significantly, reaching an average of 1.3% in the period 2012-2017 – ranking below Russia (4.4%), the U.S (3.5%), India (2.5%) and the UK (2%) in the same period. However, considering the characteristics of China's civil-military integration model, participants highlighted that its defense budget may not capture all defense-related spending, making it hardly comparable to other countries' expenses. As such, participants questioned the extent to which China might be attempting to minimize the fact that its defense budget has grown consistently since 2009 in absolute terms, amounting to US\$ 250 billion in 2018 – the second largest in the world.

**“The PLA Navy has quickly transformed into one of the most powerful in the world in the past decade, challenging the U.S. strategic superiority in East Asia.”**

The allegedly peaceful purposes of China's military ascent are underscored by its increasing engagement in global security governance and military cooperation. Notably, China currently represents the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget – and the largest troop contributor among the P5 –, deploying troops especially in South Sudan (UNMISS), Mali (MINUSMA) and Lebanon (UNIFIL). Moreover, participants highlighted growing Chinese participation and presence in Security Council debates in the past decade, particularly in topics such as terrorism and piracy. However, while China is willing to rely on multilateral institutions in fields such as peace operations and space cooperation, in other spheres of action – especially in maritime operations – it is less



adherent to international norms. Nonetheless, in its efforts to contribute to a “community with a shared future for mankind”, the Chinese White Paper clearly states its commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and to the provision of international public security goods – as well as to the construction of a regional security cooperation architecture.

## THE ROLE OF THE USA IN THE SECURITY OF THE PACIFIC IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN ASIA AND ITS IMPACT ON CHINA

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In order to analyze the impact of the United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy on China, it is necessary to assess the current status of one of the key forces underlying U.S. engagement in the region: the U.S. Navy. Despite representing the most powerful navy in the world – hosting a fleet of over 290 battle force ships – participants highlighted systemic operational issues that might ultimately compromise U.S. military superiority in the Pacific.

Understanding military superiority as a relative concept – in which declines in power matter as much as increases – participants noted the aggravation of strategic vulnerabilities in the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet, occurring in parallel to Chinese military rise and modernization. Based in Yokosuka, Japan, the Seventh Fleet is the U.S. Navy's biggest and busiest fleet, with 20,000 sailors and 50 to 70 vessels.

In past years, participants argued, the fleet has undergone an invisible decline in power resulting from technical oversights, especially related to lack of maintenance, lack of training, inexperienced officers and corruption in supply lines. The most visible aspects of this decline can be observed in widely reported accidents: In June 2017, the 9,000-ton destroyer USS Fitzgerald collided with a container ship near Japan, killing 7 people. Two months later, USS John S. McCain collided with Alnic MC, a Liberian-registered oil tanker, near Singapore (with 10 casualties).

According to participants, these episodes illustrate systemic issues related to maintenance and training in the Seventh Fleet: In the past two decades, the number of navy ships has decreased by about 20% – however, the time they are deployed has remained the same. Ultimately, constant deployments leave little time for training – combined with relentless duties that require sailors driving 9,000-ton vessels to endure sleepless periods. As a result, navy destroyers' bridges are often controlled by a round-the-clock shift of young officers, who are typically under 25 and with little shipboard experience.

Furthermore, the strategic vulnerabilities of U. S. power are corroborated by the results of RAND simulations and war games: In most scenarios simulated, the U.S. suffers heavy losses and fails to prevent China or Russia from achieving their strategic objectives. Notably, U.S. communications satellites, wireless networks and other command-and-control systems are identified as particularly vulnerable, suffering heavy hacking and jamming in most simulations.

In fact, the possibilities set by the Fourth Industrial Revolution were noted as overall favorable to China, allowing Chinese civil-military fusion and diplomatic groundwork to concentrate force against a diffuse U.S. military. This is a consequence not only of the application and integration of high tech military technologies – such as hypersonic missiles – but also of asymmetric approaches adopted by China. In this respect, China's unorthodox

naval strategy and so-called Maritime Gray Zone Operations symbolize Chinese asymmetric approaches, operating in the “gray zone” between war and peace. Carried out by Chinese paranaul forces, these operations have been instrumental in supporting China’s expansionary maritime strategy and sovereignty claims in the South and East China Seas.

As a result of trends that favor Chinese strategic advantage, participants concluded that the U.S. may already be outmatched in the Pacific, without realizing it. A likely course of action for China, in this context, would consist of letting the U.S. collapse under its own contradictions – possibly provoking more Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in the short- and medium-term.

**“The possibilities set by the Fourth Industrial Revolution are overall favorable to China, allowing Chinese civil-military fusion and diplomatic groundwork to concentrate force against a diffuse U.S. military.”**

## WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE CHINESE STRATEGY FOR THE ASIAN CONTINENT (RUSSIA, JAPAN AND INDIA, SOUTH CHINA SEA, BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE, NORTH KOREA AND SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION, ETC.)? HOW DO THEY AFFECT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE USE OF MARITIME TRADE ROUTES AND THE EXPLOITATION OF FISHING RESOURCES, CRUDE OIL AND NATURAL GAS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA?

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Considering the centrality of the Asian continent for Chinese security and defense strategy, participants highlighted the important trust-building role played by regional security institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Based on the principles of non-aligned partnership and non-confrontation towards third countries, the SCO held in China its first Defense Ministers' Summit since the organization expanded its membership in 2017, including India and Pakistan. Moreover, the China-ASEAN Defense Ministers' Informal Meeting and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) were also noted as important components of China's regional security strategy, enhancing trust in East Asia through military exchanges and cooperation.

Within China's immediate neighborhood, participants noted the strategic relevance of Russia – currently engaged in strengthening its nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities for strategic containment, and striving to safeguard its strategic security space and interests. After a period of turbulence and ambivalence in China-Russia relations in past decades, participants described the current phase as a “mature stage of comprehensive cooperation”, marked by an increasing emphasis on military cooperation through joint exercises.

On the other hand, relations with India and Japan were analyzed as overall more delicate, largely due to the unresolved territorial disputes. In the Indian case, the 2017 Doklam standoff illustrates the persisting challenges in the China-India border. In the case of Japan, the continuing disputes in the South and East China Seas result in constant underlying tensions – aggravated by historical resentments dating from the Sino-Japanese wars.

In regard to Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea, participants stressed the stalemate associated to China's unique interpretation of the international law of navigation, refusing to rely on international courts to solve territorial and maritime disputes. In this respect, participants highlighted China's refusal to recognize the ruling of an arbitration tribunal, in 2016, which decided against Chinese claims in the South China Sea, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

## WHAT ROLE DOES LATIN AMERICA PLAY IN CHINA'S GEOPOLITICAL VISION? BRAZIL-CHINA COOPERATION IN THE DEFENSE AREA: UPDATE

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**E**ven though Latin America is not a central piece of China's defense strategy and security interests, participants noted that the region is mentioned six times in China's National Defense White Paper, while not being mentioned at all in the U.S. National Defense Strategy. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Chinese military presence in Latin America – expressed mostly through military exercises and training, high-level meetings and sales of equipment – follows an overall prudent approach, in line with the narrative of China's peaceful military ascent.

In order to understand the normative underpinnings of Chinese military cooperation with Latin American countries, participants stressed the importance of analyzing the China-CELAC Forum as an overarching regional cooperation mechanism. Among the priority security issues addressed in the 2019-2021 China-CELAC Cooperation Plan, China commits to promoting joint dialogue in cyber-security and strengthening cooperation towards preventing terrorism and combatting transnational organized crime. Furthermore, China's first Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, launched in 2008, outlines priority security affairs such as military exchanges and cooperation in judicial and police affairs, including through information sharing and technological exchange.

Within China-CELAC security cooperation, participants highlighted the leading role played by Brazil, particularly considering possibilities for cooperation with the Brazilian Army. Reflecting the view that the strategic nature of Brazil-China relations transcends the economic dimension, military cooperation has been increasing in past years. Notably, military trainings currently represent the main feature of Brazil-China military cooperation, with a significant number of Brazilian armed forces officials participating in courses in China.

**“Chinese military presence in Latin America – expressed mostly through military exercises and training, high-level meetings and sales of equipment – follows an overall prudent approach, in line with the narrative of China's peaceful military ascent.”**

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Ambassador Marcos Azambuja**

Ambassador Marcos Azambuja served as Brazil's ambassador to France and Argentina, as well as head of Brazil's delegation on Disarmament and Human Rights Affairs in Geneva. He was coordinator of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 92 Earth Summit). At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he served as secretary general (deputy minister). He was a member of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission and the Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. He is currently Trustee Emeritus of the Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI), and a member of the Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute (IHGB), the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), and the Roberto Marinho Foundation.

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### **Col. Durval Durães Neto**

Dr. Colonel Durval Durães Neto is the Brazilian Army Attaché to People's Republic of China for bilateral exchange on military affairs since July 2018. As a career military officer since 1992, he held various positions in the Brazilian Army. Before the Army Attaché mission, he was Peace Mission Division Assistant - Training and Evaluation Sector in 3rd Directorate of Land Operations Command of the Brazilian Army in 2017-2018. From April to December of 2012, in Haiti, he worked as Battalion Command Logistics Officer in 2nd Brazilian Peacekeeping Infantry Battalion/16th Brazilian Contingent. He holds a Master's in Military Operations from Captain's Advanced Training School of the Brazilian Army.

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### **Andy Mok**

Mr. Andy Mok is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for China and Globalization (CCG), where he concentrates on technology and its impact on great power relations and the rise and fall of empires. In addition, Mr. Mok has advised family offices and other institutional investors on business and real estate investment opportunities in China, including representing the family office of a well-known Seattle entrepreneur in discussions with their peers in Asia. Mr. Mok holds an MBA from the Wharton School in Philadelphia and an MA in China Studies from the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies.

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### **Monica Herz**

Professor at the Institute of International Relations of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (IRI/PUC-Rio), since 1996, and Senior Fellow of CEBRI's International Security Program, Ms. Monica Herz is a member of the External Advisory Committee of the University of Coimbra and the Academic Council of the Inter-American Defense College, in the US. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology from IUPERJ and a PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, with post-doctoral studies in the Queen Mary University of London and the University of São Paulo (USP). She has authored numerous articles and books in the fields of international security, global governance, human rights and nuclear policy.

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### **Col. Rafael Cunha de Almeida**

Colonel Rafael Cunha de Almeida is currently the Chief of Staff of the 6th Army Division, Brazilian Army's South Military Command. He holds a B.A. in History, a Master's degree in Strategy by the Brazilian Army Command and General Staff School (ECEME), and a Master's degree in Military Sciences from the People's Liberation Army National Defense University in China. Previously, he served in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as a legation officer.

# ATTACHMENTS

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## Thematic guidelines

Since Xi Jinping came to power, in 2012/2013, asserting the leadership over the military has been a crucial point in his consolidation as the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong. Maintaining an absolute grip over the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which in China is under the control of the Communist Party (CCP), is also vital to strengthen the CCP itself towards the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The reforms implemented in the Chinese armed forces since 2013 - including strong anti-corruption campaigns that involved previous top commanders - have set the stage for a New Era. As the 2015 Chinese Military Strategy formerly stated, *“The Chinese Dream is to make the country strong. China's armed forces take their dream of making the military strong as part of the Chinese Dream. Without a strong military, a country can be neither safe nor strong”*.

The modernization of the Chinese armed forces and the gradual expansion of their scope cannot be dissociated from the broader picture of China's emblematic economic ascent in the last two decades, which also entailed an enlarged and more assertive role in the global stage. From a modest participation in international institutions in the late 90s and a generally outdated military, China is today the largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions and on the way to rival the US in its military capabilities in Asia, albeit not at the global level. The evolution of Chinese white papers on defense also reinforce China's global ambitions and the desire to shape a global order attuned to its new role, albeit with a strong emphasis on peaceful development and “active defense”. It also includes a remarkable expansion in military diplomacy activities aimed at enhancing its soft power, such as exchanges of visits, cooperation in training and joint exercises, and support to marketing Chinese military equipment abroad. Those activities are a very important confidence-building pillar and help push forward an idea of balance within the evolving order.

Last July, China published its “White Paper on China's National Defense in the New Era”, the tenth white paper on defense published by the Chinese government since 1998 (see suggested readings). As we approach the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC next month and the 100th anniversary of the CCP in 2021, the theme of China's rising military power is high on the agenda. It is difficult, however, to dissociate the rise of Chinese military forces from the backdrop environment of the so-called Thucydides Trap, which involves the risk of war between an emerging power (China) and the incumbent hegemon (the US), just as in the original case of Athens and Sparta and many others through history. Or, as Graham Allison himself stated back in 2015: *“The preeminent geostrategic challenge of this era is not violent Islamic extremists or a resurgent Russia. It is the impact that China's ascendance will have on the U.S.-led international order,*



*which has provided unprecedented great-power peace and prosperity for the past 70 years. As Singapore's late leader, Lee Kuan Yew, observed, "the size of China's displacement of the world balance is such that the world must find a new balance. It is not possible to pretend that this is just another big player. This is the biggest player in the history of the world."* But exactly because history should not allow for binary answers, the complexity of China's rise in the 21st century leaves room for many possibilities of cooperation. Despite – or, rather, because of – the current trade war, which has instilled new momentum onto the changing world order, the topic of China's defense policy and its regional and global impact is ever more important and constitutes a crucial aspect in helping us understand contemporary China and its future towards a well-round modern socialist nation.

The recently-published Chinese white paper is often portrayed as a direct response to the latest US National Defense Strategy, published in January 2018, in which China was described as *"a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea"...* *"As China continues its economic and military ascendance, asserting power through an all-of-nation long-term strategy, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future. The most far-reaching objective of this defense strategy is to set the military relationship between our two countries on a path of transparency and non-aggression"*. Alternatively, as a DoD official described: *"The new National Defense Strategy announced today is aimed at restoring America's competitive military advantage to deter Russia and China from challenging the United States, its allies or seeking to overturn the international order that has served so well since the end of World War II"*.

The DoD defense strategy followed the US National Security Strategy, published in the end of 2017 - the first under president Donald Trump -, as discussed in the China Analysis Group's 12th meeting, which analyzed the current US-China trade war. The document describes China (and Russia) as revisionist powers. It also argues that *"For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China's rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others...It is building the most capable and well-funded military in the world, after our own. Its nuclear arsenal is growing and diversifying. Part of China's military modernization and economic expansion is due to its access to the U.S. innovation economy, including America's world-class universities."*

As Cordesman pointed out, *"The new Chinese White Paper touches on every key point in the 2019 versions of these two U.S. reports, and portrays the Chinese actions they describe as threats as just and peaceful."* Despite more subdued when compared to the American documents, the Chinese white paper does show an assertive tone when dealing with Chinese core interests, especially Taiwan. As Elsa Kania and Peter Wood summarize (see reading list), *"China's National Defense in a New Era"* offers insights into how the PRC leadership imagines a world order characterized by greater multipolarity, its aspirations to exercise leader-

*ship within that “community of common destiny,” and the strategic objectives on which Beijing will brook no compromise...reveals Beijing’s intentions to reshape the current architecture of the global order towards a future more favorable for its interests, which are expanding into new domains around the globe”. Moreover, “While this latest defense white paper reflects the PRC’s response to new directions in U.S. national security strategy, there are striking differences in how Beijing and Washington portray the dynamics of a time when the strategic landscape is undergoing “profound changes.” In discussing the security situation in the Asia-Pacific, the claim that countries in the region are “increasingly aware that they are members of a community with shared destiny” (mingyun gongtongti) asserts a narrative in line with Beijing’s ideological inclinations.”*

As we observe the potential sources of conflict, the reunification with Taiwan emerges as the most sensitive topic in the white paper: *“To solve the Taiwan question and achieve complete reunification of the country is in the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation and essential to realizing national rejuvenation. China adheres to the principles of “peaceful reunification”, and “one country, two systems”, promotes peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and advances peaceful reunification of the country. Meanwhile, China resolutely opposes any attempts or actions to split the country and any foreign interference to this end. China must be and will be reunited. China has the firm resolve and the ability to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will never allow the secession of any part of its territory by anyone, any organization or any political party by any means at any time. We make no promise to renounce the use of force, and reserve the option of taking all necessary measures. This is by no means targeted at our compatriots in Taiwan, but at the interference of external forces and the very small number of “Taiwan independence” separatists and their activities. The PLA will resolutely defeat anyone attempting to separate Taiwan from China and safeguard national unity at all costs”.*

Maybe the most emblematic feature of China’s rising military power is the PLA Navy, which has not only enhanced its personnel and technological capabilities but also significantly expanded its scope of action, from protecting the Chinese territory and the coast, in the 70s, to guarding the adjacent seas in the 80s, to increasingly secure and defend Chinese overseas interests in this decade. One example is the PLA Djibouti support base, the first such base abroad, which entered service in August 2017. The celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Chinese Navy last April was highlighted by the official media by portraying the modernization efforts and new capabilities of the force, such as the first domestically built carrier (to be concluded by the end of the year) and the new destroyer. Although the empowerment of the Chinese Navy has been one of the most quoted reasons for suspicion against China’s rising military forces, especially in regard to disputes and shows-of-force in the South China Sea, recent speeches by the leadership have stressed the peaceful objectives of its expansion and its role in building a “maritime community for a common destiny”. A central feature of the modernization efforts in the Chinese military is cybersecurity, aiming at building modern forces, equivalent to the best in the world.

The defensive nature of the Chinese military is often emphasized, as well as the fact that they still lag much behind other leading militaries. As a matter of fact, according to the Chinese white paper, China's military expenditures accounted on average for 1.3% of the GDP between 2012-17, compared to 3.5% of the GDP in the US, and Russia (4.4%), India (2.5%), UK (2.0%), France (2.3%), Germany (1.2%). In terms of the ratio of defense expenditures to government expenditures, China (5.3%) compares to the US (9.8%), Russia (12.4%), India (9.1%), UK (4.8%), and France (4.0%). In a recent comprehensive report published on September 9, 2019, Cordesman argues that one should look at broad trends rather than specific numbers: *"Seen from this perspective, such trends clearly show that China already is a true economic superpower with growing resources and a steadily improving technology base. Its military structure is evolving to the point where China can compare or compete with the U.S. — at least in Asia... They show that China already has a far more powerful economy than Russia and is spending far more on military forces. It is also clear that China's economic outreach already exceeds that of the United States in some of its aspects. If these current trends continue — China has the future capacity to equal or surpass the U.S. economy and U.S. military forces at some point during the next two decades... no analysis that focuses on only one side of China's development — either civil or military — can begin to explain the real-world changes taking place in its grand strategy, and global and regional capabilities."*

Despite the rhetoric, cooperation still emerges as one key aspect in avoiding any escalation. Interestingly, according to a study published by the National Defense University, in Washington, D.C., China's main partners in military diplomacy are the United States, followed by Russia and Asian countries like Pakistan, Thailand and Australia. In its first white paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, published in 2008, China has committed to establish active military exchanges with the region. This commitment was renewed in the 2016 white paper to the region, while new areas such as fighting terrorism and enhancing commercial links in equipment and technology were added. Notwithstanding, China's defense activities in the region are marked by prudence, to avoid direct confrontation with the US. According to Evan Ellis, an American scholar, the Chinese interests in the region are long-term and should be assessed in the broader context of China's rise as a global economic power, including indirect protection to its economic interests in the region. Chinese initiatives, according to Ellis, aim at confidence-building with partner countries; incipient support to defend Chinese interests in third countries; strategic positioning and maintenance of US and other West countries' confidence in the Chinese government.

Cooperation activities between China and Latin American countries have significantly increased in the last ten years, in tandem with the growing Chinese interests in the region. The exchange of visits with ALBA countries is a case in point, as well as training activities. Notably, China has designated 130 police force staff to be part of UN MINUSTAH peacekeeping operations in Haiti, a country with which it does not maintain diplomatic relations. This has also allowed for closer cooperation with the Brazilian military. The sale

of Chinese military equipment to Latin American countries also showed an important increase, amounting to at least US\$ 800 million since the start of the century, according to SIPRI. The largest contracts were signed with Bolivia and Venezuela. But there are also smaller sales to Argentina, Bahamas, Ecuador, Guyana, México, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago. In the case of Argentina, a host of projects were agreed in 2015, including the Neuquén spatial station.

China's gradual increase of military links with the region may allow for trust-building and mitigation of a strategic lack of confidence. For Brazil, it also entails growing competition in the sales of military equipment.

## Reading Suggestions

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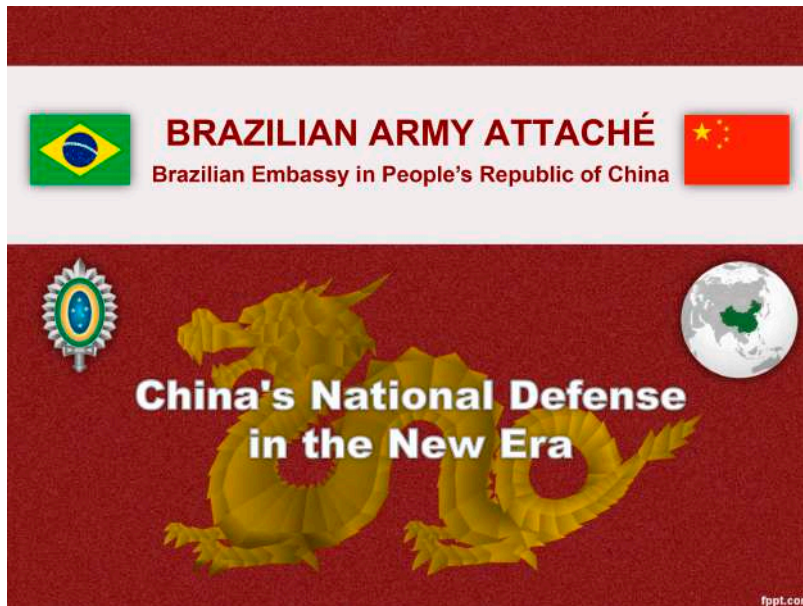
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Presentation 1 :  
Col. Durval Durães Neto







## China's National Defense in the New Era

### 2. China's Defensive National Defense Policy in the New Era

Aims for "China's National Defense in the New Era":

- To deter and resist aggression;
- To safeguard national political security, the people's security and social stability;
- To oppose and contain "Taiwan independence";
- To crack down on proponents of separatist movements such as "Tibet independence" and the creation of "East Turkistan";
- To safeguard national sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security;
- To safeguard China's maritime rights and interests;
- To safeguard China's security interests in outer space, electromagnetic space and cyberspace;
- To safeguard China's overseas interests;
- To support the sustainable development of the country.



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## China's National Defense in the New Era

### 2. China's Defensive National Defense Policy in the New Era

The **strategic goals for the development** of China's national defense and military in the new era are:

- to generally achieve **mechanization by the year 2020** with significantly enhanced informationization and greatly improved strategic capabilities;
- to comprehensively advance the modernization of military theory, organizational structure, military personnel, and weaponry and equipment in step with the modernization of the country and basically **complete the modernization of national defense and the military by 2035**; and
- to fully transform the people's armed forces into **world-class forces by the mid-21st century**.



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## China's National Defense in the New Era

### 3. Fulfilling the Missions and Tasks of China's Armed Forces

"It's one of the PLA's missions to effectively protect the safety and rightful interests of overseas Chinese people and organizations,"

The paper give great importance to Maintaining Combat Readiness and Carrying Out Military Training in Real Combat Conditions.

Since 2014, the People's Armed Police Force (PAP) has assisted the government of northwestern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in smashing 1,588 violent terrorist gangs and capturing 12,995 terrorists.

According the white paper, China isn't a threat.



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## China's National Defense in the New Era

### 4. Reform in China's National Defense and Armed Forces

The **missions and tasks** of China's armed forces:

- Safeguarding national territorial **sovereignty** and maritime rights and interests;
- Maintaining combat **readiness**;
- Carrying out military **training** in real combat conditions;
- Safeguarding interests in major security fields;
- Countering terrorism and maintaining **stability**;
- Protecting China's **overseas interests**;
- Participating in disaster rescue and relief.



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## China's National Defense in the New Era

### CENTRAL MILITARY COMMISSION (CMC)

### PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY



Ground Force



Navy



Air Force



Rocket Force



S. Support



J. Logistic Support

People's Armed Police

**2 million**  
**Military Personnel**



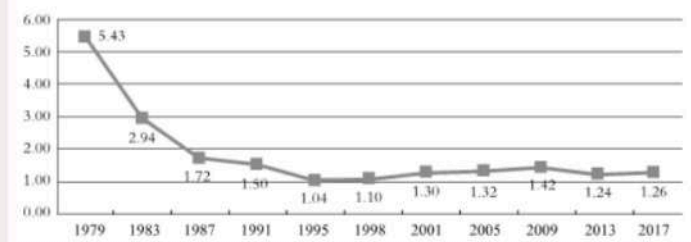
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## China's National Defense in the New Era

### 5. Reasonable and Appropriate Defense Expenditure

Figure 3 China's Defense Expenditure as a Percentage of Its GDP (1979-2017) (%)

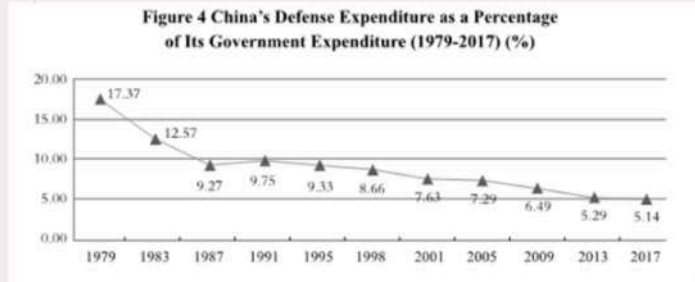


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# China's National Defense in the New Era

## 5. Reasonable and Appropriate Defense Expenditure



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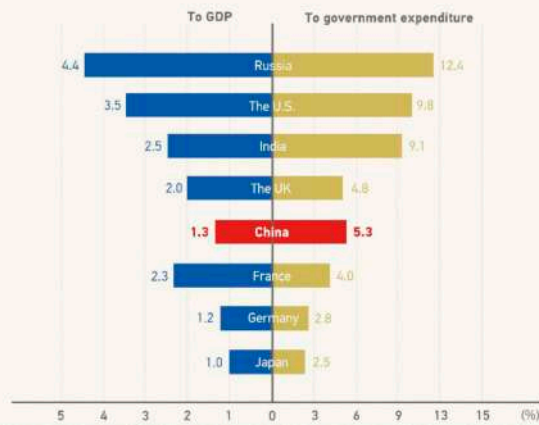
## Defense spending of major world powers



Average ratio of defense expenditure to GDP and government expenditure by country 2012-2017

w Era

### 5. Rea

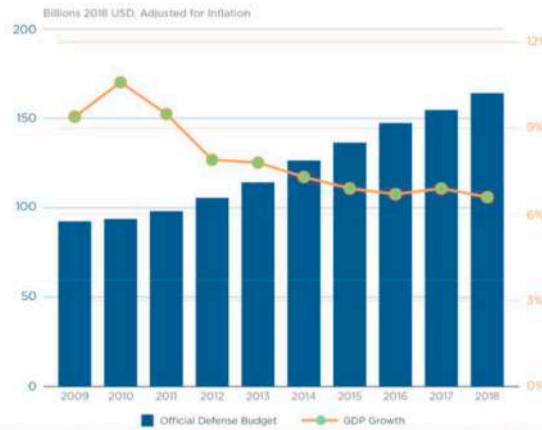


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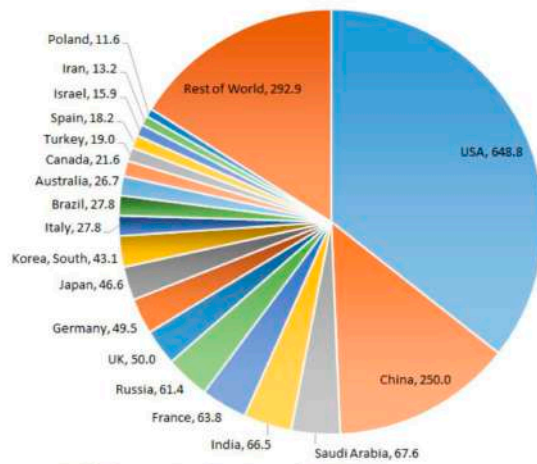


## China's National Defense in the New Era

### China's Official Defense Budget, 2009-2018



### Military Expenditures by Country (in US\$ billions) 2018



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute





## China's National Defense in the New Era

### 6) Actively Contributing to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

Premises :

- Resolutely Upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter;
- Building a New-Model Security Partnership Featuring Equality, Mutual Trust and Win-Win Cooperation;
- Building a Regional Security Cooperation Architecture;
- Properly Coping with Disputes over Territory and Maritime Demarcation; and
- Actively Providing International Public Security Goods.



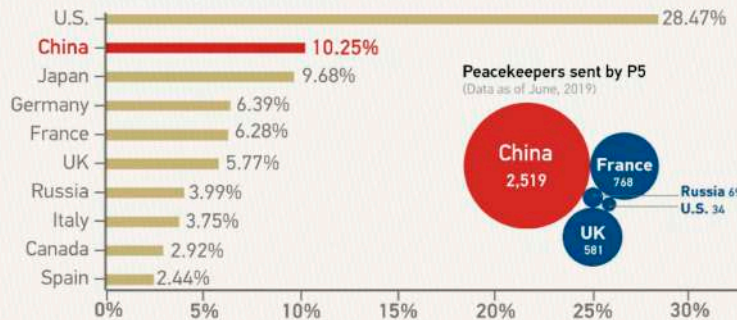
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## China in upholding world peace and security

China is the second largest contributor to UN peacekeeping budget and sends most troops among five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council.

### Who's footing UN peacekeeping budget

(Fiscal year 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019)



### Peacekeepers sent by P5

(Data as of June, 2019)



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## China's current peacekeepers in UN missions



Presentation 2:  
Andy Mok

# "China as a military power: strategic vision and global action"

Andy Mok  
Center for China and Globalization  
September 2019

## Claims

1. Military advantage is relative and not absolute - declines matter as much as increases
2. US military is still powerful but increasingly overstretched, fragile and vulnerable
3. China civil-military fusion plus diplomatic groundwork concentrate force against a diffuse US military
4. 4IR enables disruptive, devastating and decisive asymmetric attacks to which incumbents are more vulnerable



# Conclusions

- US outmatched in Pacific (but may not know it)
- Can't rule out: A short, sharp encounter to “teach US a lesson”
- Likely: Win without fighting - Let US collapse under weight of its own contradictions. 以逸待劳 - Exhaust your opponent before fighting (provoke more FONOPs, etc.)
- Other parts of world likely to gain from US distractions and setbacks in Pacific



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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Since 1998, the leading think tank in international relations in Brazil. Ranked in 2018 the third best think tank in South and Central America by the Global Go To Think Tank Index, compiled by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the University of Pennsylvania.

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