



U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issues for Congress

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Summary

This CRS Report discusses policy issues regarding military-to-military (mil-to-mil) contacts with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and provides a record of major contacts since 1993. The United States suspended military contacts with China and imposed sanctions on arms sales in response to the Tiananmen Crackdown in 1989. In 1993, the Clinton Administration began to re-engage the PRC leadership up to the highest level and including China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Renewed military exchanges with the PLA have not regained the closeness reached in the 1980s, when U.S.-PRC strategic cooperation against the Soviet Union included U.S. arms sales to China. Improvements and deteriorations in overall bilateral relations have affected military contacts, which were close in 1997-1998 and 2000, but marred by the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, mistaken NATO bombing of a PRC embassy in 1999, and the EP-3 aircraft collision crisis in 2001 as well as the naval confrontations in March 2009.

Since 2001, the Bush Administration has continued the policy of engagement with China, while the Pentagon has skeptically reviewed and cautiously resumed a program of military-to-military exchanges. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, in 2002, resumed the Defense Consultative Talks (DCT) with the PLA (first held in 1997) and, in 2003, hosted General Cao Gangchuan, a Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and Defense Minister. General Richard Myers (USAF), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited China in January 2004, as the highest ranking U.S. military officer to do so since November 2000. Visiting Beijing in September 2005 as the Commander of the Pacific Command (PACOM), Admiral William Fallon sought to advance mil-to-mil contacts, including combined exercises. Secretary Rumsfeld visited China in October 2005, the first visit by a defense secretary since William Cohen's visit in 2000. Fallon invited PLA observers to the U.S. "Valiant Shield" exercise that brought three aircraft carriers to waters off Guam in June 2006. In July 2006, the highest ranking PLA officer and a CMC Vice Chairman, General Guo Boxiong, visited the United States, the first visit by the highest ranking PLA commander since 1998. Soon after becoming the PACOM Commander, Admiral Timothy Keating visited China in May 2007.

Issues for the 111th Congress include whether the Administration has complied with legislation overseeing dealings with the PLA and has determined a program of contacts with the PLA that advances a prioritized list of U.S. security interests. Oversight legislation includes the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY1990-FY1991 (P.L. 101-246); National Defense Authorization Act for FY2000 (P.L. 106-65); and National Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163). Skeptics and proponents of military exchanges with the PRC have debated whether the contacts have significant value for achieving U.S. objectives and whether the contacts have contributed to the PLA's warfighting capabilities that might harm U.S. security interests. U.S. interests in military contacts with China include: communication, conflict prevention, and crisis management; transparency and reciprocity; tension reduction over Taiwan; weapons nonproliferation; strategic nuclear and space talks; counterterrorism; and accounting for POW/MIAs. U.S. defense officials report inadequate cooperation from the PLA, including denials of port visits at Hong Kong by U.S. Navy ships in November 2007. The PLA suspended military dialogue in October 2008 over U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. PRC ships aggressively harassed U.S. ocean surveillance ships, including the USNS Impeccable, in March 2009. This CRS Report will be updated.

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Overview of U.S. Policy

U.S. leaders have applied military contacts as one tool and point of leverage in the broader policy toward the People's Republic of China (PRC). The first part of this CRS Report discusses policy issues regarding such military-to-military (mil-to-mil) contacts. The second part provides a record of such contacts since 1993, when the United States resumed exchanges after suspending them in response to the Tiananmen Crackdown in 1989. Congress has exercised important oversight of the military relationship with China.

Cooperation in the Cold War

Since the mid-1970s, even before the normalization of relations with Beijing, the debate over policy toward the PRC has examined how military ties might advance U.S. security interests, beginning with the imperatives of the Cold War.¹ In January 1980, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown visited China and laid the groundwork for a relationship with the PRC's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), intended to consist of strategic dialogue, reciprocal exchanges in functional areas, and arms sales. Furthermore, U.S. policy changed in 1981 to remove the ban on arms sales to China. Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger visited Beijing in September 1983. In 1984, U.S. policymakers worked to advance discussions on military technological cooperation with China.² Between 1985 and 1987, the United States agreed to four programs of Foreign Military Sales (FMS): modernization of artillery ammunition production facilities; modernization of avionics in F-8 fighters; sale of four Mark-46 anti-submarine torpedoes; and sale of four AN/TPQ-37 artillery-locating radars.³

Suspensions after Tiananmen Crackdown

The United States suspended mil-to-mil contacts and arms sales in response to the Tiananmen Crackdown in June 1989. (Although the killing of peaceful demonstrators took place beyond just Tiananmen Square in the capital of Beijing on June 4, 1989, the crackdown is commonly called the Tiananmen Crackdown in reference to the square that was the focal point of the nation-wide pro-democracy movement.) Approved in February 1990, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY1990-FY1991 (P.L. 101-246) enacted into law sanctions imposed on arms sales and other cooperation, while allowing for waivers in the U.S. national interest. In April 1990, China canceled the program (called "Peace Pearl") to upgrade the avionics of the F-8 fighters.⁴ In

¹ Michael Pillsbury, "U.S.-Chinese Military Ties?", *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1975; Leslie Gelb, "Arms Sales," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1976-77; Michael Pillsbury, "Future Sino-American Security Ties: The View from Tokyo, Moscow, and Peking," *International Security*, Spring 1977; and Philip Taubman, "U.S. and China Forging Close Ties; Critics Fear That Pace is Too Swift," *New York Times*, December 8, 1980.

² Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, "Defense Relations with the People's Republic of China," June 5, 1984.

³ Department of State and Defense Security Assistance Agency, "Congressional Presentation for Security Assistance, Fiscal Year 1992."

⁴ *Jane's Defense Weekly*, May 26, 1990.

December 1992, President Bush decided to close out the four cases of suspended FMS programs, returning PRC equipment, reimbursing unused funds, and delivering sold items without support.⁵

Re-engagement

In the fall of 1993, the Clinton Administration began to re-engage the PRC leadership up to the highest level and across the board, including the PLA. However, results were limited and the military relationship did not regain the closeness reached in the 1980s, when the United States and China cooperated strategically against the Soviet Union and such cooperation included arms sales to the PLA. Improvements and deteriorations in overall bilateral relations affected mil-to-mil contacts, which had close ties in 1997-1998 and 2000, but were marred by the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, mistaken NATO bombing of the PRC embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, and the EP-3 aircraft collision crisis in 2001.

Re-evaluation

Since 2001, the George W. Bush Administration has continued the policy of engagement with the PRC, while the Pentagon has skeptically reviewed and cautiously resumed a program of mil-to-mil exchanges. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reviewed the mil-to-mil contacts to assess the effectiveness of the exchanges in meeting U.S. objectives of reciprocity and transparency. Soon after the review began, on April 1, 2001, a PLA Navy F-8 fighter collided with a U.S. Navy EP-3 reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea.⁶ Upon surviving the collision, the EP-3's crew made an emergency landing on China's Hainan island. The PLA detained the 24 U.S. Navy personnel for 11 days. Instead of acknowledging that the PLA had started aggressive interceptions of U.S. reconnaissance flights in December 2000 and apologizing for the accident, top PRC ruler Jiang Zemin demanded an apology and compensation from the United States. Rumsfeld limited mil-to-mil contacts after the crisis, subject to case-by-case approval, after the White House objected to a suspension of contacts with the PLA as outlined in an April 30 Defense Department memo. Rumsfeld told reporters on May 8, 2001, that he decided against visits to China by U.S. ships or aircraft and against social contacts, because "it really wasn't business as usual." Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz reported to Congress on June 8, 2001, that mil-to-mil exchanges for 2001 remained under review by Secretary Rumsfeld and exchanges with the PLA would be conducted "selectively and on a case-by-case basis." The United States did not transport the damaged EP-3 out of China until July 3, 2001.

The Bush Administration hosted PRC Vice President Hu Jintao in Washington in the spring of 2002 (with an honor cordon at the Pentagon) and President Jiang Zemin in Crawford, Texas, in October 2002. Afterwards, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, in late 2002, resumed the Defense Consultative Talks (DCT) with the PLA (first held in 1997) and, in 2003, hosted General Cao Gangchuan, a Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and Defense Minister. (The CMC under the Communist Party of China (CPC) commands the PLA. The Ministry of Defense and its titles are used in contacts with foreign militaries.) General Richard Myers (USAF), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited China in January 2004, as the highest

⁵ Department of State, "Presidential Decision on Military Sales to China," December 22, 1992.

⁶ CRS Report RL30946, *China-U.S. Aircraft Collision Incident of April 2001: Assessments and Policy Implications*, by Shirley A. Kan et al.

ranking U.S. military officer to do so since November 2000. (see **Table 1** on the PLA's high command and the summary of senior-level military visits.)

Visiting Beijing in January 2004, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage met with PRC leaders, including General Cao Gangchuan. Armitage acknowledged that “the military-to-military relationship had gotten off to a rocky start,” but noted that the relationship had improved so that “it’s come pretty much full cycle.” He said that “we’re getting back on track with the military-to-military relationship.”⁷

Resumption

Still, mil-to-mil interactions remained “exceedingly limited,” according to the Commander of the Pacific Command, Admiral William Fallon, who visited China to advance mil-to-mil contacts in September 2005. He discussed building relationships at higher and lower ranks, cooperation in responding to natural disasters and controlling avian flu, and reducing tensions. Fallon also said that he would seek to enhance military-to-military contacts with China and invite PLA observers to U.S. military exercises, an issue of dispute in Washington.⁸ In October 2005, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited China, the first visit by a defense secretary since William Cohen’s visit in 2000. After Rumsfeld’s visit, which was long sought by the PLA for the perceived full resumption of the military relationship, General Guo Boxiong, a CMC Vice Chairman and the PLA’s highest ranking officer visited the United States in July 2006, the first such visit since General Zhang Wannian’s visit in 1998.

At a news conference on March 7, 2007, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that he did not see China as a “strategic adversary” of the United States, but “a partner in some respects” and a “competitor in other respects.” Gates stressed the importance of engaging the PRC “on all facets of our relationship as a way of building mutual confidence.” Nonetheless, U.S. officials have expressed concerns about inadequate “transparency” from the PLA, most notably when it tested an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon in January 2007. At a news conference in China on March 23, 2007, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine General Peter Pace, said the primary concern for the bilateral relationship is “miscalculation and misunderstanding based on misinformation.” Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless testified to the House Armed Services Committee on June 13, 2007, that “in the absence of adequate explanation for capabilities which are growing dynamically, both in terms of pace and scope, we are put in the position of having to assume the most dangerous intent a capability offers.” He noted a lack of response from the PLA about a U.S. offer in 2006 to talk about strategic nuclear weapons.

In November 2007, despite various unresolved issues, Secretary Gates visited China, and the PLA agreed to a long-sought U.S. goal of a “hotline.” Later in the month, despite a number of senior U.S. visits to China (particularly by U.S. Navy Admirals and Secretary Gates) to promote the mil-to-mil relationship, the PRC denied port calls at Hong Kong for U.S. Navy minesweepers in distress and for the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk for the Thanksgiving holiday and family reunions, according to the PACOM Commander and Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admirals Timothy Keating and Gary Roughead. In response, on November 28, President Bush raised the

⁷ Department of State, “Deputy Secretary of State Richard ‘s Media Round Table,” Beijing, China, January 30, 2004.

⁸ U.S. Pacific Command, Adm. William J. Fallon, press conference, Hong Kong, September 11, 2005; and author’s discussions with Pentagon officials.

problem with the PRC's visiting Foreign Minister, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense David Sedney lodged a demarche to the PLA.⁹

Congressional Oversight

Congress has exercised oversight of various aspects of military exchanges with China. Issues for Congress include whether the Administration has complied with legislation overseeing dealings with the PLA and has determined a program of contacts with the PLA that advances, and does not harm, U.S. security interests. Section 902 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY1990-FY1991 (P.L. 101-246) prohibits arms sales to China, among other stipulations, in response to the Tiananmen Crackdown in 1989. Section 1201 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2000 (P.L. 106-65) restricts "inappropriate exposure" of the PLA to certain operational areas and requires annual reports on contacts with the PLA. Section 1211 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163) prohibits procurement from any "Communist Chinese military company" for goods and services on the Munitions List, with exceptions for U.S. military ship or aircraft visits to the PRC, testing, and intelligence-collection; as well as waiver authority for the Secretary of Defense. (See detailed discussion below.)

Select Abbreviations

AMS	Academy of Military Science
CMC	Central Military Commission
COSTIND	Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense
CPC	Communist Party of China
DCT	Defense Consultative Talks
DPMO	Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office
GAD	General Armament Department
GLD	General Logistics Department
GPD	General Political Department
GSD	General Staff Department
MR	Military Region
MMCA	Military Maritime Consultative Agreement
NDU	National Defense University
PACOM	Pacific Command
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy

⁹ "Navy: China 'Not Helpful' on Thanksgiving," *Associated Press*, November 28, 2007; White House press briefing, November 28, 2007; *Washington Post*, November 29, 2007.

Table I. The PLA's High Command

Central Military Commission (CMC) of the CPC			
Chairman		Hu Jintao	CPC General Secretary; PRC President
Vice Chm	General	Guo Boxiong	Politburo Member
Vice Chm	General	Xu Caihou	Politburo Member
Member	General	Liang Guanglie	Defense Minister
Member	General	Chen Bingde	Chief of General Staff (GSD)
Member	General	Li Jinai	Director of GPD
Member	General	Liao Xilong	Director of GLD
Member	General	Chang Wanquan	Director of GAD
Member	General	Jing Zhiyuan	Commander of the 2 nd Artillery
Member	Admiral	Wu Shengli	Commander of the Navy
Member	General	Xu Qiliang	Commander of the Air Force

Notes: Jiang Zemin was installed as the previous chairman of the CPC's CMC in November 1989 and remained in this position after handing other positions as CPC general secretary and PRC president to Hu Jintao. Jiang had ruled as the general secretary of the CPC from June 1989 until November 2002, when he stepped down at the 16th CPC Congress in favor of Hu Jintao. Jiang concurrently represented the PRC as president from March 1993 until March 2003, when he stepped down at the 10th National People's Congress. At the 4th plenum of the 16th Central Committee in September 2004, Jiang resigned as CMC chairman, allowing Hu to complete the transition of power. At the same time, General Xu Caihou rose from a CMC member to a vice chairman, and the commanders of the PLA Air Force, Navy, and 2nd Artillery rose to be CMC members for the first time in the PLA's history, reflecting

Table 2. Summary of Senior-Level Military Visits Since 1994

Year	Defense Secretary/ Minister	Highest Ranking Officer	Defense Consultative Talks
1994	William Perry		
1995			
1996	Chi Haotian		
1997		John Shalikashvili	1 st DCT
1998	William Cohen	Zhang Wannian	2 nd DCT
1999			
2000	William Cohen	Henry Shelton	3 rd DCT; 4 th DCT
2001			
2002			5 th DCT
2003	Cao Gangchuan		
2004		Richard Myers	6 th DCT
2005	Donald Rumsfeld		7 th DCT
2006		Guo Boxiong	8 th DCT
2007	Robert Gates	Peter Pace	9 th DCT

Figure I. Map - China's Military Regions



Policy Issues for Congress

Skepticism in the United States about the value of military exchanges with China has increased after the experiences in the 1990s; crises like the PLA's missile exercises targeting Taiwan in 1995-1996, mistaken bombing of the PRC embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and the F-8/EP-3 collision crisis of 2001; and changes in the U.S. policy approach. Since 2002, President Bush has pursued a closer relationship with the PRC. As the Defense Department gradually resumes the mil-to-mil relationship in that context, policy issues for Congress include whether the Administration has complied with legislation and has used leverage effectively in its contacts with the PLA to advance a prioritized list of U.S. security interests, while balancing security concerns about the PLA's warfighting capabilities.

Congressional Oversight

One issue for Congress in examining the military relationship with the PRC is the role of Congress, including the extent of congressional oversight of the Administration's policy. Congress could, as it has in the past, consider options to:

- Host PLA delegations on Capitol Hill or meet them at other venues
- Engage with the PLA as an aspect of visits by Codels to China
- Receive briefings by the Administration before and/or after military visits
- Hold hearings on related issues
- Investigate or oversee investigations of prisoner-of-war/missing-in-action (POW/MIA) cases (once under the specialized jurisdiction of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs)
- Write letters to Administration officials to express congressional concerns
- Require reports from the Pentagon, particularly in unclassified form
- Review interactions at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies of the Pacific Command (PACOM) in Hawaii
- Fund or prohibit funding for certain commissions or activities
- Pass legislation on sanctions and exchanges with the PLA
- Assess the Administration's adherence to laws on sanctions, contacts, and reporting requirements
- Obtain and review the Department of Defense (DOD)'s program for upcoming mil-to-mil contacts, particularly proposed programs already discussed with the PLA.

Arms Sales

Congress has oversight of sanctions imposed after the Tiananmen Crackdown that were enacted in Section 902 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY1990 and FY1991 (P.L. 101-246). The sanctions continue to prohibit the issuance of licenses to export Munitions List items to China, including helicopters and helicopter parts, as well as crime control equipment. The President has waiver authority.

Related to views of the U.S. ban on arms sales is the European arms embargo. In January 2004, the European Union (EU) decided to reconsider whether to lift its embargo on arms sales to China. On January 28, 2004, a State Department spokesman acknowledged that the United States has held "senior-level" discussions with France and other countries in the EU about the issue of whether to lift the embargo on arms sales to China. He said, "certainly for the United States, our statutes and regulations prohibit sales of defense items to China. We believe that others should maintain their current arms embargoes as well. We believe that the U.S. and European prohibitions on arms sales are complementary, were imposed for the same reasons, specifically

serious human rights abuses, and that those reasons remain valid today.”¹⁰ At a hearing of the House International Relations Committee on February 11, 2004, Representative Steve Chabot asked Secretary of State Colin Powell about the EU’s reconsideration of the arms embargo against China, as supported by France. Powell responded that he raised this issue with the foreign ministers of France, Ireland, United Kingdom, and Germany, and expressed opposition to a change in the EU’s policy at this time in light of the PLA’s missiles arrayed against Taiwan, the referendums on sensitive political issues then planned in Taiwan, and China’s human rights conditions.¹¹

Joint Defense Conversion Commission

In China in October 1994, Secretary of Defense William Perry and PLA General Ding Henggao, Director of the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND),¹² set up the U.S.-China Joint Defense Conversion Commission. Its stated goal was to facilitate economic cooperation and technical exchanges and cooperation in the area of defense conversion.

However, on June 1, 1995, the House National Security Committee issued H.Rept. 104-131 (for the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1996) and expressed concerns that this commission led to U.S. assistance to PRC firms with direct ties to the PLA and possible subsidies to the PLA. The committee inserted a section to prohibit the use of DOD funds for activities associated with the commission. The Senate’s bill had no similar language. On January 22, 1996, conferees reported in Conference Report 104-450 that they agreed to a provision (Section 1343 in P.L. 104-106) to require the Secretary of Defense to submit semi-annual reports on the commission. They also noted that continued U.S.-PRC security dialogue “can promote stability in the region and help protect American interests and the interests of America’s Asian allies.” Nonetheless, they warned that Congress intends to examine whether that dialogue has produced “tangible results” in human rights, transparency in military spending and doctrine, missile and nuclear nonproliferation, and other important U.S. security interests. Then, in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1997 (P.L. 104-201), enacted in September 23, 1996, Congress banned DOD from using any funds for any activity associated with the commission until 15 days after the first semi-annual report is received by Congress. In light of this controversy, Secretary Perry terminated the commission and informed Congress in a letter dated July 18, 1996.

Past Reporting Requirement

Also in 1996, the House National Security Committee issued H.Rept. 104-563 (for the National Defense Authorization Act of FY1997) that sought a “full accounting and detailed presentation” of all DOD interaction with the PRC government and PLA, including technology-sharing, conducted during 1994-1996 and proposed for 1997-1998, and required a classified and unclassified report by February 1, 1997. DOD submitted the unclassified report on February 21, 1997, and did not submit a classified version, saying that the unclassified report was

¹⁰ Department of State, press briefing by Richard Boucher, spokesman, January 28, 2004.

¹¹ See CRS Report RL32870, *European Union’s Arms Embargo on China: Implications and Options for U.S. Policy*, by Kristin Archick, Richard F. Grimmett, and Shirley A. Kan.

¹² CRS Report 96-889, *China: Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND) and Defense Industries*, by Shirley A. Kan.

comprehensive and that no contacts covered in the report included the release of classified material or technology sharing.

Programs of Exchanges

Certain Members of Congress have written to the Secretary of Defense to express concerns that mil-to-mil exchanges have not adequately benefitted U.S. interests. In early 1999, under the Clinton Administration, the *Washington Times* disclosed the existence of a “Gameplan for 1999 U.S.-Sino Defense Exchanges,” and Pentagon spokesperson Kenneth Bacon confirmed that an exchange program had been under way for years.¹³ Representative Dana Rohrabacher wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense William Cohen, saying that “after reviewing the ‘Game Plan,’ it appears evident that a number of events involving PLA logistics, acquisitions, quartermaster and chemical corps representatives may benefit PLA modernization to the detriment of our allies in the Pacific region and, ultimately, the lives of own service members.” He requested a detailed written description of various exchanges.¹⁴

In December 2001, under the Bush Administration, Senator Bob Smith and Representative Dana Rohrabacher wrote to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, expressing concerns about renewed military contacts with the PRC. They contended that military exchanges failed to reduce tensions (evident in the EP-3 crisis), lacked reciprocity, and provided militarily-useful information to the PLA. They charged that the Clinton Administration “largely ignored” the spirit and intent of legislation governing military exchanges with the PLA, including a “violation” of the law by allowing the PLA to visit the Joint Forces Command in August 2000, and, as initiators of the legislation, they “reminded” Rumsfeld of the congressional restrictions.¹⁵

Prohibitions in the FY2000 NDAA

Enacted on October 5, 1999, the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) set parameters to contacts with the PLA. Section 1201 of the NDAA for FY2000 (P.L. 106-65) prohibits the Secretary of Defense from authorizing any mil-to-mil contact with the PLA if that contact would “create a national security risk due to an inappropriate exposure” of the PLA to any of the following 12 operational areas (with exceptions granted to any search and rescue or humanitarian operation or exercise):

- Force projection operations
- Nuclear operations
- Advanced combined-arms and joint combat operations
- Advanced logistical operations
- Chemical and biological defense and other capabilities related to weapons of mass destruction
- Surveillance and reconnaissance operations

¹³ Bill Gertz, “Military Exchanges with Beijing Raises Security Concerns,” *Washington Times*, February 19, 1999.

¹⁴ Dana Rohrabacher, letters to William Cohen, March 1, 1999 and March 18, 1999.

¹⁵ Bob Smith and Dana Rohrabacher, letter to Donald Rumsfeld, December 17, 2001.

- Joint warfighting experiments and other activities related to transformations in warfare
- Military space operations
- Other advanced capabilities of the Armed Forces
- Arms sales or military-related technology transfers
- Release of classified or restricted information
- Access to a DOD laboratory.

The Secretary of Defense—rather than an authority in Congress or outside of the Defense Department—is also required to submit an annual written certification by December 31 of each year as to whether any military contact with China that the Secretary of Defense authorized in that year was a “violation” of the restrictions.

At a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee on March 9, 2006, Admiral Fallon, Commander of the Pacific Command, raised with Representative Victor Snyder the issue of whether to modify this legislation to relax restrictions on contacts with the PLA.¹⁶ Skeptics say that it is not necessary to change or lift the law to enhance exchanges, while the law contains prudent parameters that do not ban all contacts. A third option would be for Congress or the Secretary of Defense to clarify what type of mil-to-mil contact with the PLA would “create a national security risk due to an inappropriate exposure.” At a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee on June 13, 2007, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless contended that limitations in the law should not change. The PLA objects to the U.S. law, claiming that it restricts the military-to-military relationship.

Required Reports and Classification

Section 1201(f) of the NDAA for FY2000 required an unclassified report by March 31, 2000, on past military-to-military contacts with the PRC. The Office of the Secretary of Defense submitted this report in January 2001.

Section 1201(e) requires an annual report, by March 31 of each year starting in 2001, from the Secretary of Defense on the Secretary’s assessment of the state of mil-to-mil exchanges and contacts with the PLA, including past contacts, planned contacts, the benefits that the PLA expects to gain, the benefits that DOD expects to gain, and the role of such contacts for the larger security relationship with the PRC. The law did not specify whether the report shall be unclassified and/or classified. In the report submitted in January 2001 (on past mil-to-mil exchanges), the Pentagon stated that “as a matter of policy, all exchange activities are conducted at the unclassified level. Thus, there is no data included on the section addressing PLA access to classified data as a result of exchange activities.” On June 8, 2001, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz signed and submitted an unclassified report on the mil-to-mil exchanges in 2000 under the Clinton Administration and did not provide a schedule of activities for 2001, saying that the 2001 program was under review by the Secretary of Defense.

¹⁶ House Armed Services Committee, hearing on the FY2007 Budget for PACOM, March 9, 2006. Adm. Fallon also discussed a consideration of modifying the law in an interview: Tony Capaccio, “Fallon Wants to Jumpstart Military Contacts between U.S., China,” *Bloomberg*, March 13, 2006.

However, concerning contacts with the PLA under the Bush Administration, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld submitted reports on military exchanges with China in May 2002, May 2003, and May 2005 (for 2003 and 2004) that were classified “Confidential” and not made public.¹⁷ In July 2006, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld submitted an unclassified report on contacts in 2005.¹⁸ Secretary of Defense Robert Gates submitted an unclassified report in June 2007 for 2006.¹⁹ In March 2008, Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England submitted an unclassified report to Congress for 2007.²⁰

Procurement Prohibition in FY2006 NDAA

Section 1211 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (signed into law as P.L. 109-163 on January 6, 2006) prohibits procurement from any “Communist Chinese military company” for goods and services on the Munitions List, with exceptions for U.S. military ship or aircraft visits to the PRC, testing, and intelligence-collection; as well as waiver authority for the Secretary of Defense. Original language reported by the House Armed Services Committee in H.R. 1815 on May 20, 2005, would have prohibited the Secretary of Defense from any procurement of goods or services from any such company. S. 1042 did not have similar language. During conference, the Senate receded after limiting the ban to goods and services on the U.S. Munitions List; providing for exceptions for procurement in connection with U.S. military ship or aircraft visits, testing, and intelligence-collection; and authorizing waivers. The House passed the conference report (H.Rept. 109-360) on December 19, 2005, and the Senate agreed to it on December 21, 2005.

Leverage to Pursue U.S. Security Objectives

Objectives

At different times, under the Clinton and Bush Administrations, DOD has pursued exchanges with the PLA to various degrees of closeness as part of the policy of engagement in the bilateral relationship with China. The record of the mil-to-mil contacts in over ten years can be used to evaluate the extent to which those contacts provided tangible benefits to advance U.S. security goals.

The Pentagon’s last East Asia strategy report issued by Secretary of Defense Cohen in November 1998 placed “comprehensive engagement” with China in third place among nine components of the U.S. strategy. It said that U.S.-PRC dialogue was “critical” to ensure understanding of each other’s regional security interests, reduce misperceptions, increase understanding of PRC security concerns, and build confidence to “avoid military accidents and miscalculations.” While calling the strategic non-targeting agreement announced at the summit in June 1998 a “symbolic” action,

¹⁷ Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, “Inside the Ring,” *Washington Times*, May 17, 2002; author’s discussions with the Defense Department and Senate Armed Services Committee.

¹⁸ Secretary of Defense, “Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 1201(e) of the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 106-65),” July 19, 2006.

¹⁹ Secretary of Defense, “Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 1201(e) of the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 106-65),” June 22, 2007.

²⁰ Deputy Secretary of Defense, “Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 1201(e) of the FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 106-65),” March 31, 2008.

it asserted that the action “reassured both sides and reaffirmed our constructive relationship.” The report further pointed to the presidential hotline set up in May 1998, Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), and Defense Consultative Talks (DCT) as achievements in engagement with the PLA.²¹

Under the Bush Administration, in a report to Congress on June 8, 2001, required by the NDAA for FY2000, P.L. 106-65, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz wrote that military exchanges in 2000 sought to:

- foster an environment conducive to frank, open discussion
- complement the broader effort to engage the PRC
- reduce the likelihood of miscalculations regarding cross-strait issues.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz told reporters on May 31, 2002, that “we believe that the contact between American military personnel and Chinese military personnel can reduce misunderstandings on both sides and can help build a better basis for cooperation when opportunities arise. So we’d like to enhance those opportunities for interaction but we believe that to be successful we have to have principles of transparency and reciprocity. It’s very important that there’s mutual benefit to both sides.... The more each country knows about what the other one is doing, the less danger is there, I believe, of misunderstanding and confrontation.”²²

In agreeing to discuss a resumption of mil-to-mil contacts, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told reporters on June 21, 2002, that Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman would talk to the PLA about the principles of transparency, reciprocity, and consistency for mil-to-mil contacts that Rumsfeld stressed to Vice President Hu Jintao at the Pentagon in May 2002.

After the fifth DCT in December 2002, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith said that if contacts are structured properly, “they will serve our interests, they will serve our common interests. And the principal interest is in reducing the risks of mistake, miscalculation, and misunderstanding. If these military-to-military exchanges actually lead to our gaining insights into Chinese thinking and policies and capabilities and the like, and they can gain insights into ours, then it doesn’t mean we’ll necessarily agree on everything, but it at least means that as we’re making our policies, we’re making them on the basis of accurate information.”²³

In March 2008, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England defined these principal U.S. objectives in the annual report to Congress on contacts with the PLA:

- support the President’s overall policy goals regarding China;
- prevent conflict by clearly communicating U.S. resolve to maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region;
- lower the risk of miscalculation between the two militaries;
- increase U.S. understanding of China’s military capabilities and intentions;

²¹ Secretary of Defense, *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, 1998.

²² Department of Defense, “Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz’s Interview with Phoenix Television,” May 31, 2002.

²³ Department of Defense, “Under Secretary Feith’s Media Roundtable on U.S.-China Defense Consultative Talks,” December 9, 2002.

- encourage China to adopt greater openness and transparency in its military capabilities and intentions;
- promote stable U.S.-China relations;
- increase mutual understanding between U.S. and PLA officers;
- encourage China to play a constructive and peaceful role in the Asia-Pacific region; to act as a partner in addressing common security challenges; and to emerge as a responsible stakeholder in the world.

Debate

U.S. security objectives in mil-to-mil contacts with China have included gaining insights about the PLA's capabilities and concepts; deterrence against a PLA use of force or coercion against Taiwan or U.S. allies; reduction in tensions in the Taiwan Strait; strategic arms control; weapons nonproliferation in countries such as like North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan; closer engagement with top PRC leaders; freedom of navigation and flight; preventing dangers to U.S. military personnel operating in proximity to the PLA; minimizing misperceptions and miscalculations; and accounting for American POW/MIAs.

Skeptics of U.S.-PRC mil-to-mil contacts say they have had little value for achieving these U.S. objectives. Instead that they contend that the contacts served to inform the PLA as it builds its warfighting capability against Taiwan and the United States, which it views as a potential adversary, and seemed to reward belligerence. They oppose rehabilitation of PLA officers involved in the Tiananmen Crackdown. They question whether the PLA has shown transparency and reciprocated with equivalent or substantive access, and urge greater attention to U.S. allies over China. From this perspective, the ups and downs in the military relationship reflect its use as a tool in the bilateral political relationship, in which the PRC at times had leverage over the United States. Thus, they contend, a realistic appraisal of the nature of the PLA threat would call for caution in military contacts with China, perhaps limiting them to exchanges such as strategic talks and senior-level policy dialogues, rather than operational areas that involve military capabilities.

A former U.S. Army Attache in Beijing wrote in 1999 that under the Clinton Administration, military-to-military contacts allowed PLA officers “broad access” to U.S. warships, exercises, and even military manuals. He argued that “many of the military contacts between the United States and China over the years helped the PLA attain its goals [in military modernization].” He called for limiting exchanges to strategic dialogue on weapons proliferation, Taiwan, the Korean peninsula, freedom of navigation, missile defense, etc. He urged policymakers not to “improve the PLA’s capability to wage war against Taiwan or U.S. friends and allies, its ability to project force, or its ability to repress the Chinese people.”²⁴ He also testified to Congress in 2000 that the PLA conceals its capabilities in exchanges with the United States. For example, he said, the PLA invited General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to see the capabilities of the 15th Airborne Army (in May 1997), but it showed him a highly scripted routine. Furthermore, the PLA allowed Secretary of Defense Cohen to visit an Air Defense Command Center (in

²⁴ Larry Wortzel, “Why Caution is Needed in Military Contacts with China,” Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, December 2, 1999.

January 1998), but it was “a hollow shell of a local headquarters; it was not the equivalent of America’s National Command Center” that was shown to PRC leaders.²⁵

In 2000, Randy Schriver, a former official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, discussed lessons learned in conducting military exchanges during the Clinton Administration and argued for limiting such exchanges. Schriver assessed senior-level talks as exchanges of talking points rather than real dialogue, but nonetheless helpful. He considered the MMCA a successful confidence-building measure (not knowing the EP-3 aircraft collision crisis would occur less than one year later in April 2001). He also said it was positive to have PLA participation in multilateral fora and to expose younger PLA officers to American society. However, Schriver said that the United States “failed miserably” in gaining a window on the PLA’s modernization, gaining neither access as expected nor reciprocity; failed to shape China’s behavior while allowing China to shape the behavior of some American “ardent suitors”; and failed to deter the PLA’s aggression while whetting the PLA’s appetite in planning against a potential American adversary. He disclosed that the Pentagon needed to exert control over the Pacific Command’s contacts with the PLA, with the Secretary of Defense issuing a memo to set guidelines. He also called for continuing consultations with Congress.²⁶

Warning of modest expectations for military ties and that such exchanges often have been suspended to signal messages or retaliate against a perceived wrong action, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell contended in late 2005 that security ties can only follow, not lead, the overall bilateral relationship.²⁷ After serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Bush Administration, Randy Schriver observed in 2007 that military engagement with China has continued to pursue the “same modest, limited agenda that has been in place for close to 20 years,” despite a high-level visit by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in November 2007.²⁸

Proponents of military exchanges with the PRC point out that contacts with the PLA cannot be expected to equal contacts with allies in transparency, reciprocity, and consistency. They argue that the mil-to-mil contacts nonetheless promote U.S. interests and allow the U.S. military to gain insights into the PLA, including its top leadership, that no other bilateral contacts provide. U.S. military attaches, led by the Defense Attache at the rank of brigadier general or rear admiral, have contacts at levels lower than the top PLA leaders and are subject to strict surveillance in China. In addition to chances for open intelligence collection, the military relationship can minimize miscalculations and misperceptions, and foster pro-U.S. leanings and understanding, particularly among younger officers who might lead in the future. Proponents caution against treating China as if it is already an enemy, since the United States seeks China’s cooperation on international security issues. There might be benefits in cooperation in military medicine to prevent pandemics

²⁵ Larry Wortzel, Director of the Asian Studies Center at the Heritage Foundation, testimony on “China’s Strategic Intentions and Goals” before the House Armed Services Committee, June 21, 2000.

²⁶ Randy Schriver, former Country Director for China in the Office of the Secretary of Defense during the Clinton Administration, and later Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the Bush Administration, discussed military contacts with China at an event at the Heritage Foundation on July 27, 2000. See Stephen Yates, Al Santoli, Randy Schriver, and Larry Wortzel, “The Proper Scope, Purpose, and Utility of U.S. Relations with China’s Military,” *Heritage Lectures*, October 10, 2000.

²⁷ Kurt Campbell (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and the Pacific in 1995-2000) and Richard Weitz, “The Limits of U.S.-China Military Cooperation: Lessons From 1995-1999,” *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2005-2006.

²⁸ Randall Schriver, “The Real Value in Gates’ Asia Trip,” *Taipei Times*, November 16, 2007.

of diseases, like avian flu. During the epidemic of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2003, it was a PLA doctor, Dr. Jiang Yanyong, who revealed the PRC leadership's coverup of SARS cases at premier PLA hospitals.²⁹ Since the early 1990s, Congress and the Defense Department have viewed China as the key to getting information to resolve the cases of POW/MIAs from the Korean War.

Citing several exchanges in 1998 (Commander of the Pacific Command's visit that included the first foreign look at the 47th Group Army, a U.S. Navy ship visit to Shanghai, and naval consultative talks at Naval Base Coronado), the U.S. Naval Attache in Beijing wrote that "the process of mutual consultation, openness, and sharing of concerns and information needed to preclude future misunderstandings and to build mutual beneficial relations is taking place between the U.S. and China's armed forces, especially in the military maritime domain." He stressed that "the importance of progress in this particular area of the Sino-American relationship cannot be overestimated."³⁰

Two former U.S. military attaches posted to China maintained in a report that "regardless of whether it is a high-level DoD delegation or a functional exchange of medical officers, the U.S. military does learn something about the PLA from every visit." They advocated that "the United States should fully engage China in a measured, long-term military-to-military exchange program that does not help the PLA improve its warfighting capabilities." They said, "the most effective way to ascertain developments in China's military and defense policies is to have face-to-face contact at multiple levels over an extended period of time." Thus, they argued, "even though the PLA minimizes foreign access to PLA facilities and key officials, the United States has learned, and can continue to learn, much about the PLA through its long-term relationship."³¹

Another former U.S. military attache in Beijing (from 1992 to 1995) acknowledged that he saw many PLA drills and demonstrations by "showcase" units and never any unscripted training events. Nonetheless, he noted that in August 2003, the PLA arranged for 27 military observers from the United States and other countries to be the first foreigners to observe a PLA exercise at its largest training base (which is in the Inner Mongolia region under the Beijing Military Region). He wrote that "by opening this training area and exercise to foreign observers, the Chinese military leadership obviously was attempting to send a message about its willingness to be more 'transparent' in order to 'promote friendship and mutual trust between Chinese and foreign armed forces.'³² However, in a second PLA exercise opened to foreign observers, the "Dragon 2004" landing exercise at the Shanwei amphibious operations training base in Guangdong province in September 2004, only seven foreign military observers from France, Germany, Britain, and Mexico attended, with no Americans (if invited).³³

A retired PACOM Commander, Dennis Blair, co-chaired a task force on the U.S.-China relationship. Its report of April 2007 recommended a sustained high-level military strategic

²⁹ John Pomfret, "Doctor Says Health Ministry Lied About Disease," *Washington Post*, April 10, 2003; "Feature: A Chinese Doctor's Extraordinary April in 2003," *People's Daily*, June 13, 2003.

³⁰ Captain Brad Kaplan, USN, "China and U.S.: Building Military Relations," *Asia-Pacific Defense Forum*, Summer 1999.

³¹ Kenneth Allen and Eric McVadon, "China's Foreign Military Relations," Stimson Center, October 1999.

³² Dennis Blasko, "Bei Jian 0308: Did Anyone Hear the Sword on the Inner Mongolian Plains?" *RUSI Chinese Military Update*, October 2003.

³³ *Xinhua*, September 2, 2004; *Liberation Army Daily*, September 3, 2004; *Jane's Defense Weekly*, September 22, 2004.

dialogue to complement the “Senior Dialogue” started by the Deputy Secretary of State in 2005 and the “Strategic Economic Dialogue” launched by the Secretary of Treasury in 2006.³⁴

Perspectives

The Center for Naval Analyses found in a study that U.S. and PRC approaches to military exchanges are “diametrically opposed,” thus raising tensions at times. While the United States has pursued a “bottom-up” effort starting with lower-level contact to work toward mutual understanding and then strategic agreement, the PRC has sought a “trickle-down” relationship in which agreement on strategic issues results in understanding and then allows for specific activities later. The study said that “the PLA leadership regards the military relationship with the U.S. as a political undertaking for strategic reasons—not a freestanding set of military initiatives conducted by military professionals for explicitly military reasons. Fundamentally, the military relationship is a vehicle to pursue strategic political ends.” While recognizing that using the military relationship to enhance military modernization is extremely important to the PLA, the study contended that “it is not the key motive force driving the PLA’s engagement with DOD.” The report also argued that because the PLA suspects the United States uses the military relationship for deterrence, intelligence, and influence, “it seems ludicrous for them to expose their strengths and weaknesses to the world’s ‘sole superpower’.” It noted that using “reciprocity” as a measure of progress “is sure to lead to disappointment.”³⁵

U.S. Security Interests

With lessons learned, a fundamental issue in overall policy toward China is how to use U.S. leadership and leverage in managing a prudent program of military contacts that advances, and does not harm, a prioritized list of U.S. security interests. The Pentagon could pursue such a program with focused control by the Office of the Secretary of Defense; with consultation with Congress and public disclosures; and in coordination with allies and friends in the region, such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Singapore. Such a program might include these objectives.

Communication, Conflict Avoidance, and Crisis Management

Crisis

The various crises of direct confrontation between the U.S. military and PLA might call for greater cooperation with China to improve communication, conflict avoidance, and crisis management. Analysts in China have studied the government’s strengths and weaknesses in crisis management in light of the EP-3 crisis in 2001.³⁶ Nonetheless, the crisis over the EP-3 aircraft collision and subsequent confrontations have shown the limits in benefits to the United States of pursuing personal relationships with PLA leaders, the consultations under the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), as well as the presidential hotline. From the beginning of the

³⁴ Dennis Blair and Carla Hills, Task Force of the Council on Foreign Relations, “U.S.-China Relations: An Affirmative Agenda, A Responsible Course,” April 10, 2007.

³⁵ David Finkelstein and John Unangst, “Engaging DoD: Chinese Perspectives on Military Relations with the United States,” CNA Corporation, October 1999.

³⁶ Author’s discussions with government-affiliated research organizations in China in 2002.

crisis, PRC ruler Jiang Zemin pressed the United States with a hard-line stance, while PLA generals followed without any greater inflammatory rhetoric.³⁷ (See the **Appendix** for text boxes that summarize the major bilateral tensions in crises or confrontations.)

Telephones

During his second visit to China as PACOM Commander in December 1997, Admiral Prueher said that “I remember wishing I had your telephone number,” in response to a PLA naval officer’s question about Prueher’s thinking during the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1995-1996.³⁸ After becoming ambassador to China in December 1999, Prueher was nonetheless frustrated when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the PLA would not answer the phone or return phone calls in the immediate aftermath of the EP-3 collision crisis in April 2001.³⁹

Still, some continue to believe there could be benefits in fostering relationships with PLA officers, both at the senior level and with younger, future leaders. While in Beijing in January 2004, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Myers, said that “it’s always an advantage to be able to pick up a telephone and talk to somebody that you know fairly well. The relationship that I have with General Liang [Chief of General Staff], the relationship that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has with his counterpart, General Cao, is going to be helpful in that regard.”⁴⁰ Likewise, visiting Beijing in September 2005, Admiral William Fallon, Commander of the Pacific Command, referred to the value for his regional responsibilities to “pick up the telephone and call someone I already know.”⁴¹

MMCA

The MMCA, initialed at the first DCT in December 1997 and signed by Secretary Cohen in Beijing in January 1998, only arranged meetings to discuss maritime and air safety (i.e., to talk about talking). There was no agreement on communication during crises or rules of engagement. Despite the 2001 crisis, the Defense Department encountered difficulties with the PLA in discussions under the MMCA, including simply setting up meetings and PLA objections to U.S. activities in China’s claimed 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (even beyond the territorial sea up to 12 nautical miles from the coast).⁴²

³⁷ CRS Report RL30946, *China-U.S. Aircraft Collision Incident of April 2001: Assessments and Policy Implications*, by Shirley A. Kan et al.

³⁸ LTC Frank Miller (USA), “China Hosts Visit by the U.S. Commander in Chief, Pacific,” *Asia Pacific Defense Forum*, Spring 1998. The article ended by saying that “perhaps the most important result of Adm. Prueher’s December 1997 trip to China is that, should there be another crisis like the March 1996 Taiwan Strait Missile Crisis, Adm. Prueher now has the phone number.”

³⁹ John Keefe, “Anatomy of the EP-3 Incident, April 2001,” Center for Naval Analyses report, January 2002.

⁴⁰ Jim Garamone, “China, U.S. Making Progress on Military Relations,” American Forces Press Service, January 15, 2004.

⁴¹ U.S. Pacific Command, Adm. William J. Fallon, “Roundtable at Embassy PAS Program Room,” Beijing, China, September 7, 2005. Adm. Fallon also said he consulted “extensively” with retired Adm. Prueher, former Commander of the Pacific Command.

⁴² Chris Johnson, “DOD Will Urge China to Conduct Joint Search and Rescue Exercise,” *Inside the Navy*, March 13, 2006.

DPCT

In early 2005, U.S. defense and PLA officials held a Special Policy Dialogue to discuss policy disputes and end an impasse in talks over safety and operational concerns under the MMCA. The separate discussions continued in the Defense Policy Coordination Talks (DPCT) held in Washington in December 2006. The first combined exercise held under the MMCA, a search and rescue exercise (SAREX), did not take place until the fall of 2006, after eight years of discussions. By 2007, the MMCA's status and value were in greater doubt, and no MMCA working groups or plenary meetings took place that year.

On February 25-26, 2008, in Qingdao, PACOM's Director for Strategic Planning and Policy (J-5), USMC Major General Thomas Conant, and PLA Navy Deputy Chief of Staff Zhang Leiyu led an annual meeting under the MMCA, the first since 2006. The PLA sought to amend the MMCA. The U.S. side opposed PLA proposals to discuss policy differences at the MMCA meetings and to plan details of future military exercises.⁴³ The PLA and U.S. military have clashed over the PRC's disputes with foreign countries over the freedom of navigation in the high seas.

INCSEA

For his nomination hearing to be the PACOM Commander on March 8, 2007, Admiral Timothy Keating responded to questions from the Senate Armed Services Committee by claiming that a dangerous incident similar to the EP-3 crisis would be "less likely." He also proposed negotiating with the PLA an "Incidents at Sea" (INCSEA) protocol, like the agreement with the Soviet Union (signed in 1972). For dealing with a possible crisis, Adm. Keating has referred to using a network of retired Admirals who had commanded PACOM and had met with PLA commanders.⁴⁴

Hotline

After staff-level preliminary discussions in 2003, Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith formally proposed a hotline for crisis management and confidence building with the PLA at the DCT in February 2004. However, the PLA did not give a positive signal until a defense ministerial conference in Singapore in June 2007, when Lt. General Zhang Qinsheng, Deputy Chief of General Staff, said that the PLA would discuss such a hotline. During Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' visit to China in November 2007, the PLA agreed in principle to set up a defense telephone link (DTL) with the Pentagon. The two sides signed an agreement in February 2008. Then, in May 2008, PACOM's Commander, Admiral Keating, used the hotline in its first operational use to communicate with PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff Ma Xiaotian about the U.S. Air Force's dispatch of two C-17 transport aircraft to deliver relief supplies to Sichuan province after an earthquake. However, during the confrontation in March 2009 when PRC ships aggressively harassed the U.S. surveillance ship USNS Impeccable, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told reporters on March 18, 2009, that he did not use the hotline.

⁴³ Major General Thomas Conant and Rear Admiral Zhang Leiyu, "Summary of Proceedings of the Annual Meeting Under the Agreement Between the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China and the Department of Defense of the United States of America on Establishing a Consultative Mechanism to Strengthen Military Maritime Safety," Qingdao, February 26, 2008.

⁴⁴ Forum on "Evolving and Enhancing Military Relations," George Bush U.S.-China Relations Conference 2007, Washington, DC, October 24, 2007.

ATC

Another area for possible improved communication and prevention of accidents is air traffic control in China, which is controlled by the PLA Air Force. In December 2006, the PLA suddenly shut down the busy Pudong International Airport near Shanghai and at least three other airports under the Nanjing Military Region, ostensibly for training.⁴⁵

Transparency, Reciprocity, and Information-Exchange

Critics of military exchanges with China have charged that the United States gained limited information about the PLA, while granting greater access to the PLA than the access we received. A related question in the debate has concerned the extent to which the issues of reciprocity and transparency should affect or impede efforts to increase mutual understanding with the PLA.

According to the Pentagon's report submitted to Congress in January 2001, in 1998, the PLA denied requests by the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ryan, to fly in an SU-27 fighter, see integration of the SU-27s into units, and see progress in development of the F-10 fighter. Also in 1998, the PLA denied a U.S. request for Secretary of Defense Cohen to visit China's National Command Center. Still, the PLA requested access to U.S. exercises showing warfighting capabilities, with two cases of denial by the Pentagon in 1999: PLA requests to send observers to the U.S. Army's premier National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin in California and to the Red Flag air combat training exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada (see **Table 2** on PLA delegation's visit in March 1999).

Regarding controversial access to the U.S. Army's NTC, visits by PLA delegations in the 1990s included those in November 1994 and December 1997.⁴⁶ Then, in December 1998, the U.S. Army reportedly resisted a PLA request for greater, unprecedented access to the NTC in 1999, because the PLA asked for access greater than that granted to other countries, the PLA would gain information to enhance its warfighting, and the PLA was unlikely to reciprocate with similar access for the U.S. military. The PLA wanted to observe, with direct access, the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the 82nd Airborne Division in a training exercise. Army officials reportedly felt pressured by Admiral Prueher at PACOM and Secretary Cohen to grant the request. In the end, the Pentagon announced on March 17, 1999, that it denied the PLA's request.⁴⁷

The Defense Department's 2003 report to Congress on PRC military power charged that "since the 1980s, U.S. military exchange delegations to China have been shown only 'showcase' units, never any advanced units or any operational training or realistic exercises."⁴⁸ However, a Rand study in 2004 argued that the DOD's statement "appears to be inaccurate." Rand reported that between 1993 and 1999, U.S. visitors went to 51 PLA units. (PLA delegations visited 71 U.S. military units between 1994 and 1999.) The report recommended that "the best way of dealing

⁴⁵ Bruce Stanley, "China's Congested Skies," *Wall Street Journal*, February 16, 2007.

⁴⁶ The PLA's visit to the NTC in November 1994 was not the first time that the PLA observed U.S. military training at Fort Irwin. In August 1985, the United States allowed the PLA to observe military training at Fort Benning, GA; Fort Bragg, NC; and Fort Irwin, CA. See Colonel Jer Donald Get, "What's With the Relationship Between America's Army and China's PLA?" Army War College monograph, September 15, 1996.

⁴⁷ Sean Naylor, "Chinese Denied Full Access to the NTC," *Army Times*, March 29, 1999.

⁴⁸ Department of Defense, "Report on PRC Military Power," July 2003.

with the reciprocity and transparency issue is to remove it as an issue.” It called for proper planning and a focus on educational exchanges.⁴⁹

In 2005, the PRC did not allow U.S. forces to observe the major combined PLA-Russian military exercise, “Peace Mission 2005,” and prohibited U.S. participation in the multilateral humanitarian exercise in Hong Kong, to which U.S. forces had joined for years in the past.⁵⁰ Still, PACOM Commander, Admiral Fallon, invited PLA observers to the U.S. “Valiant Shield” exercise that brought three aircraft carriers to waters off Guam in June 2006. In August 2007, the U.S. observers were not invited to monitor the PRC-Russian combined exercise “Peace Mission 2007.”

Nonetheless, U.S. participants in contacts with the PLA have reported gaining insights into PLA capabilities and concepts. The record of military contacts since 1993 (in the next part of this CRS Report) shows some instances when the PLA allowed U.S. officials to be first-time foreign visitors with “**unprecedented access:**”

- Satellite Control Center in Xian (1995)
- Guangzhou Military Region headquarters (1997)
- Beijing Military Region’s Air Defense Command Center (1998)
- 47th Group Army (1998)
- Armored Force Engineering Academy (2000)
- Training base in Inner Mongolia (2003), with multinational access
- Zhanjiang, homeport of the PLAN’s South Sea Fleet (2003)
- Beijing Aerospace Control Center (2004)
- 2nd Artillery (missile corps) headquarters (2005)
- 39th Group Army (2006)
- FB-7 fighter at 28th Air Division (2006)
- Su-27 fighter and T-99 tank (2007)
- Jining Air Force Base (2007).

Tension Reduction over Taiwan

Tensions over Taiwan have continued to flare since the mid-1990s, with many observers fearing the possibility of war looming between the United States and China—two nuclear powers. The Bush Administration maintains that it has managed a balanced policy toward Beijing and Taipei that preserves peace and stability. Nonetheless, in April 2004, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly testified to Congress that U.S. efforts at deterring China’s coercion “might fail” if Beijing becomes convinced that it must stop Taiwan from advancing on a course toward permanent

⁴⁹ Kevin Pollpeter, “U.S. China Security Management: Assessing the Military-to-Military Relationship,” RAND Corporation, 2004.

⁵⁰ Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman, remarks to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, March 16, 2006.

separation from China.⁵¹ Kelly also noted that the PRC leadership accelerated the PLA buildup after 1999. The Pentagon reported to Congress in May 2004 that the PLA has “accelerated” modernization, including a missile buildup, in response to concerns about Taiwan.⁵²

Under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), P.L. 96-8, that has governed U.S. policy toward Taiwan since 1979, Congress has oversight of the President’s management of the cross-strait situation under the rubric of the “one China” policy.⁵³ While considering contacts with the PLA, the United States, after the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, has increased arms sales to and ties with Taiwan’s military.⁵⁴ Policy considerations include offering arms sales and cooperation to help Taiwan’s self-defense; securing leverage over Beijing and Taipei; deterring aggression or coercion; discouraging provocations from Beijing or Taipei; and supporting cross-strait dialogue and confidence-building measures. In educational exchanges with the PLA, questions have concerned whether to allow PLA officers to attend U.S. military academies, colleges, or universities, and how that change could affect attendees from Taiwan’s military; and whether to allow attendees from Taiwan at PACOM’s Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS).

Concerning the APCSS courses in Honolulu, the Bush Administration’s policy change to allow attendance from Taiwan has affected the PLA’s attendance and interactions among the U.S., PRC, and other Asian militaries. In November 2001, the Department of Defense directed APCSS to allow people from Taiwan to participate in courses and conferences. Acknowledging the potential difficulty for continuing participation by the PLA, the policy called for alternating invitations to the PRC and Taiwan. In the summer of 2002, three fellows from Taiwan attended the Executive Course, the first time that Taiwan sent students to APCSS. Dissatisfied with alternating attendance with Taiwan’s representatives, the PLA stopped sending representatives to APCSS courses and conferences by 2004.⁵⁵

While the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954 terminated at the end of 1979 and the TRA does not commit the United States to defend Taiwan, the TRA states that it is U.S. policy, among other points:

- to consider any non-peaceful efforts to determine the future of Taiwan, including boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific region and of “grave concern” to the United States;
- to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character (making available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability);
- to maintain the U.S. capacity to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.

⁵¹ Testimony at a hearing on “The Taiwan Relations Act: The Next 25 Years,” before the House International Relations Committee, April 21, 2004.

⁵² Defense Department, “Annual Report on PRC Military Power,” May 29, 2004.

⁵³ See CRS Report RL30341, *China/Taiwan: Evolution of the “One China” Policy—Key Statements from Washington, Beijing, and Taipei*, by Shirley A. Kan.

⁵⁴ See CRS Report RL30957, *Taiwan: Major U.S. Arms Sales Since 1990*, by Shirley A. Kan.

⁵⁵ Author’s discussions at the Biennial Conference at APCSS on July 16-18, 2002; interview with former PACOM staff.

There is a question about the extent of the U.S. role in supporting cross-strait dialogue. In Shanghai in July 2000, visiting Secretary of Defense Cohen said that the Clinton Administration viewed the newly-elected President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan as offering hope for cross-strait reconciliation. Cohen stepped out of the narrow mil-to-mil context and met with Wang Daohan, chairman of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). This meeting raised questions about the U.S. role in more actively encouraging cross-strait talks. Cohen said that Chen showed flexibility after becoming president and that there was a window of opportunity for changes.⁵⁶ In contrast, in Beijing in February 2004, visiting Under Secretary of Defense Feith said he did not discuss the contentious issue raised by PLA leaders "at length" concerning referendums in Taiwan—an issue over which the PRC threatened to use force. Feith said he did not discuss the issue because it was not defense-related.⁵⁷

There are complications in consideration of the question of Taiwan in the U.S.-PRC military relationship. Not discussing Taiwan leaves the primary dispute subject to misperception or miscalculation. However, linking the Taiwan question can raise tensions and frustrations over a disagreement that military exchanges cannot solve. A 2007 study co-authored by former PACOM Commander Dennis Blair called for discussion of the PLA's missile buildup against Taiwan and greater efforts to reduce tensions across the Taiwan Strait.⁵⁸

The PLA has suspended military exchanges in retaliation for steps in U.S. policy toward Taiwan, especially continued arms sales. However, even as the PLA signaled its displeasure and urged U.S. cooperation in "peace and stability" in the Taiwan Strait, suspensions of military exchanges have played a counter-productive role by raising U.S.-PRC tensions. Moreover, the PRC's implicit linkage has targeted the U.S. Navy in particular, precisely the service advocating engagement with the PLA.

After Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian proposed in June 2007 that Taiwan hold a referendum on membership in the U.N. under the name "Taiwan" on the day of the next presidential election (scheduled for March 22, 2008), Beijing opposed it as a step toward Taiwan's de jure independence. While joining the PRC in opposing the referendum, the Bush Administration continued the U.S. policy of providing some security assistance to Taiwan. After notifications to Congress of arms sales to Taiwan in September and November 2007, the PRC protested by refusing to hold military-to-military exchanges, including an annual MMCA meeting scheduled for October 2007. The PRC also denied port visits at Hong Kong in November 2007 by U.S. Navy minesweepers in distress (*USS Patriot* and *USS Guardian*) and by the carrier group led by the *USS Kitty Hawk* for the Thanksgiving holiday and family reunions, leading to official protests by the Pentagon to the PLA.

After sailing away from the denied port call in Hong Kong toward Japan, the *USS Kitty Hawk* sailed through the Taiwan Strait, raising objections in China with claims in PRC media of the strait as China's "internal waterway." When asked at a news conference in Beijing on January 15, 2008, visiting PACOM Commander, Admiral Keating said, "we don't need China's permission to go through the Taiwan Strait. It's international water. We will exercise our free right of passage

⁵⁶ Department of Defense, "Secretary Cohen's Press Conference at the Shanghai Stock Exchange," Shanghai, China, July 14, 2000.

⁵⁷ Joe McDonald (AP), "Feith Voices Concern Over Chinese Missiles," *Army Times*, February 11, 2004.

⁵⁸ Dennis Blair and Carla Hills, co-chairs of a task force at the Council on Foreign Relations, "U.S.-China Relations: An Affirmative Agenda, A Responsible Course," April 10, 2007.

whenever and wherever we choose as we have done repeatedly in the past and we'll do in the future." Two days later, when asked whether ships need the PRC's permission to sail through the Taiwan Strait, China's foreign ministry spokesperson did not reject the idea of permission from Beijing while claiming the strait as a "highly sensitive area."

After the Bush Administration notified Congress of some pending arms sales to Taiwan in October 2008, the PLA suspended some but not all military exchanges and nonproliferation talks until February 2009. The Defense Department spokesman said that the PRC canceled or postponed several meetings in "continued politicization" of the military-to-military exchanges.⁵⁹

After tentative support in 2008 in both Beijing and Taipei for cross-strait confidence building measures (CBMs), PACOM's Admiral Keating raised the question of mediation or another U.S. role when he offered in February 2009 to host talks between the PLA and Taiwan's military.⁶⁰

Weapons Nonproliferation

Despite past engagement with the PLA to seek cooperation in weapons nonproliferation, the United States continues to have concerns about PRC entities and has repeatedly imposed sanctions. Secretary of Defense Cohen visited China and urged its commitment to weapons nonproliferation. China did not join in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) announced by President Bush in May 2003 (to interdict dangerous shipments).

There is a debate about the policy of the Bush Administration in engaging China—and the PLA—in a multilateral effort to achieve the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons and nuclear programs. In April 2003, China hosted trilateral talks among the United States, China, and North Korea. Then, China hosted the first round of six-nation talks in August 2003 that also included Japan, South Korea, and Russia. The following month, PLA units replaced paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP) units along China's border with North Korea, apparently to signal to Pyongyang the seriousness of the tensions and warn against provocative actions. Beijing has hosted additional rounds of Six-Party Talks. After the third round, PRC leaders hosted North Korea's defense minister in July 2004. There have been questions about whether China has been adequately assertive in using its economic and political leverage over North Korea and whether China shares the U.S. priority of the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement—not just a freeze—of North Korea's nuclear weapons programs. China, nonetheless, has stated the common goal of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula and demonstrated its displeasure with North Korea after its missile and nuclear tests in 2006, including during CMC Vice Chairman Guo Boxiong's visit in the United States in 2006.⁶¹

Strategic Nuclear and Space Talks

As for a strategic nuclear dialogue, the Clinton Administration had included nuclear forces as a priority area for expanded military discussions, including during the visits to China in 1998 of Secretary of Defense Cohen and President Clinton. In his visit to China in 1998, President

⁵⁹ Statement quoted in "China Cancels Military Contacts with U.S. in Protest," *AP*, October 6, 2008.

⁶⁰ Quoted in "Optimism Grows for U.S.-China Military Talks," *New York Times*, February 19, 2009.

⁶¹ CRS Report RL31555, *China and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Missiles: Policy Issues*, by Shirley A. Kan.

Clinton announced a bilateral agreement not to target strategic nuclear weapons against each other, but it was symbolic and lacked implementation.

Since then, concerns have increased about China's modernizing strategic nuclear force and its "No First Use" policy, including whether it is subject to debate. In July 2005, PLA Major General Zhu Chenghu, a dean at the PLA's National Defense University, told western journalists in Beijing that "if the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition into the target zone on China's territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons," and he included the PLA's naval ships and fighters as China's "territory." Zhu added that if the United States is determined to intervene in a Taiwan scenario, "we will be determined to respond, and we Chinese will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all cities east of Xian [an ancient capital city in north-central China]. Of course, the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds of, or two hundreds of, or even more cities will be destroyed by the Chinese." Zhu also dismissed China's "No First Use" policy, saying that it applied only to non-nuclear states and could be changed.⁶² China's experts argued that Zhu's comments reflected China's concerns about the challenges presented by U.S. defense policy and nuclear strategy for China's policy.⁶³

When Defense Secretary Rumsfeld visited China in October 2005, the PLA accorded him the honor of being the first foreigner to visit the Second Artillery's headquarters. Its commander, General Jing Zhiyuan, assured Rumsfeld that China would not be the first to use nuclear weapons.⁶⁴ General Jing later hosted the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Ike Skelton, at the Second Artillery's headquarters in August 2007.⁶⁵

The Bush Administration invited General Jing to visit the U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), as discussed during a summit between Bush and Hu Jintao in Washington in April 2006. Two months later, Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman visited Beijing for the DCT and discussed the invitation to the 2nd Artillery Commander. In October 2006, the STRATCOM commander, General James Cartwright (USMC), expressed interest in engaging with the PLA on space issues, including ways in which the two countries can avoid and handle collisions or interference between satellites, and perceptions of attacks on satellites.⁶⁶ However, General Jing declined to schedule a visit.⁶⁷ On January 11, 2007, the PLA conducted its first successful direct ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons test by launching a missile with a kinetic kill vehicle to destroy a PRC satellite.⁶⁸ On June 13, 2007, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless testified to the House Armed Services Committee that the PLA would not set a date to hold a dialogue on nuclear policy, strategy, and doctrine. Lawless said that PLA strategic forces have improved the capability to target the U.S. mainland.⁶⁹ General Jing Zhiyuan has

⁶² Jason Dean, "Chinese General Lays Nuclear Card on U.S.' Table," *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2005; Danny Gittings, "General Zhu Goes Ballistic," *Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2005.

⁶³ World Security Institute China Program, "Opening the Debate on U.S.-China Nuclear Relations," *China Security*, Autumn 2005.

⁶⁴ General Jing's reiteration of the "no first use" pledge was cited by one official PRC media report: "Rumsfeld Visits China; The Chinese Side Reiterates It Will Not Use Nuclear Weapons First," *Zhongguo Tongxun She [New China News Agency]*, October 20, 2005.

⁶⁵ *Xinhua* and *Associated Press*, August 27, 2007.

⁶⁶ Jeremy Singer, "Cartwright Seeks Closer Ties with China, Russia," *Space News*, October 16, 2006.

⁶⁷ Bill Gertz, "Chinese General's U.S. Visit for Nuke Talks Deferred," *Washington Times*, January 15, 2007.

⁶⁸ See CRS Report RS22652, *China's Anti-Satellite Weapon Test*, by Shirley A. Kan.

⁶⁹ House Armed Services Committee, hearing on China: Recent Security Developments, June 13, 2007.

traveled outside of China, but not to the United States, including a trip to Sweden and Bulgaria in November 2007.

The PLA took some modest steps in December 2007, when the PLA delegation to the 9th DCT included 2nd Artillery Deputy Chief of Staff Yang Zhiguo. In April 2008, the PLA and the Defense Department held talks in Washington on nuclear strategy at the “experts” level. The PLA proposed to change the Pentagon-PLA defense policy talks into a “Strategic Dialogue,” that would include nuclear policy. In early 2009, the National Security Council’s Senior Director for Asia, Dennis Wilder, said that the PLA was intentionally being mysterious to have an advantage and expressed concerns about miscalculation and doubts China would engage in arms control.⁷⁰ General Jing Zhiyuan visited Tanzania and Uganda in October 2008, but not the United States.

Counterterrorism and Olympic Security

The PRC’s cooperation in counterterrorism after the attacks on September 11, 2001, has not included military cooperation with the U.S. military. The U.S. Commanders of the Central and Pacific Commands, General Tommy Franks and Admiral Dennis Blair, separately confirmed in April 2002 that China did not provide military cooperation (nor was it requested) in Operation Enduring Freedom against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan (e.g., basing, staging, or overflight) and that China’s shared intelligence was not specific enough. Also, the Pentagon issued a report in June 2002 on the international coalition fighting terrorism and did not include China among the countries providing military contributions. China has provided diplomatic support, cited by the State Department. U.S.-PRC counterterrorism cooperation has been limited, while U.S. concerns have increased about the PRC’s increased influence in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and its call for U.S. withdrawals from Central Asia, and about PRC-origin small arms and anti-aircraft missiles found in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁷¹

Some have urged caution in military cooperation with China on this front, while others see benefits for the U.S. relationship with China and the war on terrorism. Senator Bob Smith and Representative Dana Rohrabacher wrote Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld in late 2001, to express concerns about renewed military contacts with China. In part, they argued that “China is not a good prospect for counterterrorism cooperation,” because of concerns that China has practiced internal repression in the name of counterterrorism and has supplied technology to rogue regimes and state sponsors of terrorism.⁷² In contrast, a report by Rand in 2004 urged a program of security management with China that includes counterterrorism as one of three components.⁷³

As preparations intensify for the summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008, a policy issue concerns the extent to which the United States, including the U.S. military, should support security at the games to protect U.S. citizens and should cooperate with the PLA and the paramilitary PAP. With concerns about internal repression by the PRC regime in the Tiananmen Crackdown of June 1989 and after, U.S. sanctions (in Section 902 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY1990-FY1991, P.L. 101-246) have denied the export to China of defense articles/services, including helicopters, as well as crime control equipment. Presidential waivers are authorized. A precedent

⁷⁰ Quoted in “Bush Official Urges China to Lift Nuclear Secrecy,” *AP*, January 14, 2009.

⁷¹ See CRS Report RL33001, *U.S.-China Counterterrorism Cooperation: Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Shirley A. Kan.

⁷² Senator Bob Smith and Representative Dana Rohrabacher, letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, December 17, 2001.

⁷³ Rand, “U.S.-China Security Management: Assessing the Military-to-Military Relationship,” July 2004.

was set in 2004, when various U.S. departments, including the Department of Defense, provided security assistance for the Olympic games in Athens, Greece, in 2004. On June 22, 2006, at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, Brigadier General John Allen, the Principal Director for Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, testified that the Pentagon started discussions with China regarding security cooperation for the 2008 Olympics. However, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless testified to the House Armed Services Committee on June 13, 2007, that China has not accepted offers from the Defense Department to assist in Olympic security.

Accounting for POW/MIAs

For humanitarian reasons or to advance the broader U.S.-PRC relationship, the PLA has been helpful in U.S. efforts to resolve POW/MIA cases from World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. In February 2001, the Defense Department characterized PRC assistance to the United States in recovering remains from World War II as “generous,” citing the missions in 1994 in Tibet and in 1997-1999 in Maoer Mountain in southern China.⁷⁴

However, for 16 years—even as the survivors of those lost in the Korean War were aging and dying—the United States faced a challenge in securing the PLA’s cooperation in U.S. accounting for POW/MIAs from the Korean War. Despite visits by the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Office and other senior U.S. military leaders to China and improved overall bilateral relations, the United States was not able to announce progress in obtaining cooperation from the PLA until 2008.

In April 1992, a military official in Eastern Europe supplied a report to then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, alleging that “several dozen” American military personnel captured in the Korean War (1950-1953) were sent to a camp in the Northeastern city of Harbin in China where they were used in psychological and medical experiments before being executed or dying in captivity.⁷⁵ In May 1992, the State Department raised the issue of POW/MIAs with the PRC, saying it was a “matter of the highest national priority,” and in June 1992, the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs received information from the Russian government indicating that over 100 American POWs captured in the Korean War were interrogated by the Soviet Union and possibly sent to China.⁷⁶ The United States also presented to the PRC a list of 125 American military personnel still unaccounted for since the Korean War, who were believed to have been interrogated in the Soviet Union and then sent to China. China responded to the United States that it did not receive anyone on that list from the former Soviet Union.⁷⁷ But that response apparently did not address whether China received American military personnel from North Korea or China itself transferred them.

Upon returning from North Korea and Southeast Asia in December 1992, Senator Robert Smith, Vice Chairman of the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, disclosed that officials in Pyongyang admitted that “hundreds” of American POWs captured in the Korean War were sent to China and did not return to North Korea. According to Smith, North Korean officials said that

⁷⁴ Department of Defense, news release, “China Provides World War II U.S. Aircraft Crash Sites,” February 8, 2001.

⁷⁵ Melissa Healy, “China Said to Have Experimented on U.S. POWs,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 1992.

⁷⁶ Mark Sauter, “POW Probe Extends to Korea, China,” *Tacoma News-Tribune*, June 21, 1992.

⁷⁷ “No U.S. POWs in China,” *Beijing Review*, July 27-August 2, 1992.

China's PLA operated POW camps in North Korea during the Korean War and the Cold War and detained Americans in China's northeastern region. Moreover, North Korean officials told Smith that some American POWs could have been sent to the Soviet Union for further interrogations. Smith advocated that the U.S. government press the PRC government for information on POWs rather than accept the PRC's denials that it had POWs or information about them, saying "this is where the answers lie."⁷⁸ (The Senate created the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs in August 1991, chaired by Senator John Kerry. It concluded in December 1992, after gaining "important new information" from North Korea on China's involvement with U.S. POWs.⁷⁹)

Secretary of Defense Cohen visited China in 1998 and stressed cooperation on POW/MIA cases one of four priorities in relations with the PLA. After visiting China in January 1999 to seek the PLA's cooperation in opening its secret archives on the Korean War, the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO), Robert Jones, said that "we believe that Chinese records of the war may hold the key to resolving the fates of many of our missing servicemen from the Korean War." The office's spokesman, Larry Greer, reported that the PRC agreed to look into the U.S. request to access the archives.⁸⁰

In March 2003, DPMO Director Jerry Jennings visited China and said that PRC records likely hold "the key" to resolving some POW/MIA cases from the Korean War.⁸¹ Just days after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Myers, visited Beijing in January 2004, PRC media reported on January 19, 2004, that the government declassified the first batch of over 10,000 files in its archives on the PRC's foreign relations from 1949 to 1955. However, this step apparently excluded wartime records, and General Myers did not announce cooperation by China in providing information in its archives related to American POW/MIAs from the Korean War.⁸² The PRC later announced in July 2004 the declassification of a second batch of similar files. In February 2005, DPMO acknowledged that PRC cooperation on Korean War cases remained the "greatest challenge."⁸³

Visiting Beijing with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in October 2005, Pentagon officials again raised the issue of access to China's Korean War archives believed to hold documents on American POWs.⁸⁴ In July 2006, General Guo Boxiong (the top PLA commander) visited the United States and agreed to open PLA archives on the Korean War. However, in his June 2007 report to Congress on military contacts, Defense Secretary Robert Gates reported that the PLA's cooperation "yielded mixed results." PLA cooperation with DPMO was "limited" in 2006, despite General Guo's promise.

⁷⁸ Carleton R. Bryant, "N. Korea: POWs Sent to China: Senator Says U.S. Must Prod Beijing," *Washington Times*, December 23, 1992.

⁷⁹ Report of the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, S.Rept. 103-1 U.S. Senate, Report 103-1, January 3, 1993. Also see CRS Report RL33452, *POWs and MIAs: Status and Accounting Issues*, by Charles A. Henning.

⁸⁰ Sue Fleming, "U.S. Asks China for Access to Korean POW Files," *Reuters*, February 4, 1999.

⁸¹ Department of Defense, "U.S., China Agree to Enhanced Cooperation on POW/MIA Matters," March 29, 2003.

⁸² Confirmed in discussions with DPMO officials, January 29, 2004.

⁸³ Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, "Personnel Accounting Progress in China as of February 4, 2005," February 2005.

⁸⁴ Robert Burns, "Pentagon Seeking Access to Chinese Records on War MIAs," *AP/Arizona Republic*, October 23, 2005; and author's discussions with DPMO.

There was some progress in February 2008, when China finally agreed to allow access to the PLA archives on the Korean War. However, the PLA did not grant direct access to the records, as asked by the Defense Department. The DPMO would have to request searches done by PRC researchers at the archives and the PLA would control and turn over acceptable records. The two sides would have to also negotiate the frequency, amount, and expenses of the searches.⁸⁵ Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs Charles Ray signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Shanghai on February 29, 2008.⁸⁶ Despite the PRC's refusal to cooperate for many years, a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman said China agreed out of "humanitarianism."⁸⁷ On July 10, 2008, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing on POWs and MIAs, with discussion of POW/MIAs taken to China during the Korean War, including Sergeant Richard Desautels who was buried in China in 1953.

⁸⁵ "Pentagon Cites MIA Deal With China," *Associated Press*, February 25, 2008, quoting DPMO spokesman Larry Greer.

⁸⁶ Defense Department, "U.S. and China Sign POW/ MIA Arrangement," February 29, 2008.

⁸⁷ "PRC Will Continually Help Look for Remains of U.S. Soldiers Killed in Korean War," *Xinhua*, February 28, 2008.

Appendix. Major Military Contacts Since 1993

The scope of this record of mil-to-mil contacts focuses on senior-level visits, strategic talks, functional exchanges, agreements, commissions, and training or exercises. This compiled chronology does not provide a detailed list of all mil-to-mil contacts (that also include confidence building measures, educational exchanges that include visits by students at war colleges and the U.S. Capstone educational program for new general/flag officers, the numerous port calls in Hong Kong that continued after its hand-over from British to PRC control in July 1997, disaster relief missions, multilateral conferences, “track two” discussions sponsored by former Defense Secretary William Perry, etc.). There is no security assistance, as U.S. sanctions against arms sales have remained since 1989. Sources include numerous official statements, reports to Congress, documents, U.S. and PRC news stories, interviews, and observations. Specific dates are provided to the extent possible, while there are instances in which just the month is reported. Text boxes summarize major bilateral tensions in crises or confrontations as a context for the alternating periods of enthusiastic and skeptical contacts.

1993

In July 1993, the Clinton Administration suspected that a PRC cargo ship, called the Yinhe, was going to Iran with chemicals that could be used for chemical weapons and sought to inspect its cargo. In an unusual move, on August 9, China first disclosed that it protested U.S. “harassment” and finally allowed U.S. participation in a Saudi inspection of the ship’s cargo on August 26, 1993. Afterward, the State Department said that the suspected chemicals were not found on the ship at that time. The PRC has raised this Yinhe incident as a grievance against the United States and the credibility of U.S. intelligence in particular.

November 1-2 Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Chas Freeman visited China, renewing mil-to-mil ties for the first time since the Tiananmen Crackdown in June 1989. Freeman met with General Liu Huaqing (a Vice Chairman of the CMC), General Chi Haotian (Defense Minister), Lieutenant General Xu Huizi (Deputy Chief of General Staff), and Lieutenant General Huai Guomo (Vice Chairman of the Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense, or COSTIND).

1994

January 17-21 Lieutenant General Paul Cerjan, President of the National Defense University (NDU), visited China to advance professional military exchanges with the PLA’s NDU. Cerjan visited the Nanjing Military Region and saw the 179th Infantry Division.

March 11-14 Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Frank Wisner visited China, along with Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

July 6-8 Commander of the Pacific Command (PACOM), Admiral Charles Larson, visited China and held talks with PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Xu Huizi.

August 15-18 The Director of the PRC’s National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping (NBSM) visited the United States and signed an agreement for a cooperative program with the Defense Mapping Agency, the predecessor of the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA), regarding the global positioning system (GPS). The agreement refers to the “Protocol for Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Surveying and Mapping Studies Concerning Scientific and Technical Cooperation in the Application of Geodetic and Geophysical Data to Mapping, Charting, and Geodetic (MC&G) Programs.”

August 15-25 PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Xu Huizi, visited the United States and met with Defense Secretary William Perry and General John Shalikashvili, Chairman

	of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Washington, DC, and PACOM Commander, Admiral Richard Macke, in Hawaii.
September 7-29	In a POW/MIA operation, a U.S. Army team traveled to Tibet with PLA support to recover the remains of two U.S. airmen whose C-87 cargo plane crashed into a glacier at 14,000 feet in Tibet on December 31, 1944, during a flight over the “hump” back to India from Kunming, China, in World War II.
September 19-24	Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, General Merrill McPeak, visited China and met with PLA Air Force Commander, General Cao Shuangming.
October 16-19	Secretary of Defense William Perry visited China and met with Generals Liu Huaqing (CMC Vice Chairman) and Chi Haotian (Defense Minister). On October 17, Perry and PLA General Ding Henggao, Director of COSTIND, conducted the first meeting of the newly-established U.S.-China Joint Defense Conversion Commission. They signed the “U.S.-China Joint Defense Conversion Commission: Minutes of the First Meeting, Beijing, October 17, 1994.”

In a confrontation in the Yellow Sea on October 27-29, 1994, the U.S. aircraft carrier battle group led by the USS Kitty Hawk discovered and tracked a Han-class nuclear attack submarine of the PLA Navy. In response, the PLA Air Force sent fighters toward the U.S. aircraft tracking the submarine. Although no shots were fired by either side, China followed up the incident with a warning, issued to the U.S. Naval Attache over dinner in Beijing, that the PLA would open fire in a future incident.

November 5-10	The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Lieutenant General James Clapper, visited China. He met with the GSD's Second Department (Intelligence) and the affiliated China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CISS), saw the 179 th Division in Nanjing, and received a briefing on tactical intelligence.
November 11-15	The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, David Hinson, and the Defense Department's Executive Director of the Policy Board on Federal Aviation, Frank Colson, visited China to formulate the “U.S.-China 8-Step Civil-Military Air Traffic Control Cooperative Plan” agreed to during establishment of the Joint Defense Conversion Commission.
November 19-26	The PLA sent a delegation of new general and flag officers to the United States (similar to the U.S. Capstone program), led by Lieutenant General Ma Weizhi, Vice President of the NDU. They visited: Fort Irwin (including the National Training Center); Nellis Air Force Base (and observed a Red Flag exercise); Washington, DC (for meetings at NDU and Pentagon, including with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Owens); and Norfolk Naval Base (and toured an aircraft carrier).
December	A delegation from NIMA visited China to sign a GPS survey plan and discuss provision of PRC data on gravity for a NIMA/NASA project on gravity modeling and establishment of a GPS tracking station near Beijing.
December 10-13	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Requirements Ted Warner visited China to conduct briefings on the U.S. defense strategy and budget as part of a defense transparency initiative, based on an agreement between Secretary Perry and General Chi Haotian in October 1994.

1995

January 28-February 10	PLA Major General Wen Guangchun, Assistant to the Director of the General Logistics Department (GLD), visited the United States at the invitation of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology. The U.S. military provided briefings on logistics doctrine and systems and allowed the PLA visitors to observe U.S. military logistics activities and installations.
February 6-10	U.S. Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, Lieutenant General Joseph Ralston, led a delegation of officials from the Department of Defense,

Federal Aviation Administration, and Department of Commerce to visit China. They studied the PRC's civil-military air traffic control system and discussed future cooperation.

In early February 1995, the PLA Navy occupied Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, although Mischief Reef is about 150 miles west of the Philippines' island of Palawan but over 620 miles southeast of China's Hainan island off its southern coast. China seized a claim to territory in the South China Sea against a country other than Vietnam for the first time and challenged the Philippines, a U.S. treaty ally. Some Members of Congress introduced resolutions urging U.S. support for peace and stability. Three months later, on May 10, 1995, the Clinton Administration issued a statement opposing the use or threat of force to resolve the competing claims, without naming China.

February 24-March 7	President of the PLA's NDU, Lieutenant General Zhu Dunfa, visited the United States. Zhu visited West Point in New York; U.S. NDU and Pentagon in Washington, DC; Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama; Naval Air Station North Island, Marine Recruit Depot, and Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base in California; and PACOM in Hawaii.
March 22-24	The USS Bunker Hill (Aegis-equipped, Ticonderoga-class cruiser) visited Qingdao, in the first U.S. Navy ship visit to China since 1989. The senior officer aboard, Rear Admiral Bernard Smith, Commander of Carrier Group Five, met with Vice Admiral Wang Jiyong, Commander of the PLA Navy (PLAN)'s North Sea Fleet.
March 25-28	A Deputy Director of COSTIND, Lieutenant General Huai Guomo, visited Washington to meet with officials at the Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, and people in the private sector to discuss possible projects for the Joint Defense Conversion Commission.
March 26-April 2	Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai, PLA Assistant Chief of General Staff (with the portfolio of military intelligence), visited the United States, reciprocating for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Requirements Ted Warner's visit to Beijing in December 1994. Xiong provided briefings on the PLA's defense strategy and budget, and the composition of the armed forces, and received briefings on U.S. national and global information infrastructures.
March 28-April 4	A delegation from the PRC's National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping visited the United States to hold discussions with NIMA and release PRC gravity data for analysis.
April 19	Vice Minister of the PRC's General Administration of Civil Aviation (CAAC) Bao Peide visited the United States to meet with the Federal Aviation Administration and U.S. companies. U.S. Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, Lieutenant General Ralph Eberhart, briefed the PRC delegation on U.S. Air Force air traffic control programs.
April 25-30	PACOM Commander, Admiral Richard Macke, visited China, hosted by PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Xu Huizi.
May 17-22	PLA Air Force Commander, Lieutenant General Yu Zhenwu, visited the United States, hosted by the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff. Originally scheduled to last until May 27, the PLA terminated the visit on May 22 to protest the Clinton Administration's decision to grant a visa to Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui to visit his alma mater, Cornell University.

On July 21-28, 1995, after the Clinton Administration allowed Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui to make a private visit to give a speech at Cornell University on June 9, the PLA launched M-9 short-range ballistic missiles in "test-firings" toward target areas in the East China Sea. The PLA held other exercises directed against Taiwan until November.

On August 3, 1995, China expelled two U.S. Air Force attaches stationed in Hong Kong who traveled to China and were detained. China accused them of collecting military intelligence in restricted military areas along the southeastern coast.

- August 31-September 2 PLA Commander of the Guangzhou Military Region, Lieutenant General Li Xilin, visited Hawaii to participate in a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of victory in the Pacific in World War II. Li met with Secretary of Defense Perry, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili, and PACOM Commander, Admiral Macke.
- September 7-16 Two NIMA teams visited China to establish GPS satellite tracking stations and discuss plans for a GPS survey in China in 1996.
- October 15-25 Lieutenant General (USAF) Ervin Rokke, President of the NDU, visited China and held talks with Lieutenant General Xing Shizhong, President of the PLA's NDU, about professional military educational exchanges. The PLA arranged for Rokke to visit the 196th Infantry Division under the Beijing Military Region, the Satellite Control Center in Xian (the first U.S. access), the Guilin Army Academy in Guilin, and the Guangzhou Military Region.
- November 14-18 Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Joseph Nye visited Beijing and met with General Chi Haotian. Nye said that "nobody knows" what the United States would do if the PLA attacked Taiwan.

1996

On January 19, 1996, China expelled the U.S. Assistant Air Force Attache and the Japanese Air Force Attache, after detaining them while they were traveling in southern China.

- January 20-27 The Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations of the U.S. Air Force, Lieutenant General Ralph Eberhart, visited China as head of a delegation of representatives of the Department of Defense, Federal Aviation Administration, and Department of Commerce, as part of the Air Traffic Control Cooperative Program.
- January 31-February 4 The USS Fort McHenry, a dock-landing ship, visited Shanghai, under the command of Rear Admiral Walter Doran.
- February 6 Visiting PRC Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met with Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe at the Pentagon.
- March 7 Secretary of Defense Perry, along with National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, attended a dinner meeting hosted by Secretary of State Christopher at the State Department for PRC Foreign Affairs Office Director Liu Huaqiu. Perry warned Liu that there would be "grave consequences" should the PLA attack Taiwan.

On March 8-15, 1996, the PLA launched four M-9 short-range ballistic missiles into waters close to the two ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung in Taiwan. Leading up to Taiwan's first democratic presidential election on March 23, the PLA conducted live fire exercises in the Taiwan Strait on March 12-25.

On March 10-11, 1996, the United States announced that it would deploy two aircraft carriers, the USS Independence and USS Nimitz, to waters near the east coast of Taiwan.

- March 9-17 Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Stephen Joseph visited China to advance bilateral military medical relations. Joseph and a Deputy Director of the GLD, Lieutenant General Zhou Youliang, signed a "Memorandum of Medical

	Exchange and Cooperation.”
April 5-13	Geodesy and geophysical staff from NIMA visited China to hold discussions with the PRC’s National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping.
May 4-20	A geodesy and geophysical survey team from NIMA visited China to perform a cooperative GPS survey.
June 25-28	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe visited China.
July 11-August 31	The PRC’s National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping visited the United States to hold discussions with NIMA on cooperative projects and computation of results for the GPS China survey.
September 2-8	PACOM Commander, Admiral Joseph Prueher, visited China, hosted by a PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai.
September 10	The Office for Defense Procurement/Foreign Contracting of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology hosted Vice Chairman of the State Planning Commission She Jianming at the Pentagon and provided a briefing on the Defense Department’s procurement system.
September 16-18	NIMA participated in the 9 th meeting of the U.S.-PRC Joint Working Group for Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Surveying in Beijing.
September 17-29	A Deputy Director of the GLD, Lieutenant General Zhou Youliang, visited the United States to advance bilateral military medical relations, as the reciprocal visit for that of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs to China in March 1996. Both sides discussed cooperation between military hospitals, such as PLA 301 Hospital and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
September 17	At the Pentagon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell met with the vice president of the Chinese Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), which is associated with the Ministry of State Security.
September 21-27	A team from NIMA visited China to perform maintenance on the GPS tracking station and discuss cooperative plans on gravity data.
October 4-17	Lieutenant General Xing Shizhong, President of the PLA’s NDU, visited the United States. He and Lieutenant General Ervin Rokke, President of the U.S. NDU, signed a “Memorandum on Cooperation and Reciprocal Relations” between the two NDUs. They agreed to undertake reciprocal interaction on a broad range of issues relevant to professional military education, including military art, the evolution of strategy and doctrine, strategic assessment, the impact of technological advance on the nature of warfare, library science, and publishing.
October 11-17	The Surgeon General of the U.S. Air Force, Lieutenant General Edgar Anderson, led a U.S. military medical delegation to participate in the XXXI International Congress on Military Medicine held in Beijing.
October 20	At the Pentagon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell met with a delegation from the Chinese Institute of International Strategic Studies (CISS), which is associated with the PLA.
November 11-19	The Director of DIA, Lieutenant General Patrick Hughes, visited China.
December 5-18	General Chi Haotian, a Vice Chairman of the CMC and Minister of Defense, visited the United States, to reciprocate for Defense Secretary Perry’s visit to China in October 1994. Perry announced that General Chi’s visit allowed for discussions of global and regional security issues as well as the future of mil-to-mil relations. While in Washington, General Chi met with President William Clinton. A controversy arose when General Chi gave a speech at NDU at Fort McNair and defended the PLA’s crackdown on peaceful demonstrators in Beijing in 1989 (during which he was the PLA’s Chief of General Staff) and claimed—apparently in a narrow sense—that no one died in Tiananmen Square itself. DOD provided a draft proposal for a bilateral military maritime cooperative agreement. The two sides agreed to

continue U.S. port calls to Hong Kong after its hand-over from British to PRC control on July 1, 1997; to allow PLA ship visits to Hawaii and the U.S. west coast; to institutionalize Defense Consultative Talks; to hold senior-level visits; and to allow U.S. repatriation of the remains of the crew of a B-24 bomber that crashed in southern China in World War II (after General Chi presented dog tags found at the crash site). After Washington, Perry arranged for General Chi to travel to Air Force and Navy facilities in Norfolk, Virginia; the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama; Army units at Fort Hood, Texas; the Cooperative Monitoring Center at the Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, New Mexico (for discussion of technology that could be used to verify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty); and PACOM in Hawaii headed by Admiral Joseph Prueher.

1997

- January 13-17 A Defense POW/MIA team went to Maoer Mountain in Guangxi province (in southern China) to recover the remains of a “Flying Tigers” crew whose B-24 bomber crashed into the mountain in 1944 after bombing Japanese forces near Taiwan during World War II.
- January 15 At the Pentagon, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Frank Kramer met with Wang Daohan, president of the PRC’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS).
- February 21-March 6 Lieutenant General Kui Fulin, a Deputy Chief of General Staff, visited the United States, hosted by the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, General Dennis Reimer. General Kui visited the Pentagon, West Point in New York, U.S. Army Forces Command in Georgia, Fort Benning in Georgia, and PACOM in Hawaii.
- February 24-27 The Principal Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security, Gary Vest, visited Beijing to participate in the 1997 China Environment Forum and met with PLA leaders to discuss environmental security issues.
- March 9-25 PLA Naval ships (the Luhu-class destroyer Harbin, the Luda-class destroyer Zhuhai, and the oiler Nanchang) visited Pearl Harbor, HI (March 9-13) and San Diego, CA (March 21-25), in the PLA Navy (PLAN)’s second ship visit to Pearl Harbor and first port call to the U.S. west coast. As part of the occasion, Vice Admiral He Pengfei (a PLAN Deputy Commander) and Vice Admiral Wang Yongguo (PLAN South Sea Fleet Commander) visited the United States.
- April Major General John Cowlings, Commandant of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces of the U.S. NDU, visited China.
- May 12-15 The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, visited China, hosted by the PLA’s Chief of General Staff, General Fu Quanyou. On May 14, 1997, Shalikashvili gave a speech at the PLA’s NDU, in which he called for mil-to-mil contacts that are deeper, more frequent, more balanced, and more developed, in order to decrease suspicion, advance cooperation, and prevent miscalculations in a crisis. He called for a more equal exchange of information, confidence building measures (CBMs), military academic and functional exchanges, the PLA’s participation in multinational military activities, and a regular dialogue between senior military leaders. He also urged the completion of the military maritime and air cooperative agreement. However, Shalikashvili reportedly got only a limited view of the PLA during a visit to the 15th Airborne Army (in Hubei province).
- July Lieutenant General Xu Qiliang, Chief of Staff of the PLA Air Force, led an education and training delegation to the United States.
- July Lieutenant General Wu Quanxu, a Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA, visited PACOM in Hawaii.
- August 5-13 General Fu Quanyou, PLA Chief of General Staff, visited the United States. Secretary of Defense William Cohen and General John Shalikashvili welcomed Fu at the Pentagon with a 19-gun salute. General Fu also visited West Point in New York, Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia, Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, and PACOM in Hawaii. General Fu boarded a U.S. nuclear attack

	submarine and the USS Blue Ridge, the 7 th Fleet's amphibious command ship.
September 11-15	An Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, the USS John S. McCain, visited Qingdao. As part of the occasion, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Admiral Archie Clemins, visited China and met with the Commander of the PLAN North Sea Fleet, Rear Admiral Zhang Dingfa.
September 14-21	The Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Army, Major General Walter Huffman, visited China, including the Jinan Military Region, to discuss military law.
September 22-26	The U.S. Army's Chief of Staff, General Dennis Reimer, visited China, along with the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy. They met with Generals Chi Haotian and Fu Quanyou, and visited the 6 th Tank Division and an engineering regiment in the Beijing Military Region, and an artillery unit in the Nanjing Military Region. They also paid the first U.S. visit to the command headquarters of the Guangzhou Military Region.
October 6	The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jay Johnson, visited China and met with General Chi Haotian, General Fu Quanyou, and Admiral Shi Yunsheng, PLAN Commander.
October	Lieutenant General He Daoquan, a Vice President of the PLA's NDU, led a delegation to the United States (similar to the U.S. Capstone program for new general/flag officers).
October 29	Jiang Zemin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, CMC Chairman, and PRC President, visited Washington for a summit with President Clinton. Among a number of agreements, they agreed to strengthen mil-to-mil contacts to minimize miscalculations, advance transparency, and strengthen communication. In the "U.S.-PRC Joint Statement," the Administration reiterated that it adheres to the "one China" policy and the principles in the three U.S.-PRC Joint Communiques, but did not mention the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), the law governing U.S. relations with Taiwan (including security assistance for its self-defense).
November	Continuing a POW/MIA mission, a team from the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI) returned to Maoer Mountain in southern China to recover additional remains from a B-24 bomber that crashed in 1944.
December 8-19	PACOM Commander, Admiral Joseph Prueher, visited China and met with PRC leader Jiang Zemin, General Zhang Wannian, General Chi Haotian, General Fu Quanyou, among others. Prueher enjoyed what the PLA considered the broadest access ever granted to a visiting military official during one trip. Prueher visited the Jinan, Nanjing, and Guangzhou Military Regions. He visited the PLA Air Force Flight Test and Development Center in Cangzhou in Jinan, where he saw a static display of aircraft, after poor weather conditions apparently precluded a flight demonstration of F-7 and F-8 fighters. Prueher visited the 179 th Infantry Division at the Nanjing Military Region, watched a live-fire assault demonstration, and toured a farm run by the PLA. At Zhanjiang, Prueher visited the PLA Navy's South Sea Fleet, where he observed a demonstration by the 1 st Marine Brigade, saw a new air-cushioned landing craft, and toured the destroyer Zhuhai. Prueher stressed future PLA-PACOM cooperation in peacekeeping and disaster relief training.
December 11-12	Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai, a PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff, visited the Pentagon to hold the 1 st U.S.-PLA Defense Consultative Talks (DCT) with Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe. During their summit in October, Presidents Clinton and Jiang had agreed to hold regular rounds of DCT. The two sides initialed the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) ("Agreement Between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China on Establishing a Consultation Mechanism to Strengthen Military Maritime Safety").
December	The U.S. Air Force and Coast Guard conducted search-and-rescue exercises in Hong Kong (with its Civil Aviation Department), after the British hand-over of Hong Kong to PRC sovereignty in July 1997. At a news briefing on July 7, 1998, the Pentagon said that the PLA observed this exercise.

December A PLA training delegation visited the U.S. Army's premier National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin in California.

1998

January 17-21 Secretary of Defense William Cohen, accompanied by Admiral Prueher (PACOM Commander), visited China. Cohen signed the "Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA)," intended to set up a framework for dialogue on how to minimize the chances of miscalculation and accidents between U.S. and PLA forces operating at sea or in the air. He said that Jiang Zemin and General Chi Haotian promised that China did not plan to transfer to Iran additional anti-ship cruise missiles. The PLA allowed Cohen to be the first Western official to visit the Beijing Military Region's Air Defense Command Center, a step that Cohen called important and symbolic. However, the PLA denied Cohen's request to visit China's National Command Center. Cohen gave a speech at the PLA's Academy of Military Science (AMS) and called for expanded mil-to-mil contacts on: (1) defense environmental issues; (2) strategic nuclear missile forces; (3) POW/MIA affairs; and (4) humanitarian operations (as part of shifting contacts from those that build confidence to those that advance real-world cooperation). Cohen asked the PLA to allow U.S. access to PRC archives to resolve questions about the fate of U.S. POW/MIAs in the Korean War who might have been in prison camps in China.

February 16-20 For the first time, the PLA attended the Pacific Area Special Operations Conference (PASOC) in Hawaii.

March 14-24 A U.S. Army training delegation from the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) based at Fort Monroe, VA, visited China. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Training, Major General Leroy Goff and Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Major General David Ohle, led the delegation. They saw the PLA's training base in Anhui province under the Nanjing Military Region (similar to the NTC).

March 29-April 10 General Wang Ke, Director of the GLD of the PLA, visited the United States, hosted by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisitions and Technology. General Wang visited West Point in New York, Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, the Pentagon, Warner-Robins Air Logistics Center in Georgia, the Defense Logistics Agency's Defense Supply Center in Richmond, the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier at Naval Air Station North Island (San Diego) in California, and PACOM in Hawaii. At the Pentagon, DOD provided briefings on: organizations for the DOD Logistics Systems, Logistics Modernization Initiatives, Joint Logistics/Focused Logistics, DOD Outsourcing Process and Experiences, DOD Military Retirement Systems, and the Army's Integrated Training Area Management Program.

In April 1998, the *New York Times* disclosed that the Justice Department had begun a criminal investigation into whether U.S. satellite manufacturers, Loral Space and Communications Ltd. and Hughes Electronics Corporation, violated export control laws. They allegedly provided expertise that China could use to improve its ballistic missiles, when the companies shared their technical findings with China on the cause of a PRC rocket's explosion while launching a U.S.-origin satellite in February 1996. The House set up the "Cox Committee" to investigate the allegations of corporate misconduct and policy mistakes. The Senate set up a task force. Congress passed legislation to control satellite exports to China

April 6-10 The PLA went to PACOM's Military Operations and Law Conference, organized by the Judge Advocate's office.

April 29-30 The Defense Department and PLA held pre-talks on the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA).

May 3-5 Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Franklin Kramer visited Beijing.

May 4-9	The Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, General Michael Ryan, visited China. The PLA Air Force gave him a tour of Foshan Air Base and allowed him to fly an F-7 fighter and view an air-refuelable version of an FA-2. However, the PLA Air Force denied General Ryan's requests to fly in a SU-27 fighter, to see integration of the SU-27s into the units, and to see progress on development of the F-10 fighter.
May	A PLA delegation on military law visited the United States.
June 25-July 3	President Clinton traveled to China to hold his second summit with Jiang Zemin, following the summit in October 1997. They announced that the United States and China: have a direct presidential "hot line" that was set up in May 1998; will not target strategic nuclear weapons under their respective control at each other; will hold the first meeting under the MMCA; will observe exercises of the other based on reciprocity (meaning the PLA would also issue invitations to U.S. observers); will cooperate in humanitarian assistance; and will cooperate in military environmental security. However, China only agreed to study whether to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and did not agree to open archives to allow U.S. research on POW/MIAs from the Korean War. In Shanghai on June 30, Clinton stated the so-called "Three Noes" of non-support for Taiwan's independence; non-support for two Chinas or one China and one Taiwan; and non-support for Taiwan's membership in international bodies requiring statehood.
July 9-24	At U.S. invitation, the PLA sent two observers to Cope Thunder 98-4, a multinational air exercise held at Eielson and Elmendorf Air Force Bases in Alaska. The air forces of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, and Singapore participated in the exercise, which was designed to sharpen air combat skills, exchange air operational tactics, and promote closer relations. Pilots flew a variety of aircraft in air-to-air and air-to-ground combat missions, and combat support missions against a realistic set of threats. Russia, Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines also sent military observers.
July 14-15	In Beijing, the DOD and PLA held the first plenary meeting under the MMCA.
July 15-20	At U.S. invitation, the PLA Navy sent two observers to RIMPAC 1998, the first time the PLA observed this multinational naval exercise based in Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean. The naval forces of the United States, Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, and South Korea participated in the exercise, which was designed to enhance their tactical capabilities in maritime operations. During part of the exercise, the U.S. Navy hosted the PLA Navy's representatives on board the USS Coronado (the 3 rd Fleet's command ship), the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier, the USS Paul Hamilton (an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer), and the USS Antietam (a Ticonderoga-class cruiser).
July 20-26	PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Qian Shugen, visited the United States.
July	A PRC civilian and military delegation visited the United States, including Pensacola, FL, to discuss air traffic control with the Federal Aviation Administration, Departments of Commerce and Defense, and the U.S. Air Force.
August 2-6	The command ship of the 7 th Fleet, USS Blue Ridge, and a destroyer, USS John S. McCain, visited Qingdao. As part of the occasion, Vice Admiral Robert Natter, Commander of the 7 th Fleet, visited and met with Vice Admiral Shi Yunsheng, PLAN Commander, and Vice Admiral He Pengfei, a PLAN Deputy Commander.
August 16-23	The Commandant of the Army War College, Major General Robert Scales, and the U.S. Army's Chief of Military History, Brigadier General John Mountcastle, visited Beijing, Tianjin, and Nanjing, and discussed the PLA's historical campaigns.
September 12-20	NDU President, Lieutenant General Richard Chilcoat, visited China, including Hong Kong, Beijing, Xian, and Dalian.

September 14-24	General Zhang Wannian, a Vice Chairman of the CMC and highest ranking PLA officer, visited the United States. However, with General Shalikhshvili's disappointment with the lack of transparency and reciprocity shown to him by the PLA during his trip to China in May 1997, Secretary of Defense William Cohen invoked the "Shali Prohibitions" in restricting General Zhang's exposure to the U.S. military during his visits to the Pentagon, Fort Benning in Georgia, and Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. President Clinton met with General Zhang at the White House. At a news conference on September 15, 1998, Secretary Cohen announced that he and General Zhang signed an agreement on cooperation in environmental security ("Joint Statement on the Exchange of Information by the United States Department of Defense and the Chinese Ministry of National Defense on Military Environmental Protection"); discussed weapons proliferation and international terrorism; and agreed to conduct sand table exercises on disaster relief and humanitarian assistance in 1999, to have a ship visit by the PLA Navy in 1999, to conduct a seminar on maritime search and rescue, to allow each other to observe specific military exercises, to exchange military students, and to allow a PRC delegation to visit the Cooperative Monitoring Center at the Sandia National Laboratory. However, Cohen did not announce any progress in following up on U.S. concerns about Korean War POW/MIA cases, non-targeting of strategic nuclear forces (involving the Strategic Command (STRATCOM) and the PLA's Second Artillery), PLA threats against Taiwan, or weapons nonproliferation. General Zhang cited President Clinton's statements in China in June about the U.S. "one China" policy and the "Three Noes," while Secretary Cohen stressed peaceful resolution and said that Clinton reiterated commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act.
October 20-21	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe visited Beijing for the 2 nd DCT and met with Generals Zhang Wannian and Chi Haotian (CMC Vice Chairmen), and Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai. They discussed global and regional security issues, defense relations in the Asia-Pacific region, military strategy and modernization, and mil-to-mil contacts in 1999 ("Gameplan for 1999 U.S.-Sino Defense Exchanges"). The PLA raised objections to the U.S. plan to field theater missile defense systems.
November 1	Secretary of Defense Cohen visited Hong Kong (on his way to South Korea and Japan) to underscore the U.S. determination to continue its defense involvement there, including ship visits, after its hand-over to PRC rule.
November 9-14	PACOM Commander, Admiral Joseph Prueher, visited China, along with Lieutenant General Carl Fulford (Commander of U.S. Marine Forces Pacific) and Major General Earl Hailston (Director for Strategic Planning and Policy). They met with General Zhang Wannian (a CMC Vice Chairman), General Fu Quanyou (Chief of General Staff), General Wang Ke (GLD Director), and Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai (a Deputy Chief of General Staff). The PLA arranged for visits to the 47 th Group Army based near Xian and a subordinate air defense brigade, in granting the first foreign military access to these two commands. Admiral Prueher also visited the PLA Air Force's 28 th Air Attack Division in Hangzhou and observed ordnance loading of A-5 bombers and a live-fire demonstration of an air-to-ground attack by A-5s. He then toured a Jiangwei-class frigate of the PLA Navy in Shanghai.
December 1-4	U.S. and PLA military forces participated in an annual search and rescue exercise (HK SAREX 98) held by Hong Kong's Civil Aviation Department.
December 4	PACOM Commander, Admiral Joseph Prueher, visited Hong Kong and met with Major Generals Zhou Borong and Xiong Ziren, Deputy Commander and Political Commissar of PLA forces there.
December 4-8	A U.S. Navy frigate, the USS Vandegrift, visited Shanghai. As part of the port call, Rear Admiral Harry Highfill, Commander of the U.S. 7 th Fleet's Amphibious Force, met with Rear Admiral Hou Yuexi, Commander of the Shanghai Naval Base. The PLAN arranged for Admiral Highfill to tour the PLAN's Jiangwei-class frigate, the Anqing.

December 9-11 Military maritime consultative talks (under the MMCA) between the U.S. Navy and PLAN took place near San Diego, CA. The PLAN delegation, led by Captain Shen Hao, Director of the PLAN Operations Department, stayed at the Naval Amphibious Base at Coronado and toured a U.S. destroyer (USS Stetham) and the U.S. Navy's Maritime Ship Handling Simulator at the San Diego Naval Station.

1999

At the end of 1998 and start of 1999, the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* disclosed that the Cox Committee was looking at the Clinton Administration's investigation that began in 1995 into whether China obtained secret U.S. nuclear weapons data, in addition to missile technology associated with satellite launches. On April 21, 1999, the Director of Central Intelligence confirmed that "China obtained by espionage classified U.S. nuclear weapons information that probably accelerated its program to develop future nuclear weapons." However, it was uncertain whether China obtained documentation or blueprints, and China also benefitted from information obtained from a wide variety of sources, including open sources (unclassified information) and China's own efforts.

January 19-26 The Director of the Defense POW/MIA Office, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert Jones, visited China to seek the PLA's cooperation in accounting for U.S. POW/MIAs from the Korean War, specifically seeking U.S. access to PLA archives, veterans, and a film with information about POW camps in China.

March President of the PLA's NDU, General Xing Shizhong, visited Washington and gave a speech at the U.S. NDU at Fort McNair on March 18, 1999. The Pentagon arranged for General Xing to visit Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia, receive a briefing on the U.S. Navy's "Network Centric Warfare" in Rhode Island, visit Fort Hood in Texas and receive a briefing on Task Force XXI (an experimental warfighting force in the Army), and see the Air Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. However, the Defense Department denied the PLA delegation's access to observe the Red Flag combat training exercise at Nellis Air Force Base.

In April 1999, under congressional pressure, the Clinton Administration approved a potential sale of long-range early warning radars to Taiwan.

On May 7, 1999, U.S.-led NATO forces bombed the PRC's embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, having mistakenly targeted it as a military supply facility belonging to Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic whose Serbian forces attacked Kosovo. Despite President Clinton's apology, the PRC angrily suspended mil-to-mil contacts, allowed protesters to attack violently U.S. diplomatic facilities in China, and denied ship visits to Hong Kong by the U.S. Navy until September 1999. In July 1999, the United States agreed to pay \$4.5 million in compensation for PRC casualties. In FY2001 legislation, Congress appropriated \$28 million to compensate for damages to China's embassy.

May A U.S. Navy working group under the MMCA visited Qingdao to discuss international standards of communication at sea.

May 9-20 A PRC delegation that included PLA officers visited the United States to discuss air traffic control. On May 18, 1999, they visited Edwards Air Force Base in California and received a briefing on daily planning, integration, and control of civilian and military operations.

In May 1999, as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1999 (P.L. 105-261), Secretary of Defense Cohen submitted the unclassified version of the "Report to Congress on Theater Missile Defense Architecture Options for the Asia-Pacific Region." Congress required a report on theater missile defense systems that could be transferred to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, which the conference report called "key regional allies."

On July 9, 1999, Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui characterized the cross-strait relationship as “special state-to-state ties,” sparking military tensions with the PLA. The Clinton Administration responded that Lee’s statement was not helpful and reaffirmed the “one China” policy. The PLA flew fighters across the “center” line of the Taiwan Strait and conducted exercises along the coast opposite Taiwan. In early September, CMC Vice Chairman General Zhang Wannian personally directed a major, joint landing exercise. A tragic earthquake in Taiwan on September 21 defused the tensions

November 19-21 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell and Major General (USMC) Michael Hagee, PACOM’s Director for Strategic Planning and Policy (J5), visited Beijing to discuss resuming military contacts.

December 1-4 U.S. military and PLA forces participated in Hong Kong’s annual search and rescue exercise.

2000

January 24-26 Resuming contacts, Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai (a Deputy Chief of General Staff) visited Washington to hold the 3rd DCT with Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Slocombe. They discussed the program for mil-to-mil contacts in 2000, international security issues, U.S. strategy in Asia, the PLA’s missile buildup, Taiwan, missile defense, weapons proliferation, and North Korea. Xiong met with Secretary of Defense Cohen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Henry Shelton, Deputy National Security Advisor James Steinberg, Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, and State Department Senior Advisor John Holum.

February 17-18 Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Ralston, and Deputy National Security Advisor James Steinberg visited Beijing (after visiting Tokyo) for a strategic dialogue. They met with CMC Vice Chairman General Zhang Wannian, who raised the Taiwan issue, including U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

On February 21, 2000, ahead of Taiwan’s presidential election on March 18, 2000, the PRC issued its second Taiwan White Paper, which declared a threat to use force against Taiwan if a serious development leads to Taiwan’s separation from China in any name, if there is foreign invasion or occupation of Taiwan, or if Taiwan’s government indefinitely refuses to negotiate national unification (called the “Three Ifs”). Under Secretary of Defense Slocombe, who was just in Beijing but was given no indication that the PRC would issue the White Paper and the threat, responded forcefully on February 22 by warning that China would face “incalculable consequences” if it used force against Taiwan.

February 27-March 2 PACOM Commander, Admiral Dennis Blair, visited China and discussed tensions over Taiwan with Chief of General Staff, General Fu Quanyou, and General Chi Haotian.

March 10-12 Secretary of Defense William Cohen visited Hong Kong and discussed issues such as port calls by the U.S. Navy and the prevention of trans-shipments of advanced U.S. technology to mainland China.

March 27-29 A working group under the MMCA held a planning meeting in China.

April 14-22 PLAN Commander, Admiral Shi Yunsheng, visited the United States, coinciding with an annual round of U.S.-Taiwan arms sales talks in Washington. Admiral Shi met with Secretary of Defense Cohen, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers, and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jay Johnson.

In April 2000, during a round of annual arms sales talks, the Clinton Administration approved a request from Taiwan’s military to purchase AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMs).

- May 28-June 3 PACOM in Hawaii hosted the second plenary meeting under the MMCA. PACOM's Director for Strategic Planning and Policy (J5), Major General Michael Hagee (USMC), and the PLA's Deputy Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Wang Yucheng, led the proceedings. They reviewed a mutually-produced document, "A Study on Sino-U.S. Maritime Navigational Safety, Including Communications."
- June 13-14 Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Frank Kramer visited Beijing and met with Major General Zhan Maohai, Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai, and General Chi Haotian to plan Secretary of Defense Cohen's visit to China.
- June 13-21 Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy (West Point), Lieutenant General Daniel Christman, visited China. He met with General Chi Haotian and visited the PLA's Armored Force Engineering Academy, where he was the first American to have access to a PLA Type-96 main battle tank.
- June 18-23 Nanjing Military Region Commander Liang Guanglie led a PLA delegation to visit PACOM in Hawaii and met with Admiral Dennis Blair.

On July 10, 2000, responding to objections from the Clinton Administration and Congress, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak told PRC ruler Jiang Zemin in a letter that Israel canceled the nearly completed sale of the Phalcon airborne early warning system to the PLA. Prime Minister Barak informed President Clinton the next day during peace talks at Camp David, MD.

- July 11-15 Secretary of Defense William Cohen visited Beijing and Shanghai. Cohen met with President Jiang Zemin and Generals Chi Haotian, Zhang Wannian, and Fu Quanyou. Cohen did not visit any PLA bases. Cohen referred to the promise made by PRC President Jiang Zemin during Cohen's previous visit to China in January 1998 and said that the PRC has abided by that agreement not to ship cruise missiles to Iran. Cohen and General Chi signed an "Agreement on the Exchange of Environmental Protection Research and Development Information" and discussed the need for cross-strait dialogue, weapons nonproliferation, and regional stability. The PRC objected to U.S. plans for missile defense and pressure on Israel to cancel the sale of the Phalcon airborne early warning system to the PLA, concerning which Israel notified China just before Cohen's visit. Cohen offered to fund PLA students at PACOM's APCSS in Honolulu. Regarding Taiwan, General Chi said that China would adopt a wait and see posture toward the leader of Taiwan (referring to Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party, who won the presidential election on March 18, 2000, bringing an end to the Kuomintang (KMT)'s 55 years of rule in Taiwan). Cohen said that the Administration viewed Chen as offering hope for cross-strait reconciliation. In Shanghai, Cohen stepped out of the narrow mil-to-mil context and met with Wang Daohan, chairman of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). Cohen said that Chen showed flexibility after becoming president and that there was a window of opportunity for changes.
- July 23-August 4 A delegation of the PLA Medical Department visited the United States.
- July 31-August 5 Admiral Thomas Fargo, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, visited Beijing and Qingdao in conjunction with the visit of the U.S. Navy's guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville in Qingdao (August 2-5).

August 21-September 2	President of the PLA's Academy of Military Sciences (AMS), General Wang Zuxun, visited the United States. There is no counterpart in the U.S. military with which to set up reciprocal exchanges. The AMS delegation included the Directors of the Departments of Strategic Studies, Operational and Tactical Studies, and Foreign Military Studies. They visited the Pentagon; Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia; West Point in New York; Army War College in Pennsylvania; Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) at Fort Monroe in Virginia; and PACOM in Hawaii. The Joint Forces Command provided unclassified tours of its Joint Training Directorate (J-7) and Joint Training Analysis Simulation Center, but not the Joint Experimentation Battle Lab.
September 5-18	PLA Navy ships (the Luh-class destroyer Qingdao and Fuqing-class oiler Taicang) visited Pearl Harbor, HI (September 5-8) and Naval Station Everett, near Seattle, WA (September 14-18). In Hawaii, the visitors toured the U.S. destroyer USS O'Kane.
October	For the first time, the PLA invited two U.S. military personnel to attend the one-month International Security Symposium at the NDU in Beijing. (Subsequent invitations dropped required fees.)
October 10-18	The PLA participated in a visit to the United States by a Humanitarian Disaster Relief Sandtable Planning Team.
October 12-13	Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig visited Shanghai, in the first visit by a U.S. Secretary of the Navy to China. His visit was curtailed because of the attack on the USS Cole in a Yemeni harbor on October 12, 2000.
October 24-November 4	CMC Member and Director of the General Political Department (GPD)—the top political commissar, General Yu Yongbo, visited the United States. He was hosted by Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness Bernard Rostker. General Yu's delegation visited the Pentagon and met with Secretary of Defense Cohen; West Point in New York; Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC; Fort Jackson in South Carolina; Patrick Air Force Base in Florida; and PACOM in Hawaii.
November 2-6	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton, visited China, at the invitation of PLA Chief of General Staff, General Fu Quanyou. The PLA allowed General Shelton to observe a brigade exercising at the PLA's Combined Arms Training Center in the Nanjing Military Region. Shelton stressed the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question.
November 2-12	A Deputy Chief of Staff of the PLA Navy, Rear Admiral Zhang Zhannan, led a delegation from the Naval Command Academy (in Nanjing) to visit Newport News, RI (Naval War College); Washington, DC (including a meeting with the Secretary of the Navy); Monterey, CA (Naval Post-Graduate School); and Honolulu, HI (Pacific Command, including a tour aboard an Aegis-equipped cruiser).
November 12-19	A PLA NDU delegation (similar to the U.S. Capstone program) visited the United States.
November 28-December 2	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe visited Beijing to hold the 4 th DCT with PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff Xiong Guangkai. Slocombe also met with Generals Chi Haotian and Fu Quanyou and visited the PLA Navy's North Sea Fleet in Qingdao. The U.S. and PRC sides discussed sharp differences over Taiwan and missile defense, the program for mil-to-mil contacts in 2001, Korea, and weapons proliferation.
December 3-9	A Working Group under the MMCA held its second meeting (in China).
December 5-8	U.S. military and PLA forces participated in Hong Kong's annual search and rescue exercise and worked together in a demonstration.

At the end of December 2000 in New York, PLA Senior Colonel Xu Junping, who closely handled U.S.-PRC military relations, defected to the United States and presented an intelligence loss for the PLA (reported *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 5, 2001).

2001

- February 9-23 Major General Wang Shouye, Director of the GLD's Capital Construction and Barracks Department, led a delegation on military environmental protection matters to the United States. They visited Washington, DC; Fort Pickett in Virginia; Fort Bliss in Texas; the "boneyard" at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona; Las Vegas in Nevada; and PACOM in Hawaii.
- March 14-17 PACOM Commander, Adm. Dennis Blair, visited Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai. PACOM said that Blair's trip was intended to discuss military activities and plans of the PLA and PACOM, exchange views and enhance mutual understanding, discuss Taiwan, and stress the inclusion rather than exclusion of China in multilateral activities.
- March 23-26 The command ship of the 7th Fleet, the USS Blue Ridge, made a port call to Shanghai. In conjunction with the ship visit, Vice Admiral James Metzger, Commander of the 7th Fleet, visited Shanghai and met with Vice Admiral Zhao Guojun, Commander of the PLAN's East Sea Fleet.

On March 24, 2001, in the Yellow Sea near South Korea, a PLA Navy Jianghu III-class frigate passed as close as 100 yards to a U.S. surveillance ship, the USS Bowditch, and a PLA reconnaissance plane shadowed it. The harassment continued for months.

On April 1, 2001, a PLA Navy F-8 fighter collided with a U.S. Navy EP-3 reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea. Upon surviving the collision, the EP-3's crew made an emergency landing on China's Hainan island. The PLA detained the 24 U.S. Navy personnel for 11 days. Instead of acknowledging that the PLA had started aggressive interceptions of U.S. reconnaissance flights in December 2000 and apologizing for the accident, top PRC ruler Jiang Zemin demanded an apology and compensation from the United States. The United States did not transport the damaged EP-3 out of China until July 3.

On April 24, 2001, during arms sales talks in Washington, President Bush approved a request from Taiwan's military to purchase weapons systems including diesel-electric submarines; P-3 anti-submarine warfare aircraft; and destroyers (approving four Kidd-class destroyers). The Bush Administration also decided to brief Taiwan on the PAC-3 missile defense missile. The next day, the President said in an interview that if the PRC attacked Taiwan, he has an obligation to do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself."

- September 14-15 DOD and the PLA held a special meeting under the MMCA (in Guam) to discuss how to avoid clashes like the one involving the EP-3. The Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, Rear Admiral Tom Fellin, led the U.S. delegation. The issues for U.S. side were: principles of safe flight and navigation for military activities conducted on the high seas, international airspace, and EEZs; and safety of ships and aircraft exercising the right of distressed entry. The Deputy Director of the Foreign Affairs Office, Major General Zhang Bangdong, led the PLA delegation.
- December 5-7 A Working Group under the MMCA met in Beijing.

2002

- April 10-12 The third plenary meeting under the MMCA was held in Shanghai. PACOM's Director for Strategic Planning and Policy (J5), Rear Admiral William Sullivan, and the PLA Navy's Deputy Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Zhou Borong, led the delegations.

April 27-May 1	PRC Vice President Hu Jintao visited PACOM and was welcomed by Admiral Dennis Blair. In Washington, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld welcomed Hu with an honor cordon at the Pentagon. PRC media reported that Rumsfeld and Hu reached a consensus to resume military exchanges, but the Pentagon's spokeswoman said that they agreed to have their representatives talk about how to proceed on mil-to-mil contacts, which were still approved on a case-by-case basis. Vice President Hu also met with President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney.
May 14-28	The PLA sent observers to Cobra Gold 2002 in Thailand, a combined exercise involving forces of the United States, Thailand, and Singapore.
June 26-27	Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Peter Rodman visited Beijing to discuss a resumption of military exchanges. He met with General Xiong Guangkai and General Chi Haotian, who said that the PRC was ready to improve military relations with the United States. Secretary Rumsfeld told reporters on June 21, 2002, that Rodman would discuss the principles of transparency, reciprocity, and consistency for mil-to-mil contacts that Rumsfeld stressed to Vice President Hu Jintao.
July 15-29	In the first POW/MIA mission in China on a Cold War case, a team from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI) went to northeastern Jilin province to search for, but did not find, the remains of two CIA pilots whose C-47 plane was shot down in 1952 during the Korean War.
August 6-8	The PLA and DOD held a meeting under the MMCA in Hawaii.
August- September	In a POW/MIA recovery mission, a team from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI) recovered remains of the crew of a C-46 cargo plane that crashed in March 1944 in Tibet while flying the "Hump" route over the Himalaya mountains back to India from Kunming, China, during World War II. The two-month operation excavated a site at 15,600 ft.
October 8-14	The President of NDU, Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney, visited Beijing, Xian, Hangzhou, and Shanghai. He met with CMC Vice Chairman and Defense Minister Chi Haotian, Deputy Chief of General Staff Xiong Guangkai, and NDU President Xing Shizhong.
October 25	President Bush held a summit with PRC President Jiang Zemin at his ranch in Crawford, TX. Concerning security issues, President Bush said they discussed "the threat posed by the Iraqi regime," "concern about the acknowledgment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of a program to enrich uranium," counterterrorism (calling China an "ally"), weapons proliferation, Taiwan, and a "candid, constructive, and cooperative" relationship with contacts at many levels in coming months, including "a new dialogue on security issues." Jiang offered a vague proposal to reconsider the PLA's missile buildup in return for restraints in U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.
November 24	In the first U.S. naval port call to mainland China since the EP-3 crisis, the destroyer USS Paul F. Foster visited Qingdao.
November 30-December 8	Lieutenant General Gao Jindian, a Vice President of the NDU, led a Capstone-like delegation to the United States.
December 4-6	The Maritime and Air Safety Working Group under the MMCA met in Qingdao. The U.S. team toured the destroyer Qingdao.

- December 9-10 Following a two-year hiatus after the previous Defense Consultative Talks (DCT) in December 2000, the Pentagon held the 5th DCT (the first under the Bush Administration) and kept U.S. representation at the same level as that under the Clinton Administration. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith met with General Xiong Guangkai, a Deputy Chief of General Staff, at the Pentagon. The PLA played up the status of Xiong and the DCT, calling the meeting “defense consultations at the vice ministerial level.” At U.S. urging, Xiong brought a proposal for mil-to-mil exchanges in 2003. Feith told reporters that he could not claim progress in gaining greater reciprocity and transparency in the exchanges, although they had a discussion of these issues. They did not discuss Jiang’s offer on the PLA’s missile buildup. Feith also said that DOD had no major change in its attitude toward the PLA since the EP-3 crisis. Secretary Rumsfeld did not meet with Xiong. Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice met with Xiong on December 10.
- December 12-17 PACOM Commander, Admiral Thomas Fargo, visited Chengdu, Nanjing, Ningbo, Beijing, and Shanghai. The PLA showed him a live-fire exercise conducted by a reserve unit of an infantry division in Sichuan. General Liang Guanglie (Chief of General Staff) met with Admiral Fargo.
- 2003**
- March 25-29 The Director of the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO), Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Jerry Jennings, visited China and met with officials of the PLA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Red Cross Society of China. Jennings said that the PRC has records that may well hold “the key” to helping DOD to resolve many of the cases of American POWs and MIAs from the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and the Cold War. While the PRC has been “very cooperative” in U.S. investigations of losses from World War II and Vietnam, Jennings said both sides suggested ways to “enhance cooperation” on Korean War cases and acknowledged that there is limited time. Jennings sought access to information in PRC archives at the national and provincial levels, assistance from PRC civilian researchers to conduct archival research on behalf of the United States, information from the Dandong Museum relating to two F-86 pilots who are Korean War MIAs, and resumption of contact with PLA veterans from the Korean War to build on information related to the PRC operation of POW camps during the war.
- April 9-11 In Hawaii, in the fourth plenary meeting under the MMCA, PACOM’s Director for Strategic Planning and Policy (J5), Rear Admiral William Sullivan, met with PLA Navy’s Deputy Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Zhou Borong.
- April 25-May 4 The Commandant of the PLA’s NDU, Lieutenant General Pei Huailiang, led a delegation to visit the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD; U.S. NDU in Washington, DC; Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA; and PACOM in Honolulu, HI.
- May 15-29 The PLA sent observers to Cobra Gold 2003 in Thailand, a combined exercise involving the armed forces of the United States, Thailand, and Singapore.
- August 19-21 The Military Maritime and Air Safety Working Group under the MMCA met in Hawaii. The PLA delegation met with PACOM’s Chief of Staff for the Director for Strategic Planning and Policy, Brigadier General (USAF) Charles Neeley, and toured the U.S. Aegis-equipped cruiser USS Lake Erie.
- August 25 The PLA arranged for 27 military observers from the United States and other countries to be the first foreign military observers to visit China’s largest combined arms training base (in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region) and watch an exercise that involved elements of force-on-force, live-fire, and joint operational maneuvers conducted by the Beijing Military Region.
- September 22-26 In the first foreign naval ship visit to Zhanjiang, the cruiser USS Cowpens and frigate USS Vandegrift visited this homeport of the PLAN’s South Sea Fleet. Its Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Hou Yuexi, welcomed Rear Admiral James Kelly, Commander of Carrier Group Five, who also visited.

October 22-25 The PLAN destroyer Shenzhen and supply ship Qinghai Lake visited Guam.

October 24-November 1 CMC Vice Chairman and PRC Defense Minister, General Cao Gangchuan, visited PACOM in Hawaii, West Point in New York, and Washington, DC, where he met with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell. General Cao stressed that Taiwan was the most important issue. The PLA sought the same treatment for General Cao as that given to General Chi Haotian when he visited Washington as defense minister in 1996 and was granted a meeting with President Clinton. In the end, President Bush dropped by for five minutes when General Cao met with National Security Advisor Rice at the White House. Rumsfeld did not attend the PRC Embassy's banquet for Cao. At PACOM, Cao met with Admiral Thomas Fargo, toured the cruiser *USS Lake Erie*.

November 12-19 Nanjing Military Region Commander, Lieutenant General Zhu Wenquan, visited PACOM where he met with Admiral Thomas Fargo and boarded the destroyer *USS Russell*. LTG Zhu also visited San Diego, where he toured the carrier *USS Nimitz* and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. He also stopped in Washington, DC, and West Point in New York.

On November 18, 2003, a PRC official on Taiwan affairs who is a PLA major general, Wang Zaixi, issued a threat to use force against the perceived open promotion of Taiwan independence. Campaigning for re-election on March 20, 2004, Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian was calling for controversial referendums and a new Taiwan constitution. On the eve of his visit to Washington, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao threatened that China would "pay any price to safeguard the unity of the motherland." On December 3, PRC media reported the warnings of a PLA major general and a senior colonel at AMS, who wrote that Chen's use of referendums to seek independence will push Taiwan into the "abyss of war." They warned that China would be willing to pay the costs of war, including boycotts of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, drops in foreign investment, setbacks in foreign relations, wartime damage to the southeastern coast, economic costs, and PLA casualties. Appearing with Premier Wen at the White House on December 9, 2003, President Bush criticized Chen, saying that "we oppose any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo. And the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose."

2004

January 13-16 The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General (USAF) Richard Myers, visited Beijing, the first visit to China by the highest ranking U.S. military officer since November 2000. General Myers met with Generals Guo Boxiong and Cao Gangchuan (CMC Vice Chairmen) and General Liang Guanglie (PLA Chief of General Staff). CMC Chairman Jiang Zemin met briefly with Myers, echoing President Bush's brief meeting with General Cao. The PLA generals and Jiang stressed Taiwan as their critical issue. General Myers stressed that the United States has a responsibility under the TRA to assist Taiwan's ability to defend itself and to ensure that there will be no temptation to use force. Myers pointed to the PLA's missile buildup as a threat to Taiwan. The PLA allowed Myers to be the first foreign visitor to tour the Beijing Aerospace Control Center, headquarters of its space program. Myers discussed advancing mil-to-mil contacts, including search and rescue exercises, educational exchanges, ship visits, and senior-level exchanges (including a visit by General Liang Guanglie). Myers also indicated a U.S. expectation of exchanges between younger officers, saying that interactions at the lower level can improve mutual understanding in the longer run.

February 10-11	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith visited Beijing to hold the 6 th DCT with General Xiong Guangkai, a meeting which the PLA side claimed to be “defense consultations at the vice ministerial level.” Feith met with General Cao Gangchuan (a CMC Vice Chairman and Defense Minister), who raised extensively the issue of Taiwan and the referendums. Feith said he discussed North Korean nuclear weapons, Taiwan, and maritime safety. He stressed that avoiding a war in the Taiwan Strait was in the interests of both countries and that belligerent rhetoric and the PLA’s missile buildup do not help to reduce cross-strait tensions. The PRC’s Foreign Ministry said that the two sides discussed a program for mil-to-mil contacts in 2004. The Department of Defense proposed a defense telephone link (DTL), or “hotline,” with the PLA.
February 24-28	The USS Blue Ridge, the 7 th Fleet’s command ship, visited Shanghai. In conjunction with the port call, Vice Admiral Robert Willard, Commander of the 7 th Fleet, met with Rear Admiral Zhao Guojun, Commander of the East Sea Fleet.
March 9-11	The Maritime and Air Safety Working Group under the MMCA met in Shanghai. The U.S. visitors met with Rear Admiral Zhou Borong, Deputy Chief of Staff of the PLAN, and toured the frigate Lianyungang.
May 3-June 29	A team from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) traveled to northeastern city of Dandong near China’s border with North Korea on an operation to recover remains of a pilot whose F-86 fighter was shot down during the Korean War. In following up on an initial operation in July 2002 on a Cold War case, the U.S. team also went to northeastern Jilin province to recover remains of two CIA pilots whose C-47 transport plane was shot down in 1952.
July 21-25	PACOM Commander, Admiral Thomas Fargo, visited China and met with General Liu Zhenwu (Guangzhou Military Region Commander), Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, General Liang Guanglie (Chief of General Staff), and General Xiong Guangkai (a Deputy Chief of General Staff), who opposed U.S. arms sales and defense cooperation with Taiwan. Fargo said that policy on Taiwan has not changed.
August-September	DPMO sent a team to Tibet to recover wreckage from a site where a C-46 aircraft crashed during World War II.
September 24-27	The USS Cushing, a destroyer with the Pacific Fleet, visited Qingdao for a port visit.
October 24-30	Reciprocating General Myers’ visit to China, PLA Chief of General Staff, General Liang Guanglie, visited the United States, including the Joint Forces Command and Joint Forces Staff College at Norfolk; the carrier USS George Washington and the destroyer USS Laboon at Norfolk Naval Base; Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base; Joint Task Force-Civil Support at Fort Monroe; Army Infantry Center at Fort Benning; Washington, D.C.; and Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. In Washington, General Liang held meetings with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld saw General Liang briefly. Talks covered military exchanges, the Six-Party Talks on North Korea, and Taiwan.
November 22-23	DPMO held Technical Talks in Beijing on POW/MIA recovery operations in 2005.
2005	
January 30- February 1	Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless visited Beijing to hold a Special Policy Dialogue for the first time, as a forum to discuss policy problems separate from safety concerns under the MMCA. Meeting with Zhang Bangdong, Director of the PLA’s Foreign Affairs Office, Lawless tried to negotiate an agreement on military maritime and air safety. He also discussed a program of military contacts in 2005, the U.S. proposal of February 2004 for a “hotline,” Taiwan, the DCTs, PLA’s buildup, and a possible visit by Secretary Rumsfeld. Lawless also met with General Xiong Guangkai.

- February 23-25 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs Jerry Jennings visited Beijing and Dandong to discuss China's assistance in resolving cases from the Vietnam War and World War II. He also continued to seek access to China's documents related to POW camps that China managed during the Korean War. At Dandong, Jennings announced the recovery of the remains of a U.S. Air Force pilot who was missing-in-action from the Korean War.
- April 29-30 General Xiong Guangkai, Deputy Chief of General Staff, visited Washington to hold the 7th DCT with Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith. They continued to discuss the U.S. proposal for a "hotline" and an agreement on military maritime and air safety with the PLA and also talked about military exchanges, international security issues, PLA modernization, U.S. military redeployments, and energy. Xiong also met with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, and Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns.
- July 7-8 The Department of Defense and the PLA held an annual MMCA meeting in Qingdao, to discuss unresolved maritime and air safety issues under the MMCA.
- July 18-22 General Liu Zhenwu, Commander of the PLA's Guangzhou Military Region, visited Hawaii, as hosted by Admiral William Fallon, Commander of the Pacific Command. Among visits to parts of the Pacific Command, General Liu toured the USS Chosin, a Ticonderoga-class cruiser.
- September 6-11 Admiral William Fallon, Commander of the Pacific Command, visited Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong at the invitation of General Liu Zhenwu, Guangzhou Military Region Commander. As Admiral Fallon said he sought to deepen the "exceedingly limited military interaction," he met with high-ranking PLA Generals Guo Boxiong (CMC Vice Chairman) and Liang Guanglie (Chief of General Staff). Fallon discussed military contacts between junior officers; PLA observers at U.S. exercises; exchanges with more transparency and reciprocity; cooperation in disaster relief and control of avian flu; and reducing tensions.
- September 13-16 The destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur visited Qingdao, hosted by the PLA Navy's North Sea Fleet.
- September 27 U.S. and other foreign military observers (from 24 countries) observed a PLA exercise ("North Sword 2005") at the PLA's Zhurihe training base in Inner Mongolia in the Beijing MR.
- October 18-20 Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited Beijing, China. He met with General Cao Gangchuan (including a visit to the office in the August 1st [Bayi] Building of this CMC Vice Chairman and Defense Minister), General Guo Boxiong (a CMC Vice Chairman), General Jing Zhiyuan (commander of the Second Artillery, or missile corps, in the first foreign visit to its headquarters), and Hu Jintao (Communist Party General Secretary, CMC Chairman, and PRC president). General Jing introduced the Second Artillery and repeated the PRC's declared "no first use" nuclear weapons policy. Rumsfeld's discussions covered military exchanges; greater transparency from the PLA, including its spending; China's rising global influence; Olympics in Beijing in 2008; and China's manned space program. Rumsfeld also held round-tables at the Central Party School and Academy of Military Science. The PLA denied a U.S. request to visit its command center in the Western Hills, outside Beijing, and continued to deny agreement on a "hot line." The PLA did not agree to open archives believed to hold documents on American POWs in the Korean War, an issue raised by Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless.
- November 13-19 The PLA sent its first delegation of younger, mid-ranking brigade and division commanders and commissars to the United States. Led by Major General Zhang Wenda, Deputy Director of the GSD's General Office, they visited units of the Pacific Command in Hawaii and Alaska.

December 8-9	Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Lawless visited Beijing to discuss the military exchange program in 2006 and military maritime security. He met with the Director of the PLA's Foreign Affairs Office, Major General Zhang Bangdong, and Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Xiong Guangkai.
December 12-15	A delegation from the PLA's NDU, led by Rear Admiral Yang Yi, Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies, visited Washington (NDU, Pentagon, and State Department).
December 13	Following up on Rumsfeld's visit, a DPMO delegation visited Beijing to continue to seek access to China's archives believed to contain information on American POWs during the Korean War. The delegation also discussed POW/MIA investigations and recovery operations in China in 2006.
2006	
January 9-13	PLA GLD delegation representing all military regions visited PACOM (hosted by Col. William Carrington, J1) to discuss personnel management, especially U.S. vs. PLA salaries.
February 27-28	A PACOM military medical delegation visited China.
March 13-18	To reciprocate the PLA's first mid-ranking delegation's visit in November 2005, PACOM's J5 (Director for Strategic Planning and Policy), Rear Admiral Michael Tracy, led a delegation of 20 O-5 and O-6 officers from PACOM's Army, Marines, Navy, and Air Force commands to Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Ningbo.
April 9-15	NDU President Lt. Gen. Michael Dunn and Commandant of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) Maj. Gen. Frances Wilson visited Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai.
May 9-15	PACOM Commander, Admiral William Fallon, visited Beijing, Xian, Hangzhou, and cities close to the border with North Korea, including Shenyang. He met with a CMC Vice Chairman, General Cao Gangchuan, and a Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Ge Zhenfeng, and discussed issues that included the U.S.-Japan alliance and real PLA spending. Fallon was the first U.S. official to visit the 39 th Group Army, where he saw a showcase unit (346 th regiment). At the 28 th Air Division near Hangzhou, he was the first U.S. official to see a new FB-7 fighter. He invited the PLA to observe the U.S. "Valiant Shield" exercise in June near Guam.
May 15-26	A PLA delegation observed "Cobra Gold," a multilateral exercise hosted by Thailand and PACOM.
June 8	Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman visited Beijing for the 8 th DCT, the first time at this lower level and without Xiong Guangkai. He talked with Major General Zhang Qinsheng, Assistant Chief of General Staff, about exchanges, weapons nonproliferation, counterterrorism, Olympics, invitation to the Second Artillery commander to visit, etc.
June 16-23	A PLA and civilian delegation of 12, led by Rear Admiral Zhang Leiyu, a PLAN Deputy Chief of Staff and submariner, observed the U.S. "Valiant Shield" exercise that involved three carrier strike groups near Guam. They boarded the <i>USS Ronald Reagan</i> and visited Guam's air and naval bases.
June 27-30	<i>USS Blue Ridge</i> (7 th Fleet's command ship) visited Shanghai.

July 16-22	The highest ranking PLA commander, CMC Vice Chairman Guo Boxiong, visited San Diego (3 rd Marine Aircraft Wing and carrier <i>USS Ronald Reagan</i>), Washington, and West Point, at Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's invitation. General Guo agreed to hold a combined naval search and rescue exercise (a U.S. proposal for the past two years in the context of the MMCA talks) and to allow U.S. access to PLA archives with information on U.S. POW/MIAs from the Korean War (a U.S. request for many years). Guo personally gave Rumsfeld information on his friend, Lt. j.g. James Deane, a Navy pilot who was shot down by the PLA Air Force in 1956. Guo also had meetings with Representatives Mark Steven Kirk and Rick Larsen (co-chairs of the U.S.-China Working Group), Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, and President Bush briefly dropped by during the latter. During the meetings and an address at the National Defense University, General Guo discussed North Korea's July 4 missile tests, critically citing the U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the tests (remarks not reported by PRC press). In contrast to the meeting in Beijing with General Myers in January 2004, Taiwan was not a heated issue in General Guo's talks with Rumsfeld and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace.
August 7-11	MMCA plenary and working group meetings held in Hawaii. The two sides established communication protocols, planned communications and maneuver exercises, and scripted the two phases of the planned search and rescue exercise.
August 21-23	PACOM Commander, Admiral Fallon, visited Harbin.
September 6-20	The PLAN destroyer <i>Qingdao</i> visited Pearl Harbor (and held the first U.S.-PLA basic exercise in the use of tactical signals with the U.S. Navy destroyer <i>USS Chung-Hoon</i>) and San Diego (and held the first bilateral search and rescue exercise (SAREX), under the MMCA, with the destroyer <i>USS Shoup</i>).
September 10-21	A large, 58-member PLA Air Force delegation, with its own PLAAF aircraft, visited U.S. bases in Alaska, Colorado, Maryland, Alabama, New Jersey, and Washington, DC.
September 20-30	DPMO Team visited China to discuss POW/MIA concerns.
September 26	<i>USS Chancellorsville</i> made a port visit to Qingdao.
September 26-28	Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Ryan Henry, visited Beijing and Xian. He briefed PLA General Ge Zhenfeng, Deputy Chief of General Staff, on the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of February 2006.
October 8-13	A U.S. delegation from the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment visited China to discuss military environmental issues.
October 20-27	A delegation of NDU operational commanders visited the United States.

On October 26, 2006, a PLAN Song-class diesel electric submarine approached undetected to within five miles of the aircraft carrier *USS Kitty Hawk* near Okinawa. PACOM Commander Admiral Fallon argued that the incident showed the need for military-to-military engagement to avoid escalations of tensions.

October 30-November 4	PLA mid-level, division and brigade commanders (senior colonels and colonels) visited Honolulu, toured the destroyer <i>USS Preble</i> in San Diego, and observed training at Camp Pendleton Marine Base. They were denied requests to have closer looks at an aircraft carrier and Strykers.
November 12-19	Commander of the Pacific Fleet, Adm. Gary Roughead, visited Beijing, Shanghai, and Zhanjiang, overseeing second phase of bilateral search and rescue exercise (involving the visiting amphibious transport dock <i>USS Juneau</i> and destroyer <i>USS Fitzgerald</i>), and the first Marine Corps visit to the PRC.

December 7-8 Stemming from the MMCA-related Special Policy Dialogue of 2005, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense held Defense Policy Coordination Talks (DPCT) in Washington with the director of the PLA's Foreign Affairs Office to discuss a dispute over EEZs.

2007

On January 11, 2007, the PLA conducted its first successful direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons test by launching a missile with a kinetic kill vehicle to destroy a PRC satellite at about 530 miles up in space.

January 28-February 9 Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Ge Zhenfeng led a PLA delegation to visit PACOM in Honolulu, Washington, Fort Monroe, Fort Benning, and West Point. The U.S. Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) hosted Ge, who also met with the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. However, the PLA declined to attend the Pacific Armies' Chiefs' Conference in August and a reciprocal visit by the CSA.

January 30-31 DPMO/JPAC delegation visited China to discuss POW/MIA cooperation.

February 23-28 Commander of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, Lt. General Karl Eikenberry, visited China.

March 22-25 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps General Peter Pace, was hosted in China by Chief of General Staff Liang Guanglie and also met with CMC Vice Chairmen Guo Boxiong and Cao Gangchuan. Pace visited Beijing, Shenyang, Anshan, Dalian, and Nanjing, including the Academy of Military Sciences, Shenyang MR (where he was the first U.S. official to sit in a PLAAF Su-27 fighter and a T-99 tank), and the Nanjing MR command center.

April 1-7 PLA Navy Commander Wu Shengli visited Honolulu and Washington, where he met with the PACOM Commander Keating, Pacific Fleet Commander Roughhead, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Mullen, Deputy Secretary of Defense England, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Pace, and Navy Secretary Winter. The CNO, Admiral Michael Mullen, discussed his "1,000-ship navy" maritime security concept with Vice Admiral Wu. He also toured the Naval Academy at Annapolis, the cruiser *USS Lake Erie* in Honolulu, and aircraft carrier *USS Harry Truman* and nuclear attack submarine *USS Montpelier* at Norfolk Naval Base. Wu also went to West Point.

April 15-22 General Counsel of the Defense Department William Haynes II visited Beijing and Shanghai, and met with GPD Director Li Jinai. Haynes sought to understand the rule of law in China.

April 21-28 U.S. mid-level officers' visit to China, led by RAdm Michael Tracy (PACOM J-5). The delegation visited Beijing, Qingdao, Nanjing, and Shenyang, including the East Sea Fleet Headquarters, a Su-27 fighter base, and 179th Brigade.

May 12-16 PACOM Commander Admiral Timothy Keating visited Beijing, meeting with CMC Vice Chairman Guo Boxiong and questioning the ASAT weapon test in January. Keating also met with PLA Navy Commander Wu Shengli and heard interest in acquiring an aircraft carrier. Keating visited the Nanjing Military Region (including the Nanjing Naval Command, Nanjing Polytechnic Institute, and 179th Brigade). At a press conference in Beijing on May 12, Keating suggested U.S. "help" if China builds aircraft carriers.

July 23-29 Pacific Air Forces Commander, General Paul Hester, visited Beijing and Nanjing. He met with PLAAF Commander Qiao Qingchen and Deputy Chief of General Staff Ge Zhenfeng. Hester visited Jining Air Base (as the first U.S. visitor) and Jianqiao Air Base. He was denied access to the J-10 fighter.

- August 17-23 After nomination to be Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CNO, Adm. Michael Mullen, visited Lushun, Qingdao, Ningbo, and Dalian Naval Academy. He met with PLAN Commander Wu Shengli and two CMC Vice Chairmen, Generals Guo Boxiong and Cao Gangchuan. After postponing his reciprocal visit (for hosting PLAN Commander Wu Shengli in April) due to inadequate substance and access given by the PLA, Mullen got unprecedented observation of an exercise, boarding a Song-class sub and Luzhou-class destroyer.
- November 4-6 Defense Secretary Robert Gates visited China (then South Korea and Japan). Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan finally agreed to the U.S. proposal to set up a defense telephone link (hotline). Gates also sought a dialogue on nuclear policy and broader exchanges beyond the senior level. Gates also met with CMC Vice Chairmen Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou, and Chairman Hu Jintao.

In November 2007, the PRC disapproved a number of port calls at Hong Kong by U.S. Navy ships, including two minesweepers in distress (*USS Patriot* and *USS Guardian*) seeking to refuel in face of an approaching storm, and the aircraft carrier *USS Kitty Hawk* and accompanying vessels planning on a holiday and family reunions for Thanksgiving. The Pentagon protested to the PLA. When the *Kitty Hawk* left Hong Kong, it transited the Taiwan Strait, raising PRC objections. In Beijing in January 2008, Adm. Keating asserted that the strait is international water and PRC permission is not needed.

- December 3 9th DCT was held in Washington. PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff Ma Xiaotian and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman led discussions that covered PLA objections to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and U.S. law restricting military contacts, military exchanges in 2008, nuclear proliferation in North Korea and Iran (including the just-issued U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear program), lower-ranking exchanges, hotline, PLA's suspension of some visits and port calls in Hong Kong, and U.S. interest in a strategic nuclear dialogue. The PLA delegation included PLAN Deputy Chief of Staff Zhang Leiyu and 2nd Artillery Deputy Chief of Staff Yang Zhiguo. They also met: Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff James Cartwright, Deputy National Security Advisor James Jeffrey, and Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte.

2008

- January 13-16 In his 2nd visit as PACOM Commander, Adm. Timothy Keating, visited Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, before Hong Kong. He visited AMS and Guangzhou MR, and met with PLA Chief of General Staff, General Chen Bingde; CMC Vice Chairman, General Guo Boxiong, who demanded an end to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Keating discussed planned exchanges with a new invitation to the PLA to participate in the Cobra Gold multilateral exercise in May, the PRC's strategic intentions, denied port calls in Hong Kong, etc. (But the PLA only observed Cobra Gold in Thailand in May 2008.)
- February 25-26 PACOM's Director for Strategic Planning and Policy (J-5), USMC Major General Thomas Conant, and PLA Navy Deputy Chief of Staff Zhang Leiyu led an annual meeting under the MMCA in Qingdao, the first since 2006. The U.S. delegation visited the frigate *Luoyang*. The U.S. side opposed PLA proposals to discuss policy differences and plan details of naval exercises at the MMCA meetings.
- February 25-29 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs Charles Ray signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Shanghai on February 29, 2008, gaining indirect access to PLA archives on the Korean War in an effort to resolve decades-old POW/MIA cases.
- February 26-29 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense David Sedney met with PLA Assistant Chief of General Staff, Major General Chen Xiaogong, in Beijing. Sedney also led another meeting of the DPCT in Shanghai. Sedney and Major General Qian Lihua, Director of the PLA's Foreign Affairs Office, signed an agreement to set up a hotline.

Days before Taiwan's presidential election on March 22, 2008, in a sign of U.S. anxiety about PRC threats to peace and stability, the Defense Department had two aircraft carriers (including the *Kitty Hawk* returning from its base in Japan for decommissioning) positioned east of Taiwan to respond to any provocative situation.

- March 8-15 PACOM's Deputy Director for Strategic Planning and Policy, Brigadier General Sam Angelella, led a 19-member delegation of mid-level officers to Beijing, Zhengzhou, and Qingdao.
- March 30-April 4 The U.S. Marine Corps Commandant, General James Conway, visited Beijing, as hosted by PLA Navy Commander Wu Shengli. Conway met with Defense Minister Liang Guanglie and spoke at NDU. The PLAN allowed Conway to board an amphibious ship, a destroyer, and an expeditionary fighting vehicle. In meeting Guangzhou MR Commander, Lt. Gen. Zhang Qinsheng, Conway apparently discussed deploying forces together in disaster relief operations.
- April 21-22 The first discussion on nuclear weapon strategy and policy was held in Washington, DC, at the "experts" level.
- May 18 After the earthquake in China on May 12, PACOM sent two C-17 transport aircraft to Chengdu to deliver disaster relief supplies. PACOM Commander Keating used the Pentagon's hotline to discuss that aid with PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff Ma Xiaotian.
- June 16-21 Air Force Command Chief Master Sgt James Roy from PACOM led the first U.S. NCO delegation to China. The group of senior NCOs visited the PLA's 179th Infantry Battalion in Nanjing and the Second Artillery (Missile Force) Academy's NCO training school in Wuhan.
- July 5-17 PLA Lieutenant General Zhang Qinsheng, Guangzhou Military Region Commander, led a delegation to Hawaii. He met with Admiral Robert Willard, Commander of the Pacific Fleet, at his headquarters and with Rear Adm. Joe Walsh, Submarine Force Commander, during a tour of the attack submarine USS Santa Fe. The PLA delegation also was able to observe the RIMPAC exercise. PACOM Commander, Admiral Timothy Keating, agreed with Zhang about planning for two humanitarian aid exercises, the first combined land-based ones, to "push the envelope." The PLA delegation also visited Alaska, Washington, D.C., and New York. In Washington, Zhang met with U.S. officials of the Marine Corps, Departments of Defense and State, and NSC, including Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England.
- October 1-2 The PLA sent its first "NCO" delegation to PACOM supposedly to reciprocate the U.S. NCO visit in June. However, the PLA delegation was led by Major General Zhong Zhiming, and only 3 out of 13 members in the group were enlisted.
- December 17-19 After the PLA suspended some military exchanges in response to notifications to Congress of arms sales to Taiwan in October, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense David Sedney visited Beijing to try without success to resume the dialogue. He met with PLA Assistant Chief of General Staff Chen Xiaogong.

2009

- January PLA Navy and U.S. Navy cooperated in anti-piracy operations off Somalia.
- February 27-28 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense David Sedney again visited Beijing to resume the military dialogue after suspension in October 2008. He held a round of the DPCT, including the new topic of anti-piracy coordination, and then called the meeting "the best set of talks" he has experienced, although results were limited.

On March 4-8, 2009, Y-12 maritime surveillance aircraft, a PLAN frigate, PRC patrol and intelligence collection ships, and trawlers harassed in increasingly aggressive and dangerous behavior unarmed U.S. ocean surveillance ships, the USNS *Victorious* and USNS *Impeccable*, in international waters in the Yellow Sea and South China Sea.

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