

ASSESSING THE NEW U.S. MARITIME STRATEGY

A Window into Chinese Thinking

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The new U.S. maritime strategy embodies a historic reassessment of the international system and how the nation can best pursue its interests in harmony with those of other states. In light of the strategy's focus on building partnerships to better safeguard the global maritime commons, it is vital that American leaders clearly understand the frank and unvarnished views of allies, friends, and potential partners. The strategy's unveiling at the Naval War College on 17 October 2007 with the leaders of nearly a hundred navies and coast guards present demonstrated initial global maritime inclusiveness. The new maritime strat-

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egy is generating responses from numerous states. As U.S. leaders work to implement global maritime partnerships in the years ahead, they must carefully study the reactions of the nations and maritime forces with which they hope to work.

Chinese responses warrant especially close consideration. China is a key global stakeholder with which the United States shares many common maritime interests. Beijing has not made any official public statements on the maritime strategy thus far. Yet Chinese opinions on this matter are clearly important, even if they suggest that in some areas the two nations must "agree to disagree." Chinese reactions to the maritime strategy provide a window into a larger strategic dynamic—not just in East Asia, where China is already developing as a great power, but globally, where it has

the potential to play a major role as well. How the United States can maintain its existing status and role while China continues to rise—as the world’s greatest developed and developing powers attempt to reach an understanding that might be termed “competitive coexistence”—will be perhaps the critical question in international relations for the twenty-first century.¹ To that end, this study analyzes three of the most significant unofficial Chinese assessments of the maritime strategy publicly available to date and offers annotated full-length translations (which follow, in the form of essays) so that a foreign audience can survey the documents themselves.²

A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL COMPLEX

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has a long tradition of informing its policy elites on international affairs through the widespread translation of foreign news and documents.

Under Mao Zedong’s leadership (1949–76), official discourse was dominated by “doctrinalism.”³ Revolutionary leaders dedicated to “antagonistic contradictions and struggle” used ambiguous ideological statements to mobilize political factions and launch personal attacks against their rivals. By the late 1970s, however, Deng Xiaoping had shifted the national emphasis to economic and science and technology development, called for pragmatic debate of policy issues and solutions, and thereby opened the way for market forces and more widespread circulation of information.⁴

These factors have allowed a “public intellectual complex” to emerge under Deng’s successors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. Members of this community of strategic scholars and policy makers at a wide variety of private and public institutions engage in increasingly vigorous debates, publish widely in specialized and popular journals, make media appearances, and on occasion brief policy makers and even China’s senior leadership. Some intellectuals are privy to internal deliberations, and a few play a major role in shaping policy, particularly in specialized subject areas. Even when Chinese public intellectuals are not directly involved in the policy process, their views often matter. Their ideas may inform policy makers indirectly and even be adopted as policy. They may also play a role in justifying or socializing already-established policies.⁵ When politics or bureaucratic maneuvering comes to the fore, public intellectuals may become caught up in a larger competition of ideas. For all these reasons, their writings are worth examining for possible insights into Chinese policy debates and even, possibly, government decision making. Chinese analysts are meticulous students of policy documents from major countries (particularly the United States), and they scrutinize their texts in the belief that wording contains specific insights; any significant U.S. policy

document (e.g., the maritime strategy) is therefore likely to receive careful vetting in Chinese publications.⁶

In this context, it is hardly surprising that the maritime strategy has been subject to Chinese description and evaluation. In the first year since the strategy's promulgation, it was covered extensively in China's civilian (and, to a lesser extent, military) press. The vast majority of these articles, however, were brief and descriptive.⁷ Some of the more extensive ones touched on the strategy indirectly in discussing more broadly U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific;⁸ a few were rather sensational in their obsession with the idea that the United States is attempting to "contain" China.⁹

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This could be a major change in the U.S. military's maritime strategy. It must receive the affirmation of all the world's nations.

Thus far, three openly published articles stand out from the rest in their focus on the strategy, the detail and sophistication of their analyses, and their having been written by recognized experts from major institutions; they have therefore been selected as the focus of this study. Their respective authors' affiliations suggest that their writings (in terms of variations in coverage) offer windows into how different elements of China's bureaucracy, with their specific interests and perspectives, assess the new U.S. maritime strategy. While these informed commentaries are not definitive and should not be overinterpreted, they may be suggestive of the Chinese government's viewpoint and future policy responses.

The first article is by Lu Rude, emeritus professor at the Dalian Naval Vessel Academy.¹⁰ Lu has been a consistent proponent of maritime and naval development and contributes frequently to debates on China's naval priorities.¹¹ Lu enlisted in the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in 1951, beginning a military career that would last for half a century, of which over four decades would be devoted to education in maritime navigation.¹² Lu's full-page article on the new maritime strategy appeared in *People's Navy*, the official newspaper of the PLAN, which is published by the service's Political Department and provides guidance for officers and enlisted personnel.¹³ Lu outlines the new U.S. maritime strategy's context, content, and implications for international security, particularly in East Asia. He lauds the strategy's emphasis on conflict prevention and international cooperation but places the onus on the United States to demonstrate its strategic sincerity through concrete actions. He highlights the document's emphasis on multinational cooperation against unconventional threats but also draws attention to the Navy's stated mission of "detering potential competitors."

The second article is by Wang Baofu, researcher and deputy director of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) National Defense University's Institute for Strategic Studies.¹⁴ Wang's comments and assessments on international relations and arms control appear frequently in China's official media, as well as in popular media and academic publications.¹⁵ His present article appeared in *Study Times*, a journal of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Party School. An outspoken critic of the American intervention in Iraq, Wang sees the new maritime strategy as the outgrowth of a comprehensive reassessment of U.S. military policy, methods, and objectives in the aftermath of both 9/11 and the early phases of the Iraq war.¹⁶

The third article is by Su Hao, a well published professor in the Department of Diplomacy at the China Foreign Affairs University and director of its Center for Asia-Pacific Studies.¹⁷ He is also a board member in a range of Chinese organizations that focus on security, cooperation, and bilateral exchange.¹⁸ Su has emphasized that Chinese national interests and identity are primarily continental.¹⁹ He displays a deep understanding of the strategy's wording, having also published a full-length Chinese translation.²⁰ Su's article appeared in *Leaders*, a popular magazine on current affairs and policy published in Hong Kong for domestic consumption there, as well as for a select mainland audience.

COMMON ASSESSMENTS

The three articles give a sophisticated and relatively comprehensive summary of the U.S. maritime strategy. They differ in assessing various aspects of the document, and there is some tension between the commonalities that emerge from shared perspectives and those that are products of the articles' having followed the strategy's original structure. But the three articles unambiguously share several major conclusions.

A New Strategic Direction. All three authors see the new U.S. maritime strategy as representing a major shift from the Maritime Strategy of 1986. Each regards the strategies issued in the interim as products of post-Cold War strategic uncertainties, with little lasting influence.²¹ They characterize the current strategy as fundamentally different. Su explains that when formulating the 2007 edition, "U.S. Navy theoretical circles were faced with the new situation of international antiterrorism and the rapid rise of emerging countries." Wang states that the new strategy "not only has new judgments and positions concerning maritime security threats, but more importantly has new thinking regarding how to use military power to meet national security objectives." All emphasize the importance of the subject at hand: in Wang's words, "As a bellwether of world military transformation, U.S. maritime strategic transformation merits scrutiny."

Emphasis on Cooperation and Conflict Prevention. All three analysts praise the strategy's explicit focus on cooperation. Su declares that "it prominently emphasizes maritime security cooperation." Wang states that "the U.S. military's 'maritime strategy' has already taken 'international cooperation' as an important principle. This . . . indicates that the United States security and military strategy will face a major new adjustment." Lu writes, "One can see that the new U.S. maritime strategy emphasizes 'military software' such as 'humanitarian rescue missions and improving cooperative relations between the United States and every country.'"

The analysts all emphasize that the new maritime strategy elevates preventing war to an equal status with winning wars. They interpret war prevention as involving primarily soft-power operations, as opposed to deterrence based on war-winning capabilities to undergird otherwise cooperative approaches. Wang

有一个引人注目的新观点：明确写入“防止战争与赢得战争同等重要”的观点。

There is a conspicuous new viewpoint: it is written unequivocally that "Preventing and Winning War Are Equally Important."

terms the emphasis on war prevention the strategy's "most prominent feature." Lu describes this "conspicuous new viewpoint" as a product of "major change" and recognizes the utility of "maritime military operations other than war" and increased "international cooperation and noncombat use of navies," to include humanitarian rescue missions and improved cooperative relations with other regions. Su describes this as a "major bright spot." Chinese analysts implicitly welcome a U.S. Navy more focused on such missions than on sea control and power projection.

But the Chinese analysts are not prepared to acknowledge fully that war prevention may require substantial coercive capabilities. (Wang does mention "strategic deterrence theory," and Su notes that the strategy, in its own words, "does not assume conflict, but also recognizes the historical reality that peace cannot be automatically maintained"). They are examining regional maritime security from the perspective of China's national interests. These include emphasizing the use of venues in which Beijing is relatively influential (e.g., the United Nations) to address disputes and limit foreign military influence. In the views of many Chinese, letting other states unduly shape these areas could—in a worst-case scenario—lead to military intervention in a manner that could harm China's regional influence and sovereignty claims.²² In the analysts' apparent unwillingness to acknowledge that conflict prevention can sometimes rely on coercive capabilities, one can see an effort to emphasize desired elements of the document while deemphasizing or contesting undesired ones—a common practice in both policy analysis and international relations around the world.

Mention of Multipolarity. The analysts also note the maritime strategy's reference to a "multipolar" world. Lu describes this as a "first time" shift in U.S. policy documents. In the translator's opinion, however, the term "multipolar" describes neither the international system as it currently exists nor the world that U.S. policy makers would want in the future.²³ Moreover, many Chinese audiences regard "multipolar" (多极) as having a specific meaning: "a world in which there are several major regional powers and no single superpower hegemon." This situation would be realized in the near future only by substantial relative decline in U.S. power, to the benefit of other emerging major powers. A small but increasingly influential Chinese school of thought promoting an American "decline theory" (衰落论)—which lost influence after it incorrectly predicted the emergence of multipolarity immediately following the Cold War's end—has recently gained ground with the U.S. difficulties in Iraq and elsewhere.²⁴ China's 2006 defense white paper states that "the world is at a critical stage, moving toward multi-polarity."²⁵ The strategy's very use of the term "multipolar," therefore, appears to validate the Chinese government's vision of the potential benefits of a decline in American hegemony, which it views as a threat to its core interests.²⁶ To be sure, the authors surveyed clearly believe that the United States is still hegemonic and thus retains significant deterrence power.²⁷ But in the translator's view, while arrogance will only further erode American influence, actively encouraging the perception that American power is ebbing risks undermining deterrence capabilities in the longer term.

Together with other apparent instances of recognition by the United States of the limitations of its power and influence, the translator believes, such a change of attitude is likely to be seen by many Chinese as inspired not by sudden enlightenment in an altruistic sense but rather by growing recognition of weakness (in light of previously overambitious strategic goals). Indeed, the analysts cited here seem to welcome, as Su points out in almost Corbettian fashion, a strategy apparently based on recognition of limitations (U.S. "ability is not equal to its ambition") and a consequent reliance on cooperation with other international partners. As Su states, paraphrasing the strategy itself (as do Lu and Wang), "no country alone has adequate resources to ensure the security of the entire maritime area." In the translator's opinion, then, the problematic use of the term "multipolar" thus potentially risks causing misinterpretation, miscalculation, and false expectation on the part of Chinese analysts—or perhaps even worse, making the strategy's rhetoric seem removed from the reality of U.S. force structure and deployments. Care should be taken in further interactions with Chinese counterparts to counteract potential misperceptions in this regard.

Appreciation of Domestic Dimensions. The analysts also recognize the inter-agency aspects of U.S. maritime cooperation and coordination. As Su notes, this is the “first time that the U.S. sea services jointly issued a strategic report,” which “makes concrete plans for the joint operations of the three maritime forces.” He notes the strategy’s injunction “that coordination and cooperation must be strengthened among the maritime forces of each military service and each domestic department.” This seems to indicate recognition that cooperation and coordination among the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard will be particularly important to the strategy’s successful functioning. Wang’s analysis, as will be discussed in more detail below, displays significant understanding of the U.S. defense policy process.

在美国官方正式的文体中首次提出了多极化转化，建设海上共同利益的“合作伙伴。”
This is the first time that U.S. official writings have put forward [the concept of] a transition to multipolarity and the construction of “cooperative partnerships” based on maritime common interests.

A Special Role for Naval Forces. The analysts see the maritime domain as vital to many nations’ development and recognize the central role that the U.S. Navy has played in the world. Wang contends that “the ability of the United States to become the world hegemon is directly related to its . . . comprehension of sea power, and [its] emphasis on maritime force development.” All three note that today “the majority of the world’s population lives within several hundred kilometers from the ocean, 90 percent of world trade is dependent on maritime transport, [and] maritime security has a direct bearing on the American people’s way of life.” Lu additionally observes (using wording similar to that of Wang) that naval forces are particularly relevant to fighting terrorism, because of such “special characteristics” as “mobility, which gives [them] the ability to advance and withdraw, to deter and fight.”

Asia-Pacific Focus. All three scholars identify the Asia-Pacific as a priority area for American naval presence. Lu describes the Middle East as a “powder keg” and acknowledges the status of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea—the two other areas specifically mentioned in the strategy—as strategic energy lifelines. But he uses his own interpretation to connect several issues mentioned separately in the strategy, concluding that “the Western Pacific is determined to be ‘a region of high tension’ where the United States has the responsibility to ‘carry out treaty obligations’ to its allies and to ‘contain potential strategic competitors.’” Wang and Su also take notice of the maritime strategy’s specific mention of the western Pacific.

Continued Hegemony. Perhaps most important, all three analysts view the strategy as part of a larger U.S. effort to maintain its predominant international

power and capabilities for unilateral action. They do acknowledge that the new strategy is far more cooperative than the 1986 version in both concept and rhetoric. Wang states that “overbearing, offensive language is relatively reduced, and there is noticeably more emphasis on ‘strategic cooperation.’” Lu notes that “the new maritime strategy is relatively moderate compared to the previous version in its use of words and style.” But, he emphasizes, while the strategy “projects the pleasant wording of ‘peace,’ ‘cooperation,’ and ‘war prevention,’ hegemonic thinking remains its main thread.” The analysts see the United States as unwilling to abandon the traditional “hegemony” and “sea control” that its capabilities have long afforded it. Wang judges that the United States retains a long-standing “maritime hegemonic mentality,” which he traces to Mahanian thought, and that the nation remains “the only superpower in the world today.” He adds: “Because the United States . . . places maritime power above all others, its maritime strategy can be better described as serving its global hegemony rather than safeguarding the world maritime order.” Lu charges that “the hegemonic U.S. thinking of dominating the world’s oceans has not changed at all.” In his view, “what is behind ‘cooperation’ is America’s interests[;] having ‘partners or the participation of allies’ likewise serves America’s global interests.”

The Chinese analysts here are expressing concern that the United States retains power to threaten core Chinese interests. These interests include reunification with Taiwan, assertion of sovereignty over disputed islands (and associated resources, as well as air and water space) on China’s maritime periphery, and ultimately some form of sea-lane security and regional maritime influence. Chinese concerns in this area offer a useful caution regarding the possibilities of U.S.-Chinese cooperation in the near term.

DIVERGING VIEWPOINTS

Despite these shared viewpoints, there are identifiable differences in focus and interpretation among the three analysts. By chance, the maritime strategy’s promulgation has coincided with a vigorous and unprecedented debate within China concerning its own maritime development. The three Chinese assessments of the U.S. strategy, particularly in their judgments about the contours and directions of American strategy, cannot help but influence that debate.

A Model for PLAN Development?

Lu’s lengthy, complex analysis contains apparent attempts to use the new maritime strategy, rightly or wrongly, as evidence of an elevated position of influence for the U.S. Navy. Lu writes that the new maritime strategy of the United States demonstrates that its Navy “has been placed in an extremely prominent position” and “continues to serve as the daring vanguard and main force of U.S.

global strategy.” While the latter point may seem optimistic to some, this formulation does describe realistically the character of U.S. power projection from Lu’s strategic vantage point in maritime East Asia. Even with its current fiscal difficulties, the U.S. Navy, in terms of capabilities alone, must seem very impressive to the PLAN. Such a portrayal of American naval power and influence is consistent with Lu’s longtime advocacy of rapid, robust Chinese maritime development.

There are several indications that his evaluation, in addition to educating PLAN officers about the U.S. maritime strategy, may also contain an implicit ar-

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This new concept . . . can only be regarded as a major transformation in [U.S. military] understanding of the application of military force in the realization of national interests, following setbacks in earlier unilateralist and preemptive strategy.

gument for a similar increase in the PLAN’s mission from access denial to blue-water defense of sea lines of communication (SLOCs), as consistent with China’s growing interests as a great power.²⁸ More than Su or even Wang, Lu appears to believe that “the oceans have become a new domain for rivalry.” He notes that “the Western Pacific is the area of most intense competition among nations for maritime sovereignty,” that it “has the highest concentration and fastest growth in terms of the world’s naval forces,” and that it “is the sea area where the U.S. military conducts the largest and most frequent maritime exercises with its allies.” Lu appears also to hint that PLAN development must inevitably be used to balance against American naval power projection. “Some Asian countries are rising rapidly, have abundant economic and technological strength, and possess nuclear weapons,” he notes elliptically; “they will directly influence and challenge American hegemony.”

Here Lu may be arguing implicitly for some form of PLAN power-projection capability, perhaps in the form of deck aviation (as might be broadly surmised from the context). In East Asia, he emphasizes, the United States “dispatches carrier battle groups to cruise around in a heightened state of war readiness.” Were it operationally feasible, one might infer, China could benefit from similar capabilities to protect its sovereignty claims. Also, “by setting up pointed defenses and carrying out strategic deployment, the United States is prepared to act at any time and to intervene” in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, where China has similar interests in SLOC security and energy access.

In time, at least by Lu’s ambitious standards, China might likewise benefit from a navy that could maximize its forward presence while minimizing its international footprint to avoid the tremendous political risk of overseas bases—which the PRC has foresworn since its founding in 1949. This would seem to

allow for a Chinese approach to power projection: respecting sovereignty while influencing events ashore. Wang and Su do not appear to share Lu's emphasis or advocacy. But Lu's arguments should not be dismissed as mere naval promotion. While likely reflecting the PLAN's bureaucratic interests, naval advocates like Lu publishing in official forums must defer to the guidance promulgated by China's civilian leadership. The real danger here is that if Chinese naval development were to be inspired by that of the United States, as would be manifest in internal bureaucratic debates and budgetary battles, there would be a risk of the sort of interaction effects that have triggered arms races.²⁹

Seeking Explanations in Foreign Policy and Bureaucratic Politics

Wang describes the new maritime strategy as not only representing a major departure from the tone of previous security documents issued by the George W. Bush administration but as "one of the most far-ranging adjustments in the last twenty years." He sees it as the logical outcome of three major factors: military reversals in Iraq, the failures of transformation in that conflict, and the need for the Navy to justify its share of the defense budget. "The '9/11' terrorist attacks produced a tremendous assault on the U.S. security concept," Wang observes, in wording akin to Lu's; "the U.S. maritime strategy changed accordingly." The Iraq war experience, Wang states, is teaching America the importance of combining hard and soft power to develop "rational strength." This strategic rethinking, and the concepts of the "thousand-ship navy" and Global Fleet Stations, "can only be regarded as a major transformation in [U.S. military] understanding of the application of military force in the realization of national interests, following setbacks in earlier unilateralist and preemptive strategy."³⁰ According to Wang, "As Chief of Naval Operations, [Admiral Michael] Mullen repeatedly suggested that 'the old maritime strategy had sea control as a goal, but the new maritime strategy must recognize the economic situation of all nations, [and] not only control the seas, but [also] maintain the security of the oceans, and enable other countries to maintain freedom of passage.' It is precisely through his promotion that the new 'maritime strategy' was introduced."

Wang's charge of strategic overreach is broadly compatible with Su's less abrasive assessment, but it stands in contrast to Lu's, which focuses more on U.S. capabilities than limitations. Wang's third conclusion is based on a sophisticated understanding of the American defense establishment and its policy processes: "For the maritime forces to obtain a larger share of the future defense spending pie, they must lead strategic thinking and initiatives," Wang maintains. At the same time, like many of his peers, he also alleges that "some people and military industrial interest groups have worked together to frequently concoct a 'Chinese naval threat theory.'"

Strategic Coherence

Su's largely descriptive article contains a fairly favorable assessment of U.S. maritime power and intentions. Su sees the United States as developing a coherent maritime policy in which the maritime strategy and "the so-called 'Thousand Ship Navy' concept currently being deliberated in U.S. Navy circles are two sides of the same coin." He relates that at a 2007 Naval War College conference, "Defining a Maritime Security Partnership with China," at which he presented an academic paper, "prospects for cooperation were optimistically forecast." This

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Although the U.S. military's new "maritime strategy" elaborates on the importance of "international cooperation," it has not given up its maritime hegemonic mentality.

"atmosphere," Su concludes, "is consistent with" the maritime strategy "and reflects the efforts of the U.S. Navy to establish a maritime partnership with China and integrate China within the maritime security order led by the United States." Where Lu sees a model for PLAN development and Wang sees responses within the U.S. military bureaucracy to changing conditions and failed policies, Su sees a carefully calibrated and coordinated diplomatic message.

ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED

For all their insights, the three analysts display limited understanding of the bureaucratic context behind the strategy's development. They collectively fail to recognize (at least in print) that the new U.S. maritime strategy is not a stand-alone document, even in the American domestic bureaucratic context. While they offer interpretations of the historical background and strategic circumstances of its formulation, they do not mention that the new strategy was guided by the objectives set out in the *U.S. National Security Strategy*, the *National Defense Strategy*, the *National Military Strategy*, and the *National Strategy for Maritime Security*.³¹

Moreover, a number of key uncertainties are neither mentioned nor investigated by the analysts. U.S. Navy modernization goals would have seemed another potential subject for inquiry, especially as the U.S. Navy appears first (in 2005) to have derived a goal of increasing its 281-ship fleet to 313 vessels by 2020, and then to have developed a strategy for their use.³² These ambiguities in the relationship between the ends and means of American policy are not explored.

The maritime strategy was issued late in the second Bush administration, yet the analysts seem to assume that it will serve as a precursor of future policy

regardless of subsequent changes in U.S. government leadership. The strategy seems to be portrayed more as authoritative policy than as a “trial balloon,” yet these analysts give few indications as to how they believe it will actually shape U.S. policy. Most American analysts, by contrast, believe that the specific effects of the document on future U.S. maritime policy are not yet certain.³³ Within the Navy, continued support by the Chief of Naval Operations and the appearance of the maritime strategy’s principles in key service planning documents (as well as national strategy pillar documents) will provide important barometers of success.³⁴ None of these documents are mentioned directly by the Chinese analysts.³⁵

As in the past, reactions from other military services, Congress, and the media will signal policy and monetary support for relevant programs. Wang appears to allude to this when he states that a major rethinking of military and foreign policy remains under way: “The U.S. intellectual elite is in the process of comprehensively rethinking the war, and this is beginning to have an impact on policy-making departments.” Implementation of the new strategy is certain to be subject to budgetary limitations, particularly given the ongoing challenges associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. From Wang’s perspective, by contrast, “whether the Republican Party or the Democratic Party comes to power, adjustments and changes in the U.S. government’s foreign policy are inevitable.” Wang and Su seem to appreciate the fiscal challenges that may impact American military spending. None of the analysts appear to entertain the idea, however, that funding constraints might limit the development of nontraditional low-end capabilities to support the maritime strategy.

Are the Chinese analysts “mirror imaging,” assuming that the strategy is a more authoritative document than it may actually be on the basis of their own experience with a more centralized policy process? Might their view reflect a superficial understanding of some aspects of the U.S. policy process? Perhaps. But just as the strategy cannot be expected to address all possible issues or contingencies in detail—this would take too much space and risk its soon becoming outdated—the three analysts cannot be expected to address all of its contents and related issues. All three emphasize, however, a most important point, that a broad acceptance of and participation in the Global Maritime Partnership initiative by the international community will be essential if the strategy is to fulfill its intended goals. Nevertheless, these collective omissions suggest that the analyses represent a “first cut” at understanding the strategy and how it may affect China. The objective seems to be to consider some initial implications for maritime development in the United States and China, as well as the prospects for future bilateral relations.

TRUE TO ITS WORDS AND RESOLUTE IN ITS DEEDS

The Chinese analysts obviously have major concerns regarding the intentions behind U.S. military strategy. With respect to the maritime strategy in particular, they worry that beneath a veneer of cooperative rhetoric, they are being asked to tolerate, or even directly acquiesce in, projection of U.S. power in a manner

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that they believe threatens China's core national interests. Here the cooperative implications of the strategy may run against the grain of much Chinese thinking regarding the United States, particularly its armed forces.

At the same time, the Chinese analysts are heartened by the new American emphasis on cooperation. While retaining concerns about U.S. strategic objectives, they do not dismiss the strategy outright. For Lu, Washington stands at a strategic crossroads, at which it must demonstrate its true strategic intentions to Beijing. On one hand, Lu is concerned about the frequent "transnational and multinational maritime military exercises" in East Asia that, he believes, constitute "evidence that the new U.S. maritime strategy has already been put into effect." On the other hand, the new cooperative approach may truly represent "a major change in the U.S. military's maritime strategy," Lu allows. "It must receive the affirmation of all the world's nations."

The election of Ma Ying-jeou as Taiwan's president in March 2008 has placed cross-strait relations on an improved trajectory after eight years of instability under Chen Shui-bian. Meanwhile, recent developments suggest that PLAN missions may become increasingly compatible with the maritime strategy's focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. At an expanded Central Military Commission conference on 24 December 2004, Chairman Hu Jintao introduced a new military policy that defines the four new missions of the PLA, one of them being to "play an important role in maintaining world peace and promoting common development."³⁶ PLAN writings are operationalizing both this theme and Hu's recent guidance that China's military should pay attention to "diversified military tasks" (多样化任务).³⁷ Such factors may well support mission convergence and increase strategic space for Sino-American maritime cooperation, though it will take substantial effort from both sides to exploit opportunities, and it will not be easy.

Chinese analysts will therefore likely watch the concrete actions on the part of the United States to see how they affect Beijing's core strategic concerns. In future discussions with their American counterparts, they will probably continue to probe for U.S. willingness to commit to actions that would make China

feel strategically more assured. They will undoubtedly be looking for the United States to, in the words of a Chinese proverb, “言必信, 行必果”—to be true to its words and resolute in its deeds. As Lu puts it, “The people of the entire world are glad to see this transformation in strategic thinking, [but] will wait and see, hoping for genuine actions and practical results.”

NOTES

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The views expressed here are solely those of the translator and do not represent the estimates or policies of the U.S. Navy or of any other organization of the U.S. government.

1. See, for example, Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, “China on the March,” *National Interest* 88 (March/April 2007), pp. 16–22; Thomas J. Christensen, “Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia,” *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 81–126; and Aaron L. Friedberg, “The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?” *International Security* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7–45.
2. For an early analysis of Chinese reactions to the maritime strategy, see “New U.S. Maritime Strategy: Initial Chinese Responses,” *China Security* 3, no. 4 (Autumn 2007), pp. 40–61, available at www.wsichina.org/cs8_3.pdf. This article has been translated into Chinese as 汪北哲译 [Wang Beizhe, trans.], “美 <中国安全>: 中国谨慎应对美海洋战略” [U.S. <China Security>: China Reacts Cautiously to the U.S. Maritime Strategy], 环球时报 [Global Times], 18 December 2007, available at china.huanqiu.com/eyes_on_china/2007-12/36152.html.
3. See Lucian Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain, 1981), pp. 8–12.
4. These new trends were reinforced by three major factors: a higher level of functional and technical specialization and bureaucratic differentiation required by Deng's more complex nation-building tasks; the gradual replacement of Maoist revolutionaries by new generations of technocrats devoted to resolving specific administrative and technical problems; and gradual institutionalization of research on policy and technical issues. This paragraph draws heavily on an unpublished manuscript on Chinese civil-military relations by Nan Li.
5. Experts at key think tanks may be more influential in general than those at teaching institutions, but their writings on the maritime strategy were not available as this article went to press.
6. For further background, see Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, “China's New Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (November/December 2003), pp. 22–35; David Shambaugh, “China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure

- and Process,” *China Quarterly* 171 (2002), pp. 575–96.
7. See, for example, “中美海军上将握手大洋” [The Chiefs of the Chinese and U.S. Navies Shake Hands over the Ocean], 当代海军 [Modern Navy] (October 2007), title and facing page; 杨晴川 [Yang Qingchuan], “美国海上力量‘三巨头’—海军作战部长拉夫黑德, 海军陆战队司令康韦和海岸警卫队司令艾伦共同出现在罗得岛州纽波特海军战争学院举行的国际海军研讨会上, 向与会的100多个国家和地区的海军首脑隆重推出美国新版的海上战略” [The “Three Magnates” of U.S. Sea Power—Adm. Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations; Gen. James T. Conway, Marine Corps Commandant; and Adm. Thad W. Allen, Coast Guard Commandant, Presented the Strategy to Maritime Leaders from More Than 100 Countries Attending the International Seapower Symposium at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.], 国际先驱导报 [International Herald Leader (Beijing)], 17 October 2007, available at www.chinesenewsnet.com.
 8. See, for example, “针对台湾与朝鲜问题美军增兵太平洋将不‘太平’” [The Increase of U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific to Counter the Taiwan and North Korean Problems Will Not Be “Peaceful”], 环球时报 [Global Times], 12 November 2007, available at www.sxgov.cn/jstd/jsrd/501023.shtml.
 9. See, for example, 刘华, 吴强 [Liu Hua and Wu Qiang], “美国通过新海上战略 指导美军重返菲律宾” [Through the New Maritime Strategy, the U.S. Directs Its Military to Return to the Philippines], 国际先驱导报 [International Herald Leader], 24 October 2007, available at www1.chinataiwan.org; 杨晴川, 王薇 [Yang Qingchuan and Wang Wei], “美国推出新的海上战略—遏制潜在竞争对手” [The U.S. Releases a New Maritime Strategy—Containing Potential Competitors], 新华网 [Xinhua Net], 18 October 2007, available at www.pladaily.com.cn; 邢蓬宇 [Xing Pengyu], “美国新海上战略: 以合作之名谋强权之实” [The United States’ New Maritime Strategy: Solidifying Its Might under the Banner of Cooperation], 人民网军事频道 [People’s Daily Online: Military Affairs Section], 24 October 2007, available at military.people.com.cn.
 10. This article was originally published as 陆儒德 [Lu Rude], “美海上新战略浮出水面” [The New U.S. Maritime Strategy Surfaces], 人民海军 [People’s Navy], 27 November 2007, p. 3. Lu’s home institution is perhaps most similar to the U.S. Naval Academy (though this comparison has significant limitations, in part because Chinese professional military education is dispersed among a wider range of schools than is the case in the United States).
 11. Lu is the author of 中国走向还海洋 [China Advances on the Sea], 海潮出版社 [Sea Tide Press] (1998), and 当代海洋知识丛书(共5册) [Modern Maritime Knowledge series, 5 volumes] (Dalian: 大连海事学院出版社 [Dalian Maritime Academy Press], 2005–2006). He has published such monographs as *Operation and Collision Avoidance for Naval Vessels*, *China Moves toward the Ocean*, and *Ocean. Nation. Seapower*. Lu’s scholarship has been covered by Xinhua News Agency and China Central Television (CCTV) broadcast programs. Lu’s more than one hundred articles are featured prominently in the PLA publications *Liberation Army Daily* and *Modern Navy*, as well as in such newspapers and periodicals as *China National Defense News*, *China Soft Science*, *People’s Daily*, and *China Youth Daily*. See, for example, “实施海洋强国战略的若干问题” [A Number of Issues in Carrying Out a Strong Sea Power Strategy], 海洋开发与管理 [Ocean Development & Management], no. 1 (2002), pp. 62–63; “中国为啥要去南极?” [Why Must China Go to the South Pole?], 解放军报 [Liberation Army Daily], 26 February 2001, p. 9; with 刘永路 [Liu Yonglu]; “一位80岁老海军的传奇人生” [The Legendary Life of an Eighty-Year-Old Old Navy (Officer)], 当代海军 [Modern Navy], no. 4 (2001), pp. 35–36; “创新做大 加快步伐” [Blaze Great New Trails, Quicken the Pace], 大连日报 [Dalian Daily], 20 April 2006, p. B04; “树立海洋战略意识建设海上经济强国” [Establish a Maritime Strategic Consciousness, Build a Maritime Economic Power], 中国软科学 [China Soft Science] (April 1997), pp. 13–17; “从国际海洋法谈新的国土观念” [From the International Law of the Sea a Discussion of the New Concept

- of Territory], 中国软科学 [China Soft Science], no. 9 (1996), pp. 19–22.
12. Lu was born in Shanghai in 1937. His early PLAN duties included patrolling the East China Sea; later, in 1985, he had the opportunity to “sail each of the world’s great oceans” and join China’s highly decorated first mission to the South Pole to establish the “Great Wall” science observation station. At Dalian Naval Vessel Academy, Lu successively served as instructor, chair of the teaching and research section, and chair of the navigation department. He has also held academic positions in the Beijing Polytechnic University Radio Department and the Naval Command College Campaign Command Class. In addition to these core duties, Lu has also held the concurrent posts of Director, China Oceanic Navigation Society; Member, Oceanic Navigation Education Guidance Committee for Colleges and Universities; Member, Examination and Approval Committee for Navigation Science Terms; Visiting Researcher, Beijing Ceyuandi Institute for Comprehensive National Power; Special Researcher, Zheng He Research Society; Senior Researcher, China Management Science and Technology Research Institute; and Reporter, Dalian Municipality Political Ideology Education Reporting Organization. In 2000, Lu was recognized as a “Liaoning Province Advanced Worker for General Science Education” and a “Dalian City Advanced Individual for General Science Education.” 陆儒德 [Lu Rude], “实施海洋强国战略的若干问题” [Problems with Implementing a Great Sea Power Strategy], 2002中国未来与发展研究报告 [2002 Research Report on China’s Future and Development], 北京理工大学无线电系 [Beijing Management Engineering University Radio Department] (2002), p. 997, available at www.amazon.cn/mn.
 13. See also 陆儒德 [Lu Rude], “在大战略中给中国海权定位” [Defining Sea Power in China’s Grand Strategy], 人民海军 [People’s Navy], 6 June 2007, p. 4.
 14. This article was originally published as 王宝付 [Wang Baofu], “美军‘海上战略’与未来军事转型” [The U.S. Military’s “Maritime Strategy” and Future Transformation], 学习时报 [Study Times], 22 January 2008, www.lianghui.org.cn.
 15. See Xiao Wei, ed., “Chinese Military Analysts on U.S. Expanding Military Targets,” CCTV.com, 29 March 2003, www.cctv.com/english/news/TVNews/NoonNews. Wang Baofu, “PLA Warship’s Visit to Japan of Far-Reaching Significance,” *People’s Daily Online*, 29 November 2007, english.people.com.cn; “Russia No Longer Shows Forbearance,” *People’s Daily Online*, 17 July 2007, english.people.com.cn; “Outer Space Not Let to Overcast with ‘War Clouds,’” *People’s Daily Online*, 3 April 2007, english.people.com.cn; “No Winner in Indian-Pakistani Conflicts,” *Beijing Review*, 28 February 2002, p. 13 (all Wang Baofu). Wang Baofu et al., “Can India Become a Military Power?” *Beijing Review*, 28 February 2002, pp. 13–15; and 王宝付 [Wang Baofu], 美国特种作战部队与特种作战 [U.S. Special Forces and Special Warfare] (Beijing: 国防大学出版社 [National Defense University Press], 1995).
 16. “War on Iraq Opens Pandora [sic] Box,” Xinhua, 25 March 2003, available at wcm.fmprc.gov.cn.
 17. This article was originally published as 苏浩: 外交学院外交学系教授; 吴兵: 外交学院外交学系博士生 [Su Hao, Professor of Diplomacy, China Foreign Affairs University; Wu Bing, Doctoral Student, China Foreign Affairs University], “美国海上战略新思路—《21世纪海权的合作战略》报告评述” [The U.S. Maritime Strategy’s New Thinking—Reviewing the “Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower”], 领导者 [Leaders], no. 19 (December 2007), pp. 29–30.
 18. Su is the acting chairman of China Foreign Affairs University’s Diplomacy Department and director of its China’s Foreign Relations Section. He is a member of the Chinese Committee, Council of Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP); and a board member of China Association of Arms Control and Disarmament, the China Association of Asia-Pacific Studies, China Association of Asian-African Development Exchange, and the China Association of China-ASEAN. Su received his BA and MA in

- history and international relations from Beijing Normal University and PhD in international relations from China Foreign Affairs University. He pursued advanced studies in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, in 1993–95 and was a Fulbright Scholar in 2001–2002, at both Columbia University's Institute of War and Peace Studies and the University of California at Berkeley's Institute of East Asian Studies. In 2004 Su served as a visiting professor in Uppsala University's Department of Peace and Conflict Research (Sweden). He teaches and conducts research on China's diplomatic history, strategic studies and international security, and politics and economics in the Asia-Pacific region. Su has published several books and many articles concerning China's foreign policy, security issues, international relations in the Asia-Pacific region, and on East Asian cooperation.
19. For Su's analysis of China's overall geostrategic position, see 苏浩 [Su Hao], “地缘重心与世界政治的支点” [Geogravitational Centers and World Political Fulcrums], *现代国际关系* [Contemporary International Relations], no. 4 (2004), pp. 54–61.
 20. 吴兵, 母耕源, 钟龙彪翻译, 苏浩审校 [Wu Bing, Mu Gengyuan, Zhong Longbiao (trans.), and Su Hao (proofreader)], “21世纪海权的合作战略—首开历史先河: 21世纪海权的合作战略” [A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: For the First Time in History—a Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower], *领导者* [Leaders], no. 19 (December 2007), pp. 21–28.
 21. For Chinese assessments of these maritime strategies, see 许世勇 [Xu Shiyong], “美海军实施网络反潜新战略” [The U.S. Navy Implements a New Network Antisubmarine Warfare Strategy], *当代海军* [Modern Navy] (September 2006); 李杰 [Li Jie], “重视前沿存在, 强调联合作战—十年来美国海军战略的调整变化及特点” [Attach Importance to Forward Presence, Emphasize Joint Operations: The Revision, Change and Characteristics of U.S. Naval Strategy over the Past Fifteen Years], *现代舰船* [Modern Ships], no. 1 (2003), pp. 13–14.
 22. See Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, eds., *The Science of Military Strategy* (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2005), pp. 439–43; 徐起 [Xu Qi], “21世纪初海上地缘战略与中国海军的发展” [Maritime Geostrategy and the Development of the Chinese Navy in the Early 21st Century], *中国军事科学* [China Military Science] 17, no. 4 (2004), pp. 75–81, reprinted (trans. Andrew Erickson and Lyle Goldstein) in *Naval War College Review* 59, no. 4 (Autumn 2006), pp. 46–67.
 23. As Samuel Huntington explains, “A multipolar system has several major powers of comparable strength that cooperate and compete with each other in shifting patterns. A coalition of major states is necessary to resolve important international issues. European politics approximated this model for several centuries.” Over a decade after Huntington wrote this, the world is still closer to the “uni-multipolar” system that he described than to true multipolarity. (Samuel Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs* [March/April 1999].) In a recent alternative interpretation, Richard Haass likewise rejects the idea that the current international system is multipolar: “In a multipolar system, no power dominates, or the system will become unipolar” (Richard N. Haass, “The Age of Nonpolarity: What Will Follow U.S. Dominance,” *Foreign Affairs* [May/June 2008]).
 24. For Chinese discussion of U.S. decline, see 王恬 [Wang Tian], “美国衰落与群雄崛起” [U.S. Decline and the Rise of Other Power Centers], *人民日报* [People's Daily], 30 May 2008; 肖刚 [Xiao Gang], “在单极与多极之间: 中国外交的平衡” [Between Unipolarity and Multipolarity: China's Diplomatic Balance], *太平洋学报* [Pacific Journal], no. 3 (2008); 郑羽 [Zheng Yu], “多极世界是否已经成为国际关系的现实” [Has a Multipolar World Already Become the Reality in International Relations?], *中国社会科学院院报* [Journal of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences], 31 January 2008; 李义虎 [Li Yihu], “世界经济多极化趋势将进一步加强” [The Trend of World Economic Multipolarization Will Further Strengthen], *现代国际关系* [Contemporary International Relations], no. 12 (2007); 孟庆龙 [Meng Qinglong], “美国衰落过程的重要地标” [Important

- Indications of the Process of U.S. Decline], 现代国际关系 [Contemporary International Relations], no. 9 (2006), pp. 30–32; Zhang Wenmu, “Sea Power and China’s Strategic Choices,” *China Security* (Summer 2006), pp. 28–29, available at www.wsichina.org/cs3_2.pdf; and 裘元伦 [Qiu Yuanlun], 美国“衰落论”与“复兴论”之争 [Contention between “U.S. Decline Theory” and “U.S. Revival Theory”], 了望 [Outlook], no. 16 (1989).
25. “The Security Environment,” in *China’s National Defense in 2006*, by Information Office of the State Council, 29 December 2006, available at english.pladaily.com.cn.
 26. Denny Roy, “China’s Pitch for a Multipolar World: The New Security Concept,” *Asia-Pacific Security Studies* 2, no. 1 (May 2003), available at www.apcss.org/Publications/APSS/ChinasPitchforaMultipolarWorld.pdf; Yong Deng, “Hege-mon on the Offensive: Chinese Perspectives on U.S. Global Strategy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 116, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 343–65.
 27. See also 宋国友 [Song Guoyou], “美国衰落的幻象” [The Illusion of U.S. Decline], 东方早报 [Oriental Morning Post], 24 January 2008.
 28. Lu’s discussion of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) appears to represent further advocacy of PLAN development to support regional stability. Lu refers directly to UNCLOS Article 301’s admonition to use the seas only for peaceful purposes—a provision that, as a nonmember, the United States is not technically bound to observe. Lu’s reference would not be readily recognizable to many U.S. readers, and the United States and China disagree about Article 301’s meaning in any case. Lu makes a similar reference to UNCLOS Article 197’s call for global and regional cooperation to protect and preserve the maritime environment, which would be received in the same manner as the Article 301 reference by most U.S. readers. The author greatly appreciates Peter Dutton’s contributions concerning concepts and wording in this and the two following paragraphs.
 29. For theoretical literature on this subject, see Alastair Iain Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?” *International Security* 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003), pp. 49–56; Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999), pp. 49–80.
 30. According to *Naval Operations Concept 2006*, a “Global Fleet Station . . . is a persistent sea base of operations from which to coordinate and employ adaptive force packages within a regional area of interest.” ([Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, 2006], available at www.nwdc.navy.mil.)
 31. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, 16 March 2006), available at www.whitehouse.gov; *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Defense Dept., March 2005), available at www.defenselink.mil; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America: A Strategy for Today—a Vision for Tomorrow* (Washington, D.C.: 2004), available at www.defenselink.mil; *The National Strategy for Maritime Security* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Homeland Security Dept., September 2005), available at www.dhs.gov.
 32. This “313-Ship Plan” was clearly reported in China’s media at the time. See “U.S. Navy Plans to Expand Fleet: Report,” *Xinhua*, 6 December 2005. The order in which the 313-Ship Plan was issued in relation to the maritime strategy remains unclear in some Chinese news reports that mention both. See, for example, “美海军作战长称美需要更多舰船—313艘是底限” [The U.S. Chief of Naval Operations States That the U.S. Needs More Warships: 313 Hulls Is the Lower Limit], 新华网 [Xinhua Net], 19 November 2007, available at news.xinhuanet.com. For detailed Chinese speculation on the relationship between the two events, see 李红军 [Li Hongjun, author/expert], 晓枫 [Xiao Feng, reporter], “专家解读美国海上新战略: 继续走强权路线” [Expert Analyzes New U.S. Maritime Strategy: Continue to Go the Route of Power and Might], 兵器知识

- [Weapons Knowledge], 11 May 2008, available at www.wforum.com/gbindex.html.
33. Peter Dombrowski, "Maritime Strategy Project: Overview and Preliminary Analysis" (presentation to translator, October 2007).
 34. See U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, *Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective Memorandum 08* (Washington, D.C.: May 2006), available at best-managers-support.com/centex/documents; *Naval Operations Concept 2006*. For "pillar documents" see endnote 29 above.
 35. For Chinese sources (most of which precede the strategy's release, and none of which focus on it) that demonstrate a basic understanding of the relationship between major recent U.S. strategic documents with relevance to naval development, see "美国面向21世纪的国防转变" [U.S. National Defense Transformation for the Twenty-first Century], 全球防务 [Global Defense], 11 April 2007, available at ww.defence.org.cn; 秦大鹏 [Qin Dapeng], "美海军'全球作战概念'构想及未来兵力构成" [The U.S. Navy's "Global Concept of Operations"], 全球防务 [Global Defense], 19 February 2007, available at www.defence.org.cn; "美军21世纪海上新战略: 打造'全能武士'" [The U.S. Military's New Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Build "All-Around Warriors"], 中国国防报 [China Defense News], 6 July 2006, available at www.chinareviewnews.com; 艾雨兵, 郑金华, 张文丽 [Ai Yubing, Zheng Jinhua, and Zhang Wenli], 中国船舶重工集团公司第716研究所, 江苏连云港 [China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation, 716th Research Institute, Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province], "美国海军21世纪战略概念分析 (连载一)" [Analysis of the U.S. Navy's Strategic Concept for the 21st Century (Part 1)], 情报指挥控制系统与仿真技术 [Information, Command Control Systems and Simulation Technology] 26, no. 3 (June 2004), pp. 1–9, and Part 2, vol. 26, no. 4 (August 2004), pp. 9–20; "美海军全球作战新概念" [The U.S. Navy's New Global Concept of Operations], 解放军报 [Liberation Army Daily], 21 April 2005, available at www.pladaily.com.cn; 李杰 [Li Jie], "看美国海军'新军事变革'有何高招" [A Look at the U.S. Navy's "New Military Transformation": What Are the Brilliant Stratagems?], 现代军事 [Modern Military Affairs], no. 5 (May 2004), available at www.cetin.net.cn.
 36. "Earnestly Step Up Ability Building within CPC Organizations of Armed Forces," 解放军报 [Liberation Army Daily], 13 December 2004, available at www.chinamil.com.cn; "三个提供, 一个发挥" [Three Provides and One Bring into Play], 新浪 [Sina], news.sina.com.cn.
 37. 韩志庆 [Han Zhiqing], "'能战度'—非战争军事行动新课题" [Degree of Warfighting Ability: The New Issue of Military Operations Other Than War], 解放军报 [Liberation Army Daily], 24 June 2008, p. 11; 霍小勇 [Huo Xiaoyong], "锻造有多样化能力的现代化军队" [Forging a Modern Army with Diversified Capabilities], 解放军报 [Liberation Army Daily], 24 June 2008, p. 11.