CHAPTER FOUR

Chinese Cooperation to Protect Sea-Lane Security

Antipiracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden

Andrew S. Erickson and Austin M. Strange

Antipiracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden represent a successful example of cooperation between China and the international community to achieve sea-lane security far from China's shores. Over the past six years, Chinese naval ships and personnel joined elements of over forty other navies in the fight against Somali piracy. This represents the first time that the People's Republic of China has deployed naval forces operationally (as opposed to representationally) beyond its immediate maritime borders. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) antipiracy escort task forces, typically composed of one or more guided-missile frigates and destroyers and a supply ship, have escorted ships from China and other nations in armed convoys since the inaugural escort task force departed China on 26 December 2008. At the mission's sixth anniversary at the end of 2014, fifteen thousand personnel in nineteen PLAN task forces had escorted nearly six thousand merchant ships—roughly half of them foreign—in eight hundred batches. The task forces had "performed deliveries of eight vessels released by pirates, rescued and aided eight vessels under attack[,] . . . saved forty-three vessels from the chase of pirates," and rendered other assistance to five vessels.[1]

Despite earlier signals that China might halt its contributions, PLAN antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden continue uninterrupted and are likely to persist for the foreseeable future. "So far," the commander of the PLAN, Adm. Wu Shengli, told one of the authors in September 2014, "There is no end in sight for the mission."[2] On 12 November 2014 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) extended its mandate for state navies to fight piracy off Somalia until 12 November 2015.[3] Already likely to continue contributions, on the strength of policies and past practice, the PLAN became almost certain to do so following the announcement in late 2014 that the navy of China's East Asian rival Japan, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, would soon take command of a major international antipiracy coalition.[4]

Understanding China's Antipiracy Operations: Rules of Engagement

China's conduct of antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden is undergirded by robust and explicit international-law authorities. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) clearly authorizes foreign navies to fight piracy outside a coastal state's territorial sea. The UNSC initially passed several relevant resolutions (UNSCRs) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter throughout 2008 to construct a legal basis for international antipiracy. One of six resolutions mentioning Somali piracy during that year, UNSCR 1801, noted international concern with Somali piracy.[5] UNSCR 1816 initially authorized a six-month window in which navies were to use "all necessary means" to repress piracy in Somalia's territorial waters.[6] Later that year, UNSCRs 1838 and 1844 affirmed international concern over Somali pirates, while UNSCR 1846 explicitly mentioned the initial invitiation by the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) for international assistance as well as subsequent calls for UNSCR 1816 to be extended.[7] UNSCR 1851 officially extended the right for navies to fight piracy in Somali waters by twelve months beginning 2 December 2008, the date that UNSCR 1846 was passed, and authorized international navies to pursue pirates from the Gulf of Aden to the shores of Somalia and—if conditions warranted—to engage in related activities "in Somalia" itself.[8] Since then, the UNSC has passed subsequent resolutions renewing in twelve-month increments the international community's authority to repress Somali piracy.[9] Renewals have been preceded by letters from the TFG (now the Federal Government of Somalia [FGS]) to the UNSC calling explicitly for such action.

China consistently proceeds with great care in taking actions that might be viewed as violations of other states' sovereignty. In addition to the UN mandates, Beijing first obtained an explicit invitation to participate in antipiracy operations near Somalia from Mogadishu's ambassador to China, Ahmed Awil.[10] It subsequently emphasized that international assistance "should be based on the wishes of the [Somali] Government."[11] Combined, these hard assurances constitute the legal mortar of the PLAN's continued antipiracy operations off the coast of Somalia.

The PLAN has pledged a cautious approach to use of force, limited to defense of its ships and vessels under its escort. Nonetheless, China's antipiracy operations have gradually become more expansive and innovative. While initially PLAN task forces escorted only mainland China–, Hong Kong–, and Taiwan-flagged merchant vessels, China has become increasingly willing to provide recourse for foreign-flagged ships; over half the vessels escorted to date have in fact been foreign flagged. The explicit objective is not to search actively for pirates and engage in combat with them but rather to escort ships and thus deter pirates from attacking them in the first place. PLAN forces will not "take the initiative to search for captured vessels and personnel at sea and carry out armed rescues."[12] Senior Capt. Ma Luping, director of the Navy Operational Bureau of the

PLA General Staff, states that PLAN forces will not "normally" enter another nation's territorial seas (i.e., within the internationally recognized twelve-nautical-mile limit) to chase pirates.[13] While PLAN antipiracy forces have ventured into Somali waters and even briefly landed on Somali shores to rescue hostages, there is no explicit evidence that the PLAN has failed to honor the spirit of this pledge. Upon the initial deployment in December 2008, Rear Adm. Du Jingcheng, the escort task force commander at the time, stated that PLAN ships would "independently conduct escort missions" and avoid landing on Somali shores.[14] Another senior Chinese military official has remarked, "For us to use force is a very complex matter[;] . . . it is not just a simple question based on an operational requirement. . . . There are political questions—and these are not issues dealt with by military commanders alone. Our warships off Somalia are very well aware of this. We are fully prepared to use force, but we do not take that step lightly."[15]

Cautious rules of engagement imposed on the PLAN reflect China's desire to minimize risks associated with political and legal issues that would arise as a result of engaging suspected pirates. A lack of viable legal options for prosecution and the possibility of negative political ramifications, particularly in the Muslim world, disincentivize China from combating pirates directly. Additionally, killing pirates could put unwanted targets on the backs of PLAN vessels or Chinese-flagged commercial ships if pirates sought revenge.[16]

Of course, caution does not necessarily equate to low impact. PLAN antipiracy task forces in the Gulf of Aden have adapted to the needs of specific situations while technically operating within the operational confines described above. For example, in November 2010 the vessel *Taiankou,* owned by the China Overseas Shipping Company, was attacked by four Somali pirates. The twenty-one crewmen on board evaded capture by hiding in the security cabin. Special Forces from the destroyer *Xuzhou,* in the region for antipiracy missions, were dispatched via helicopter and speedboat. PLAN antipiracy forces appeared ready to engage, posting snipers and launching flares, flash-bangs, and percussion grenades to warn any potential pirates still present as they boarded.[17] After searching the ship thoroughly, the PLAN forces reported that no pirates had been found on the ship and proceeded to free the sailors.[18] In 2012, the frigate *Changzhou* of the twelfth escort task force dispatched Special Forces soldiers who briefly landed on Somali shores to extract freed hostages from Taiwanese fishing vessel *Shiuh-fu*.[19] Despite somewhat rigid rules of engagement, the above instances reflect a capacity to react effectively to unscripted situations. This emphasis is also ever present in PLAN antipiracy training, which has focused on raising the ability of PLAN crewmen to react to unforeseen circumstances.[20]

The PLAN has managed to improve operationally within its given rules of engagement.[21] However, this is not to say that PLAN leaders are, on balance, completely satisfied with

antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. For example, key legal deficiencies prevent China from dealing more effectively with the problem of piracy. One issue is that of detaining suspected pirates. China's antipiracy operations, though the largest of any independent deployer in the Gulf of Aden, have never resulted in the detention of a suspected pirate and serve only to deter attacks.[22] The PLAN and other navies face formidable obstacles in this regard, such as accurately identifying pirates at sea, obtaining photographic evidence, securing witnesses to piracy crimes, and collecting evidence from victimized ships.[23] More broadly, China and states committed to eradicating piracy frequently emphasize that the true fight is not on the water but on Somali soil, where persistently failed governance and abysmal economic prospects lead otherwise helpless Somalis, many of whom were initially commercial fishermen, to engage in piracy. Gen. Chen Bingde, then the PLA Chief of Staff, suggested in 2011 that "for counter-piracy campaigns to be effective, we should probably move beyond the ocean and crush their bases on the land."[24] That said, there are no indications that China, without the explicit mandate of the UN or support of the FGS, would undertake measures similar to air raids conducted by EU NAVFOR in 2013 to uproot piracy bases on land.

Cooperation with Other Militaries and the Diplomatic Element of Antipiracy Operations

Beijing has achieved noteworthy cooperation with the United States and other states in the conduct of its antipiracy operations. This is especially remarkable since the majority of international navies contributing to the fight against Somali piracy do so under the command of multilateral mechanisms, while those of China and some other countries, such as India and Russia, coordinate with counterparts in the region but operate autonomously. The primary multilateral antipiracy forces in the region are known as "the Three Forces": Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151), led by the United States; Operation Ocean Shield (previously Operation Allied Protector), led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and Operation Atalanta, led by the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR).

From the outset, while the autonomous navies have conducted antipiracy operations in ways fundamentally different from those of the Three Forces, the PLAN has been "ready to exchange information and cooperate with the warships of other countries in fighting Somalian pirates."[25] At the time of the first deployment, the deployment commander, Adm. Du Jingcheng, stated that the PLAN would "not accept the command of other countries or regional organizations" but was willing to "facilitate exchanges of information with escort naval vessels from other countries."[26] This statement has held true: the PLAN has gradually increased communications with vessels from the United States and over twenty other countries and has conducted several shipboard exchanges of

commanding officers and with CTF-151 staff.[27] In recent years a voluntary, multinational antipiracy coordination mechanism known as Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) has facilitated tighter integration of the antipiracy operations of multilateral and independent naval actors, including China, which continues to make meaningful contributions to SHADE.

To date, the willingness of the PLAN and other independent navies to synchronize their antipiracy operations through the SHADE mechanism has been a bright spot for the international fight against piracy. While China was denied chairmanship of SHADE in 2009, both the international community and China have proactively sought to enhance the PLAN's role in the mechanism. Specifically, China participates in SHADE's Convoy Coordination Working Group, which coordinates escort schedules between navies such as those of China, India, Japan, and South Korea.[28] SHADE is ultimately chaired by Western-centric naval forces; however, China likely prefers to cooperate with it because of its voluntary and multilateral nature, whereas other multilateral forces, such as CTF-151, are commanded by the United States. Also, there are potential security barriers to more direct integration between China and traditional navies in the region; SHADE provides an innovative, low-sensitivity platform that has facilitated important breakthroughs in maritime nontraditional security cooperation between China and Western states. There are indeed signs of growing teamwork and cooperation; reportedly the PLAN deployed antipiracy forces south of the Bab el Mandeb to help fill gaps in patrol left by the Three Forces.[29] In summary, while SHADE highlights the major differences in approaches to dealing with the piracy problem, it also demonstrates a successful formula, one involving the mutual support and tolerance of different preferences that are needed to foster more institutionalized engagement between China and Western naval forces.

China has also attempted to coordinate with other navies in the fight against piracy in various ways other than SHADE. In 2009 it called for apportioning the Gulf of Aden and surrounding waterways into zones that each navy would protect independently, though the notion never came to fruition.[30] The PLAN has regularly visited and hosted other naval task forces, including, as noted, periodic shipboard exchanges with the commanders of CTF-151, NATO, and EU NAVFOR. PLAN antipiracy forces have conducted joint exercises with a diverse cohort of international partners, including Pakistan, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. A 2010 article in *Modern Navy* recapitulated the PLAN's underlying approach to international antipiracy cooperation: "While insisting on 'self-direction' [以我为主] [when] conducting escorts, China's navy [also] is actively expanding international maritime military exchanges and cooperation [and] gradually establishing and exploring escort methods and mechanisms with relevant countries."[31]

China has been true to its word in this regard and has engaged in various forms of international antipiracy cooperation. For instance, the PLAN previously assigned a surface

vessel to help monitor the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor jointly with CTF-151 forces and has escorted a total of eight UN World Food Programme vessels.[32] In 2012, 2013, and 2014, China engaged with the U.S. Navy in joint antipiracy exercises in the Gulf of Aden, even amid considerable strategic tension in East Asia between Beijing and other Asian capitals, many of them U.S. security partners.[33]

Beyond its high-seas piracy deterrence and ship-protection patrols, China has effectively leveraged this six-year far-seas antipiracy mission to conduct wide-ranging naval diplomacy. This is significant because China's deployment and associated activities have allowed it to be a "responsible stakeholder" in international society, particularly in the area of maritime nontraditional security.[34] When it escorted World Food Programme vessels into Somali ports, China ceased being the only permanent UNSC member not to have done so. Similarly, China's willingness to escort thousands of foreign commercial vessels, coupled with the PLAN's frequent exchanges and coordination with other navies in the region, has paid important dividends for the PLAN's image as a capable and peaceful contributor to security in the maritime commons. Finally, just as Beijing faces domestic pressure to protect its citizens overseas effectively, the PLAN's deployment sends a signal to the rest of the world that China is capable of protecting its perpetually expanding assets throughout the world and ready to do so.

Implications for Future Chinese Antipiracy Operations in the Far Seas

What lessons might we take from China's Gulf of Aden experience that might be applied to future antipiracy missions in the far seas? First, from the above discussion, it seems essential for the international community to supply an authoritative legal framework that supports international antipiracy and other nontraditional security activities of China and other states. Robust legal institutions not only make Beijing more comfortable with deploying forces beyond East Asia but in some cases they may pressure China to provide maritime security in porportion to its growing capabilities in the maritime arena. Second, China appears open to progressively increasing cooperation with other navies in ways that still allow it to characterize its contributions as independent to domestic and foreign audiences. While it might still be difficult to integrate the PLAN directly into U.S.-led multilateral naval security mechanisms, owing to a conflux of ideological, operational, and security barriers, the navies of America and China can look for approaches that are perhaps less expeditious but nevertheless of value. Admittedly, future far-seas PLAN nontraditional security missions, including antipiracy deployments, must confront potentially limiting internal tension between decisions to undertake such operations and what some consider more pressing needs closer to home.[35] For instance, Ma Xiaojun, a professor in the Central Party School's International Strategic Studies Institute, states in reference to the Gulf of Aden mission,

> Another kind of objective is to do things in a sound and practical way, doing whatever we can according to our capability. If you truly have the capability to do long-term escort duty off the east coast of Africa, why do you not first subdue the South China Sea pirates? The international community, especially ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], hopes more that China will make more effort to crack down on pirates in the South China Sea region. This possibility is more realistic.[36]

But if China is to participate in global antipiracy operations, the Gulf of Aden experience teaches us that it is likely to do so in its own way. China will likely continue to be cautious about its use-of-force policies, especially where the sovereign prerogatives of other states may come into play. This will limit the extent to which Chinese naval forces will be willing to compel, rather than simply enhance, security. Nonetheless, the Gulf of Aden demonstrates that the Chinese approach to antipiracy can make an effective contribution to international efforts. Additionally, as Chinese naval forces become more experienced in dealing with unscripted situations, they are likely to continue to become even more effective at managing piracy within the strict limits imposed by their rules of engagement. With these caveats in mind, there is every reason to believe that in future piracy hot spots—such as the Gulf of Guinea—China will be an active partner, able to make meaningful contributions to improving maritime security.

Notes

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2. Adm. Wu Shengli, discussion with author and small group of Harvard administrators, faculty, and students at Wadsworth House, Harvard University, 20 September 2014.
3. See "date approved until" for United Nations Security Council [hereafter UNSC] Resolution 2184, 12 November 2014, para. 13, in United Nations, *Security Council Reporting and Mandate Cycles,* DPA/SCAD/SCSB ref. no. 35 (New York: Dept. of Political Affairs Security Council Secretariat Branch), p. 7, available at www.un.org/en/sc/inc/pages/pdf/sccycles.pdf.
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11. Ibid.
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14. 白瑞雪, 朱鸿亮 [Bai Ruixue and Zhu Hongliang], "护航编队指挥员: '编队目前没有上岸计划'" [Commander of the Chinese Flotilla for Escort Missions Says: "At Present, the Flotilla Does Not Have a Disembarkation Plan"], 新华社 [Xinhua News Agency], 26 December 2008, www.gov.cn/jrzg/2008-12/26/content_1188602 .htm.
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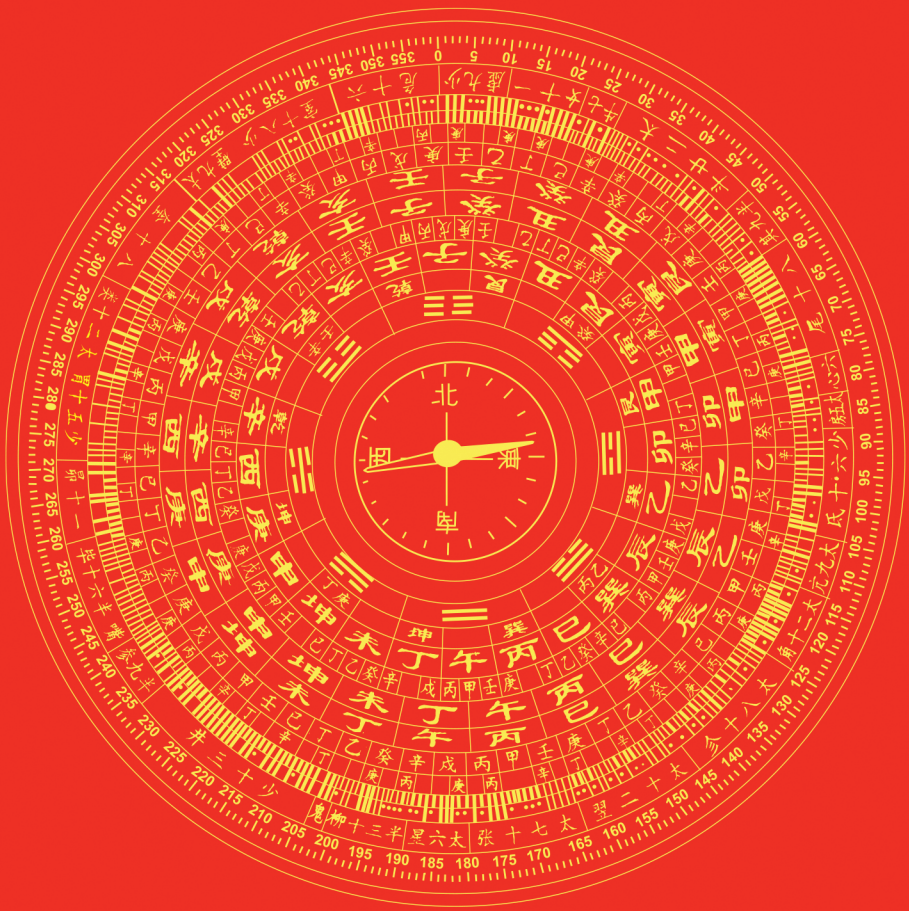

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Introduction

Peter A. Dutton and Ryan D. Martinson

This volume is the product of a groundbreaking dialogue on sea-lane security held between People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy and U.S. Navy scholars at the Naval War College in August 2013, with additional material from a related conference, "China's Far Seas Operations," hosted by the China Maritime Studies Institute in May 2012. At that time the political climate in China was uncertain, in the shadow of the Bo Xilai crisis and of the impending transition of power between the Hu and Xi regimes; accordingly the PLA Navy, though invited to participate in the "Far Seas" conference, ultimately declined to do so. This was not entirely surprising. Attempts by various agencies of the U.S. Navy up to that time to engage in discussions to advance maritime cooperation between China and the United States had been met with lukewarm responses at best. But at a maritime security dialogue in Dalian in September 2012 Senior Capt. Zhang Junshe of the PLA Navy Research Institute, a key contributor to this volume and to the success of the academic cooperation between our two institutes, approached Peter Dutton to tell him that everything had changed. China's new leadership wanted the PLA Navy to engage the U.S. Navy actively and to discuss openly all relevant issues, with the aim of advancing cooperation between the two navies. Since that time members of the China Maritime Studies Institute have engaged members of the PLA Navy Research Institute in discussions on a rich variety of maritime topics, leading to advances in understanding between our two institutes and our two navies.

Much has been written about Chinese sea power in the "near seas" of East Asia—those waters located within the chain of islands extending from the Kurils in the north to Sumatra in the south.[1] This volume attempts to broaden the discussion by examining China's efforts to shape its navy to meet new and growing needs beyond Asia, in waters to which it usually refers as the "far seas," or "distant seas."[2] Remote from domestic bases of support, the far seas impose a range of logistical and operational challenges on the PLA Navy. But this distance from the Chinese homeland also provides new opportunities for cooperation with the other navies of the world, creating a much-needed antidote to the growing tensions east of Malacca.

The five missions of the China Maritime Studies Institute—to research, write, advise, teach, and engage—were all advanced through this exchange of scholarship, but none

more so than the engagement portion of its portfolio. The institute engages with the PLA Navy for the purpose of providing the Chief of Naval Operations with an additional pathway to improve the U.S. Navy's understanding of PLA Navy perspectives. The exchange that forms the basis of this volume was rich. Although that exchange cannot be captured in this brief introduction in all its aspects, there are several themes that the papers published here capture especially well. Every author, for instance, takes for granted that a redistribution of power is ongoing that could have profoundly negative consequences for sea-lane security if not carefully managed. Additionally, although there is general agreement that the U.S. Navy will remain dominant in terms of traditional security, it is broadly accepted that the shrinking size of its fleet means it will increasingly need support in stabilizing the global maritime domain from the effects of nontraditional security threats. Finally, there is a general consensus that cooperative U.S.-Chinese naval relations could serve as a basis for improvements not only in maritime security but also in the overall relationship between the United States and China.

To that end, Dale Rielage begins this volume by reflecting on some of the deepest questions facing the U.S. Navy. He assesses that the aforementioned global redistribution of power is brought about primarily by the rise of China rather than any American decline but that nonetheless this redistribution of power has the potential to affect sea-lane security. One major factor in China's growing power is the expansion of its maritime trade, which is dependent on sea-lane security. However, Rielage notes, as power transfers and diffuses among states, maritime trade ironically becomes a vulnerability, in that shipping presents an increasingly attractive target if power shifts lead to conflict. Additionally, the same diffusion of technology that accompanies advances in maritime trade also increases access to technology that can be used to deny use of the seas. Rielage concludes that dealing with the inevitable mistrust between the United States and China in the midst of power change and the PLA Navy's improving capacity is one of the major challenges of our age. To avoid the problems of misperception, he recommends regular communication between navies, maintenance and development of the international legal system, and the development of mechanisms for collective action to support sea-lane security.

Wu Zhengyu's chapter advances the theme of maritime competition introduced by Rielage and focuses attention on the impact of China's maritime development on strategic stability in East Asia. He observes lessons from the previous experiences of similarly situated states in terms of geographical position—that is, states with hybrid land and maritime interests, such as France and Germany, and a large continental state that chose to build maritime power, the Soviet Union. He observes that for many years China's maritime deficiency was an important component of strategic stability in Asia, because there was a natural balance of power and interests between China as a strong continental state and the United States and its maritime allies. However, the recent growth of China's

navy and the development of antiaccess capabilities has upset this balance. Wu observes that to ensure its long-term safety and security China must find an appropriate balance between land and sea power to avoid antagonizing the United States as Beijing pursues its territorial, economic, and security interests in its surrounding seas.

Xu Qiyu is somewhat less concerned about the possibility of accelerating naval rivalry and asserts instead that the historical record suggests that the maritime domain tends not to be especially sensitive to power shifts in the international structure. In support of this contention he observes that throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries even as Germany, France, and Russia vied for power on the European continent, Britain remained the dominant maritime power. Xu concludes that the American position as the dominant maritime power is secure for the foreseeable future but will not be without challenges. A shrinking U.S. Navy will be especially ill prepared to cope with nontraditional security threats and will require cooperation from other naval powers. Xu is optimistic that such multilateral naval cooperation will help to foster a cooperative, or at least collaborative, model of great-power relations. American cooperation in this regard assists China to overcome its own mistrust of U.S. intentions.

Andrew Erickson and Austin Strange and, in the succeeding essay, Zhang Junshe reflect on the antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden as a successful example of Chinese cooperation with the international community. Erickson and Strange observe that the PLA Navy takes a cautious approach to the use of force but has become quite innovative in performing the mission. They note that China's initial preference for individual action in coordination with others to perform the tasks associated with suppressing piracy has gradually given way to more direct cooperation. Additionally, the Chinese have conducted a tremendous amount of international engagement through a wide array of port visits. Zhang proudly recounts the PLA Navy's accomplishments in the Gulf of Aden since it first began antipiracy operations in 2008. Like Erickson and Strange, he argues that the Chinese navy's increasingly "close cooperation" with other navies, including the U.S. Navy, has "promoted mutual understanding and mutual trust between the two navies" and advanced "a new type of big power relationship between our two countries."

Six years of antipiracy operations have not been without their challenges for the PLA Navy. One such challenge is logistical support. Christopher Yung tells us that the Chinese are having a robust debate over the question of how to provide logistical support to the PLA Navy's increasing far-seas operations, especially in the Indian Ocean. He assesses that the most logical, and therefore most likely, decision would be to establish dual-use logistics facilities that can support both commercial and military operations. He anticipates that such facilities will use local agents to tap into existing commercial networks and commercial delivery services so as to provide an efficient method of moving required materiel. This model is attractive because dual-use logistics facilities have

a small and light footprint, incur low political costs to China, and would not need to be defended by the Chinese military.

Cai Penghong observes that China's recent determination to expand and protect its overseas interests reflects a significant break with the nation's past internal and continental focuses. He observes that the expansion of China's overseas interests is a natural outcome of its economic rise and that disruption to important sea-lanes would threaten China's economic and political stability. At the same time, he expects China to face competition and pressure from the United States, especially in the western Pacific. China, he asserts, should not back down under this pressure but should actively compete with the United States, without resorting to war. The key that prevents escalation of competition to conflict, Cai says, is that China's overseas interests are, though important, not vital, and that will remain the case for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, Cai believes, cooperative competition is the best strategic approach for China to take.

Jonathan Odom and Wang Xiaoxuan in their respective essays shift the focus of discussion to the rule sets that will best serve the interests of peace and stability in the maritime domain as both countries seek ways to manage competition and expand cooperation. Odom observes that China's current approach to international law of the sea, an approach that seeks to restrict military freedoms of navigation in the near seas, may not serve Chinese interests well as China moves out into the far seas to undertake naval operations there. Without liberalization of its restrictive approach to international law, Odom argues, despite its growing capacity the PLA Navy risks remaining ineffective at protecting its growing overseas resource and commercial interests and at protecting Chinese citizens living abroad from the effects of political instability or natural disasters. Accordingly, in Odom's view, liberalizing its policies regarding freedom of navigation for military purposes would best protect China's interests. Wang seems to agree, to a point. While he believes the international community should "establish the concept of freedom of the seas for all," he is convinced that "self-interested and exclusive control"—a reference, presumably, to American global naval dominance—is the "greatest threat" to sea-lane security. Wang makes little mention of the maritime legal regime, asserting only that the system needs to be improved to support the management of the global maritime environment. Wang's solution is based more on power sharing: joint management of sea-lanes, cooperative international support for sea-lane navigation systems, and an open conversation among coastal states, user states, and maritime powers. Note the difference between the American preference for regulating international behaviors (strengthening rules and laws) and the Chinese preference (strengthening relationships). This is a recurring theme not just in this volume but in many bilateral discussions between the two navies.

Finally, Mark Redden and Phillip Saunders round out the volume with a substantial chapter that tackles the competition/cooperation dynamic in the United States–China relationship at sea. Redden and Saunders circle back to a theme that the beginning chapters address—that if the U.S. Navy and the PLA Navy are able to improve bilateral cooperation substantially, it will have "a significant positive impact on the broader relationship." They are pessimistic about the bilateral talks under the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, because the United States focuses on "tactical-level deconfliction procedures" while China seeks to address "broader political-military issues." (This is the rules/relationship dichotomy returning for a curtain call.) Using this framework, Redden and Saunders address the two perspectives regarding military operations in the exclusive economic zone. They conclude that for the time being the difference between them causes friction but at a manageable level, below a threshold of maximum acceptable operational risk. However, Redden and Saunders are not optimistic that this condition will continue indefinitely and conclude that ultimately "U.S. and Chinese . . . maritime interactions will help shape broader rules and norms of maritime behavior."

Perhaps, after all, this is the point of continued direct engagement between the U.S. Navy and the PLA Navy. If China's power continues to rise in the future as it has in recent decades, the history of the twenty-first century will be written in terms of the cooperation or competition between the two powerful states whose interests these navies will have defended. The United States and China will either develop a common approach to maritime security or slip farther toward competition and probably even into conflict. If we hope to avoid the latter future, active, sustained, patient engagement will be required to develop either mutually agreeable rule sets or an improved relationship. As one Chinese participant noted during the conference, a new type of great-power relationship would mean "something completely new, very different from the old US-USSR relationship, but also different from the US-UK relationship. It is a new path that will require more cooperation, understanding, and the development of mutual trust for China and the US to move toward a common goal. The bottom line is that it is like a friendship." These are lofty words, and indeed the chapters in this volume make clear that both American and Chinese naval experts desire a relationship defined more by cooperation than by competition. The question that remains to be answered, however, is: On what terms?

Notes

1. Peter Dutton, Andrew S. Erickson, and Ryan Martinson, eds., *China's Near Seas Combat Capabilities,* China Maritime Study 11 (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2014).
2. Nan Li, "The Evolution of China's Naval Strategy and Capabilities: From 'Near Coast' and 'Near Seas' to 'Far Seas,'" *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (2009), pp. 144–69.

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