

PLA Military Diplomacy During 2023

Kenneth W. Allen

Introduction

As the People's Republic of China (PRC) enters 2024, it is important to know how the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted its military diplomacy during 2023 in order to support the Chinese Communist Party (CCP aka CPC). Therefore, this report provides information concerning the PLA's military diplomacy during 2023 based about 250 articles published in two of the PRC's Ministry of National Defense (MND) English-language websites and 25 articles in MND's Chinese-language website.¹ Of note, 23 of the 25 Chinese-language articles were identical to the English-language articles. Appendix A provides a list of previous articles/reports on military diplomacy since 2000 that lays the foundation for this report.

The report is organized into the following 12 Sections and 2 Appendices:

- Section 1: Key Developments during 2023
- Section 2: Senior-level Hosted Visits and Visits Abroad
- Section 3: PLA Navy Military Diplomacy Activities
- Section 4: Coast Guard Military Diplomacy Activities
- Section 5: PLA Army Military Diplomacy Activities
- Section 6: PLA Air Force Military Diplomacy Activities
- Section 7: High-level Meetings at Home and Abroad
- Section 8: United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
- Section 9: Humanitarian and Medical-related Activities
- Section 10: PLA Academies and Cadet Military Diplomacy Activities
- Section 11: Border Defense Military Diplomacy Activities
- Section 12: Foreign Attache Visits to PLA Facilities
- Appendix A: Previous Military Diplomacy Reports
- Appendix B: Acronyms

Data Explanation

All of the information in each section is taken directly from the articles in the MND website or from Wikipedia, and the relevant citations have been included. In some cases, the information is condensed, so it is not exactly word for word. I did not provide any analysis. The analysis of the information will be provided in China Maritime Report No. 37.

Section 1: Key Developments during 2023

On December 28, the Ministry of National Defense held its final regular press conference for the year, which included the following highlights concerning military diplomacy.²

¹ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/node_48461.htm and http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html.
http://www.mod.gov.cn/diplomacy/node_46942.htm.

² Zhang Zhicheng, "Regular Press Conference of China's Ministry of National Defense on December 28," [eng.mod.gov.cn](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html), December 28, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html.

“The year 2023 marks the first year for fully implementing the guiding principles laid down at the 20th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress. On military diplomacy, we acted on *Xi Jinping Thought on Strengthening the Military* and *Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy*, followed the guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, took high-level exchanges as important means, focused on practical cooperation and gave emphasis to multilateral platforms. We have broken new ground, forged ahead with enterprise and fortitude, enhanced the quality and efficiency of international military cooperation and achieved high-quality development.

“First, military diplomacy served the overall political and diplomatic objectives of China. Under the strategic guidance of head-of-state diplomacy, leaders of the Central Military Commission (CMC) had strategic communication with defense and military leaders of Russia, the United States, Vietnam, Cambodia, Pakistan, South Africa, etc., and deepened bilateral strategic cooperation. The Chinese military enhanced consultation and dialogue and expanded practical cooperation with relevant militaries to put into practice the achievements of head-of-state diplomacy.

“Second, military diplomacy resolutely safeguarded national sovereignty, security and development interests. In response to the negative and wrong rhetoric and infringements and provocations made by certain countries on the Taiwan Question and the South China Sea issue, while taking actions to protect our rights in accordance with laws and regulations, the Chinese military also made diplomatic representations, and timely refuted, warned and exposed the wrongdoings and negative moves of relevant countries, and made clear China’s positions through MND spokesperson and the media.

“Thirdly, we have expanded foreign-related military operations. The PLA organized and conducted 34 joint training, exercises and international military games including the China-Russia “Beibu Unity-2023” joint exercise, the “Aman youyi-2023” joint exercise with southeast Asian countries, the China-Cambodia “Golden Dragon 2023” joint exercise, and the China-Laos “Friendship Shield-2023” joint exercise. Through expanded bilateral and multilateral exercises and training, the PLA has deepened mutual trust and cooperation with the militaries of relevant countries and played a positive role in maintaining regional stability.

“Fourthly, we have made innovative efforts in multilateral diplomacy. The tenth Beijing Xiangshan Forum and the third China-Africa Peace and Security Forum hosted by China were widely attended and welcomed. We attended multilateral events including the Shangri-La dialogue, the Defense Ministers’ Meeting of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and actively introduced major initiatives such as the Global Security Initiative and promoted international consensus for peace and cooperation.

“Fifthly, we have contributed to building a community with a shared future for mankind. The PLA Navy’s (PLAN) Peace Ark hospital ship visited Kiribati, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. The Chinese military medical expert teams continued to work in Zambia, Cambodia and Laos, and provided medical service to the local people. PLA Air Force (PLAAF) Y-20 transport aircraft carried out humanitarian relief missions to Afghanistan and Nepal. PLAN vessels rushed to Sudan to evacuate Chinese nationals. The Chinese military also actively participated in United Nations (U.N.) peacekeeping and vessel protection operations, consistently providing public security goods to the international community.

“Embracing the world for peace, the Chinese military will always follow the guidance of *Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era* and stay committed to

expanding and deepening relations with foreign militaries, strengthening practical exchanges and cooperation, and making due contributions to world peace and common development.”

Section 2: Senior-level Hosted Visits and Visits Abroad

This section provides information for January through December 2023 about visits abroad and visits hosted by the two CMC Vice Chairmen, Defense Minister, Chief of the Joint Staff Department, and the Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff Department whose portfolio includes military diplomacy. Of note, no information was found concerning visits abroad or hosted visits by the PLA Army (PLAA), Navy (PLAN), Air Force (PLAAF), or Strategic Support Force (PLASSF) commanders. In addition, since the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) was created in 2016, no commander has traveled abroad or hosted a foreign visitor. Of note, some of the meetings that would have been held in person were conducted by video teleconference (VTC).

CMC Vice Chairmen (Generals Zhang Youxia and He Weidong)

The PRC has two identical Central Military Commissions (CMC), including one under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) whose members are normally appointed during the Party Congress that is held every five years, and one under the State Council whose members are the same as the Party CMC and are appointed during the National People’s Congress (NPC), which is held a few months after the Party Congress; however, the new Defense Minister normally does not assume his position until the NPC. Until then, he just serves as a CMC Member. Each CMC has two uniformed Vice Chairmen.

Army General Zhang Youxia (张又侠) became the Party’s CMC’s senior Vice Chairman in October 2017 and the State’s CMC Vice chairman in March 2018.³ Army General He Weidong (何卫东) became the second Party CMC Vice Chairman in October 2022 and a State CMC Vice Chairman in March 2023.⁴ The following bullets provide information about their travel abroad and hosted visits during 2023.

Zhang Youxia

- Hosted Visits in Beijing
 - February: The Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and concurrent Commander of the Royal Cambodian Army⁵
 - April: Pakistani Chief of Army Staff⁶
 - June: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Pakistan Army, who added that the Pakistani military is willing to deepen cooperation with the Chinese military in various fields such as high-level exchanges, joint training and exercises, counter-terrorism and stability maintenance, in a bid to safeguard common interests and promote common development.⁷

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhang_Youxia.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/He_Weidong.

⁵ Huang Panyue, ed., “Senior Chinese, Cambodian military officials meet in Beijing,” *Xinhuanet*, February 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16200862.html.

⁶ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Senior Chinese military officer meets with Pakistani Army Chief,” *China Military Online*, April 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/News_213079/16220268.html.

⁷ Li Jiayao, ed., “CMC Vice Chairman meets with Pakistani Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee,” *China Military Online*, June 20, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16232555.html.

- October: Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense⁸
- October-November: During the 10th Xiangshan Forum, Zhang had separate meetings with several foreign defense ministers, including Suriname, Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe, Russia, Laos, and Mongolia.⁹
- Travel Abroad
 - November (Russia): Separate meetings in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Defense Minister¹⁰

He Weidong

- Hosted Visits in Beijing
 - October-November: During the 10th Xiangshan Forum, He had separate meetings with several foreign defense ministers, including Vietnam, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Singapore, and Cambodia.¹¹
- Travel Abroad
 - December (Laos and Cambodia): Meetings with Laotian President and Defense Minister¹² and Cambodian Prime Minister and Defense Minister.¹³

Defense Minister (General Li Shangfu)

The Defense Minister is normally appointed as a CMC Member during the Party Congress and is then appointed as the new Defense Minister and State Councillor during the National People's Congress for five years; however, General Li Shangfu (李尚福) was appointed as the 13th Defense Minister in March 2023 but was removed from office for corruption in October 2023.¹⁴ He was replaced by the PLAN Commander, Admiral Dong Jun (董军), on December 29, 2023, and was the first PLAN officer to serve as the Defense Minister.¹⁵ The following bullets provide information about Li's travel abroad and hosted visits during 2023.

⁸ Lin Congyi, ed., "Senior Chinese military officer meets Serbian defense minister," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16259896.html), October 19, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16259896.html.

⁹ Huang Panyue, ed., "CMC Vice Chairman General Zhang Youxia meets with Suriname Defense Minister," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16264027.html), November 2, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16264027.html. Lin Congyi, ed., "CMC Vice Chairman General Zhang Youxia meets with guests attending 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16263732.html), November 1, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16263732.html.

Wang Xinjuan, ed., "CMC vice chairman Zhang Youxia meets with Lao, Mongolian guests," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262919.html), October 28, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262919.html. Wang Xinjuan, ed., "Senior Chinese military officer holds talks with Russian defense minister," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16263192.html), October 30, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16263192.html.

¹⁰ Chen Zhuo, ed., "Russian President meets with Chinese CMC Vice Chairman," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265718.html), November 8, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265718.html.

¹¹ Wang Xinjuan, ed., "CMC vice chairman He Weidong meets with Vietnamese defense minister," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262920.html), October 28, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262920.html.

Huang Panyue, ed., "CMC Vice Chairman General He Weidong meets with guests attending 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16263744.html), November 1, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16263744.html.

¹² Jiang Chenglong, "Chinese general meets Laotian president, praises military ties," [China Daily](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202312/06/WS65703427a31090682a5f1c43.html), December 6, 2023, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202312/06/WS65703427a31090682a5f1c43.html>.

¹³ "Cambodian PM meets with senior Chinese military official," [Xinhua](http://www.china.org.cn/world/2023-12/05/content_116858219.htm), December 5, 2023, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2023-12/05/content_116858219.htm.

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_Shangfu.

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dong_Jun.

- Hosted Visits in Beijing
 - April: Chief of Naval Staff of the Bangladesh Navy¹⁶
 - April: Chief of Naval Staff of the Thai Navy¹⁷
 - May: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Vice Prime Minister and Defense Minister¹⁸
 - May: Phone conversation with Japan’s Defense Minister using the direct telephone link under the maritime and air liaison mechanism between the Chinese and Japanese defense departments for the first time¹⁹
 - May: Chief of Naval Staff of the Pakistani Navy²⁰
 - June: Vietnamese Defense Minister²¹
 - June: Chief of the South African National Defence Force²²
 - June: Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army²³
 - July: Chief of the Air Staff of the Pakistani Air Force²⁴
 - July: Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy²⁵
 - August: Commander of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force and Air Defense²⁶
 - August: Delivered a keynote speech at the third China-Africa Peace and Security Forum in Beijing.²⁷ More than 100 senior representatives from the African Union (AU) and nearly 50 African countries attended the forum. Li held meetings with the defense leaders of Senegal, Comoros, the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Ghana, Zambia, South Sudan, Gambia, Mauritania, Uganda and other countries respectively, as well as the commissioner for political affairs, peace and security of the AU Commission.
- Travel Abroad
 - April (Russia): Meeting with Russian Defense Minister in Moscow²⁸

¹⁶ 乌铭琪 [Wu Mingqi], 李尚福会见孟加拉国海军参谋长 [“Li Shangfu meets with Bangladesh Chief of Naval Staff“], mod.gov.cn, April 1, 2023, <http://www.mod.gov.cn/gfbw/jswj/lf/16213769.html>.

¹⁷ 李庆桐 [Li Qingtong], 李尚福会见泰国海军司令 [“Li Shangfu meets with Thai Chief of Naval Staff“], mod.gov.cn, April 14, 2023, <http://www.mod.gov.cn/gfbw/jswj/lf/16217079.html>.

¹⁸ Li Jiayao, ed., “Chinese defense minister meets with DRC counterpart,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16226936.html), May 27, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16226936.html.

¹⁹ Li Jiayao, ed., “Chinese, Japanese defense ministers hold phone talks,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16224658.html), May 16, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16224658.html.

²⁰ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Chinese Defense Minister meets with Pakistani Chief of Naval Staff,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222755.html), May 8, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222755.html.

²¹ Li Jiayao, ed., “Chinese defense minister meets with Vietnamese counterpart,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16233452.html), June 27, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16233452.html.

²² Chen Zhuo, ed., “China, South Africa vow to improve mil-to-mil relations,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16232711.html), June 21, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16232711.html.

²³ Li Weichao, ed., “Chinese defense minister meets with commander of Royal Thai Army,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230303.html), June 10 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230303.html.

²⁴ Li Weichao, ed., “Chinese Defense Minister meets with Pakistani Chief of Air Staff,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239768.html), July 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239768.html.

²⁵ Li Jiayao, ed., “Chinese Defense Minister meets with Commander-in-Chief of Russian Navy,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16234783.html), July 3, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16234783.html.

²⁶ Li Weichao, ed., “Chinese Defense Minister meets with UAE Air Force and Air Defense Commander,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16246979.html), August 23, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16246979.html.

²⁷ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Chinese defense minister urges enhanced China-Africa cooperation to safeguard global security,” Xinhuanet, August 30, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16248724.html.

²⁸ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Chinese and Russian defense ministers hold talks in Moscow,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/News_213079/16218110.html), April 18, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/News_213079/16218110.html.

- April (India): Attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Defense Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, India, and met separately with India's Defense Minister.²⁹ He also had separate meetings with Defense Ministers from Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, India, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Iran on international and regional situations, bilateral and military ties as well as issues of common concern.³⁰
- June (Singapore): Attended the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue where he gave a speech on "China's New Security Initiative" and also met separately with Singapore's Defense Minister³¹
- August (Russia): Attended the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS) and delivered a speech on August 15.³² On the sideline of the conference, Li held separate talks with Russia's Defense Minister as well as heads of defense departments and armed forces from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Vietnam and other countries. Li then visited Minsk, Belarus, where he met with the President and Defense Minister.³³

Chief of Staff, CMC Joint Staff Department (General Liu Zhenli)

Army General Liu Zhenli (刘振立) became the Chief of Staff of the CMC Joint Staff Department in September 2022.³⁴ Since assuming office, Liu did not travel abroad during 2023 and did not host any foreign leaders; however, he held a VTC with the First Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation on June 9, 2023.³⁵ He also held a VTC with the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Charles Q. Brown, on December 21, 2023.³⁶

Section 3: PLA Navy Military Diplomacy Activities

This section discusses the PLA Navy's military diplomacy activities during 2023, which are organized into the following four categories: Gulf of Aden Escort Task Forces, bilateral and multilateral joint exercises, training ship Qi Jiguang visits, and Peace Ark hospital ship visits.

PLA Navy Gulf of Aden Escort Task Forces

As of December 2023, the PLAN has sent more than 150 ships and over 35,000 troops in 45 escort task forces (ETF) to the Gulf of Aden and the waters off the coast of Somalia since 2008 to carry

²⁹ Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese Defense Minister meets with Indian Defense Minister," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16220779.html), April 28, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16220779.html.

³⁰ Li Wei, ed., "Chinese defense minister to attend SCO Defense Ministers' Meeting in India," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/News_213079/16220839.html), April 25, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/CMCDEPARTMENTS/News_213079/16220839.html.

³¹ Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese defense minister delivers speech at 20th Shangri-La Dialogue," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16228602.html), June 4, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16228602.html.

³² Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese defense minister attends 11th Moscow Conference on International Security," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16245560.html), August 16, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16245560.html.

³³ Li Jiayao, ed., "Belarusian President meets Chinese Defense Minister," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16245838.html), August 17, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16245838.html.

³⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liu_Zhenli_\(general\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liu_Zhenli_(general)).

³⁵ Li Weichao, ed., "Chief of staff of Chinese military holds video talks with Russian counterpart," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230169.html), June 9, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230169.html.

³⁶ Li Weichao, ed., "China's senior military official holds video meeting with US counterpart," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16275519.html), December 22, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16275519.html.

out escort missions.³⁷ The PLAN ships have safely escorted over 7,200 Chinese and foreign ships in more than 1,600 batches, and rescued and protected nearly 100 ships of various types, of which more than 50 percent were foreign ships. The past 15 years of escort missions in the Gulf of Aden have witnessed the staunch efforts made by the PLA Navy to accelerate its transformation towards a strong maritime force and demonstrated the commitment of the PLAN troops to embracing the world and safeguarding peace. In its missions of expelling pirates, conducting emergency evacuation of Chinese nationals and humanitarian rescue operations, the PLAN stays committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind and a maritime community with a shared future, and actively contributes to safeguarding China's overseas rights and interests and the safety of international sea lanes.

In February 2023, the 42nd ETF, which is subordinate to the Northern Theater Command Navy (TCN), was composed of the guided missile destroyer Huainan (Hull 123), frigate Rizhao (Hull 598), and comprehensive supply ship Kekexilihu (Hull 968), finished its five-month deployment to the Gulf of Aden from Qingdao (Shandong Province) since September 2022, and headed directly south to Richards Bay in the southernmost part of South Africa to participate the PLAN's second joint military exercise with Russia and South Africa since 2019 in the eastern waters and airspace from Durban to Richards Bay.³⁸ Themed "joint operation to safeguard the safety of shipping and maritime economic activities", the joint exercise ran from February 20-27. The 43rd ETF, which consisted of the guided-missile destroyer Nanning (Hull 162), the guided-missile frigate Sanya (Hull 574), and the comprehensive supply ship Weishanhu (Hull 887), assumed the mission.

The 43rd ETF was also involved in three other key events while serving in the Gulf of Aden. First, from February 10-14, the destroyer Nanning participated in the Pakistani Navy's AMAN-23 Multinational Maritime Exercise in the Arabian Sea, which included naval vessels, aircraft, special operation forces, marines, and sailors from 50 countries, which also included the United States.³⁹ The exercise was divided into harbor and sea phases.⁴⁰ Second, following AMAN-23, the Nanning participated in UAE's Abu Dhabi's NAVDEX 2023 from February 17-25.⁴¹ During the exhibition, the Nanning held seminars, mutual visits, sports competitions, and other friendly exchange activities with the UAE Navy and participating ships from other countries. It was also open to the public. Third, as a result of heavy fighting between rival military factions in Khartoum, Sudan, the Nanning and Weishanhu evacuated 940 Chinese citizens and 231 foreign personnel from Port

³⁷ Zhang Zhicheng, "Regular Press Conference of China's Ministry of National Defense on December 28," [eng.mod.gov.cn](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html), December 28, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html.

³⁸ Lin Congyi, ed., "Chinese navy vessels participate in China-Russia-South Africa joint maritime exercise," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16203349.html), February 22, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16203349.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "China, Russia, South Africa to hold 2nd joint maritime exercise," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16202591.html), February 19, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16202591.html.

³⁹ Sana Jamal, correspondent, "Pakistan Navy hosts 50 countries for multinational exercise Aman 2023: Navies of the US, China, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait taking part," [World Asia](https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pakistan-navy-hosts-50-countries-for-multinational-exercise-aman-2023-1.93803073), February 12, 2023, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pakistan-navy-hosts-50-countries-for-multinational-exercise-aman-2023-1.93803073>.

⁴⁰ Li Jiayao, ed., "Multinational maritime exercise AMAN-23 concludes," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16201722.html), February 15, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16201722.html.

⁴¹ Li Jiayao, ed., "PLA naval ship Nanning to participate in NAVDEX 2023 in Abu Dhabi, UAE," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16201979.html), February 16, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16201979.html.

Sudan to the port of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia from April 26-29, and, on April 30, they evacuated 272 more Chinese and 221 foreigners.⁴²

On June 2, the 43rd and 44th Chinese ETFs held a mission handover ceremony in the Gulf of Aden.⁴³ On August 30, the 43rd ETF, which is subordinate to the Eastern TCN and was comprised of the guided-missile destroyer Nanning (Hull 162), the guided-missile frigate Sanya (Hull 574), and the comprehensive supply ship Weishanhu (Hull 887), returned to the southern city of Zhanjiang (Guangdong Province) after completing its mission of escorting 21 Chinese and foreign ships.⁴⁴ During the evacuation of Chinese personnel in Sudan, the Nanning and Weishanhu successfully transferred more than 1,000 Chinese and foreign people. Altogether, the 43rd ETF had traveled about 120,000 nautical miles during its 232-day voyage and had visited Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo. On July 21, the 43rd ETF ended its seven-day visit to the Republic of the Congo, completing a visit to five West African countries. Naval officers and sailors from both sides held exercises and tactical discussions on counterterrorism and combating piracy, as well as friendly events including basketball and football.⁴⁵ In addition, the task force's medical team ran a free clinic in conjunction with the 29th Chinese aid medical team at Brazzaville Hospital in Pointe-Noire. Following departure, the task force conducted exercises covering counterterrorism, combating piracy and search and rescue, with escort boats belonging to the Republic of the Congo Navy. While en route home, the ETF made a technical stop in at Victoria Wharf in Cape Town, South Africa from July 24-27 and another technical stop in Port Klang, Malaysia, from August 17-20, for replenishment and rest.⁴⁶

The 44th ETF, which is subordinate to the Southern TCN and departed from Zhoushan (Zhejiang Province) on April 28, organized a series of targeted training on anti-terrorist and anti-piracy, hijacked ship rescue by force and nighttime helicopter landing practice under complex sea conditions along the way, aiming to improve its capability in carrying out escort missions. The 44th ETF was composed of the guided missile destroyer Zibo (Hull 156), frigate Jingzhou (Hull 532), and comprehensive supply ship Qiandaohu (Hull 886).⁴⁷ After its handover ceremony to the 45th ETF in late October, the 44th ETF conducted goodwill visits to four Middle Eastern countries, including Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE.⁴⁸ After leaving the UAE port, the ETF conducted a

⁴² Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese military completes mission of evacuating Chinese personnel from Sudan: Defense Spokesperson," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16221045.html), April 29, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16221045.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese navy evacuates 493 more people from Sudan, including 221 foreigners," [Xinhuanet](http://www.xinhuanet.com), April 30, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16221151.html. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/22/politics/us-diplomatic-personnel-sudan/index.html>.

⁴³ Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese naval escort taskforces complete mission rotation in Gulf of Aden," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16228264.html), June 2, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16228264.html.

⁴⁴ Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese naval fleet returns from escort mission," [Xinhuanet](http://www.xinhuanet.com), August 30, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16248894.html.

⁴⁵ Chen Zhuo, ed., "PLA naval task force wraps up visit to West Africa," [China Daily](http://www.chinamil.com.cn), July 21, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16240102.html.

⁴⁶ Chen Zhuo, ed., "43rd Chinese naval escort taskforce docks in Cape Town," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16241200.html), July 31, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16241200.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "43rd Chinese naval escort taskforce docks in Port Klang, Malaysia," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16247692.html), August 25, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16247692.html.

⁴⁷ <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-deploys-six-warships-to-middle-east-over-fears-israel-crisis-could-spark-wv3/ar-AA1iClkM>.

⁴⁸ Li Weichao, ed., "44th Chinese naval escort taskforce wraps up visit to UAE," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265210.html), November 6, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16265210.html.

joint maritime exercise with the UAE Navy's frigates Baynunah and Mezyad in nearby waters, including joint search and rescue and formation maneuver. After visiting Kuwait, it also conducted a joint maritime exercise with Kuwaiti naval patrol craft Failaka in nearby waters.⁴⁹ This was the third visit by an ETF to Qatar.⁵⁰

After assuming its mission in late October, the 45th ETF, which is subordinate to the Northern TCN and based in Qingdao, is composed of the destroyer Urumqi (Hull 118), frigate Linyi (Hull 547), and comprehensive supply ship Dongpinghu (Hull 902). The ETF escorted a fleet of 10 Chinese deep-sea fishing boats for nearly three days and nights and more than 600 nautical miles.⁵¹

PLA Navy Bilateral and Multilateral Joint Exercises

Malaysia, Exhibition: The guided-missile destroyer Zhanjiang (Hull 165), which is subordinate to the Southern TCN, deployed to Malaysia to participate in the 16th Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition from May 23-27.⁵² During LIMA 2023, the destroyer Zhanjiang held an open day and deck reception, and participated in activities of fleet review, Langkawi Maritime Conference, Naval Engineering Conference, and Fleet Cultural and Food Festival Night.

Indonesia, Komodo Exercise: From June 5-8, the Southern TCN's destroyer Zhanjiang and frigate Xuchang (Hull 536) participated in the 2023 Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK) joint maritime exercise in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia with more than 40 ships from Indonesia, the US, Russia, Singapore, Pakistan, and other countries.⁵³ The MNEK is a non-war exercise by prioritizing regional maritime cooperation, disaster management, and humanitarian operations to strengthen cooperation among the participating navies, which is held by the Indonesian Navy every two years since 2014. This was the fourth exercise in this series. The exercise included a fleet review, onshore activities (city parade, maritime exhibition, civil medical service, civil engineering program, culinary demonstrations, fun diving and sports exchanges, and lectures), and joint maritime drills (search and rescue, maritime interception, damage control, and aerial photography), etc. After completing the exercise, the two ships also conducted narrow channel navigation and multi-scenario combat drills on the way back, which effectively tested the task-fulfilling capabilities of the troops. Altogether, the ships traveled more than 3,090 nautical miles within 15 days.

⁴⁹ Li Weichao, ed., "44th Chinese naval escort taskforce concludes visit to Kuwait," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16261491.html), October 24, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16261491.html.

⁵⁰ Huang Panyue, ed., "44th Chinese naval escort taskforce wraps up Qatar visit," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16263183.html), October 30, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16263183.html.

⁵¹ Lin Congyi, ed., "45th Chinese naval escort taskforce escorts ten fishing boats," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16261858.html), October 25, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16261858.html.
<https://english.cctv.com/2023/09/13/ARTIgbJ5v7BKkUWXTa856W3C230913.shtml>

⁵² Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese military to participate in LIMA exhibition in Malaysia," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16224294.html), May 15, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16224294.html. Xu Yi, ed., "Ship Zhanjiang enhances interactions with foreign navies during LIMA 2023 trip," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16226089.html), May 23, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16226089.html.

⁵³ Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese naval ships arrive for Komodo 2023 multilateral naval exercise," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16228883.html), June 5, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16228883.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese sailors participate in exchange activities of 2023 multilateral naval exercise Komodo," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16229816.html), June 8, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16229816.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese naval ships returns from 2023 multilateral naval exercise Komodo," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16231506.html), June 15, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16231506.html.

Vietnam, Joint Patrol: On June 27, Southern TCN frigates Guangyuan (Hull 649) and Hanzhong (Hull 648) and two Vietnamese vessels carried out the 34th joint patrol in Beibu Gulf since 2005 as part of the relevant agreement between the Chinese and Vietnamese militaries and the annual routine plan.⁵⁴ The two sides conducted a joint search and rescue drill, with the scenario set as a fishing boat of each side was in distress in the common fishery area and the personnel were in urgent need of rescue. In addition to regular joint patrols, the two sides also conducted drills on subjects of joint search and rescue, light signals, etc.

On November 27, the Chinese and Vietnamese navies concluded the 35th joint patrol in Beibu Gulf. During the two-day joint patrol, China and Vietnam each sent two naval vessels, including the Southern TCN light frigates Hanzhong (Hull 648) and Aba (Hull 630).⁵⁵ During the joint patrol, the joint Chinese-Vietnamese task unit steamed in formation along the China-Vietnam maritime demarcation line in the Beibu Gulf. Both sides shared relevant information in a timely manner and alternated command of the vessels, enhancing their organization and coordination capabilities in joint patrols. After the joint patrol, the two sides conducted joint drills on search and rescue, communication, among other subjects.

Russia, Shanghai Visit: From July 4-11, Russian naval corvettes Gromkiy and Sovershenniy visited the Wusong port in Shanghai.⁵⁶ In waters near the Yangtze River estuary, the Eastern TCN guided-missile destroyer Taiyuan (Hull 131) and the Gromkiy held a joint maritime exercise. During the communication training drill, the two sides sent signals to and received signals from each other, and practiced light communication, signal codes, etc. to test their understanding and application of the communication rules. Following that, the warships also conducted training on maneuver in formation and maritime search and rescue.

Russia, Norther/Interaction-2023 Exercise: From July 20-25, Russian and Northern TCN vessels, including the destroyer Qiqihar (Hull 121), and naval aviation aircraft from both countries held the Northern/Interaction-2023 exercise in the Sea of Japan.⁵⁷ After the opening ceremony, the participating troops conducted joint training on subjects including maritime and air escort, deterrence and expelling, and anchorage ground defense. The theme was “safeguarding the safety of strategic maritime passage”. On July 27, the PLAN vessels that had participated in the exercise wrapped up a three-day visit to Vladivostok and departed from the Golden Horn Bay, homeport of the Russian Pacific Fleet.

Russia, Joint Naval Patrol: In late July, according to the annual cooperation plan between the Chinese and Russian militaries, the Chinese and Russian naval vessels held the third joint maritime

⁵⁴ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Chinese, Vietnamese navies conduct 34th joint patrol in Beibu Gulf,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16233861.html), June 28, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16233861.html.

⁵⁵ Wang Xinjuan, ed., “Chinese, Vietnamese navies conclude 35th joint patrol in Beibu Gulf,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16269448.html), November 11, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16269448.html.

⁵⁶ Li Weichao, ed., “Russian naval vessels conclude visit, departs from Shanghai,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16236660.html), July 12, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16236660.html.

⁵⁷ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Northern/Interaction-2023 exercise kicks off,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16238784.html), July 21, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16238784.html. Li Weichao, ed., “China-Russia Northern/Interaction-2023 exercise concludes,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239326.html), July 24, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239326.html. Li Weichao, ed., “Chinese naval vessels wrap up Vladivostok visit,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16241494.html), August 1, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16241494.html.

patrol in the western and northern waters of the Pacific Ocean.⁵⁸ The Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) dispatched ships and aircraft to track and monitor. Moreover, the chairman of the US House Armed Services Committee stated that the Chinese and Russian joint naval patrol near Alaska a few days before was meant to intimidate the United States. The PLA spokesman replied by stating, “This action was not targeted at any third party and had nothing to do with the current international and regional situation. During the event, the naval vessels of both countries strictly abided by the international law and always remained in international waters.” The spokesman also “slammed Japan’s close-range tracking and surveillance, saying that it was very dangerous, which could easily lead to cause misunderstanding, misjudgment and accidents at sea and in the air. He urges Japan to stop such meaningless disturbances and irresponsible words and deeds that affect the healthy development of China-Japan relations and undermine regional peace and stability.”

Thailand, Blue Strike-2023 Exercise: From August 31 to September 10, three Eastern TCN ships, including amphibious dock landing ship Simingshan (Hull 986), guided-missile frigate Anyang (Hull 599), and comprehensive supply ship Chaohu (Hull 890), as well as a Marine Corps element and a shipboard helicopter element, participated in the Blue Strike-2023 joint naval training exercise in Sattahip, Thailand, and the Gulf of Thailand, which was the 5th exercise since the inception in 2010.⁵⁹ More than 400 officers and soldiers from China and Thailand participated in the opening ceremony on September 3.

The exercise emphasized the importance of actual combat, and effectively enhanced the combat capabilities of both sides. The joint training was aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the two navies in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, enhancing mutual trust and exchange at the tactical and operational level, and laying a foundation for the two sides to carry out joint missions. The two sides conducted land and sea joint training and exchanged activities centered on subjects including jungle survival, and maritime search and rescue.

The joint exercise highlighted unity, practicality, and combat readiness. It demonstrated a high level of trust and deep integration in training on joint command, helicopter cross-deck landing, mutual presence aboard each other’s ships, jungle survival, and helicopter fast-roping, etc.

During the joint training, the Marine Corps from both sides conducted training exercises, including urban warfare, light weapons shooting, sniping tactics, armored tactics, chemical defense, battlefield first aid, and jungle survival. The naval units will engage in joint training exercises such as replenishment-at-sea, maneuvering drills, helicopter deck-landing, aerial photography, joint anti-submarine operations, and light signal communication.

Saudi Arabia, Blue Sword-2023 Joint Training: From October 10-25, the Southern TCN conducted Blue Sword-2023 naval special operations joint training with Saudi Arabia’s Navy,

⁵⁸ Huang Panyue, ed., “China, Russia to hold third joint naval patrol,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239851.html), July 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239851.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., “Cooperation between Chinese, Russian militaries open and transparent: Defense Spokesperson,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16245072.html), August 14, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16245072.html.

⁵⁹ Huang Panyue, ed., “Chinese troops arrive in Thailand for “Blue Strike-2023” joint naval training,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16249453.html), September 9, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16249453.html. Huang Panyue, ed., “China-Thailand “Blue Strike 2023” joint naval training kicks off,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16250006.html), September 4, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16250006.html. Huang Panyue, ed., “China-Thailand Blue Strike-2023 joint naval training exercise concludes,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16251351.html), September 9, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16251351.html.

which marked the 2nd joint training between Chinese and Saudi Arabian navies.⁶⁰ On October 9, the opening ceremony was held at a PLAN naval brigade and was attended by more than 100 training participants from both sides. The joint training focused on overseas maritime counter-terrorism operations and was divided into three phases, including basic training, specialized training, and comprehensive exercise. The phases of basic and specialized training included 24 subjects, such as multiple arms shooting, fast roping from helicopter, ship climbing, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations, anti-sea shooting, boat driving, and underwater explosive ordnance search and disposal, while the comprehensive exercise was about the maritime assault and rescue skill training and joint rescue exercise centering on the joint rescue of hijacked merchant ships by the special operations troops of the two navies. On October 25, a comprehensive drill of rescuing hijacked merchant ships by force at sea wrapped up the training.

Pakistan, Sea Guardians-3 Joint Maritime Exercise: From November 11-17, according to the Annual Plan for International Military Cooperation, Chinese and Pakistani navies held the Sea Guardians-3 joint maritime exercise in the waters and airspace of the northern Arabian Sea near Karachi.⁶¹ The theme was “Joint Response to Maritime Security Threats”. Participating troops from the PLAN consisted of six vessels, including the guided-missile destroyer Zibo (Hull 156), guided-missile frigates Jingzhou (Hull 532) and Linyi (Hull 547), and the comprehensive supply ship Qiandaohu (Hull 886), along with two shipborne helicopters and dozens of Marines. For the Pakistani side, nine vessels, including the Pakistani Naval Ship (PNS) Shahjahan and Saif, three shipborne helicopters, four fighter jets, one fixed-wing anti-submarine patrol aircraft, and dozens of Marines are involved in the exercise. This was the third time for China and Pakistan to hold such exercise, aiming to consolidate the all-weather strategic partnership and traditional friendship between the two countries, and strengthen realistic combat training of the two militaries.

Spanning seven days in the waters and airspace of the northern Arabian Sea, the exercise was divided into two phases. After the opening ceremony, discussions were held on topics such as future anti-submarine development, anti-surface ship technology, counter-terrorism operations, etc. Marines from both sides conducted drills and exchanges on cabin infiltration, hostage rescue, and close quarter battle (CQB). During the first phase of shore-based exchanges, the two sides conducted professional exchanges and mutual visits, and included training courses on formation maneuvering, VBSS (visit, board, search and seizure), helicopter cross-deck landing, joint search and rescue, and joint anti-submarine drills. China and Pakistan conducted their first joint maritime patrol. The two sides sent observers to each other, while the Chinese observers participated in the exercise with the Pakistani anti-submarine patrol aircraft.

⁶⁰ Li Weichao, ed., “China-Saudi Arabia “Blue Sword-2023” naval special operations joint training kicks off,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16257598.html), October 10, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16257598.html. Lin Congyi, ed., “China-Saudi Arabia “Blue Sword-2023” naval special operations joint training concluded,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262630.html), October 27, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262630.html.

⁶¹ Li Wei, ed., “China, Pakistan to hold “Sea Guardians-3” joint maritime exercise: Defense Spokesperson,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262265.html), October 26, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262265.html. Li Weichao, ed., “China-Pakistan Sea Guardians-3 joint maritime exercise kicks off,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16266437.html), November 13, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16266437.html. Huang Panyue, ed., “China-Pakistan Sea Guardian 2023 joint maritime exercise concludes,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16267834.html), November 19, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16267834.html.

On November 14, the exercise began the second phase of maritime joint operations, focusing on more than 10 subjects, including helicopter cross-deck landing, joint search and rescue, and anti-submarine operations, in the northern waters and airspace of the Arabian Sea.

Southeast Asia, Aman Youyi-2023 Counterterrorism Joint Exercise: From November 13-22, the Aman Youyi-2023 Joint Exercise, which was also identified as Peace and Friendship-2023, conducted live drills in a training ground on land near Zhanjiang, Guangdong, and a certain sea area, respectively, for a ten day exercise.⁶² The land drill, which focused on counter-terrorism and safeguarding maritime security, included troops from China, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, who suppressed the mock terrorists stationed in the simulated city blocks and successfully rescued the mock hostages by air-ground coordination, three-dimensional envelopment, and other means.

At the same time, the sea drill focused on counter piracy. The Southern TCN's guided-missile destroyer Nanning (Hull 162), guided-missile frigate Bayannur (Hull 551), comprehensive supply ship Weishanhu (Hull 887) and guided-missile frigate Suqian (Hull 666), together with the Royal Malaysian Navy frigate KD Selangor and Vietnamese Navy frigate 016-Quang Trung, sailed in formation towards the targeted waters. During the drill, all ships flexibly adjusted their positions in tacit cooperation, and cooperated to subdue the "pirates" and rescue a "hijacked cargo ship".

Through the live drills, all parties explored and optimized the processes and mechanisms of joint anti-terrorism and military operations on maritime security, further deepened mutual military trust and practical cooperation, and demonstrated their confidence and determination to jointly safeguard regional peace and stability.

This was the fifth time an exercise with the code name "Peace and Friendship" was held, and the first time such an exercise was held in China. It saw the participation of a record-high number of countries and the largest scale of military forces to date.

PLA Navy Training Ship Qi Jiguang

As part of the PLA's Annual Plan for International Cooperation, the PLAN's training ship Qi Jiguang (Hull 83), which was commissioned in 2017 and is assigned to the Dalian Naval Academy, conducted two training voyages during 2023.

The first voyage lasted for 41 days from May 15 to June 24 with 476 naval cadets and sailors onboard to conduct cadet training in far seas and pay 3-5 day visits to four countries, including Vietnam, Thailand (5th visit), Brunei (2nd visit), and the Philippines (1st visit).⁶³ That voyage, which

⁶² Li Jiayao, ed., "Aman Youyi-2023 joint exercise launches live drills," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268707.html), November 23, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268707.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "China, southeast Asian countries conclude joint military drills," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268872.html), November 24, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268872.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "Aman Youyi-2023 joint exercise launches joint commanding drill," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268426.html), November 22, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268426.html.

⁶³ Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese naval training ship Qi Jiguang wraps up goodwill visit to Vietnam," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16226739.html), May 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16226739.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese naval training ship Qi Jiguang arrives in Thailand for goodwill visit," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16227442.html), May 30, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16227442.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese naval training ship Qi Jiguang arrives in Brunei for goodwill visit," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16228975.html), June 5, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16228975.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese naval training ship heading to Philippines after wrapping up friendly visit to Brunei," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16230113.html), June 9, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16230113.html. Huang Panyue, ed.,

sailed more than 8,500 nautical miles, marked the training ship's third navigation training and visit mission in open seas since its commission in 2017. More than 6,000 people visited the ship, including the Chinese Ambassador and military attaches assigned to each country, as well as key naval officers from the host country. The cadets also visited naval facilities, museums, and academies. Besides finishing a series of training programs, the vessel held joint exercises with navy vessels from Vietnam, Brunei, and the Philippines.

The second voyage lasted for 49 days from September 4 to October 23 with over 300 cadets from the PLA Naval University of Engineering, Naval Submarine Academy, and Naval Aviation University onboard.⁶⁴ It also included 10 midshipmen from Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji. The ship visited Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji. Since its departure on September 4, the ship sailed across two oceans, traversed nine sea areas, crossed six straits, and spanned five time zones, covering a total voyage of over 14,000 nautical miles and lasting more than 900 hours. The ship conducted 11 batches of friendly exchanges, with a total of 786 participants, received more than 4,000 visits, and held three deck receptions. The mission is designed to improve the operational adaptability and capability of Chinese naval officer cadets, strengthen maritime practical cooperation and mutual trust with the countries visited, and contribute to serving and building a maritime community with a shared future. At the invitation of the Fiji Navy, when the ship departed from the Port of Suva, it conducted joint training with Fiji naval vessels on formation maneuver, joint communication, and other subjects. Overall, all the cadets completed professional training on departmental logistics, ship management, collision avoidance maneuver, international law, and other related courses, and passed the training assessment for 11 positions.

PLA Navy Peace Ark Hospital Ship Activities

Since it was commissioned in 2008, the PLAN's hospital ship "Peace Ark (Hull 966)," which was designed and built in China and is based at Zhoushan (Zhejiang Province), has conducted 10 overseas missions under the name "Harmonious Mission" and provided medical services for roughly 250,000 people from 43 countries and regions around the globe.⁶⁵ It departed Zhoushan

"Naval training ship Qi Jiguang to host open day activities in the Philippines," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16231164.html), June 14, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16231164.html. Xu Yi, ed., "Chinese naval training ship Qi Jiguang arrives in the Philippines for goodwill visit," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16231493.html), June 15, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16231493.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese navy vessel returns from overseas voyage," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16232961.html), June 24, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16232961.html.

⁶⁴ Lin Congyi, ed., "Naval ship Qi Jiguang to visit Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16250009.html), September 4, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16250009.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese naval ship Qi Jiguang concludes goodwill visit to Indonesia," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16253531.html), September 21, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16253531.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese naval ship Qi Jiguang concludes goodwill visit to Fiji," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16257319.html), October 10, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16257319.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese naval ship Qi Jiguang returns from ocean-going training mission," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16261422.html), October 24, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16261422.html.

⁶⁵ Zhang Zhicheng, "Regular Press Conference of China's Ministry of National Defense on December 28," [eng.mod.gov.cn](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html), December 28, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html. Chen Zhuo, ed. Chinese naval hospital ship offers medical aid worldwide, [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16231815.html), June 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16231815.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Hospital ship Peace Ark conducts anti-terrorism, anti-piracy drills in Pacific," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16279128.html), July 7, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16279128.html.

on July 3 and returned home in late September having visited 5 countries, including Kiribati, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste for about 7-10 days each and treated about 10,000 people at each stop. This is the second visit to Timor-Leste by Peace Ark and the fourth visit by any PLAN vessel. During the voyage, it successively conducted training tasks such as sea and air rescue, outpatient medical services, surgical preparation and process simulation, and special training on emergency treatment capabilities. It also conducted anti-terrorism and anti-piracy drills in the Pacific Ocean on July 10. Unlike naval combat ships, hospital ships do not have their own weapon platforms and often perform long-distance missions alone, so anti-terrorism and anti-piracy are very important training subjects for them. During the exercise, the firepower team, the ammunition handling team, and the air strike team worked closely and effectively tested the actual combat strength of the hospital ship in anti-terrorism and anti-piracy operations.

Section 4: Coast Guard Military Diplomacy Activities

Vietnam, Coast Guard Joint Patrol: From April 11-13, the coast guards of China and Vietnam conducted the first joint patrol in 2023 in the Beibu Gulf.⁶⁶ During the joint patrol, the Chinese and Vietnamese coast guard vessels carried out observations, recording, and boarding inspections according to the established plan and route, cruising for a total of 59 hours and 542.4 nautical miles, and inspecting 37 Chinese fishing boats and 63 Vietnamese fishing boats. In general, the offshore production and operation were in good order. During the mission, both sides learned from each other on the boarding and inspection operations as well as other law enforcement experience. This was the 25th joint patrol conducted by the maritime law enforcement departments of China and Vietnam since 2006. For the first time, the patrol was jointly commanded by the director-general of Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) and the commander of Vietnamese Coast Guard (VCG), and it was also the first maritime meeting between the senior leaders of the two countries' maritime law enforcement departments. The two sides reviewed the work carried out since the 6th China-Vietnam Coast Guard High-Level Meeting in 2022, spoke highly of this joint patrol, and reached a consensus on the next exchange activities.

Russia, Coast Guard Agreement: In late April, the CCG and Russia's Federal Security Service signed a memorandum of understanding on strengthening cooperation in maritime law

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16236364.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "China's hospital ship "Peace Ark" completes 1st visit to Kiribati," Xinhuanet, July 24, 2023,
http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16240091.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Peace Ark hospital ship celebrates 96th anniversary of PLA founding in Tonga," [China Military Online](#), August 2, 2023,
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16241776.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese naval hospital ship concludes visit to Tonga," [China Military Online](#), August 8, 2023,
http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16243265.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese naval hospital ship Peace Ark concludes visit to Vanuatu," [China Military Online](#), August 17, 2023,
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16245696.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "Hospital Ship Peace Ark engages in cultural exchange with local school in Solomon Islands," [China Military Online](#), August 23, 2023,
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16247107.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Hospital ship Peace Ark leaves Solomon Islands for Timor-Leste," [China Military Online](#), August 28, 2023,
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16248372.html. Lin Congyi, ed., "Chinese naval hospital ship Peace Ark visits Timor-Leste," [China Military Online](#), September 4, 2023,
http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16250002.html.

⁶⁶ Huang Panyue, ed., "China, Vietnam carry out first joint patrol in Beibu Gulf in 2023," [China Military Online](#), April 14, 2023,
http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16217076.html.

enforcement at a high-level meeting.⁶⁷ This was part of the CCG's goal to strengthen international communication and cooperation on law enforcement. The two-day meeting was conducted in Murmansk, Russia, during which both sides discussed future cooperation and exchanged views on topics of common interest. The two agreed to jointly implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, actively promote maritime law enforcement cooperation, jointly build a maritime community with a shared future and fully serve the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership.

Vietnam, Coast Guard Working Meeting: From December 4-8, the CCG held the seventh high-level work meeting with the VCG High Command and received the visit of Vietnam Coast Guard Vessel CSB 8002 in Guangzhou (Guangdong Province).⁶⁸ The two sides held a series of activities such as welcome and farewell ceremonies, drills and exchanges, cultural and sports exchanges, mutual ship visits, professional and technical exchanges, and deck receptions. CCG Director-general Major General Yu Zhong (郁忠) and VCG Commander Major General Lê Quang Đạo co-hosted the meeting. Leaders of sea area administrations as well as personnel of political work, law enforcement and international cooperation from both sides attended the meeting. After the meeting, the VCG delegation visited the CCG institutions in Guangzhou and Shanghai. At the meeting, the two sides positively evaluated the results of cooperation during the year and discussed how to better understand and implement the important consensus recently reached by the leaders of the two parties and the two countries, as well as the requirements for both sides to strengthen maritime law enforcement cooperation. They decided to establish a political work exchange mechanism, continue to tap the potential of joint patrol cooperation in the Beibu Gulf, create a “young officer exchange” cooperation brand, set up a sea area-level liaison window, and coordinate the fight against maritime crimes to further consolidate the traditional friendship between the two countries, deepen pragmatic maritime cooperation, properly handle maritime emergencies and jointly maintain maritime security and stability. The two sides also exchanged views on topics of common concern.

Section 5: PLA Army Military Diplomacy Activities

This section discusses the PLA Army's military diplomacy activities during 2023, which are organized into six joint exercises held in Thailand (twice), Laos, Singapore, Cambodia, and Indonesia.

Thailand, Cobra Gold-2023 Held in Thailand

From February 9 to March 10, Southern Theater Command Army dispatched a contingent to participate in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercise component of the multinational exercise Cobra Gold 2023 in Thailand.⁶⁹ Since 2014, this was the tenth time that the PLA Army was invited to participate in the annual exercise, which includes engineering assistance, tabletop exercise of HADR, and a high-level forum, as well as live drills under the scenarios of

⁶⁷ Chen Zhuo, ed., “Coast Guard, Russia security service sign joint MoE,” [China Daily](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16220857.html), April 27, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16220857.html.

⁶⁸ Lin Congyi, ed., “China, Vietnam coast guards hold 7th high-level work meeting,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16272137.html), December 8, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16272137.html. No information was found concerning the first four meetings. The 5th meeting was held in 2021 via video teleconference. http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/4900206.html.

⁶⁹ Lin Congyi, ed., “China participates in Cobra Gold 2023 HADR exercise in Thailand: Defense Spokesperson,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16203770.html), February 23, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16203770.html.

building collapse, hazardous substances leakage, medical first aid, fire rescue, and so on. The exercise helps to promote the exchange of experience and practices in rescue and disaster relief between the Chinese and foreign militaries, and further advance their pragmatic cooperation in relevant fields, added the spokesperson.

Laos, Friendship Shield-2023 Held in Laos

From May 9-28, the China-Laos Friendship Shield-2023 Joint Military Exercise was held at the Kommadam Academy of the Lao People's Armed Forces (LPAF) in Laos and was aimed at enhancing capabilities of the two militaries to combat terrorism.⁷⁰ The Chinese side included over 200 troops from a combined-arms brigade of the 75th Group Army (Kunming, Yunnan Province) under the Southern Theater Command Army along with more than 300 units (sets) of assault vehicles, various types of ordnance, and equipment for mine clearance, explosive disposal and epidemic prevention. The exercise was set on the scenario of joint attacks on transnational armed criminal groups, involving more than 900 participating troops from both sides. The exercise included such contents as mixed-group training, comprehensive drills, cultural exchanges and humanitarian assistance event, which is of great significance to strengthening military exchanges between the two militaries and maintaining regional peace and stability.

Major-General Yang Wenlin, who is a deputy commander of the 75th Group Army, said the exercise served as a platform for exchanging experiences between the two militaries, as well as a concrete measure to deepen friendship and boost cooperation between the two countries. The joint drill was held on the scenario of joint attacks on transnational armed criminal groups based in jungle mountains. The exercise also included live arms firing, comprehensive individual training, detachment tactics, and combat service support. During the exercise, events such as basketball matches, tug-of-war, and cultural performances were held by the participating soldiers to cement friendship between the two militaries.

Thailand, Commando-2023 Held in Thailand

From mid-August to early-September, the Southern Theater Command Army's 74th Group Army (Huizhong, Guangdong Province) participated in the China-Thailand "Commando 2023" Joint Army Training Exercise.⁷¹ With joint counter-terrorism operations as the subject, the training, which included special operations tasks, aimed to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation between the Chinese and Thai armies, promote the development of mil-to-mil relationship, and play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in the region. The senior PLA Army leader was Zheng Gang (郑钢), who was the commander of a Special Operations Brigade under the group army.

⁷⁰ Chen Zhuo, ed., "China, Laos to hold Friendship Shield-2023 joint exercise in May," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222068.html), May 5, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222068.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "China, Laos to hold Friendship Shield-2023 joint exercise," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222017.html), May 5, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222017.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "China, Laos hold joint military drill in Laos," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16223920.html), May 12, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16223920.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "Mixed-group training launched in China-Laos Friendship Shield-2023 joint exercise," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16225177.html), May 18, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16225177.html.

⁷¹ Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese troops arrive in Thailand for "Commando 2023" joint army training," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16245759.html), August 17, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16245759.html.

Singapore, Cooperation-2023 Held in Singapore

From September 5-13, troops from the Southern Theater Command Army's 74th Group Army participated in the China-Singapore "Cooperation-2023" Joint Army Training Exercise with the topic of "joint urban counter-terrorism operations" in and around the Jurong Camp of the Singapore Army's 3rd Division.⁷² The ongoing bilateral exercise was the fifth edition since its inauguration in 2009, and was the second "Cooperation" series of joint training organized by the two armies after a lapse of four years since 2019 due to COVID. With the theme of "joint urban counter-terrorism operations", over 280 elite military personnel from both armies conducted joint training on subjects such as sniping tactics, hand-to-hand combat, rappelling and fast-roping, hostage rescue, equipment operations, small-arms live firing, and command post coordination.

During the live fire shooting training, members from both sides swapped equipment and organized training for their counterparts. After having learned about each other's weapons and equipment, they conducted firing training using swapped arms and ammunition and had a deep exchange on the method of increasing shooting stability and hit rate. Although it was the first time for the participants to learn how to use each other's weapons, some of them got excellent marks in the first round of live fire shooting. In the field of urban counter-terrorism skills training, members from both sides carried out training in the context of terrorists hidden in a building. Members from both sides completed training on sniping tactics, concealed approaching, building breaching, and search and shooting in close collaboration with each other, and improved fighting capabilities in a real-combat environment. The two sides also conducted training on combat physical fitness and hand-to-hand combat, with fast-roping and comprehensive live exercise to be held, in order to refine and test the troops' joint urban counter-terrorism operational capabilities.

Cambodia, Pure Homeland-2023 Held in Cambodia

From the end of August to late September, according to the consensus reached by the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), the PLA Army sent a task force to Cambodia for the multinational joint demining operation code-named "Pure Homeland-2023".⁷³ This was a major event co-hosted by China and Cambodia as co-chairs of the ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA. This event was aimed at strengthening cooperation between member states and institutions, resolving regional mine problems, and contributing to the security and well-being of people in the region. The Chinese task force arrived by air on September 6. Chinese troops participating in the operation were chosen mainly from a brigade under the Southern Theater Command Army's 75th Group

⁷² Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese troops arrive in Singapore for Cooperation-2023 joint army training," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16250353.html), September 6, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16250353.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "China-Singapore joint exercise kicks off," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16250661.html), September 9, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16250661.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Mixed-group training of China-Singapore "Cooperation-2023" kicks off," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16251348.html), September 11, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16251348.html. Dong Zhaohui, ed., "China-Singapore joint military exercise concludes," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16251978.html), September 13, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16251978.html.

⁷³ Li Weichao, ed., "PLA Army to participate in "Pure Homeland-2023" multinational joint demining operation in Cambodia," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16249080.html), August 31, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16249080.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese troops set out for "Pure Homeland-2023" multinational joint mine-clearing operation," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16250777.html), September 8, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16250777.html.

Army, consisting of demining team and explosive ordnance disposal team. According to the head of the task force, 60% of the Chinese participating troops had rich experience in peacekeeping or border mine-clearing operations to ensure the success of this operation.

This multinational joint demining operation mainly covered three tasks, namely, joint field mine-clearing, joint instructions on mine-clearing and explosive disposal, and a workshop in the joint command, which will be conducted simultaneously in the Royal Cambodian Army multinational peacekeeping force training school and the minefield surrounding it. The event aimed at enhancing bilateral and multilateral joint mine-clearing collaboration capabilities, strengthening non-traditional security cooperation among member states and institutions, further resolving regional mine problems, and make positive contributions to the security and well-being of people in the region.

Indonesia, ADMM-Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Held in Indonesia

From October 14-21, the PLA Army sent troops to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to participate in the live exercises held by the HADR EWG of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus).⁷⁴ The exercise was organized in the form of mixed teams, and mainly carried out table-top and live exercises on humanitarian relief and disaster reduction in the context of major natural disasters, and conducted academic discussions and exchanges in related fields. Defense Spokesperson Senior Colonel Zhang added that since the beginning of 2023, the Chinese military had actively implemented the Global Security Initiative, participated in the ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, peacekeeping and counter-terrorism live exercises, as well as the HADR exercise of Cobra Gold 2023, continuously deepening the pragmatic cooperation under the ADMM-Plus mechanism, and keeping reinforcing the capabilities to cope with security threats and jointly maintain regional peace and stability.

Section 6: PLA Air Force Military Diplomacy Activities

This section discusses the PLA Air Force's military diplomacy activities during 2023, which are organized into the following two categories: Bayi Aerobatics Team demonstrations abroad and bilateral joint exercises.

Bayi Aerobatics Team: Malaysia and UAE

From May 23-27, six J-10C fighter aircraft from the PLAAF's Bayi (August 1st) Aerobatics Team participated in Malaysia's 16th Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition and presented an impressive flight performance at the opening ceremony.⁷⁵ All six jets took off in succession and shuttled through the clouds in close formation. This was the first public appearance of the air demonstration team after being refitted with the J-10C fighter jets.⁷⁶ The team conducted aerobic performances each day during the exhibition. This is the eighth time for

⁷⁴ Chen Zhuo, ed., "PLA Army to participate in HADR exercises of ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16258442.html), October 13, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16258442.html.

⁷⁵ Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese military to participate in LIMA exhibition in Malaysia," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16224294.html), May 15, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16224294.html. Li Weichao, ed., "China's best-known aerobic team performs in Malaysia," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16226341.html), May 24, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16226341.html.

⁷⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_1st_\(aerobatic_team\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_1st_(aerobatic_team)).

the Bayi Aerobatics Team to perform abroad, and the second time to perform in Malaysia since the 13th Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition in 2015.

From November 13-17, seven aircraft in the Bayi Aerobatics Team participated in the 18th Dubai Airshow at Al Maktoum International Airport in the UAE.⁷⁷ They departed from a western airport in China and flew more than 7,000 kilometers, completing the overseas flight for the first time without accompanying guidance and transport aircraft's support. The team conducted four aerial performances at the airshow, where international aerobatic teams from Russia, Italy, UAE, India, and others also performed. This airshow marked the team's second appearance in the UAE following its debut in November 2017, and also the team's first visit to the Middle East after being equipped with the J-10C aircraft. For more than 60 years since its inception, the Bayi Aerobatics Team, which has eight aircraft assigned to it, has flown various types of aerobatic aircraft successively, including J-5, J-6, JJ-5, J-7EB, J-7GB, J-10A, and J-10C. It had staged more than 700 aerial displays for more than 700 delegations from over 170 countries and regions, and undertaken flight demonstration missions abroad on eight occasions.

Russia, Strategic Air Patrols

On June 6-7, Chinese and Russian air forces carried out a joint aerial strategic patrol over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea during phase one on the first day and in the western airspace of the Pacific Ocean during phase two on the second day, which effectively tested and enhanced the coordination between the countries' air forces.⁷⁸ The patrol was the sixth aerial strategic patrol jointly organized and conducted by Chinese and Russian militaries since 2019 as part of the annual cooperation plan between the two militaries, and, according to Zhang Xiaogang, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, it did not target any third party and was not relevant to current global or regional situations. No details were provided concerning the types of aircraft and how many planes were involved. During the fifth joint patrol in November 2022, the PLAAF deployed H-6K bombers while the Russian military deployed Tu-95 bombers and Su-35 fighter jets.

Thailand, Falcon Strike-2023 Held in Thailand

From July 10-21, the PLAAF and Royal Thai Air Force conducted Joint Air Force Exercise Falcon Strike-2023 at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base (Udorn RTAFB) in Thailand.⁷⁹ The PLAAF sent various warplanes, including the J-10C fighter jet, the JH-7A fighter bomber, and the KJ-500 early warning aircraft. The PLAAF also deployed a surface-to-air missile (SAM) unit. Some J-11B fighter jets from the PLA Navy also participated. Thai aircraft included the Saab JAS 39 Gripen, the Alpha Jet, and the Saab 340 early warning aircraft. The joint exercise included such subjects

⁷⁷ Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese Air Force's Bayi Aerobatic Team to participate in Dubai Airshow," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265353.html), November 8, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265353.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "China's Bayi Aerobatic Team arrives at UAE for Dubai airshow," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265716.html), November 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265716.html.

⁷⁸ Li Weichao, ed., "China, Russia complete tasks of second phase of 6th joint strategic air patrol," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16229514.html), June 7, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16229514.html. Li Weichao, ed., "Sixth Sino-Russian air patrols take place," [China Daily](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16229301.html), June 7, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16229301.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "Joint patrol enhances Chinese, Russian air forces' coordination: spokesperson," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16231817.html), June 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16231817.html.

⁷⁹ Huang Panyue, ed., "China-Thailand joint air exercise Falcon Strike - 2023 kicks off in Thailand," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16236106.html), July 10, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16236106.html. Liu Xuanzun, "21-day China-Thailand joint air combat exercises end in success, combat capabilities and collaboration enhanced," [Global Times](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202307/1294883.shtml), July 23, 2023, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202307/1294883.shtml>.

as air support, land assault, joint air defense, and large-scale deployment, etc. SAM units carried out mock air defense missions based on air conditions in real time. A special operations unit was tasked to parachute to a designated area to conduct reconnaissance and guide warplanes to engage in precision land attacks as a part of the exercise.

According to one expert, it shows a high level of exchange, cooperation, and mutual trust between China and Thailand. Thailand uses aircraft of Western origins and adopts combat tactics based on a Western model, and they could be good additions to the PLA's domestic training program in China. On the other hand, Thai pilots also get the chance to see Chinese technologies and combat approaches, which could spark some ideas for them as well, observers said. The Falcon Strike-2023 marked the sixth China-Thailand joint air combat exercise, and, through these joint drills, both sides improved their combat capabilities and collaboration, which is conducive to enhancing the two countries' military cooperation and the safeguarding of regional peace and stability, CCTV reported.

UAE, Falcon Shield-2023 Held in China

In August, according to the annual plan and the consensus reached by China and the UAE, the Falcon Shield-2023 Joint Training Exercise between the Chinese and UAE air forces was held in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region.⁸⁰ This was the first joint training between both air forces, aiming to deepen pragmatic exchanges and cooperation between the two militaries and enhance mutual understanding and trust. The joint exercise was a natural development after the UAE procured Chinese L15 military aircraft earlier this year, marking the deepening of the relations between the two countries' militaries.

In February 2023, China announced that it had sealed a deal to export the domestically developed L15 advanced trainer jet to the UAE. In 2022, the Defense Ministry of the UAE said it intended to buy 12 L15s from China, with the option for 36 additional aircraft of the same type in the future. As the new generation of light attack and combat trainer jet independently developed by China, the L15 can be used to train pilots for fourth- and fifth-generation fighter jets, or it can also carry out air-to-air combat and land attack missions. The PLA also flies the L15 under the designation JL-10. China is not planning to fill the so-called power vacuum left by the US in the Middle East, but is enhancing cooperation with countries in the region, respecting their independent development, and helping safeguard regional peace and stability, Fu said.

Pakistan, Shaheen (Eagle)-X Held in China

From August 28 to mid-September, based on the annual plan and bilateral consensus, the PLAAF and Pakistan's Air Force held Shaheen (Eagle)-X Joint Training Exercise in two locations in China, including Jiuquan (Gansu Province) and Yinchuan (Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region) as part of efforts to further boost training and coordination between the two militaries and deepen their exchange and cooperation on military technology.⁸¹ Both sides sent fighters, early warning aircraft,

⁸⁰ Lin Congyi, ed., "China, UAE to hold 1st joint air force drill, eye cooperation boost," [Global Times](https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/16241280.shtml), July 31, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16241280.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "China, UAE air forces to conduct first joint training," [China Military Online](http://www.chinamil.com/news/16241137.shtml), July 31, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16241137.html.

⁸¹ Li Weichao, ed., "China, Pakistan to hold 'Shaheen (Eagle)-X' joint air exercise," [China Military Online](http://www.chinamil.com/news/16247860.shtml), August 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16247860.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "China, Pakistan kick off Shaheen (Eagle)-X joint air exercise," [China Military Online](http://www.chinamil.com/news/16248628.shtml), August 29, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16248628.html. "China, Pakistan Launch Joint Air Exercise

and several other types of aircraft, as well as ground forces, such as ground-to-air missiles and radar and signal troops, to participate in the exercise. Chinese naval aviation units were involved in the training.

This was the tenth Shaheen (Eagle) Joint Exercise since March 2011 and was the first exercise since Pakistan inducted Chinese-made J-10CE fighters into its air force in March 2022. Shaheen-IX was held in December 2020 in Pakistan, and no exercises were held in 2021 or 2022 due to COVID. According to an expert, after more than a year's independent practice and use, the Pakistani pilots should have already grasped and developed skills and tactics on the J-10CEs, and their first joint exercise with China using the aircraft will benefit both countries' pilots when they exchange experiences. The Pakistan Air Force uses the J-10CE as its main combat force, while the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force also operates a large fleet of J-10C fighter jets, Fu noted. Xinhua reported that the Shaheen-X exercise focused on training in typical combat scenarios such as joint air defense and joint countermeasures. According to an expert, the exercise would allow China to learn from the Pakistan Air Force's Western-like training system, while Pakistan will strengthen its capabilities in safeguarding its sky as well as conducting anti-terrorism operations.

Section 7: High-Level Meetings at Home and Abroad

This section provides information about nine high-level defense-related meetings held during 2023 in China and abroad with the following countries: Laos, Vietnam, Brunei, Japan, New Zealand, Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, ASEAN in Indonesia, United Kingdom, France, and Russia. The section also discusses the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum.

Laos, Vietnam, and Brunei, Working Group Meetings: From February 8-15, a working group sent by China's MND visited Laos, Vietnam, and Brunei and held talks respectively with the defense departments of the three countries.⁸² The Chinese working group exchanged views with their counterparts on mi-to-mil relations and regional security issues of common concern, conducted in-depth consultations on the construction of bilateral defense cooperation mechanisms, and reached a series of consensus, which further enriched the substance of China's defense cooperation with relevant countries.

Japan, Security Dialogue: On February 22, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong (孙卫东) and his Japanese counterpart Shigeo Yamada hosted the 17th China-Japan Security Dialogue in Tokyo.⁸³ 2023 marks the 45th anniversary of the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Zhang Baoqun (张保群), Deputy Director of the CMC's Office of International Military Cooperation (OIMC), and Atsushi Ando, Deputy Director of the Defense Policy Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Defense, attended the dialogue. China and Japan agreed to strengthen communication and cooperation on properly managing and handling disputes and differences, and to maintain close contact under the framework of the maritime and air liaison mechanism between

Featuring Chinese Warplanes on Both Sides," Global Times, August 30, 2023, <https://www.defense-aerospace.com/china-pakistan-joint-air-exercise-features-chinese-warplanes-on-both-sides/>.

⁸² Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese defense working group visits Laos, Vietnam and Brunei," [Ministry of National Defense](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16201953.html), February 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16201953.html.

⁸³ Li Jiayao, ed., "China-Japan security dialogue agrees on strengthening mutual trust, properly managing disputes," [Global Times](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16203844.html), February 24, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16203844.html.

the defense departments of the two countries and to open a direct telephone line at an early date. This was the first time the two countries agreed to hold security talks since 2019. China expressed its solemn position and grave concern over Japan's military expansion, hyping of the "China threat" theory in its defense and security policy documents, strengthening of military and security ties with non-regional forces in neighboring areas, and repeated negative moves on issues concerning China's core and major interests such as the Taiwan question and the South China Sea issue. The Chinese side urged Japan to correct its mistakes and correct its perception during the dialogue, adding that Japan needs to take concrete actions to honor its commitment to the path of peaceful development and the one-China principle, and be committed to building constructive security relations with China.

New Zealand, 11th Strategic Dialogue Held in China: On May 10, the 11th Strategic Dialogue between the Chinese and New Zealand militaries was held in Xi'an (Shaanxi Province).⁸⁴ The two sides candidly exchanged views on international and regional issues of common concern and expressed their willingness to jointly promote military exchanges and cooperation. This meeting is an annual engagement, but the 11th meeting was the first to take place since 2019, due to the interruption in regular defence engagement activities that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸⁵ In 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping successfully visited New Zealand and the two sides agreed to upgrade China-New Zealand relations to comprehensive strategic partnership.⁸⁶

China, Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Seminar: From May 24 to June 7, the PLA NDU's International College of Defense Studies hosted the 16th Seminar for Senior Military Officers from Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries.⁸⁷ Fifty-four senior military and police officers and defense officials from 25 countries attended the 15-day seminar. With the theme of Friendly Cooperation for a Shared Future, the seminar organized a variety of activities in the forms of lectures, workshops, and field trips, etc. All participants had in-depth discussions and exchanges on the risks and challenges to global and regional security, security perspectives and policies of China and LAC countries. During the seminar, the participants were invited to visit the PLA's Army, Navy, Air Force, Armed Police Forces and military academies to learn about the development of the Chinese military.

Indonesia, 20th ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference: On June 21, at the invitation of the Ministry of Defense of Indonesia, which was serving as the rotating chair of ASEAN, the working group of the Chinese MND participated in the 20th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Security Policy Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, and exchanged views with all participating parties on international and regional security issues.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese, New Zealand militaries hold 11th strategic dialogue in Xi'an," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16223235.html), May 10, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16223235.html.

⁸⁵ New Zealand-China strategic defence dialogue, May 11, 2023, <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/media-centre/news/new-zealand-china-strategic-defence-dialogue/>.

⁸⁶ Xu Yi, ed., "Chinese and New Zealand militaries hold 10th strategic dialogue in Wellington," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/4854770.html), November 11, 2019, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/4854770.html.

⁸⁷ Li Jiayao, ed., "MND concludes seminar with senior military officers from LAC countries," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16230062.html), June 9, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16230062.html. Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese defense ministry hosts seminar for senior military officers from LAC countries," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16227213.html), May 29, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16227213.html.

⁸⁸ Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese military working group participates in ARF Security Policy Conference," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16232715.html), June 21, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16232715.html.

PLA Delegation Visit to UK and France: From June 24 to July 1, a PLA defense strategic consultation delegation visited the United Kingdom (UK) and France.⁸⁹ The delegation held discussions with foreign parties on developing bilateral defense relations and exchanged in-depth views on international and regional security issues of common interest. The discussions enhanced bilateral mutual understanding and trust.

Indonesia, ASEAN Defence Senior Official's Meeting Plus: On August 3, at the invitation of the Ministry of Defense of Indonesia, which was serving as the rotating chair of ASEAN, a working group of the Chinese MND participated in the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Plus (ADSOM+) in Jakarta, Indonesia, during which they exchanged views with participating parties on strengthening regional defense and security cooperation, and called on all countries to jointly implement the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and work together to maintain peace, tranquility, prosperity, and stability in the Asia Pacific region.⁹⁰

Russia, Strategic Consultations: On December 20, the Chinese and the Russian militaries held the 22nd round of strategic consultations in Beijing.⁹¹ The two sides had in-depth exchanges on topics including international and regional security and mil-to-mil relations. They expressed that the two sides will implement the important consensus reached by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, further improve the level of strategic coordination between the two militaries, and to make new contributions to promoting peace and security in the region and the world, as well as promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum

This section discusses the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum that was held in October 2023.

From October 29-31, the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum (香山论坛) since 2006 was held at the Beijing International Conference Center under the theme of "Common Security, Lasting Peace".⁹² Each forum was held in October. This was the first forum in person taking place since COVID-19. Official delegations from over 90 countries, regions, and international organizations, including Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Brazil, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Fiji, attended the forum and more than 200 experts from over 50 countries and regions also applied to participate, which, altogether, was the highest number ever. The participation of developing countries, as well as international and regional organizations,

⁸⁹ Chen Zhuo, ed., "PLA delegation visits UK, France," [China Daily](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16234465.html), July 1, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16234465.html.

⁹⁰ Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese military working group attends ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Plus," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16242425.html), August 4, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16242425.html.

⁹¹ Lin Congyi, ed., "Chinese, Russian militaries hold 22nd round of strategic consultation," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16275271.html), December 21, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16275271.html.

⁹² Wang Xinjuan, ed., "10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum to open Sunday," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16261490.html), October 24, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16261490.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "Participation hits new high in Beijing Xiangshan Forum: Defense Spokesperson," [Ministry of National Defense](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262255.html), October 26, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262255.html. Wang Xinjuan, ed., "Beijing Xiangshan Forum kicks off, provides platform for 'communicating in a frank manner, better resolving questions'," [Global Times](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262923.html), October 29, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262923.html.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft:Beijing_Xiangshan_Forum. The forums have been held in October in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2023. The forums have been co-hosted by the China Association for Military Science (CAMS), which is subordinate to the subordinate to the PLA Academy of Military Sciences, and the China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CISS).

significantly increased. There were over 30 ministerial representatives and military chiefs, as well as representatives from international and regional organizations including the Secretary-General of ASEAN, the Vice President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Secretary-General of the Captive Insurance Companies Association (CICA), advisor to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) secretariat, and the Arab League's charge d'affaires to China, who attended. The numbers across the board were the highest ever.

The forum focused on the Global Security Initiative (GSI). Four plenary sessions were held on Monday and Tuesday focused on Major Countries' Responsibility and Global Security Cooperation, the Role of Developing Countries in Global Security, Asia-Pacific Security Architecture: Present and Future, as well as Regional Security and Development: Goals and Roads. Eight simultaneous sessions on Monday discussed Security Trend and Configuration of Security Situation in Northeast Asia, ASEAN Centrality in Regional Security Cooperation Architecture, New Security Architecture in the Middle East, Reconfiguring Peace in Europe, Preventing and Managing Military Maritime Crisis, Nuclear Risk and Global Security, Artificial Intelligence Security, as well as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: International Military Cooperation. In addition, the forum hosted several seminars, including two titled "Voices from Leading Experts" and "Seminar of Young Officers."

The forum also arranged sessions focused on European and Middle Eastern regional security, as security issues like the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Israel-Palestine conflict were obviously very important to security in Europe and the Middle East and would inevitably be touched upon during these sessions. Speakers from both sides of the issues spoke.

Section 8: United Nations Peacekeeping Activities in 2023

This section provides information about United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) activities during 2023, including in South Sudan, Mali, Lebanon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

UNPKO Overview for 2023: On December 28 during the final MND Press Conference for the year, the spokesperson identified the following issues concerning UNPKO.⁹³ Recently, the Chinese MND delegation attended the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Accra, Ghana. In its speech, the Chinese side introduced the vision of building a community with a shared future and the Global Security Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping, and pledged that China will strengthen peacekeeping capability readiness, hold international training courses on peacekeeping and conduct exchanges on peacekeeping ideas and experience, so as to make greater contributions to world peace and security. Furthermore, 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the UNPKO. China is the largest troop contributing country among the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the second largest financial contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget. China has participated in 25 UNPKO missions and has contributed more than 50,000 peacekeepers. As we speak, nearly 2,000 Chinese peacekeepers, mainly in engineering, transportation, medical, police, infantry and helicopter units, are deployed in the UN Headquarters and mission areas including South Sudan, the DRC, and Lebanon. They have played an important role in maintaining world peace and security, bringing tranquility and stability to conflict zones

⁹³ Zhang Zhicheng, "Regular Press Conference of China's Ministry of National Defense on December 28," eng.mod.gov.cn, December 28, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16279128.html.

and generating peace and hope for the world. The Chinese blue helmets have become a key force in UNPKO.

South Sudan, UNPKO Activities: In early January, the 9th Chinese peacekeeping infantry battalion to Juba, South Sudan, conducted its first long-range foot patrol since arriving in late December for its one-year tour assigned to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).⁹⁴ Upon receiving the order, the battalion immediately held a task deployment meeting to formulate an operation plan, while comprehensively studying and judging the social and natural situations along the patrol route. At the same time, specific course training was carried out according to the task needs. The long-distance patrol mission lasted for 3 days and 2 nights, with a total journey of more than 280 km and emergency handling of over 10 times. It served to comprehensively test the peacekeepers' ability of operational command, emergency handling, military-civilian coordination, and integrated support. During the patrol, the Chinese peacekeepers established friendly relations with the local government and other foreign peacekeeping forces, while vigorously carrying out humanitarian relief activities such as condolences and donations, well demonstrating the good image of the Chinese military.

In late June, the 13th Chinese Peacekeeping Horizontal Engineering Company assigned to UNMISS in Wau, South Sudan, repaired a total of 179 kilometers of supply lines in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap State, and Unity State after six months' arduous work.⁹⁵ At the beginning of 2023, the UNMISS assigned the Chinese peacekeepers to restore an important local supply route between Warrap State and Unity State, which serves as a vital lifeline for local transportation. However, this route was seriously damaged due to long-term surging floods and passing vehicles. If it could not be repaired in a timely manner, the local people's daily lives would become tougher once the rainy season started. The supply route spans the UNMISS Sector West and Sector Unity, which made this mission the first cross-sector construction operation in the history of UNMISS. Add to this, the tense security situation in the Sector Unity and that some construction areas are adjacent to the disputed regions. The difficulty of the task was thus greatly increased. While the Chinese contingent dispatched peacekeepers to get down to the construction work, the UNMISS assigned another route construction task. This meant that the Chinese peacekeepers had to work simultaneously at two places, and the newly added construction site was over two hundred kilometers away. Faced with enormous challenges, including dealing with scorching heat, rampant mosquitoes, and other harsh natural conditions, they worked hard and efficiently completed the construction tasks. Despite the lack of specialized equipment and materials, they managed to repair multiple severely damaged bridges by adopting innovative construction measures based on local conditions.

Mali, UNPKO Medical Activities: In early January, the 10th Chinese peacekeeping medical contingent to Mali, which arrived in August 2022 and was composed of 398 peacekeepers consisting of defense infantry, engineering, and medical contingents, conducted a combat wound treatment drill based on the needs of peacekeeping missions and situations in the mission area.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Li Jiayao, ed., "9th Chinese peacekeeping infantry battalion to South Sudan (Juba) completes first long patrol mission," *China Military Online*, January 4, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2023-01/04/content_4929940.htm.

⁹⁵ Li Weichao, ed., "Chinese peacekeeping engineering contingent to South Sudan repairs critical supply routes," *China Military Online*, June 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16233298.html.

⁹⁶ Li Jiayao, ed., "10th Chinese peacekeeping medical contingent to Mali conducts combat wound treatment drill," *China Military Online*, January 10, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2023-01/10/content_4930368.htm. Huang

During the drill, the evacuation team quickly organized forward movement and emergency transfer, while the treatment team made preparations back in the hospital. The two teams cooperated closely to seize the golden treatment time and strengthened the capability of whole-process treatment for the wounded. The drill was targeted at the frequent armed conflicts in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Sector East. It further straightened out the process of quick transfer and emergency rescue and optimized the treatment plan to ensure timely and efficient medical treatment on the battlefield. On June 20, all 398 peacekeepers were awarded the UN Peace Medal of Honor for having fulfilled missions such as super-camp guard and defense, engineering support, and emergency construction.

Lebanon, UNPKO Activities: On February 11, the 21st Chinese peacekeeping multi-role engineering company participated in the Exercise Tiger 2023 held by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which took place at the barracks of the company in the south Lebanese village of Hinnieh.⁹⁷ Guided by the UNIFIL headquarters and implemented by the Chinese peacekeeping contingent, the exercise had more than 60 peacekeepers and more than 20 civilian employees involved from 10 countries, including Italy, Ireland, and Poland. The exercise was set against a large-scale conflict scenario in the mission area with the security situation seriously deteriorating. The Chinese peacekeepers were assigned to receive, protect and transfer the UNIFIL employees and their families. During the 3-hour exercise, the Chinese peacekeeping company dispatched more than 100 members and 10 vehicles to complete drills on eight subjects, including emergency evacuation, camp defense, and armed escort.

On February 16, the 21st Chinese peacekeeping construction engineering company to UNIFIL held an earthquake relief drill codenamed Blue Helmets Rescue-2023 to test the emergency rescue capability of the contingent.⁹⁸ Affected by the strong earthquake in southern Turkey, Lebanon had also experienced several earthquakes recently. The drill was carried out in the scenario of an earthquake disaster in the peacekeeping mission area, where the UNIFIL headquarters ordered the Chinese contingent to carry out road emergency repair and cleaning, as well as search and rescue of other UNIFIL peacekeeping troops. Launched at 4:00 am, the peacekeepers were well organized in special teams to carry out missions at different sites. The mechanical rescue team was responsible for road clearing operations, and the manual rescue team and the medical service team carried out personnel search and rescue and emergency rescue evacuation in close cooperation. The nearly-four-hour drill completed ten subjects including emergency evacuation, emergency dispatch, road emergency repair, and personnel search and rescue.

On May 3, the 21st Chinese peacekeeping multi-role engineering company to UNIFIL participated in Angel Rescue Exercise, an emergency medical rescue drill organized by the UNIFIL, in which its capabilities in emergency rescue, coordinated command and support won acclaim from the UNIFIL headquarters and other participating troops.⁹⁹ The drill simulated the whole process of first aiding and air transporting the wounded demining operator from the minefield to the local

Panyue, ed., "Chinese peacekeepers to Mali awarded UN Peace Medal of Honor," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16233071.html), June 25, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16233071.html.

⁹⁷ Wang Xinjuan, ed., "Chinese peacekeepers to Lebanon participate in Exercise Tiger 2023," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16201265.html), February 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16201265.html.

⁹⁸ Chen Zhuo, ed., "Chinese peacekeepers to Lebanon hold earthquake rescue drill," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16202777.html), February 20, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16202777.html.

⁹⁹ Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese peacekeepers to Lebanon participate in Angel Rescue Exercise," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222270.html), May 6, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16222270.html.

hospital. Commanded by the UNIFIL Command and participated by peacekeepers from China, Italy, France and India, the drill aimed to test the coordination and emergency response capabilities among various contingents after peacekeepers get injured. He Lei, director of the Chinese peacekeeping level-1 hospital to UNIFIL introduced that as the drill site had been set at the minefield along the Lebanon-Israel Blue Line border, the real environment fully tested the contingent's minefield rescue capability, and helped peacekeepers accumulate valuable first aid experience in battlefield. Since its deployment to the mission area in August 2022, the 21st Chinese peacekeeping multi-role engineering contingent to UNIFIL has cleared more than 6,500 square meters of minefields, and safely disposed of more than 1,200 landmines and one unexploded bomb, playing an important role in maintaining peace and stability in South Lebanon.

On December 8, Chinese peacekeeping troops to UNIFIL held a ceremony of force command handover, completing the 21st deployment rotation.¹⁰⁰ The ceremony was held at the Chinese peacekeeping troops' barrack in the south Lebanese village of Hinnieh. Since the beginning of the deployment in August 2022, the 21st Chinese peacekeeping troops to UNIFIL demined 15,325 square meters of risky areas, clearing 2,277 mines and five unexploded ordnance, and improvised explosive devices. They also completed 87 engineering tasks and 32 temporary construction tasks and provided treatment to more than 3,700 patients. In July 2023, all 410 Chinese peacekeepers to Lebanon were awarded the UN Peace Medal of Honor. The first batch of 205 members of the 22nd Chinese peacekeeping troops to UNIFIL arrived in the mission area on December 5. The 410-member succeeding unit is composed of a multi-role engineering company, a construction engineering company and a level-1+ hospital detachment. The second batch of them were schedule to depart from China in mid-December.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), UNPKO Activities: On July 25, the 26th Chinese Peacekeeping Contingent to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) was awarded the UN Peace Medal on Tuesday.¹⁰¹ The awarding ceremony was held at the camp of the engineering company of the Chinese contingent on the outskirts of Bukavu, the capital of the eastern province of South Kivu. Since the first group of Chinese peacekeepers was deployed to the DRC in April 2003, they have made contributions by accomplishing countless missions essential to local peace and development. In particular, a temporary bridge spanning the Luzira River in the province's flood-hit Kalehe territory, was recently completed by the engineering company, as well as the Level-II Hospital, run by the medical company. Since their deployment in September 2022, the 26th Chinese peacekeepers fulfilled the mission of maintaining peace in the eastern DRC. The engineering company organized 26 engineering surveys and completed 32 projects with high standards. The medical company received a total of 736 patients and performed 79 surgical operations, providing medical support for more than 4,000 MONUSCO members in Bukavu.

Section 9: Humanitarian and Medical-Related Activities in 2023

This section provides information about PLA humanitarian and medical-related activities during 2023. According to the final PLA Press Conference in December 2023, "We have contributed to building a community with a shared future for mankind. The PLAN Peace Ark hospital ship visited

¹⁰⁰ Huang Panyue, ed., "Chinese peacekeeping troops to Lebanon complete 21st deployment rotation," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16272597.html), December 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16272597.html.

¹⁰¹ Li Jiayao, ed., "Chinese peacekeepers to DR Congo awarded UN Peace Medal," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239764.html), July 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16239764.html.

Kiribati, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. The Chinese military medical expert teams continued to work in Zambia, Cambodia and Laos, and provided medical service to the local people. PLA Air Force Y-20 transport aircraft carried out humanitarian relief missions to Afghanistan and Nepal. PLA Navy vessels rushed to Sudan to evacuate Chinese nationals. The Chinese military also actively participated in UN peacekeeping and vessel protection operations, consistently providing public security goods to the international community.” Some of these activities are discussed in the service-relevant sections.

Ethiopia, 9th Military Medical Expert Team Deployment: On May 11, the 9th Chinese military medical expert team departed on May 11 for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to perform a year-long medical aid mission.¹⁰² This was the ninth straight year, which included a total of over 80 medical experts. This team consists of 10 military doctors, mainly selected from the First Hospital Affiliated to the Army Medical University (AMU), covering eight disciplines such as hepatobiliary surgery, infectious diseases, and radiology. All the members feature excellent professional skills and rich experience in medical support for military operations other than war (MOOTW). After receiving the mission, the team got intensive preparation training on emotion management, critical illness treatment, infectious disease prevention and control, among others, for better service in overseas medical aid tasks.

PLA Naval Medical University Online Medical Lecture:

From July 17-18, the PLA Naval Medical University (NMU) held the first online medical lecture for international alumni, which was attended by more than 200 on-site foreign trainees and overseas alumni of the NMU from 38 countries.¹⁰³ Chinese experts and foreign alumni conducted in-depth discussions and exchanges on six major topics, including cardiovascular medicine, psychiatry, respiratory infectious disease, traditional Chinese medicine, diving, hyperbaric medicine, and overseas medical tasks. Focusing on the forefront of medicine, and closely following the needs of clinical and medical service, this event also provided a platform for the alumni who had graduated for many years to reunite with their Chinese mentors. They recalled their precious time of study, and shared the valuable insights and experience accumulated in military missions.

Afghanistan, Y-20s Deliver Humanitarian Supplies: On October 16, two PLAAF Y-20 transport aircraft flew to Herat, Afghanistan, with stops in Wuhan and Urumqi to load a total of nearly 50 tons of humanitarian relief supplies provided by the Chinese government, the Chinese PLA and the Red Cross Society of China.¹⁰⁴ Relief supplies included quilts, outdoor jackets, tents, folding beds and other items urgently needed by the victims of disasters in Afghanistan. A 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck near Herat on October 15. It was the fourth earthquake with a magnitude above 6 that occurred after October 7, and the strongest one. The series of earthquakes caused thousands of casualties. On October 12, Xu Wei, spokesperson for the China International Development Cooperation Agency, said that the Chinese government provided RMB30 million

¹⁰² Li Weichao, ed., “China’s 9th military expert team leaves for Ethiopia to provide medical aid,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16224309.html), May 12, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16224309.html. “Feature: Chinese doctors bring Ethiopian parents cure, hope,” Xinhua, August 3, 2023, http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2023-08/03/content_98070669.htm.

¹⁰³ Huang Panyue, ed., “Naval Medical University holds online medical lecture for foreign alumni,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16238574.html), July 20, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16238574.html.

¹⁰⁴ Li Jiayao, ed., “China’s Y-20 transport aircraft delivers disaster-relief supplies to Afghanistan,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16259037.html), October 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16259037.html.

(about USD4.1 million) in emergency humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, to help in its post-earthquake relief efforts. This was the second time the Y-20 aircraft delivered post-earthquake relief supplies to Afghanistan since June 2022.

China, Conference on Military Medicine of the 3rd China-Africa Peace and Security Forum: From November 20-26, the Ministry of National Defense hosted the Conference on Military Medicine of the 3rd China-Africa Peace and Security Forum.¹⁰⁵ The conference was organized by the PLA Academy of Military Sciences. Leaders and medical experts from the military health departments of 25 African countries were invited to attend the event. Under the theme of “Strengthening Exchanges and Cooperation, Protecting Health of Service Members”, the event aimed to share China’s experience and practices in military health system construction and talent cultivation, as well as corresponding forces construction and scientific research achievements with relevant countries, and also to explore ways and measures of strengthening China-Africa military medicine cooperation and addressing challenges jointly in the field of health care.

South Sudan, Medical Team Pre-deployment Evaluation: During November, members of the 14th Chinese peacekeeping level-II hospital to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) received pre-deployment evaluation.¹⁰⁶ During the evaluation, inspections and assessments were focused on subjects including command and communication, defense and contingency disposition, first medical aid, live-fire shooting, driving skills, and medical rescue and treatment. All the activities were set in a battlefield environment. The participants carried out field triage and dressing, medical evacuation and treatment, daily clinical reception and treatment, etc. The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive evaluation on the contingent’s pre-deployment training in order to ensure the troops’ capabilities of accomplishing various tasks assigned by the UN. Members of this group mainly came from the 989th Hospital of the PLA Joint Logistic Support Force. More than 10% of them had overseas peacekeeping experience, and most had participated in major exercises and missions.

Ethiopia, Anniversary of Medical Assistance: In November, the PLA Army Medical University held the Ethiopian I Cultural Exhibition to commemorate the anniversary of the dispatch of China’s foreign aid medical teams to countries around the world.¹⁰⁷ Members of the university, together with more than 80 international cadets from over 20 countries, enhanced friendship in cultural exchange activities on the day. More than 30 Ethiopian cadets vividly presented the history and culture of their own country and recalled the moving stories of the PLA Army Medical University’s aid to Ethiopia. Cadets from Mongolia, Cambodia, Laos, and other countries, dressed in national costumes, also showcased the culture of their countries through music and dance

¹⁰⁵ Li Weichao, ed., “Conference on Military Medicine of 3rd China-Africa Peace and Security Forum to be held in Beijing,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16267182.html), November 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16267182.html.

¹⁰⁶ Li Jiayao, ed., “14th Chinese peacekeeping medical contingent to South Sudan passes pre-deployment evaluation,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268224.html), November 11, 2021, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268224.html.

¹⁰⁷ Lin Congyi, ed., “PLA Army’s university hosts cultural event commemorating 60th anniversary of dispatching foreign aid medical team,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16268735.html), November 22, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16268735.html. Note that the PLA sent its first UN Peacekeeping Operations team abroad in 1990 and the first medical teams were dispatched in 2004. See Kenneth Allen, Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen. *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003-2016*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)), China Strategic Perspectives 11, July 2017, p. 40-42, <https://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/china/ChinaPerspectives-11.pdf>.

performances. During the event, the Ethiopian Embassy in China sent a congratulatory letter to express gratitude to the PLA Army Medical University for its long-term medical assistance. The PLA Army Medical University has carried out medical assistance missions to Ethiopia since 2015. So far, nine batches of 80-odd people have been dispatched for medical assistance tasks, whose superb medical technology and pragmatic work style had been highly praised by local residents in the mission areas. In addition, the Southwest Hospital of the PLA Army Medical University had assisted the building of a high-tech hospital for the Ethiopian military and provided guide and assist in their medical works.

South Korea, PLA Remains from Korean War: On November 23, a Chinese honor guard flew on a PLAAF Y-20 transport aircraft [from the 13th Air Division] flew to South Korea's Incheon International Airport near Seoul to receive coffins containing remains of 25 Chinese People's Volunteers martyrs who were killed in the 1950-1953 Korean War.¹⁰⁸ This was the 10th handover ceremony since 2014, which included a total of 938 martyrs. According to Chinese Vice Minister of Veterans Affairs Chang Zhengguo during the ceremony, as inseparable neighbors and partners, China and South Korea face each other across the sea. Furthermore, he added that, in the face of profound changes unseen in a century, the two countries should uphold the original aspiration of establishing diplomatic ties, stick to the right direction of friendly cooperation and jointly push for sustained, sound and steady development of bilateral relations. China is willing to further strengthen communication and coordination with South Korea, deepen friendly cooperation, promote cooperation in the work related to the remains of CPV martyrs in South Korea, and bring more CPV martyrs back to their motherland at an early date.

Latin America, Military Medicine Forum in Beijing: From December 11-13, China's MND hosted the first China-Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Military Medicine Forum in Beijing.¹⁰⁹ China invited chiefs of military (police) health departments and experts from over 20 LAC countries and officials from the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM) to the event. Under the theme of "Meet New Military Medical Challenges and Open a New Era for China-Latin America Cooperation", the forum covered a range of topics, including smart health service administration, systems and technologies for military trauma treatment, and new progress in special medicine research.

Laos, Medical Team Deploys to Laos: On December 8, the PLA's 10th medical team sent to Laos since 2019 arrived in Vientiane for a 6-month medical aid task.¹¹⁰ According to the needs of the Laos side, the 10th Chinese medical team was composed of nine experts from urology, neurosurgery, cardiovascular medicine, gastroenterology, obstetrics and gynecology. The deputy director of the Health Bureau of the General Logistics Department of the Lao People's Army (LPA) said at the welcoming ceremony that China has been sending military medical expert teams to bring advanced medical equipment and technical support to Laos, which has greatly improved the diagnosis technology and treatment level of the Military Hospital 103 of the LPA and made positive contributions to promoting the construction of a community with a shared future between Laos and China and deepening the friendship between the two peoples.

¹⁰⁸ Li Jiayao, ed., "China, S. Korea hold ceremony to transfer remains of Chinese soldiers killed in Korean War," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268663.html), November 23, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268663.html.

¹⁰⁹ Li Jiayao, ed., "First China-LAC Military Medicine Forum to be held in Beijing: Defense Spokesperson," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16270085.html), November 30, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16270085.html.

¹¹⁰ Chen Zhuo, ed., "10th Chinese military medical team to Laos arrives in Vientiane," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16272613.html), December 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16272613.html.

Section 10: PLA Academies and Cadet Military Diplomacy Activities

This section provides information about military diplomacy activities involving PLA academic institutions during 2023, which are organized into the PLA National Defense University (NDU), PLA Navy, Air Force, and Army activities.

PLA NDU and Latin American and Caribbean Forum: From Jun 28 to July 4, the forum for commandants of defense colleges and universities in China and Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, which was organized by the PLA National Defense University (NDU), was held in Beijing.¹¹¹ Forty-five delegates from 22 LAC countries attended. The seven-day forum was organized on the theme of “Future-oriented China-LAC Military Education Cooperation”. At the forum, participants exchanged ideas and learned from each other’s development, experience and practices on military education through special lectures, seminars, and visits, laying a solid foundation for deepening and expanding China-LAC military education cooperation.

PLA Navy: On October 21, the “Deep Sea Warrior” International Sailing Skills Competition and Naval International Cadets Week concluded.¹¹² During the 6-day event, more than 120 naval cadets from 8 countries took part in the competition and exchange activities.

PLA Air Force: On October 23, the 5th Air Force International Cadets Week hosted by the PLA Air Force Engineering University kicked off in Xi’an (Shaanxi Province).¹¹³ Cadets from military educational institutions of 11 countries including Hungary, Indonesia, Pakistan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia were organized in mixed groups with cadets from nine Chinese military academies, and carried out one-week of learning, training, and exchange activities. This event aimed to build a platform for in-depth exchanges between Chinese and foreign cadets, facilitate their mutual learning, promote friendly exchanges between the Chinese and foreign air forces, and advocate their cooperative development. Altogether, the cadets participated in more than 20 activities, such as military parade, offensive and defensive exercises, a simulated UN conference, and some Chinese traditional cultural activities.

PLA Army: From November 5-13, the PLA Army Engineering University held the 10th International Army Cadets Week (IACW) in Nanjing (Jiangsu Province).¹¹⁴ Cadets from 50 military academies of 35 countries, including China, Russia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Brazil, Mexico, Cambodia, and Pakistan participated in the event. Under the theme of “Capability-building of Junior-level Army Officers”, IACW focused on two topics, namely junior officers’ commanding ability for future warfare and cross-cultural competence in multi-national military operations.

PLA Army: From November 25-26, the PLA Army Special Operations Academy, which is located in Guilin (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), held the first International Special

¹¹¹ Li Weichao, ed., “Forum for Chinese, LAC commandants of defense colleges concludes,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16235372.html), July 6, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16235372.html.

¹¹² Lin Congyi, ed., ““Deep Sea Warrior” International Sailing Skills Competition and Naval International Cadets Week concluded,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16261123.html), October 23, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16261123.html.

¹¹³ Huang Panyue, ed., “5th Air Force International Cadets Week kicks off in Xi’an,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16261468.html), October 24, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16261468.html.

¹¹⁴ Li Weichao, ed., “10th International Army Cadets Week to be held in Nanjing: Defense Spokesperson,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16262273.html), October 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16262273.html.

Operations Forum in Guangzhou (Guangdong Province).¹¹⁵ Representatives of special operations forces and academies from Russia, Belarus, Cambodia, Pakistan, and other countries attended the forum on invitation. With the theme of “Forging Future Special Warfare Elites”, the forum held symposiums and exchanges on topics including the future-oriented special operations talent cultivation system as well as commanding and skilled personnel training, aiming at sharing practical experience and latest achievements in personnel training and promoting exchanges in the special operations field across the globe.

PLA Army: On November 20, the PLA Army Engineering University hosted the 4th International Army Forum on Military Education in Nanjing (Jiangsu Province).¹¹⁶ Representatives of military academies from Cambodia, Pakistan, the United Kingdom (UK), Argentina, and other countries were invited to participate in the forum. Under the theme of “Future-oriented Army Officer Cultivation”, it aimed to research and explore the development trend and reform direction of military education, share the relevant practical experience and latest achievements, and promote international exchanges and cooperation in the field of military education. During the forum, participants carried out symposiums and exchanges around various topics, such as the demands and changes of the cultivation of junior officers in the Army, the reform and exploration of Army academic education, and the opportunities and challenges of the Army’s military education in the context of the digitalization development.

Cambodia, Golden Dragon-2023 Joint Exercise: From March 20 to April 8, the Golden Dragon-2023 China-Cambodia Joint Military Exercise was held at a training base in Cambodia.¹¹⁷ The Golden Dragon series of joint exercises is an annual routine military cooperation activity between the two militaries and the Golden Dragon-2023 is the fifth of such joint exercises. This was the fifth Golden Dragon joint exercise between the two militaries since 2016; however, the event was cancelled in 2021 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The exercise was set up in part to celebrate the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations. More than 200 troops from the PLA Army, Navy and Joint Logistic Support Force of the Southern Theater Command participated and were deployed on the Type 071 amphibious dock landing ship Jinggangshan (Hull 999) from Zhanjiang (Guangdong Province). The content of this exercise mainly included the joint security exercise for major events, the humanitarian work, and the cultural exchanges. A total of more than 3,000 troops from both sides, with more than 300 wheeled vehicles, various types of ordnance, mine-sweeping

¹¹⁵ Wang Xinjuan, ed., “PLA Army Special Operations Academy to hold first Int’l Special Operations Forum,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16267225.html), November 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16267225.html.

¹¹⁶ Huang Panyue, ed., “4th Int’l Army Forum on Military Education held in Nanjing,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268790.html), November 23, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16268790.html.

¹¹⁷ Li Wei, ed., “Chinese troops in Golden Dragon-2023 offer stationery, medical supplies to local Cambodians,” [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16214214.html), April 3, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16214214.html. Lin Congyi, ed., “Chinese troops participating in Golden Dragon-2023 China-Cambodia joint exercise setout,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16209915.html), March 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16209915.html. “China and Cambodia successfully conclude Golden Dragon and Cambodia,” Telesurenglish.net, April 6, 2023, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/China-and-Cambodia-successfully-conclude-Golden-Dragon-20230406-0009.html>. “China and Cambodia hold first naval drills in Cambodian waters,” Aljazeera.com, March 20, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/20/china-and-cambodia-hold-first-naval-drills-in-cambodian-waters>. “China, Cambodia kick off Golden Dragon 2023 joint drills,” Radio Free Asia, March 23, 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/cambodia/golden-dragon-exercises-03232023022407.html>. Lin Congyi, ed., “Chinese troops participating in Golden Dragon-2023 China-Cambodia joint exercise setout,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16209915.html), March 16, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16209915.html.

devices and pandemic-prevention equipment, participated in the exercise. Several Southeast Asian countries also sent military officers to observe the exercise.

The exercise was held to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of China and Cambodia to jointly build a China-Cambodia community with a shared future in the new era. It aimed to consolidate and develop the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership between China and Cambodia, increase political mutual trust, expand military exchanges between the two countries and improve the counterterrorism and humanitarian assistance capabilities of the two militaries. Early in the morning on April 2, a group of Chinese soldiers went to a primary school in Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia, and donated school bags, workbooks, folding stools and sport equipment to more than 180 students there. On the same morning, the Chinese medical team went to a local community hospital for a free clinic. The team set up consulting rooms for internal medicine, surgery and inspection, providing disease diagnosis and treatment to the local villagers. A total of 142 people were treated that day, with 486 boxes of medicines distributed to them. After that, the team further donated a batch of medicine to the Cambodian side.

As part of the exercise, China and Cambodia held their first-ever naval drills in Cambodian waters. The Jinggangshan, which brought the troops to Cambodia, carried out a two-hour exercise with two patrol boats of the Royal Cambodian Navy and established communications before practicing coordinated navigation in different formations.

Cambodia's deepening relationship with China has raised concern in the United States and Australia, as well as among some of its neighbours in Southeast Asia who, like China, have claims to the South China Sea. In 2022, the two countries agreed on a two-year Chinese-funded project to revamp Cambodia's Ream naval base on the Gulf of Thailand, and Phnom Penh has since dismantled facilities there that were built partly with money from the US. In 2021, the United States imposed an arms embargo on Cambodia over concerns about "deepening Chinese military influence" in the country.

Section 11: Border Defense Military Diplomacy Activities

This section discusses border defense discussions and/or exercises with India, Mongolia, Laos, and Vietnam.

China-India Border Discussions: During 2023, China and India held the 18th, 19th, and 20th round of China-India Corps Commander Level Meetings concerning the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on April 23 (Indian side), August 13-14 (Chinese side), and October 9-10 (Indian side), respectively.¹¹⁸ The first round was held in early 2020 following the border conflict. Each meeting resulted in the same basic news release shown here for the 20th meeting: "The two sides had a positive, in-depth and constructive discussion on resolving the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western Sector in a mutually acceptable manner at the earliest possible date. In line with the guidance provided by the leadership, the two sides exchanged views in a candid, open and forward-looking manner. They agreed to maintain the momentum of

¹¹⁸ Li Wei, ed., "China, India hold 18th round of Corps Commander Level Meeting," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16220861.html), April 25, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16220861.html. Huang Panyue, ed., "Joint Press Release of the 19th Round of China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting," [Ministry of National Defense](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16245388.html), August 15, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16245388.html. Li Jiayao, ed., "China, India hold 20th Round of China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting," [Ministry of National Defense](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16258122.html), October 12, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16258122.html.

communication and dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and resolve the remaining issues in an expeditious manner. In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain the peace and tranquility on the ground in the border areas.”

Mongolia, Border Defense Cooperation-2023 Held in China: On November 10, according to the annual plan for border defense exchanges and cooperation between China and Mongolia, the two militaries held the Border Defense Cooperation-2023 Joint Drill in the border region near the Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture in Northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.¹¹⁹ With the theme of “China-Mongolia Joint Action to Curb Border Crimes”, the joint drill aimed to enhance the capability of the two countries’ border defense forces to jointly combat cross-border smuggling and terrorist activities, jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas, and further deepen pragmatic exchanges and cooperation between the two militaries. The drill focused on joint command, operational disposition, observation and demonstration. Both sides’ participants carried out siege and capture, hostage rescue, tactical combat casualty care and other real-combat training subjects, in a bid to explore the establishment of joint command between the two sides, enhance the operational capabilities of joint response to major border contingencies, and preserve the peace and stability in the border regions together. During the drill, both sides adopted various methods of information sharing to transmit the frontline situation in the border region back to the joint tactical command post in real time, effectively supporting the commander’s judgment and decision-making.

For operational disposition, border defense troops of the two sides jointly sieged and chased the mock terrorists applying combined methods of fire strike and force assault. In the phase of handover and extraction, they jointly conducted on-site evidence collection, personnel transfer, and battlefield extraction, to test the tactic achievement explored during the border counter-terrorism operations by the two militaries. The two sides also organized activities such as military skill demonstration, weapons and equipment display, and other military exchanges.

Laos, Fourth Border Defense Friendship Exchange Held in Laos: On November 28, the Chinese and Lao militaries held the fourth border defense friendship exchange at Yot Ou District, Phongsaly Province, Laos, in the border region.¹²⁰ The exchange was aimed at implementing the important consensus reached by the top leaders of the two Parties and the two countries, deepening traditional friendship, strengthening border defense cooperation between the two militaries, and jointly maintaining regional peace and stability. General Wang Xiubin, Commander of the PLA Southern Theater Command, and Lieutenant General Khamliang Outhakaysone, Laos’ Deputy Minister of National Defense and Chief of the General Staff of the Lao People’s Army, led delegations to participate. During the event, the two sides repainted the inscription on the boundary monument and took a group photo. And the two delegations then visited the 111th Border Defense Company of the Lao People’s Army, where they inspected the equipment, listened to the

¹¹⁹ Li Weichao, ed., “China, Mongolia to hold Border Defense Cooperation-2023 joint drill,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265690.html), October 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16265690.html. Huang Panyue, ed., “China, Mongolia hold Border Defense Cooperation-2023 joint drill,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16266448.html), October 13, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16266448.html.

¹²⁰ Huang Panyue, ed., “Chinese, Lao militaries to hold fourth border defense friendship exchange,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16269277.html), November 26, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16269277.html. Lin Congyi, ed., “Chinese, Lao militaries hold fourth border defense friendship exchange,” [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16269763.html), November 29, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16269763.html.

company's debriefing, planted a friendship tree, and held friendly talks. The two sides also donated materials to Lao Ou Nua primary school.

Vietnam, Xi Jinping Visit: On December 13, during the state visit to Vietnam by Xi Jinping, the two sides agreed to promote high-level exchanges between the militaries of both countries, make good use of such channels as border defense friendly exchanges, and defense and security consultations and defense ministry hotlines, according to a joint statement issued.¹²¹ Both sides will further strengthen cooperation in the defense industries, joint exercises and training, military medical and health services, UN peacekeeping and non-traditional security fields. The two sides will also continue to deepen border defense cooperation, continue to carry out joint patrols in the Beibu Gulf and mutual visits of warships, and deepen cooperation and exchange mechanisms between their navies and coast guards.

Section 12: Foreign Military Attaché Visits to PLA Facilities

This section provides information about two separate visits by the Beijing Military Attaché Corps (BMAC) to PLA organizations during 2023. Of note, as of January 2024, a total of 104 countries had military attachés assigned to Beijing.¹²² This number was down from 116 in January 2022.

Visit to Shaanxi Province: From June 12-16, at the invitation of China's MND, 74 military attachés and their spouses from 51 countries visited the cities of Xi'an and Yan'an in Shaanxi Province.¹²³ During the visit, they were briefed on the Central Theater Command, the economic and social development of Shaanxi Province, and the construction of the "Belt and Road Initiative". They also visited relevant military units and local communities. The delegation visited several famous historical and cultural sites, and watched performances in Xi'an, the capital of thirteen ancient Chinese dynasties. Their spouses also took part in traditional Chinese cultural activities such as Centuries-old Chinese fashion Hanfu and paper cutting. In order to enhance mutual understanding and friendship, the military attachés were invited to visit Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial Hall, Yangjialing Revolutionary Site, Wangjiaping Revolutionary Site, the former site of the Eighth Route Army (ERA) Xi'an Office and other places, and had a better understanding of the revolutionary, construction and reform achievements of the CPC and PLA in different historical periods. At the PLA Army Academy of Border and Coastal Defense, the delegation learned more about the teaching, learning and living conditions of the cadets, and had lunch with them. The military attachés gave thumbs up to the professional quality and good spirit of the cadets. They agreed that the tour had deepened their understanding of China's national defense policies and military building concept in the new era, along with Chinese culture, ideology and responsibilities. And they also expressed expectations for more opportunities to strengthen exchange and coordination with the Chinese military in the future.

Visit to Naval Aviation University: On the occasion of the 74th anniversary of the founding of the PLAAF on November 11, military attachés from 22 countries to China, including Australia,

¹²¹ Li Jiayao, ed., "China, Vietnam to strengthen defense cooperation," [Xinhuanet](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16273228.html), December 13, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16273228.html.

¹²² Correspondence with the US Defense Attache Office in Beijing in January 2024.

¹²³ Huang Panyue, ed., "Military attachés to China visit Shaanxi Province," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230879.html), June 13, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230879.html.

Huang Panyue, ed., "Military attachés to China visit PLA Central Theater Command," [China Military Online](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16232610.html), June 20, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16232610.html.

Denmark, Germany, France, Zimbabwe, South Korea, Sweden, were invited to visit the PLA Naval Aviation University.¹²⁴ In the morning, military attachés visited the academic buildings, library, physical training center, watched physical training carried out by cadets, and had lunch with them. In the afternoon, the military attachés watched stunts performed by the Red Eagle Aerobatic Team.

About the Author

Kenneth W. Allen: During 21 years in the U.S. Air Force (1971-1992), Ken Allen served as an enlisted Chinese and Russian linguist and intelligence officer with tours in Taiwan, Berlin, Japan, PACAF Headquarters, China, and Washington DC. From 1987-1989, he served as the Assistant Air Attaché in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, where he received the Director of Central Intelligence's individual Exceptional Air Force Collector of the Year Award for 1988 and the Unit Exceptional Collector of the Year Award for 1989 (Tiananmen). He retired as a major in 1992. He was inducted into DIA's Defense Attaché Hall of Fame in 1997. From 1992–2017, he worked in several non-profit and for-profit organizations, and from May 2017 to November 2019, he served as the Research Director for the US Air Force's China Aerospace Studies Institute (CASI). His primary focus has been on China's military organizational structure, personnel, education, training, and military diplomacy with particular emphasis on the PLA Air Force. He has written multiple article on PLA military diplomacy and six books, including *China's Air Force Enters the 21st Century* for RAND (1995), *People's Liberation Army Air Force 2010* for NASIC, *China's Navy 2007* for ONI, and his latest book entitled *70 Years of the PLA Air Force*, as well as multiple monographs, book chapters, journal articles, and online articles on the PLA. He has B.A. degrees in Physical Education from the University of California at Davis and in Asian Studies from the University of Maryland and an M.A. degree in International Relations from Boston University.

¹²⁴ Chen Zhuo, ed., "Military attachés to China visit PLA Naval Aviation University," [China Military Online](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16266133.html), November 11, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16266133.html.

Appendix A: Previous Military Diplomacy Reports

China's Navy 2007, (Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), 2007, Chapter 15), <https://irp.fas.org/agency/oni/chinanavy2007.pdf>.

Heidi Holz and Kenneth Allen. "Military Exchanges with Chinese Characteristics: The People's Liberation Army Experience with Military Relations." In Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell, eds. *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, Chapter 9, June 2010), <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Apr/26/2003208916/-1/-1/0/2079.PDF>.

Kenneth Allen, Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen. *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003-2016*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)), China Strategic Perspectives 11, July 2017, <https://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/china/ChinaPerspectives-11.pdf>.

Kenneth Allen, *The PLA's Military Diplomacy in Advance of the 20th Party Congress (Part One)* and *(Part Two)*, (Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation *China Brief*, Volume 22, Issues 16 and 18, September 9 and October 4, 2023), <https://jamestown.org/program/the-plas-military-diplomacy-in-advance-of-the-20th-party-congress/> and <https://jamestown.org/program/the-plas-military-diplomacy-leading-up-to-the-20th-party-congress-part-two/>.

Kenneth Allen, *The PLA's Military Diplomacy under COVID-19*, (Washington DC: Jamestown Foundation *China Brief*, Volume 21, Issue 13, June 21, 2021), <https://jamestown.org/program/early-warning-brief-the-plas-military-diplomacy-under-covid-19/>.

Kenneth Allen, *The Top Trends in China's Military Diplomacy*, (Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation *China Brief*, Volume 15, Issue 9, May 1, 2015), <https://jamestown.org/program/the-top-trends-in-chinas-military-diplomacy/>.

Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1999),

Kenneth W. Allen, *Showing the Red Flag: The PLA Navy as an Instrument of China's Foreign Policy*, (Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analysis (CNA), April 2003).

Melodie Ha, *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Military Diplomacy and Overseas Security Activities"*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, January 26, 2023), https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/Melodie_Ha_Testimony.pdf.

Phillip C. Saunders, *(Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission: China's Military Diplomacy: Trends and Implications)*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, January 26, 2023), https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/Phillip_Saunders_Testimony.pdf.

Appendix B: Acronyms

Acronym	Term
ADMM	ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting
ADMM+	ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus
ADSOM+	ASEAN Defence Senior Officials Meeting Plus
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CCG	Chinese Coast Guard
CCP / CPC	Chinese Communist Party / Communist Party of China
CCTV	China Central Television
CICA	Captive Insurance Companies Association
CMC	Central Military Commission
COVID	Coronavirus disease
CQB	Close quarter battle
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ERA	Eighth Route Army
ETF	Escort Task Force
EWG	Experts' Working Group
GSI	Global Security Initiative
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
HMA	Humanitarian Mine Action
IACW	International Army Cadets Week
ICMM	International Committee of Military Medicine
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JMSDF	Japan Maritime Self Defense Force
LAC	Line of Actual Control
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LIMA	Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace
LPA	Lao People's Army
LPAF	Lao People's Armed Forces
MCIS	Moscow Conference on International Security
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MND	Ministry of National Defense
MNEK	Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NDU	National Defense University
NMU	Naval Medical University
NPC	National People's Congress
OIMC	Office of International Military Cooperation
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAA	PLA Army
PLAAF	PLA Air Force
PLAN	PLA Navy
PLARF	PLA Rocket Force
PLASSF	PLA Strategic Support Force
PNS	Pakistani Naval Ship
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMB	Renminbi
RTAFB	Royal Thai Air Force Base
SAM	Surface-to-air missile
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization

TCN	Theater Command Navy
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN.	United Nations
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNPKO	United Nations Peace Keeping Operations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
VBSS	Visit, board, search, and seizure
VCG	Vietnamese Coast Guard
VTC	Video teleconference