



C H I N A A E R O S P A C E
S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

**Senior PLA Leader Military Diplomacy
from October 2017 through December 2024**

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This is a review of the military diplomacy activities at home and abroad conducted by People’s Liberation Army (PLA) key leaders from the 19th Party Congress in October 2017 through December 2024. Key leaders include members of the Central Military Commission (CMC) such as the Vice Chairmen; the Minister of National Defense, aka the Defense Ministerⁱ; the Chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department (JSD), and the Director of the CMC Political Work Department (PWD). The report also includes the commanders of the services, including the Army (PLAA), Navy (PLAN), and Air Force (PLAAF). The Commander of the Rocket Force (PLARF), which is the fourth service, has not been involved in any public military diplomacy since 2012. Finally, the CMC Office for International Military Cooperation (OIMC) and relevant Deputy Chiefs of Staff of the JSD are actively involved in military diplomacy and are identified throughout the report.

The following table identifies the key leaders discussed in this report to include their billet and dates they have held the billet:

Senior PLA Leadersⁱⁱ: 2017-2024

Billet					
DefMin	CHANG Wanquan 03/2013-03/2018	WEI Fenghe 03/2018-03/2023	LI Shangfu 03/2023-10/2023	DONG Jun 12/2023-present	
CMC VC	XU Qiliang 10/2017-10/2022	ZHANG Youxia 10/2017-present	HE Weidong 10/2022-present		
COJS	LI Zuocheng 08/2017-10/2022	LIU Zhenli 10/2022-present			
Dir, PWD	MIAO Hua 10/2017-10/2024				
PLAA CDR	HAN Weiguo 06/2017-06/2021	LIU Zhenli 06/2021-09/2022	LI Qiaoming 09/2022-present		
PLAN CDR	SHEN Jinlong 01/2017-09/2021	DONG Jun 09/2021-12/2023	HU Zhongming 12/2023-present		
PLAAF CDR	DING Laihang 08/2017-09/2021	CHANG Dingqiu 09/2021-present			
Dir, OIMC	GUAN Youfei 2016-2017	HU Changming 2017-2018	CI Guowei 2018-2022		
DepDir, OIMC	CI Guowei 2016-2018	HU Changming 2016-2017	LI Ji 2016-11/2017	HUANG Xueping 11/2017-2022	YE Jiang Unk-present

ⁱ Although the Defense Minister has previously been a concurrent CMC Vice Chairman (1993-2008) or a CMC Member, the current Defense Minister, Admiral DONG Jun, has not been added as a CMC Member since taking office in December 2023. It is not clear why he has not been elevated.

ⁱⁱ Throughout this report, the surnames of Chinese individuals are in all capital letters.

Counterparts

Although China based English-language news articles used the term ‘counterpart’ to identify who PLA leaders consider as their counterparts, no Chinese-language articles identified anyone as a “counterpart”. For example, multiple English articles identified the PRC Defense Minister as the counterpart for foreign Defense Ministers as well as the U.S. Secretary of Defense.¹ As a general rule, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and China’s Defense Minister are considered “counterparts” and typically host each other; however, it is important to keep in mind that the Chinese Defense Minister is not a true counterpart to the Secretary of Defense in terms of responsibilities.² Specifically, the Defense Minister does not hold any operational command and control responsibility like Secretary of Defense does, and is nowhere in the PLA operational chain of command. Furthermore, as noted in the report, the current Defense Minister, Admiral Dong Jun, is not even a Member of the CMC. For this reason, the U.S. considers the Defense Minister to only be a partial counterpart. In addition to hosting the Defense Minister, the Secretary of Defense has also hosted several CMC Vice Chairmen who have visited the U.S. and have more of the same responsibilities. Of note, as to the PLA’s overall foreign relations program, one of the CMC vice chairmen, rather than the Defense Minister, often host foreign defense ministers. However, no information was found that identified anyone as a CMC Vice Chairman’s “counterpart.” T

he Chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department also has perceived “counterparts,” including the Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, British Chief of the Defence Staff, and Chief of the General Staff of the Mozambique Defense Armed Forces.

The CMC Vice Chairmen also met with Defense Ministers at home and abroad, but none of them were identified as a counterpart. In fact, no articles identified anyone as a Vice Chairman’s counterpart. Some of the people the Vice Chairmen met held concurrent billets such as Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister. The following bullets identify the key people the CMC Vice Chairmen met with:

- The Deputy Secretary of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party and concurrent Defense Minister of Vietnam³
- The Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Defense Services⁴
- Cuban Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and Chief of the General Staff and First Deputy Minister of the Cuban Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR)⁵
- Australia’s Chief of the Defense Force⁶
- Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army (COAS), who is identified as the counterpart for the PLA Army⁷
- Pakistan’s Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee⁸
- Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense⁹
- Lao Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense¹⁰
- Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Milos Vucevic¹¹
- Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and concurrent Commander of the Royal Cambodian Army¹²
- US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan¹³
- While traveling abroad, the Vice Chairmen also met with various Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Chinese media identified the Chief of the CMC's Joint Staff Department as the counterpart for the following people:

- Lieutenant General Bilal Akbar, the visiting Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army¹⁴
- General Charles Q. Brown, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff¹⁵
- First Deputy Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation General Valery Gerasimov and concurrent Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces¹⁶
- British Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin¹⁷
- Rear Admiral Lázaro Henriques Lopes Menete, Chief of the General Staff of the Mozambique Defense Armed Forces (FADM)¹⁸
- Lieutenant General Bilal Akbar, Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army¹⁹

PLA Service Commanders were noted as having met with the following “counterparts”:

- Two articles identified the PLA Air Force Commander as a counterpart to the Zambian and Bulgarian Air Force Commander.²⁰
- One article identified the PLA Navy Commander as a counterpart to the US Navy's Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).²¹
- One article identified the PLA Army Commander as a counterpart to Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS).²²

Rarely do key PLA leaders meet with the same person twice either at home or abroad; however, there are exceptions, including Defense Minister meetings with their counterparts from Singapore, Indonesia, Russia, and Cambodia. Prior to 2016, it was common for PLA news articles to identify the members of delegations led by senior leaders on trips abroad, such as a visit in May 2014 to the United States by the Chief of the General Staff, General FANG Fenghui, that was hosted by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His delegation included Assistant to Chief of the General Staff YI Xiaoguang, PLAN Deputy Commander XU Hongmeng, PLA AF Chief of Staff MA Zhenjun, and Shenyang MR Commander WANG Jiaocheng.²³

The Defense Minister and one of the CMC Vice Chairmen occasionally host separate meetings with the same person during their visits to Beijing, including the Defense Ministers from Serbia, Iran, Germany, Cambodia, New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.

Although video calls were made by the Defense Minister, Chief of the Joint Staff Department, Director of the Political Work Department, and Navy and Air Force Commanders, No video calls were made by any CMC Vice Chairmen.

Singapore's Defense Minister, NG Eng Hen, who has been the Defense Minister since 2011 has had the most meetings with senior PLA officials. He attended each of the four Beijing Xiangshan Forums during this period, and met with XU Qiliang twice, HE Weidong once, and ZHANG Youxia once. He also hosted five meetings with PRC Defense Ministers in Singapore, including one with CHANG Wanquan (2018), two with WEI Fenghe (2018 and 2022), one with LI Shangfu (2023), and one with DONG Jun (2024).

Besides individual meetings with key foreign leaders, PLA leaders are also involved in several different conferences and dialogues, including:

- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)
- ADMM-Plus Meeting
- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- Beijing Xiangshan Forum
- Shangri-La Dialogue
- Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)
- China-Latin America High-level Defense Forum

Beijing Xiangshan Forum

The Beijing Xiangshan Forum serves as China’s platform for Asia-Pacific security dialogue. It was upgraded to a track 1.5 dialogueⁱⁱⁱ at the 5th Forum in 2014 and started to involve wider participation of defense and military leaders, heads of international organizations, former political personages and retired generals, as well as renowned scholars.²⁴

During the 8th to 11th Forums that took place between 2018 and 2024, the Defense Minister or a CMC Vice Chairman had a total of 56 individual meetings with senior foreign leaders who attended the forum. However, the Defense Minister did not have any meetings during the 9th and 10th forums. The only time the Defense Minister and a Vice Chairman met with the same person separately was the Laos Deputy Prime Minister and concurrent Defense Minister during the 11th Forum. Interestingly, only Vice Chairman XU Qiliang had any meetings during the 9th forum. During the 10th and 11th forums the two CMC vice-Chairmen had separate meetings, but neither of them met with the same person. Altogether, the Defense Ministers and Vice Chairmen met with representatives from 37 different countries; and of those countries, they only met once with representatives from 24 different countries, and they met twice with representatives from seven countries^{iv}, three times with representatives from three countries^v, and four times with representatives from two countries^{vi}. For Singapore, the same Defense Minister, NG Eng Hen, attended each of the four Forums and met with XU Qiliang twice, HE Weidong once, and ZHANG Youxia once. Of note, no separate meetings were held with any representatives from the United States.

Defense Minister

During this time frame, PRC Defense Ministers have conducted the most travel abroad, including visiting 31 countries during 35 separate trips. Trip purposes have included attending conferences, observing joint exercises, as well as a purely diplomatic visit. Of the 35 trips, the most visited countries were Singapore (five conferences), Russia (two conferences and two trips to observe exercises), and Vietnam (three diplomatic visits). Two visits were made to Belarus, Cambodia (conference), India (conference), and the Philippines (conference). Of the 209 diplomatic trips, 14 of them involved only one country, two of them involved two countries, and four of them involved three countries. Although COVID impacted the PLA’s overall military diplomacy engagements hosted at home during 2020 and 2021, the Defense Minister still traveled abroad seven times to ten different countries during the COVID period from early 2020 to late 2022.

From October 2017 through 2024, the four Defense Ministers hosted a total of 125 meetings with foreign military leaders. This included 94 one-on-one meetings with foreign

ⁱⁱⁱ Track 1.5 dialogues are conversations that include a mix of government officials—who participate in an unofficial capacity—and non-governmental experts, all sitting around the same table. It is also defined as when both officials and non-officials are involved in diplomatic negotiations. Often foreign leaders travel with businessmen is an example.

^{iv} Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Serbia, Suriname, and Zimbabwe

^v Cambodia, Mongolia, and Russia

^{vi} Singapore and Vietnam

military leaders who visited China for separate meetings. The Defense Ministers also had separate meetings with 41 foreign military leaders who were attending various conferences in Beijing, including the 15th SCO Defense Minister Meeting, Beijing Xiangshan Forum, 4th China-Latin America Defense Leaders Meeting, and the 1st and 3rd China-Africa Peace and Security Forum. Eight of the total number of 125 visitors also had a separate meeting with one of the CMC Vice Chairmen. In addition, the four Defense Ministers held 18 one-on-one video calls with key foreign military leaders, as well as participating in video calls for several conferences. Altogether, meetings or video calls were made to leaders from 62 different countries.

The country hosted by PRC Defense Ministers most frequently is Pakistan, which included six standalone visits and one visit linked to a conference. The second highest number of visits applies to Russia and Vietnam, each of which included six visits. While three video calls occurred with the same Russian Defense Minister, three in-person visits occurred with the Vietnamese Defense Minister. The other countries that included more than one meeting with the same person were with Singapore, Cambodia, and Indonesia. Of note, there were no meetings with North Korea and the only meetings with South Korea and Japan were by video. Finally, the total number of events (103) that involved separate meetings are balanced out throughout the year.

CMC Vice Chairmen

Altogether, the three Vice Chairmen^{vii} during this period hosted 68 separate meetings, which included 33 foreign leaders who attended the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forums . During these four Beijing Xiangshan Forums, the three Vice Chairmen hosted 33 foreign leaders. Only XU Qiliang hosted leaders during the 8th and 9th Forums. However, both Vice Chairmen hosted different visitors during the 10th. No meetings were held during 2020-2021 due to COVID.

Among foreign leaders, it appears the only time that one of the Vice Chairmen met with the same visitor included Cambodia's Defense Ministers (Tea Banh and Tea Seiha), Singapore's Defense Minister (NG Eng Hen), and Russia's Defense Minister (Sergei Shoigu). Of note, Tea Banh met XU Qiliang twice, while Tea Seiha met separately with ZHANG Youxia and HE Weidong. NG Eng Hen met separately with all three Vice Chairmen. Sergei Shoigu met separately with ZHANG Youxia twice and with XU Qiliang once. None of the Vice Chairmen engaged in any video calls.

As for the CMC Vice Chairmen's travel abroad, the three Vice Chairmen visited 11 different countries, including Pakistan twice, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Angola, Russia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Cuba. None of the visits abroad involved conference participation, and no visits abroad were conducted during 2020 through 2022. It appears that the only person that any of the Vice Chairmen met in Beijing and while traveling abroad was Vietnam's Defense Minister Phan Van Giang. However, it was not the same Vice Chairman. The 2023 hosted visit involved HE Weidong, while the 2024 visit to Vietnam involved ZHANG Youxia.

CMC Members

General LI Zuocheng, who was the Chief of the Joint Staff Department from Aug 2017 to Oct 2022, hosted six meetings with leaders from six different countries from Nov 2017 to Jan 2019, including Belarus, Mozambique, Pakistan, Russia, the United States, and Zimbabwe. LI

^{vii} Vice Chairmen: Generals XU Qiliang, ZHANG Youxia, and HE Weidong

also had video calls with leaders from New Zealand and the United States. LIU Zhenli, who became the Chief of the Joint Staff Department in October 2022, did not host any meetings, but since Jun 2023, he did have video calls with leaders from Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

LI Zuocheng attended the 5th meeting of Chiefs of Staff of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Members in Moscow and also observed “Peace Mission-2018” SCO joint anti-terrorist drills in Russia’s Chelyabinsk. LI also visited New Zealand in Nov 2019 to attend the 10th Strategic Dialogue between the Chinese and New Zealand militaries. LIU Zhenli has not traveled abroad since assuming his billet.

Admiral MIAO Hua assumed the position of Director of the CMC Political Work Department in Oct 2017 but was suspended in Oct 2024 for corruption. He has not yet been replaced yet. During his tenure, he traveled abroad three times, including Laos (Jan 2019), Cuba (May 2019), and North Korea (Oct 2019). He also hosted a visitor from Vietnam (2018) and hosted one meeting via video in August 2020 with General Chalermphol Srisuwat, Chief of Joint Staffs of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, during the China-Thailand Military-to-Military Video Conference on Poverty Alleviation.

Service commanders

Although the PLAA, PLAN, and PLAAF Commanders have been slightly involved in military diplomacy since 2017, the PLARF Commander has not been involved at all since 2012.²⁵

Since Oct 2017, the PLA Army has had three Commanders; of the three, only HAN Weiguo met with any foreign visitors since the 19th Party Congress in Oct 2022. Specifically, in Sep 2018, CMC Vice Chairman ZHANG Youxia hosted a meeting with Pakistan Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss how Pakistan’s Army provides security to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC),²⁶ General HAN Weiguo, also met separately with the delegation.²⁷ None of the PLAA commanders have traveled abroad.

Since October 2017, the PLA Navy has had three commanders. Adm Shen Jinlong had four meetings in 2017 before the Party Congress, he only had one “counterpart” meeting with U.S. Navy Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson. After the 20th Party Congress. Adm DONG Jun only participated in one video conversation in Nov 2021. Admiral HU Zhongming did not participate in any meetings. None of them traveled abroad.

The only Service Commander who traveled abroad was PLA Air Force Commander General DING Laihang in 2018 to Thailand and Pakistan. General DING held one meeting in 2021 via video and his successor, General CHANG Dingqiu held one meeting in 2022 via video.

The PLA Rocket Force Commander was not involved in any public meetings at home or abroad.

The country with the most hosted visits in Beijing is Pakistan, which included six standalone visits and one visit linked to a conference. The second highest number of visits were by Russia and Vietnam, each of which included six visits. Three video calls occurred with the same Russian Defense Minister, and three in-person visits occurred with the Vietnamese Defense Minister. Of note, there were no meetings with North Korea and the only meetings with South Korea and Japan were by video.

Key Themes During Meetings

Each meeting between key PLA and foreign leaders at home and abroad highlights various themes shown in the bullets below; however, not every meeting and subsequent media article has all of the themes.²⁸ Many of the articles surveyed begin by stating that Chairman XI Jinping and the key leader of the relative country had recently held talks and laid out general guidelines for building a good relationship. Although not every article had the same exact wording, the key themes concerning XI include:

- Lifting the current bilateral relations to a comprehensive partnership, which fully reflects the high-level political mutual trust between the two countries.
- Working with the current comprehensive partnership or building a comprehensive cooperative partnership, a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, or comprehensive strategic partnership
- Providing opportunities and momentum to deepen mil-to-mil relations between the two sides.
- Each relationship is built on equality, mutual trust, cooperation, and mutual benefit with the goal of creating a community of a shared future for mankind to tackle the security dilemma as well as to maintain regional and even global peace and prosperity.
- For the relevant countries, relations should be a model of good-neighborly friendship, a pillar of regional peace and stability, and a benchmark for international cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative.

As for the one-on-one discussions, the key themes discussed included various combinations of trust, respect, friendship, stability, counterterrorism, prosperity, safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, national dignity, and practical cooperation, as well as various partnerships, e.g. comprehensive, comprehensive cooperative, comprehensive strategic cooperative, or a comprehensive strategic partnership.

20th Century historical perspective

The key PLA leaders involved in military diplomacy at home and abroad include the Defense Minister, CMC Vice Chairmen, and the Chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department. Each of them are involved in hosting individual visits, including separate visits linked to conferences such as the Beijing Xiangshan Forum. Although the CMC Vice Chairmen visited 13 countries during eight trips abroad from October 2017 through 2024, none of them involved attending a conference. The Defense Ministers took 35 trips abroad during the same time period, of which 13 of them were to attend conferences. The Chiefs of the Joint Staff Department only attended two conferences/dialogues abroad.

According to a 1999 report based on interviews with senior PLA officers in Beijing, “A typical high-level Chinese delegation visit abroad generally takes place within a couple of months after the PLA celebrates the Spring Festival (late January or early February) or just before the expanded annual meeting of the Central Military Commission in early December. Most senior leaders take at least one, but not more than two, trips abroad each year. For the most part, the PLA does not have more than one or two exchanges per year with any single country due to political and budgetary restrictions, but the number of countries involved has increased by at least fifty percent during the 1990s. Defense Minister General Chi Haotian hosted 24 visits in 1996, 22 in 1997, 21 in 1998, and 22 in 1999. In order to save money and have a longer presence in a particular region, PLA delegations will continue to visit more than one country

during a trip. The service commanders and political commissars (PCs) are likely to continue to take one trip abroad and host from three to five counterpart commanders per year.”²⁹

According to a 2009 report, “A review of senior PLA officer visits abroad indicates that those senior PLA officers who travel abroad do so an average of once per year. In terms of the number of trips abroad by a single officer, only the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff have averaged more than one trip abroad per year.”³⁰

As per a report in 2017, “The Chinese military views high-level meetings as an important aspect of military diplomacy, and senior PLA leaders devote a significant amount of time to interacting with foreign counterparts. However, senior-level meetings and visits are subject to the constraints and unique characteristics of the PLA. Generally, all senior PLA leaders aside from the Defense Minister and Chief of the General Staff (now the director of the CMC Joint Staff Department) are limited to one trip abroad per year by regulation, although not every leader takes advantage of the opportunity and exceptions sometimes occur. Senior PLA leaders rarely, if ever, visit the same country twice except to attend multilateral meetings or host the same foreign military leader twice. The Defense Minister does not necessarily host or meet with all his foreign counterparts, who are often hosted by one of the CMC vice chairmen. Since few countries have direct counterparts to the two senior CMC vice chairmen positions, meetings with the CMC Vice Chairmen rather than lower-level PLA officers may indicate which countries Beijing prioritizes in military diplomacy. Examining which countries PLA leaders visit and which countries they host can further illuminate priorities. The opportunity costs of overseas travel by senior PLA officers are relatively high, since traveling officers are less able to complete other work, and officers are typically limited to one international trip per year by PLA regulations.”³¹

In conclusion, based on a review of the available information, the number of annual hosted visits and travel abroad by the CMC Vice Chairmen and Defense Ministers have remained fairly consistent even though the number of countries that the PRC has diplomatic relations with has increased from about 100 in 1998 to over 150 by 2004.³² CMC Vice Chairmen have averaged one trip abroad to two countries per year, except for no travel abroad in 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008, or 2020-2022 due to COVID. The two Vice Chairmen have continued to host a total number of visitors at about the same rate of 3-5 per year each since 1998, but the number has gone up during years of the Xiangshan Forum. The Defense Ministers have continued to travel abroad 3-4 times per year to attend conferences and then visit 1-2 additional countries. They have continued to host about 20-30 visitors on separate visits per year since 1996, except during COVID. In addition to the separate visits, they also had separate meetings with a total of about 40 other foreign military leaders who were attending various conferences in Beijing, including the 15th SCO Defense Minister Meeting, four Beijing Xiangshan Forums, 4th China-Latin America Defense Leaders Meeting, and the 1st and 3rd China-Africa Peace and Security Forum.

Furthermore, the role of the Chief of the Joint Staff Department (former General Staff Department) has been reduced considerably primarily since the CMC Office of International Military Cooperation was created in 2016 and took over the military diplomacy portfolio. Finally, although the service commanders and even the service PCs previously traveled abroad at least once a year and hosted counterparts, their involvement has basically disappeared.

See the CASI website for all of the supporting information for this report.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ For example but not all inclusive: (United States) http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2022-11/22/content_4926695.htm ; (Uzbekistan) http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-12/22/content_7880641.htm; (Gabon) http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-12/11/content_7863222.htm; and (Belarus) http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-10/31/content_7806844.htm.
- ² See Kenneth W. Allen, Christopher M. Clarke, John F. Corbett, Jr., and Lonnie D. Henley, “China’s Defense Minister and Ministry of National Defense,” in Kevin Pollpeter and Kenneth W. Allen, eds., *The PLA as Organization v2.0*, which can be found at www.pla-org.com/downloads/.
- ³ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-10/29/content_9325936.htm.
- ⁴ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-11/24/content_7842062.htm.
- ⁵ http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-11/20/content_9349936.htm.
- ⁶ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-10/30/content_9326986.htm.
- ⁷ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-06/12/content_10162474.htm.
http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/19/content_9290461.htm.
- ⁸ http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16232555.html.
- ⁹ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-08/15/content_10178351.htm.
- ¹⁰ http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/Exchanges/News_209188/16262919.html.
- ¹¹ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16259896.html.
- ¹² http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16200862.html.
- ¹³ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16334468.html.
- ¹⁴ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-11/20/content_7833802.htm.
- ¹⁵ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16275519.html.
- ¹⁶ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16230169.html.
- ¹⁷ http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/TopStories/16309522.html.
- ¹⁸ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-12/21/content_7878182.htm.
- ¹⁹ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-11/20/content_7833802.htm.
- ²⁰ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-11/17/content_7831111.htm.
http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-11/28/content_7847062.htm.
- ²¹ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-01/15/content_9405421.htm.
- ²² http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/19/content_9290461.htm.
- ²³ 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 (CSP) 11, July 2017, <https://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/china/ChinaPerspectives-11.pdf>.
- ²⁴ Beijing Xiangshan Forum, <https://xiangshanforum.cn/introduction.html>
- ²⁵ The Second Artillery Force Commander only traveled abroad a few times since 2000, including to Russia and Finland in August 2000 (Xinhua, 10 Aug 2000). From 2005 to 2008, the PLASAF Commander (2003-2012), General JING Zhiyuan, took one trip abroad each year to two countries (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>). In 2009, he visited Serbia (http://rs.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zsgx/zzjw/200907/t20090722_3370537.htm) and in 2012 visited Indonesia (<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/715690.shtml>) The PLASAF Commander also only hosted a few visitors, including US SecDef Donald Rumsfeld in Dec 2005, which was the first time that the force was open to a foreign military leader (Xinhua, 29 Dec 2005).

²⁶ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/19/content_9290481.htm.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/19/content_9290461.htm.

²⁷ http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/19/content_9290481.htm.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/19/content_9290461.htm.

²⁸ This information in this section was taken from multiple articles.

²⁹ Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations*, (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1999).

³⁰ Heidi and Allen, 2010.

³¹ 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>.

³² Review of the 1988-2019 Defense White Papers (PRC State Council Information Office, *China's National Defense* (中国的国防), Beijing: China, which is usually identified as the *Defense White Paper*.), Allen and McVadon 1999, Holz and Allen 2009, INSS 2017 CSP 11, and data in this report.