

The Impact of Revolution in Military Affairs on China's Defense Policy

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Introduction

In the 1991 Gulf War, the US used the advanced technology weapon systems with information technology as a core. After that, the high technology weapon systems have been used more and more in battlefields. In Kosovo war and recent Iraq war, high technology weapon systems became the dominant weapons in military operations. The material technology, new energy technology and information technology have promoted the revolution in military affairs (RMA) both in operations and military equipment. The system integration with the information technology as a core is the technology basis of the military revolution, and a basis for a new strong military state.

Under the new situation, Chinese leaders have recognized that China is relatively backward in military technology and equipment. They decided to follow the world military revolution, and to create a regime of strengthening the military forces with science and technology. Currently, facing the challenge of the world military revolution, China is actively pushing military revolution with Chinese characteristics. Reforms have started in terms of strategic doctrine, force construction, operation training, technology equipment, organization and so on.

1. RMA's impact on the strategic doctrine

China has noticed the rapid and drastic changes in warfare form. In 1993, then President Jiang Zemin pointed out: "We had shifted our strategic guideline from aiming at engaging in an early war, an all-out war and a nuclear war to a local war under the condition of modern technologies, especially high technologies. This shift represents the development and improvement of our strategic guideline.

2. RMA's impact on the goal of military force construction

The international security situation has changed very much. The People's Liberation Army(PLA) force building has to catch up with the world military revolution. With the emerging of high technology form of war, quality of military force has become

the key factor dominating the war's going. In 1977, Chinese Central Military Commission(CMC) pointed out that China would realize modernization both in national defense and army in middle of the 21st century. In 2003, CMC made it clear that the basic sign of modernization is informationization.

It is understood that the high technology war is information technology war. Currently, the PLA still stays in the stage of mechanized or semi-mechanized. The task of mechanization has not completed. Although the military mechanization need to develop, it has been recognized that PLA must aim at engaging in information technology war rather than traditional mechanization war. Therefore, China's military forces have to develop the information technology, in the mean time, to improve mechanization. In brief, they have to simultaneously realize the two goals of mechanization and informationization.

3. RMA's impact on the military training

The high technology used in warfare initiates the PLA to shift training form from the conventional training to one featuring new technology. With the development of military forces in land, sea and air, joint services operation become the dominating form of high technology warfare. The PLA has started the studies and training of joint operations.

The PLA has enforced new military training regulations and strengthened regularized training. In September 2002, the CMC promulgated the new regulations on the military training of the PLA.

4. RMA's impact on the organization of the army

Chinese military persists in taking the road of fewer but better troops with Chinese characteristics. Since 1980s, China has taken several big steps of disarmament. In 1980s, China reduced 1,000,000 personnel in army. In September 1997, China declared that it would cut another 500,000 troops in 3 years. Recently, China announced that 200,000 troops would be cut by 2005.

China's reducing scale of army is to optimize the military organization, and increase the quality of the army. "Further reducing the scale of the army will help us concentrate our limited resources to speed up the army's information technology construction". The Central Military Commission has framed the draft of reform of military system constitution, and decided to reform the military command system, logistic support system, military constitutes and military colleges. China has set up the General Armament Department. The weaponry and equipment management system and mechanism have further improved. China has further strengthened unified leadership over weaponry and equipment development.

The PLA persists in taking the training of high-equality military personnel of new type as a fundamental measure for promoting a leapfrog development of the armed

forces' modernization. To meet the requirement of building a strong military through science and technology, the PLA pays great attention to the training of high-level personnel.

5. Chinese military revolution takes the road of Chinese characteristics

Considering Chinese special social and army condition, China will take the road of military revolution in its own way. China will learn the foreign experience of military revolution. But, China will not copy other country in military revolution.

The PLA implements the strategy of building a strong military through science and technology. The national defense-related science, technology and industries give priority to the development of new- and high-technology weaponry and equipment, and strive to raise their modernization level. The PLA has trained high quality personnel of a new type, established a scientific organization structure, developed theories for military operations with Chinese characteristics, and strengthened its capability for joint, mobile and multi-purpose operations.

In the face of new changes in modern warfare, China persists in relying on the people in national defense building.

The PLA is strictly under the leadership of Communist Party of China.

6. The principle of Chinese military revolution

China implements a military strategy of active defense. Strategically, China pursues a principle featuring defensive operations, self-defense and counter attack only after being attacked.

China follows an approach of coordinating national defense building and economic development, striving for a high cost-effectiveness and promoting defense and military modernization on the basis of economic growth. China insists on a policy with the economic developing as the central task.

Based on the continuous economic growth, Chinese defense expenditure has increased recently. However, China's defense expenditure has been kept at a fairly low level, and the increased part is basically of a compensatory nature. The proportion of annual defense spending in the GDP was 1.09% in 1995 and 1.50% in 2001. Comparing to other countries, the percentage of China's defense expenditure in its GDP and state financial expenditure is also fairly low.

Conclusion

Military revolution will be part of overall Chinese reforms in the next 20 years. China will strengthen the PLA capability to meet the outside threat coordinating with the economic growth. The PLA implement the strategy of building a strong military through science and technology, and accelerate national defense development and

achieve national defense and military modernization.

Chinese military persists in taking the road of fewer but better troops with Chinese characteristic, pushes forward the various reforms in response to the trend in military changes in the world, to accomplish the historical tasks of mechanization and information technology application, thereby bring about leapfrog development in the modernization of the military.

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