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Threat Tactics Report:

China



TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats

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Introduction

In 2015, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) released a statement on worldwide threats and identified China as a threat actor currently challenging the United States (US) in its cyber, space/counterspace, nuclear, and territorial reclamation activities.¹ These activities, China's growing influence in Asia, and its continued willingness to display its diplomatic and military power present a significant concern for US security interests.² Given the US's pivot to the Pacific and the recent influx of US military service members, an understanding of one of the region's largest threat actor's military capabilities, tactics, and techniques is necessary.

This Threat Tactics Report (TTR) will provide an overview of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Army's military capabilities, with an emphasis on its tactics and techniques in order to explain to the US Army training community how China's military fights. In order to accomplish this, this report will include information on the PLA Army's doctrine, force structure, weapons and equipment, and an analysis of its capabilities.

The report contains five sections. Section 1 is an introduction that provides an overview of China's military strategy. Section 2 details China's PLA Army capabilities. Section 3 highlights tactic and technique examples of the PLA's Army, complete with graphics depicting the tactics. Section 4 provides information on key weapons and equipment available to the PLA Army that have the potential to challenge US Army forces. Section 5, the conclusion to this report, culminates with a discussion on training implications and provides a table that shows where conditions specific to the China OE are present in the [Decisive Action Training Environment \(DATE\)](#) and other training materials so that these conditions can easily be implemented across all training venues.

This (U) **Threat Tactics Report (TTR)** was produced in accordance with (U) *Intelligence Community Directive Number 203: Analytical Standards* (Effective: Jan 2015). This TTR was coordinated with:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon S. Cleaves".

Jon S. Cleaves
TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration

Cover photo: [Soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army's 1st Amphibious Mechanized Infantry Division, 12 July 2011.](#)



Executive Summary

- The United States (US) intelligence community classified China as a threat actor capable of challenging the US's security interests in the Asia-Pacific region.
- There a number of issues that would likely prompt China to use its military force to protect its national interests. These issues are: Taiwan, territorial disputes, and internal instability.
- China has spent the past two decades modernizing its military forces. Modernization efforts have included the acquisition of new technologies and weapon systems, updated training efforts, and revamped doctrine.
- The People's Liberation Army's Army, China's land forces, have focused modernization on its special purpose forces, amphibious, and aviation capabilities. It has also procured more modern armor, artillery, and air defense systems.
- The Chinese Army updated its tactics doctrine in 2009 to reflect the importance of the concept of informationization.
- Chinese tactics can be replicated using the TC 7-100 series of threat doctrine.

Section 1: Introduction to China

The state of China is experiencing unprecedented growth in political, economic, diplomatic, and military power. Because of this growth, its role in the Asia-Pacific region as a dominant regional power is expanding. China is capitalizing on this expansion by using its military forces to further its strategic goals for the state. Recent examples of this are China's proclaimed expansion of its air space into the East China Sea, land reclamation activities in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, and continued cyber espionage against the United States. As a result of these actions, the US intelligence community (IC) has classified China as a threat actor capable of challenging US interests in the Pacific region.³ This section of the TTR will provide an overview of China's military strategy and goals and discuss key alliances of the state of China.

Strategy and Goals

China has placed great emphasis on growing its economic, military, and diplomatic powers for the past several decades in order to expand what it calls *comprehensive national power*. China's leaders believe that growth in its comprehensive national power will enable China to achieve its five strategic objectives. These objectives are: preserving Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule; sustaining economic growth and development; maintaining domestic political stability; defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity; and securing China's status as a great power and reacquiring regional preeminence.⁴

China claims its pursuit of its strategic objectives is entirely peaceful. In 2013, the government stated that there are three basic ways to use military power: military deterrence, war, and military operations other than war.⁵ This indicates that China will protect its national sovereignty and national interests first by deterring others and only resort to warfighting when deterrence fails.

While China claims its pursuit of these strategic objectives is entirely peaceful, some of its actions have demonstrated that China may use these new powers in ways that many states in Asia would not view as

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peaceful. These actions typically relate to three issues: the Taiwan issue, territorial disputes, and internal instability. These three issues could potentially result in China's use of military force.

Taiwan

A potential conflict with Taiwan is China's biggest security concern. China, and the majority of the world, does not recognize Taiwan as an independent nation and there are many in China that would like to see Taiwan reunified with the mainland, through force if necessary. China has openly stated that if Taiwan authorities attempt any action in pursuit of independence, China will be forced to use its military. This could result in mainland China using its military assets to forcefully reunify Taiwan with the mainland. Given the US's standing defense agreement with Taiwan, this action would have serious implications for the US military.

Territorial Disputes

China is actively involved in five territorial disputes with its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region. The first is China's dispute with Taiwan as stated above. While China claims Taiwan, the Republic of China (Taiwan) asserts its sovereignty and resists attempts at reunification. The second territorial issue is the dispute over the Spratly Islands. This particular territorial dispute is extremely complex because six different countries claim parts of the area: Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The third dispute China is involved in is with Vietnam and Taiwan over the Paracel Islands. The fourth dispute is between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The last dispute is between India and China over two separate boundary issues along their mutual border.

Internal Instability

One of the greatest fears of the Chinese government is internal instability. As a result, the PLA has a secondary assigned mission to prevent instability in the regions where units are located. While its primary mission is to defend China, together with the local police force, the PLA's secondary mission set shows that the Chinese government prioritizes preventing instability at all costs.

The People's Liberation Army: China's Military Force

People's Liberation Army is the name of all of China's military service branches. Unlike the traditional use of 'army' in American colloquialism, China's use of the term refers to all branches of its armed forces, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as the Second Artillery Force, an independent branch of the Army.

China's armed forces, including the PLA, the People's Armed Police (PAP), and the militia are completely controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). China's armed forces are often referred to as the "party's army" due to the level of control the CCP has over the military. This relationship is directly related to the CCP's intent on preserving its rule. To ensure the party maintains absolute control of the armed forces, every company and higher level unit in the PLA and the PAP has both a commander *and* a political officer who *jointly share* responsibility for everything the unit does.

For the past two decades, China has devoted significant time and money to modernizing its military. The PLA that was once known for its outdated equipment, poor training, and personnel issues has been revamped thanks to regular increases in defense spending. It is now a much more capable military with

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more advanced equipment and better training. While personnel training and reforms are partially responsible for this, much of the PLA's growth in capability is due to the acquisition of new technologies and weapon systems. The PLA's acquisitions have focused on information warfare (INFOWAR) technologies, fourth-generation level platforms, and precision strike systems. The biggest capability advancement the PLA has demonstrated is its ability to conduct joint force operations. The PLA has placed significant focus on the latter area and has made great strides.⁶

On a tactical level, the PLA has concentrated its advancements on its special purpose forces (SPF) and improving amphibious and army aviation capabilities. Additionally, it has procured more modern

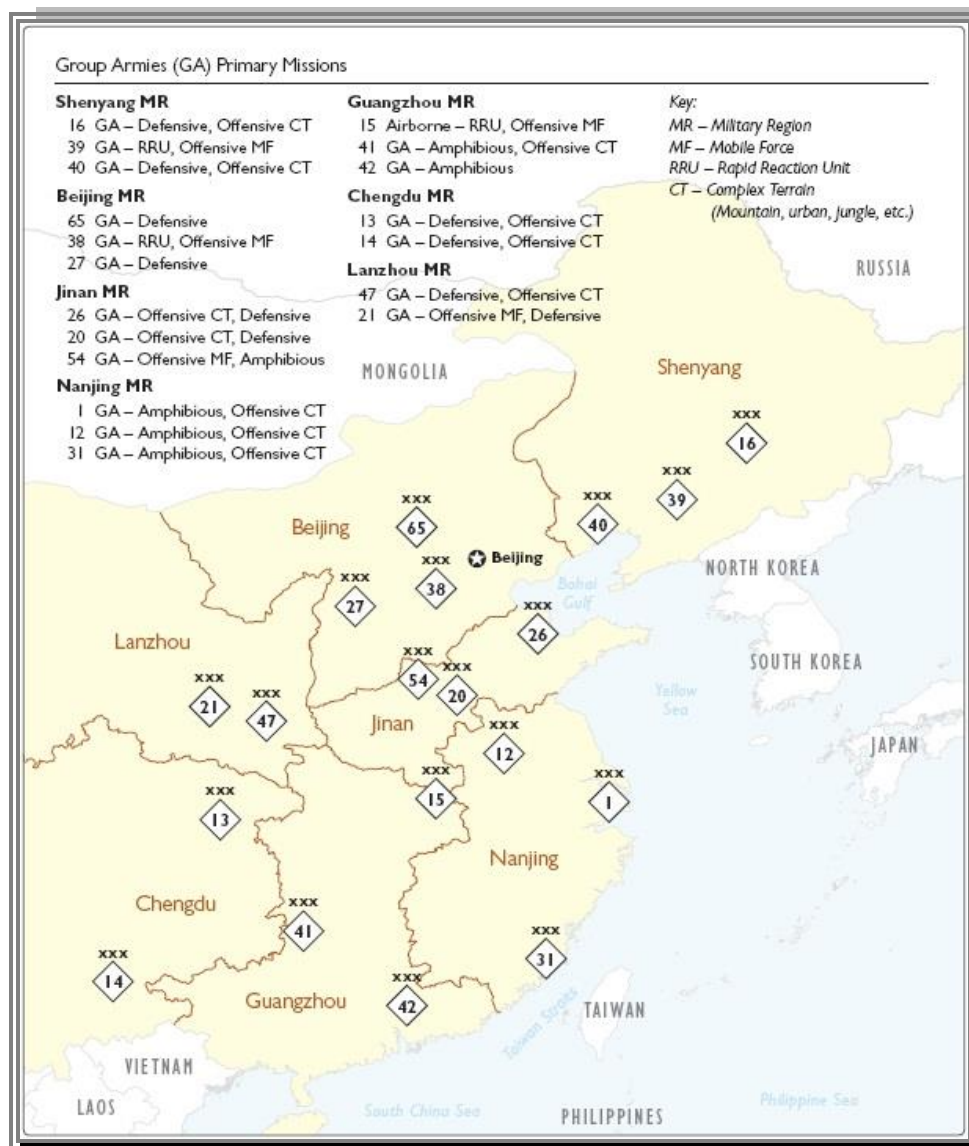


Figure 1. China's Military Regions and Group Army locations

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platforms for use by its ground forces: main battle tanks (MBTs), armored vehicles, artillery, and air defense systems are all examples of systems that have been upgraded in recent years.

Despite the advancement of its capabilities, analysis by the RAND Corporation has shown that the PLA still has some significant weaknesses. These fall into two broad categories—institutional and combat capabilities. The institutional weaknesses stem from ineffective command structures, lack of professionalism among personnel, and rampant corruption. The major combat capability weaknesses include logistical shortfalls and strategic airlift capabilities.⁷

PLA Army

The PLA's Army is a considerably large force with approximately 850,000 active soldiers and 510,000 reserve soldiers divided into Group Armies. There are 18 Group Armies divided among seven military regions (MRs). Figure 1 above shows the locations of all seven of the MRs and includes the headquarters location for each of the Group Armies. Additionally, the figure highlights the primary mission set for each of the Group Armies. Each army is assigned the mission of some combination of the following: offensive, defensive, complex terrain, mobile force, rapid reaction unit (RRU), or amphibious. With some exceptions, each Group Army has between 30,000 and 50,000 troops normally organized into 2–5 mechanized/motorized/infantry divisions or brigades, 1 armored brigade, 1 artillery brigade, and 1 air defense brigade. Additionally, most combat units are assigned with combat service and service support units such as engineer, communications, chemical defense, reconnaissance, and logistics and repair. Approximately half of the Group Armies have an Army Aviation brigade or regiment and/or an SPF brigade or regiment assigned to them. While most combat units are assigned directly to a Group Army, some are not. Those units that are not assigned to a Group Army are considered “independent” and assigned directly to an MR, military district, or garrison headquarters.⁸

Unlike US Army divisions, PLAA divisions command regiments, not brigades. PLAA infantry and armored brigades are subordinate to army-level organizations, either Group Army or provincial military district headquarters, not to divisions.

Below is a roll-up of the number of combat units currently available to the PLAA. These numbers are likely to change as the PLA undergoes a reorganization of its forces and command structure.

Table 1. PLA Army Combat Unit Roll-up

| PLA Army | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|------------|----|--------------|----|-----------|---|--------------|----|
| Infantry | | Armor | | Artillery | | Aviation | | Reserves | |
| Mechanized DIVs | 7 | Divisions | 1 | Divisions | 2 | Brigades | 5 | INF DIVs | 18 |
| Mountain Mech DIVs | 2 | Brigades | 16 | Brigades | 17 | Regiments | 5 | INF BDEs | 4 |
| Motorized DIVs | 14 | Amphib BDE | 1 | ADA Brigades | 21 | | | ARTY DIVs | 3 |
| Amphibious Mech DIVs | 2 | | | | | | | ARTY BDEs | 7 |
| Infantry Brigades | 23 | | | | | | | AD DIVs | 17 |
| Mountain INF BDEs | 2 | | | | | | | AD BDEs | 8 |
| Mechanized BDEs | 25 | | | | | | | AD Regiments | 8 |
| Motorized BDEs | 16 | | | | | | | | |



The PLA Army (PLAA) is organized in a three-tiered structure: main forces, local or regional forces, and reserve forces. The main forces are the Group Armies detailed above. These forces are intended to be available to respond to any requirement around the country. To aid in this requirement, each Group Army fields at least one RRU.⁹ Local forces are made up of active and reserve PLA units as well as the PAP and local militia, and are responsible for local defense, and for maintaining internal security in their local area.¹⁰ The PAP has a secondary mission of defending China against external enemies.

PLA Navy

The PLA Navy (PLAN) received a disproportionate amount of focus for modernization from the Chinese government over the past two decades. This is mainly a result of China's strategic efforts to provide military backing for its territorial claims under dispute and to create a robust anti-access/aerial denial (A2/AD) capability, a key tenant of China's mainland defense and offense. The PLAN is organized into three main fleets: the North Sea Fleet, the East Sea Fleet, and the South Sea Fleet. Each fleet contains surface ships, submarines, naval air, coastal defense, and marine assets. The PLAN has a small Marine Corp of approximately 10,000 marines organized into two brigades. The PLAN has more than 300 surface ships, submarines, amphibious ships, and patrol craft, which amounts to more vessels in service than any other country in Asia.

PLA Air Force

The PLA Air Force (PLAAF), like the PLAN, has received a disproportionate amount of focus for its modernization also. It too is seen as integral to China's plan to provide military backing for its territorial claims and is key in China's A2/AD capability. The PLAAF is organized into seven Military Region Air Forces and 24 Air Divisions. The PLAAF has a surface-to-air missile (SAM) corps and it is divided into SAM division and brigades. According to the Chinese 2015 white paper, the PLAAF "will endeavor to shift its focus from territorial air defense to both defense and offense, and build an air-space defense force structure that can meet the requirements of informationized operations."¹¹

The 15th Airborne Army, depicted in the map in the "PLA Army" section of this report, is subordinate to the PLAAF and not the PLAA.

Second Artillery Force

The final key component of China's A2/AD capability is the Second Artillery Force. This element of the PLA is responsible for the China's strategic missile force. It controls all of China's nuclear and conventional strategic missiles. The Corps is manned by approximately 100,000 personnel comprising six missile divisions. The divisions are independently deployed in different MRs.

Power Projection

The PLA's modernization has focused on expanding its ability to project power. This has manifested primarily in its air, naval, and missile forces as they have gained capabilities specifically designed to support China's emphasis on expanding its reach into blue waters. In China's first white paper on strategy, release in 2015, it publicly announced that a key strategic goal for its military forces is to project force far from China's coastline.¹² This strategic goal has resulted in a military force that is being



modernized for the explicit purpose of projecting its power outside of its national boundaries. China often claims this effort is simply intended to protect its territory, including the disparate island chains it claims as territory. However it is often seen by its regional neighbors and the US as an attempt to expand its offensive capabilities.¹³

PLA Future Military Development Efforts

The PLA is likely to focus its future military development efforts on fleshing out its naval, air, missile, and space capabilities in addition to rectifying the weaknesses addressed earlier in this TTR. The naval capabilities that the PLAN is likely to focus on are those that support the expansion of its operations into the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Air defense, cruise missiles, and aircraft carriers are three areas that could enable the PLAN's operations expansion.¹⁴

The PLAAF is expected to receive the same emphasis as the PLAN. According to the Department of Defense, the PLAAF "will likely become a majority fourth-generation force within the next several years," in addition to developing as many five-generation systems as possible.¹⁵ The PLAAF is also likely to improve its current unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) capabilities.

The final areas of emphasis for future capability growth will be in China's strategic missile force and space/counterspace. China's long-range strike capability is likely to be improved by the deployment of intermediate-range ballistic missile systems.¹⁶ China's space/counterspace capability will continue expanding through many space-based capabilities such as intelligence, surveillance, and communication systems.

According to IHS Jane's, the PLA seeks the capabilities to be able to conduct all future campaigns simultaneously on land, at sea, in the air, in space, and in the electronic domains.¹⁷ The PLA's effort to reach this goal is evidenced by the areas of future capability development discussed above.

Section 2: PLA Army

China's primary purpose of military development for the PLA Army is to create capabilities that are characterized by mobility, proficiency at exploiting information technology, high-tech firepower, and seamless joint operations.¹⁸ While China's ground forces are leagues ahead of where they were in the 1980s and 1990s, their ability to perform the above-mentioned goals is still not at the level the government wants, and the armies' ability to perform these goals varies among them.

The PLA Army has been very successful at increasing mobility. Units are leaner and equipped with more motorized and mechanized equipment and have been restructured; the number of divisions has been downsized in order to create more brigades. The PLA Army has also been extraordinarily successful at increasing units' ability to exploit information technology. New technology purchases have greatly influenced this.

The PLA Army is slowly improving in the remaining two goals: high-tech firepower and seamless joint operations. China has steadily purchased new systems to field with the ground forces; however, these systems are not prolific throughout the entire force, but rather concentrated in certain units. The PLA's ability to conduct joint operations is improving, but joint interoperability is still one of its biggest weaknesses.¹⁹



Professionalism

In the mid-1990s, the PLA was characterized by extremely poor professionalism. This was significantly influenced by the PLA's active role in profitable economic ventures (such as farming) where troops were used to support the venture. In the late 1990s this practice was ended in an effort to increase military professionalism. The PLA has further advanced its professionalism efforts by recruitment changes and improved training programs. An example of this is the PLA's attempts to create a professional NCO corps. In the late 1990s the PLA began providing NCOs with more education and training, gave them more responsibilities, and allowed them to complete a full 30-year career. However, despite significant progress, it should be noted that the PLA lacks formal combat experience and still struggles with rampant corruption—two very significant roadblocks to a fully professionalized fighting force.

Readiness

China has prioritized its readiness capability since the 1990s. In an effort to increase readiness, it has built a rapid-reaction capability. The PLA's RRUs were initially created for the purpose of mounting rapid counter-Taiwan operations, but newer RRUs are designed to respond to internal crises. Now, most military regions in China field RRUs.

Military Capabilities

The PLA Army has successfully transformed itself from the huge army that was designed to fight a protracted war of attrition to a smaller, more modern force designed to fight local, high-intensity wars of short duration against high-tech adversaries.²⁰ China's modernization of the ground forces has produced a more agile, lean, and mobile force that includes a "special operations force equipped with advanced technology; improved army aviation units using helicopters armed with precision-guided munitions; and C2 capabilities with improved networks providing real-time data sharing within and between units."²¹

China's success in this area and its efforts at refining the way it fights are partially due to its observations of the US Army at war over the past decade. These observations provided China with a number of lessons learned that it is actively implementing through training and doctrinal changes. Key lessons learned include:

- "The centrality of information on the battlefield, and the impact of attacking key nodes rather than across a broad front of activity.
- "The importance of offensive action, pre-emptive strikes, surprise, and deception.
- "The value of high-tech weaponry. Specifically, weapon systems needed to integrate information technology, increase firepower effects and range, higher accuracy, and greater mobility and survivability.
- "The importance of 'real-time' C4ISR [command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance], long-range precision strike, and advanced electronic warfare capabilities.
- "The combat-multiplying effect of joint operations.
- "The need for timely comprehensive logistics support."²²

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As a result of lessons learned such as those above, two concepts now drive Chinese military thought. These concepts are local warfare and “informationization” warfare. While the Chinese military once thought it would fight protracted war on Chinese soil with guerrilla warfare, its analysis of Western conflicts over the past two decades has caused it to now believe it will fight what it calls “local wars.” These wars will be characterized by shorter conflicts, potentially lasting only one campaign; will most likely *not* entail the occupation of China; and will involve joint military operations across land, sea, air, cyber, and space using advanced technology, particularly information technology.²³ China has adopted the phrase “informationization warfare” to describe this type of joint environment supported by advanced information technology.

Informationization. “The PLA is convinced that systems integration is more important than individual high-tech hardware. Informatization is thus singled out as the driving force for PLA transformation. This reflects a new understanding about the type of war the PLA expects to face in the future: even if the combat is between conventional platforms, **the key to victory is the IT systems.** The idea of adding numbers of platforms to enhance capabilities is obsolete. Therefore, INFOWAR is no longer seen as only one method of combat, but the dominant form and the core of all other types of military engagement. Nor is IT upgrading a matter of mere technical significance—it is now considered the lifeline of the PLA's survival.” (You Ji, “China’s Emerging National Defense Strategy,” *The Jamestown Foundation*, 2004.)

China’s emphasis on informationization is key to understanding its military capabilities. The idea of increasingly fielding more high-tech systems and integrating the use of those systems with its capabilities is a significant change for the PLA and an extremely important piece of information for those studying how China will fight.

The rest of this section will detail China’s capabilities as they pertain to specific categories. It is important to keep in mind the concept of informationization and understand that China is actively pursuing systems to advance each of the following capability categories.



Command and Control

At the national level there are four departments: the General Staff Department (GSD), the General Political Department (GPD), the General Logistics Department (GLD), and the General Armaments Department (GAD). Since there are not national military-level headquarters, these departments serve as a headquarters between the Central Military Commission and the forces commanded by the MRs and the services. As discussed above, the PLAA is completely controlled by the CCP. This control extends down to the lowest echelons with every company and higher level unit having *both* a PLA commander and a political officer who *jointly* command the unit.



Figure 2. Chinese soldiers learn how to use new command and control platform

Modernization efforts have affected the PLAA's ability to conduct command and control. This is primarily through increased training efforts at teaching young officers not only new C2 techniques, but also teaching them how to use new technology designed to enhance command and control capabilities.



Maneuver



Figure 3. 2006 motorized division exercise

The PLA Army is a maneuver force. Since the 1990s, China has prioritized fielding maneuver systems to the troops, pushing trucks down to all units in order to ensure the entire force was at least motorized. Recent modernization efforts have significantly increased the number of motorized and mechanized units, resulting in a significant growth in units with access to armored personnel carriers (APCs). Because of the PLA's heritage of light infantry, those on foot move fast and can maintain a pace of 25 miles per day.²⁴ This heritage has also caused the PLAA's maneuver tactics to emphasize rapid tactical action and movement. The PLAA prioritizes retaining sufficient freedom of maneuver in order to envelop enemy positions and attack from the front.

INFOWAR

China's INFOWAR capabilities are extremely robust but are primarily focused on protection and security measures and computer warfare. In 2011, China confirmed the existence of an online army unit that exists to boost the military's defense capabilities and improve Internet security.²⁵ Hackers from China routinely engage in cyberespionage targeting the US government, the US defense industry, and other privately held US companies. Hackers are often seeking access to intellectual property and other information in the search for strategic intelligence.

Chinese hackers from PLA unit 61398 are widely known to target US corporations and government information in order to collect intelligence data. It was recently discovered that the PLA hackers are intentionally targeting a very specific set of US companies—those involved with controlling the US power grid, gas lines, and water works. This indicates that the PLA may be vying for access to target the

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US homeland's utility systems. Targeting such systems while the US military is engaged in conflict in the Pacific region could result in serious issues on the homeland which in turn could upset the effectiveness of any US military campaign in the Pacific.

RISTA

China has placed significant emphasis on growing its RISTA capability and is estimated to be well on its way to having capabilities similar to the US.²⁶ China's RISTA capability is provided by its growing arsenal of UAVs and access to information from reconnaissance satellites. China's acquisitions and development efforts indicate that it is closely watching the US's use of unmanned devices for RISTA, and is replicating it. China's advancements in this area have been described as "alarming."²⁷ China's RISTA capability advancements demonstrate its attempts to dominate the information environment and fight informationization warfare.

On a tactical/operational level, the PLAA has been increasingly fielding systems designed to catch up with the Army's peers on the battlefield. For example, the PLAA does not have the same ability to conduct night operations as other countries. This is primarily due to the fact that PLAA forces are not all equipped with night vision goggles (NVGs) and they rarely train at night. As a result the PLAA is making an effort to increase training in this area.

Fire Support

One of the PLA's biggest capability strengths is its indirect fires. PLA doctrine uses fires as a means of bringing war to the enemy's territory. To this end, the PLA has placed significant emphasis on growing its artillery and missile arsenal. The PLA is likely to not only use its fire support assets as indirect fire support for conflicts that should arise on mainland China, but also as direct main force attacks on Taiwan, should conflict arise there. Saturated conventional missile attacks at military targets and communication hubs is assessed to be China's first move in the event of war breaking out with Taiwan.²⁸

Protection

As part of China's effort to make the PLA more mobile, it has begun procuring systems that also provide for better protection. While the Army's main battle tanks provide the most protection for soldiers on the field, new infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers are helping to increase protection force-wide. It should be noted, however, that these systems are not being procured for their protection capabilities, but rather for their mobility capabilities. Many of the systems are air-transportable and amphibious, characteristics that are given high priority by the PLA over heavy protective armor.

Logistics

Chronic resource shortages define the PLA Army's logistics capability, leaving it extremely weak in this area.²⁹ China has reorganized its units into brigades with more firepower and mobility, but it has not updated the logistics for those units, leaving them vulnerable.³⁰ Exercises have shown that the PLA needs to improve everything from combat uniformsⁱ and personal protective equipment, to transport

ⁱ PLA soldiers were just equipped with underpants with elasticated waistbands for the first time. Until recently, soldiers kept their underpants up with rope. (Peter Ford, "[What China's Army-issue underwear reveals](#)," *CS Monitor*, 8 December 2014.)



equipment and systemization of the logistics train. Properly feeding the troops is also a challenge for the PLA, especially for those in more remote areas. Resupplying ammunition is a challenge, so PLA soldiers tend to carry more ammo on their person than soldiers in other armies. China fully recognizes these issues and has publicized them,ⁱⁱ acknowledging that logistics is a force multiplier and without proper logistics the PLA will be unable to conduct sustained operations outside of China's borders.³¹

Air Defense

Air defense is a key mission area for the PLA. This is in part because it plays a significant role in China's A2/AD capability, but also because it plays a significant role in China's targeting "three attacks, three defends" strategy that emphasizes targeting stealth aircraft, cruise missiles, and attack helicopters while defending against electronic attacks, precision strikes, and reconnaissance efforts. To enable this strategy China has developed a national-level, integrated air defense system (IADS) capable of defending key strategic cities, borders, and various territorial claims. China's IADS is a multilayered defense composed of weapon systems, radars, and C4ISR platforms. China's IADS and recent air defense system acquisitions indicate that China's land-based air defense capability is robust.³²

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

China has placed great emphasis on increasing its UAV capability in recent years. It has begun fielding more UAVs to its PLAA units and is expected to use these systems for more than just reconnaissance. China is known to have procured UAVs capable of carrying missiles designed for ground attacks, such as the Harpy. In January 2015, details behind the design of a new UAV under development by a Chinese defense manufacturer gave indications that China's UAV capability is growing and improving. Modifications to the engines and air intake in this new design appear to be intended to make the UAV a stealth aircraft.³³

UAVs at a tactical level are still primarily small and short-range. They are being used to support tactical reconnaissance and to support artillery fire. In addition, these systems can be used for radio-delay and INFOWAR.

Special Purpose Forces

The PLAA is estimated to have around 14,000 SPF with one group assigned to each MR. China has prioritized development of these forces for the past twenty years and this has resulted in an SPF that is equipped with advanced technology, contains highly trained personnel, and is capable of being mobilized in the early stages of conflict to attack key personnel and infrastructure targets and to secure air facilities for use by follow-on forces.

The PLAA's SPF do not have the kind of air and naval assets available to US special operations forces (SOF) and, as a result, the PLAA's SPF has limited range and sustainability. SPF units train with regular force units and their equipment, not special equipment. It is assessed that most SPF operations would be conducted to support tactical or operational PLAA commanders.³⁴

ⁱⁱ In China's most recent white paper, released in May of 2015, it acknowledged its weakness and prioritized future development of its logistics capability.



Training

Because the PLAA lacks formal experience on the battlefield, it prioritizes training in order to give its combat units an element of experience. The PLAA's training program is a combination of force-on-force events, advanced simulation use, and practice using automated tools to aid in command decisions. The PLAA is taking its lessons learned from US conflicts and implementing them in their training program. As discussed above, these lessons learned have resulted in a shift in Chinese military planning and thought in addition to changes in Chinese PLAA training and doctrine. In 2009, China released updated tactics doctrine that reflects many of the lessons learned discussed in this TTR. PLAA training events are still working on implementing the new doctrine.

Chinese doctrine and military strategy assume that the PLAA will be the weak force in most encounters, so training events are designed to teach this to PLAA units and prepare them for this environment. This is partially reflected by the results of the PLAA's training events. The PLAA has a dedicated opposing force (OPFOR) brigade. It is often referred to as the "blue force" while the PLAA units are referred to as the "red force." The dedicated brigade is a professional force and recent training events indicate that it significantly challenges the PLAA training units.³⁵

Section 3: How the PLA Will Fight—Tactics and Techniques

This section of the TTR will detail the specifics of Chinese offensive and defensive tactical actions. It will first recount the Chinese doctrinal description of tactical actions, then provide four graphical representations of an analytical interpretation of sample tactical actions using [TC 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*](#) terminology and graphics.

Chinese doctrine outlines two basic tactical actions—offensive and defensive. It argues that while these two types of tactics are fundamentally different in nature, it is not possible to have one without the other. Thus, defensive actions only exist because there are offensive actions and conversely, with only the presence of defensive action and the absence of offensive action, the final objective of war can never be fully realized.³⁶

This statement demonstrates that Chinese military philosophy necessitates offensive action in order to achieve victory in war. Because of this, a key tenant of Chinese military action is "gaining initiative by striking first."³⁷ This applies to local wars and is a means of gaining initiative on the battlefield. Chinese military thought holds that not striking first causes the loss of momentum and creates the possibility of decisive defeat. This concept holds true for both offensive and defensive missions. Chinese doctrine requires that all defensive actions be planned and conducted with the aim of changing over to the offensive as quickly as possible.³⁸

PLA Doctrine

Offense

Chinese military doctrine holds that victory can only be won by attacking. This is a fundamental tactical principle that holds true for all echelons. PLA doctrine also states that victory is more likely with numerical superiority. The ratio of 3 to 1 is the minimum required, but much higher ratios, such as 10 to 1, are preferred.³⁹

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For the PLA, the key purpose of offensive action is to annihilate the enemy's effectiveness and occupy the enemy's important terrain and targets. To accomplish this, Chinese doctrine divides offensive tactical actions into offensive *operations patterns*. These patterns, or actions, have a number of basic tasks, the most important of which is annihilating the enemy.⁴⁰ Table 2 below details the three types of operations patterns and the eight basic tasks for offensive actions.

Chinese offensive doctrine also highlights key principles for offensive actions. These principles are: centralize strength to form superiority; conduct full-depth offensive, partition, encirclement, and annihilation; keep in mind the whole situation and attack the enemy's vital points; make changes in accordance with the situation and flexibly launch attacks; and fight a quickly decisive battle and annihilate the enemy through sudden and vigorous actions. The table below provides a description for each of these principles.

Table 2. PLA Army Offensive Tactics

| Offensive Operations Patterns | Basic Tasks |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Offensive operations toward the enemy in defense</i>• <i>Offensive operations toward the enemy not well-established</i>• <i>Offensive operations toward the enemy on the move</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Break through enemy positions</i>• <i>Eliminate the enemy in defense</i>• <i>Occupy important areas/targets</i>• <i>Attack/annihilate enemies in stagnation or on the move</i>• <i>Occupy the enemy's key depth points</i>• <i>Cut apart the enemy's operations disposition</i>• <i>Block the enemy's route of withdrawal and reinforcement</i>• <i>Contain and annihilate the enemy</i> |
| Key Principles in Offensive Operations | |
| <i>Centralize Strength to Form Superiority</i> | Use of organic and reinforced forces and weapons systems to create comprehensive superiority over the enemy in both quantity and quality and to form absolute superiority at a certain time in a local space. |
| <i>Conduct Full-Depth Offensive, Partition, Encirclement, and Annihilation</i> | Offensive actions should unfold simultaneously in the full depth of the enemy's dispositions in order to divide the enemy's forces in the shortest time possible and weaken the enemy to the point that containment and annihilation is possible. |
| <i>Keep in Mind the Whole Situation and Attack the Enemy's Vital Points</i> | Carry out prioritized attacks and focused assaults against key enemy targets based on knowledge of the enemy and the whole situation. |
| <i>Make Changes in Accordance with the Situation and Flexibly Launch Attacks</i> | Make adjustments according to change in battlefield conditions and use a variety of combat measures to strike at the enemy. |
| <i>Fight a Quickly Decisive Battle and Annihilate the Enemy through Sudden and Vigorous Actions</i> | Employ sudden, firm, quick, and continuous offensive actions to keep intense pressure on the enemy forces in order to ensure a positive outcome of the offensive action in the shortest time possible. |

Defense

Chinese doctrine views defensive tactics as a means of transitioning to the offense in order to secure victory. The PLA Army will assume the defense in order to: preserve friendly force strength, gain time, economize forces, consolidate captured objectives, hold key terrain, and cover a withdrawal.⁴¹

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The main purpose of defensive actions is to cause the enemy casualties, protect a key area or target, delay or foil the enemy's offensive, race against time, and preserve combat strength to set the stage for transition to the offense.⁴² To accomplish this, Chinese doctrine divides defensive actions into three operations patterns and identifies five basic tasks; see table 3 below.

Chinese defensive doctrine also identifies key principles for successful operations. These principles are full-depth, integrated defense; amassing strength to form focused resistance; close combination of protection, resistance, attack, and counterattack actions; and fight for initiative through firm and active actions. Table 3 provides a more detailed description of each of these principles.

Table 3. PLA Army Defensive Tactics

| Defensive Operations Patterns | Basic Tasks |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Positional Defense</i>• <i>Mobile Defense</i>• <i>Maneuver Defense</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Safeguard important areas or targets to foil the enemy's offensive</i>• <i>Block the enemy's reinforcement, breakthrough or retreats, and delay enemy actions</i>• <i>Suppress and attract the enemy to create favorable battle opportunities for annihilating the enemy or covering offensive actions of the main force</i>• <i>Consolidate occupied areas, resisting the enemy's counter-assault, or assure the flank safety of the main force</i>• <i>Cover the centralization, maneuver, transfer, or rest and reorganization of the main force</i> |
| Key Principles in Defensive Operations | |
| <i>Full-Depth, Integrated Defense</i> | Maximize use of the terrain and the capabilities of available friendly forces to conduct an integrated defense. |
| <i>Amassing Strength to Form Focused Resistance</i> | Centralize defensive forces to mass combat power and provide protection from the enemy's offense. Keep the forces maneuverable. |
| <i>Close Combination of Protection, Resistance, Attack, and Counterattack Actions</i> | Conduct close protection to preserve combat power, block the enemy's offensive tactics, and attrite its forces in order to prepare friendly forces for assuming offensive actions. |
| <i>Fight for Initiative through Firm and Active Actions</i> | Fight for local superiority in generally inferior circumstances by using forces flexibly, planning actions smartly, and applying tactics with imagination. |

Tactical Diagrams

The purpose of this section is to provide a picture of how the PLA Army will fight based on an analytical interpretation of the compilation of available PLA doctrine and intelligence community analytical assessments of the ground forces.

All diagrams are an analyst's rendition of what a PLA Army action could look like. None of the diagrams are pulled directly from Chinese doctrine,ⁱⁱⁱ but the actions, tasks, and principles that will be identified in the graphic or accompanying description will be. The diagrams will depict PLAA actions, tasks, and

ⁱⁱⁱ ACE Threats Integration's review of available Chinese doctrine revealed no known diagrams readily available.



principles using [TC 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*](#) terminology and graphics. There are four diagrams in this section: two offensive actions and two defensive actions. The graphics are titled according to the Chinese doctrinal action but also includes the TC 7-100.2 action equivalent in parentheses.

Tactical Offense: Offensive operations toward the enemy on the move (annihilation ambush)

In this first diagram, the PLA red force battalion is conducting an offensive action against a blue force company on the move. The red force comprises three infantry companies with two artillery platoons, a MANPAD platoon, and close air support tasked from higher. The battalion is conducting an annihilation ambush, in order to destroy the blue company's headquarters and combat service support.

This diagram is an example of a Chinese offensive operation toward an enemy on the move and the following Chinese doctrinal tasks are depicted: attack/annihilate the enemy on the move, cut apart the enemy's disposition, block the enemy's route of withdrawal and reinforcement, and contain and annihilate the enemy. Additionally, this graphic demonstrates three key offensive principles: conduct full-depth offensive, partition, encirclement, annihilation; keep in mind the whole situation and attack the enemy's vital points; and fight a quickly decisive battle and annihilate the enemy through sudden and vigorous actions.

Graphic Description: The blue force company, as part of a larger maneuver, is traveling along a main avenue of approach. The red force battalion, aware of the maneuver in advance, ambushes the company in order to destroy the headquarters element and the combat service support element. An observer post established to the east acts as an early warning system for the battalion. As the blue company moves west, the ambush element—two infantry companies and an attack helicopter—move into position and prepare to attack. When the headquarters element enters the kill zone, the ambush elements begin the attack. The ambush is supported by two support elements, an infantry platoon that engages the lead vehicles and an artillery platoon that targets the convoy with indirect fire. To stall reinforcements and protect the ambush elements, the battalion has three security elements, two infantry platoons, and an air defense platoon equipped with MANPADS.

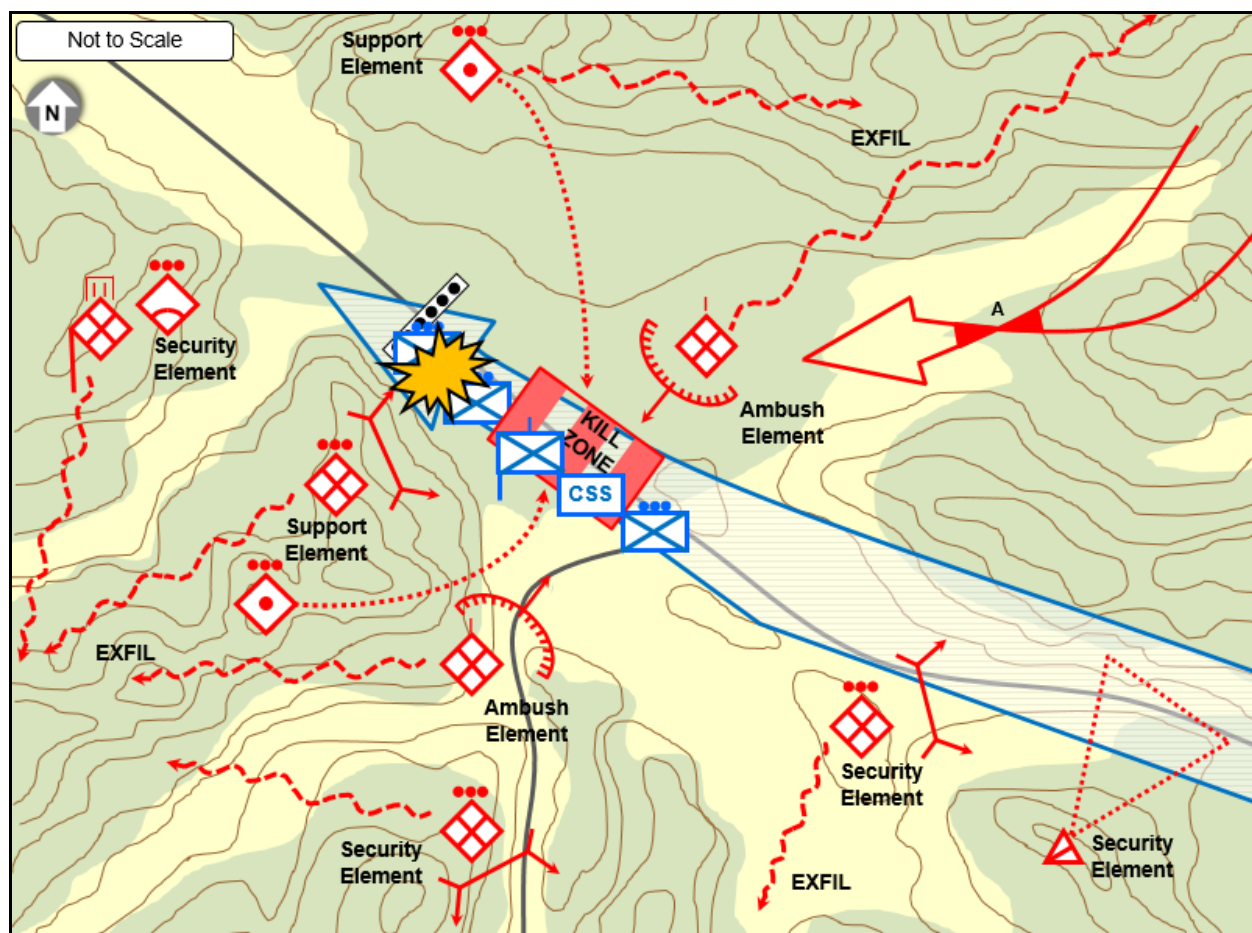


Figure 4. Tactical Offense: Offensive operations toward the enemy on the move (annihilation ambush)

Operational Offense: Offensive operations toward an enemy in the defense (integrated attack)

In this second diagram the PLA red force is an amphibious armored brigade attacking an island where a blue battalion is in the defense. The red force is comprised of three armored battalions, one mechanized infantry battalion, one artillery battery, one air defense company, and one SPF company. The brigade is divided into smaller forces in order to facilitate the commander's objective of destroying the blue force. This diagram is an example of a Chinese offensive operation toward an enemy in the defense and the following Chinese doctrinal tasks are depicted: eliminate the enemy in the defense, occupy important areas, annihilate enemies in stagnation, cut apart the enemy's disposition, block the enemy's route of withdrawal and reinforcement, and contain and annihilate the enemy. Additionally, this graphic demonstrates four key offensive principles: centralize strength; conduct full-depth offensive, partition, encirclement, and annihilation; keep in mind the whole situation and attack the enemy's vital points; and fight a quickly decisive battle and annihilate the enemy through sudden and vigorous actions.

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Graphic Description: The blue force battalion, in defense on an island with hilly terrain, is attacked by a red force amphibious brigade. The brigade has divided its assets into smaller forces in order to enable its main effort attack on the battalion's combat service support element. Three battalions of armor and three battalions of mechanized infantry are tasked with fixing the blue battalion's three defensive positions. They are supported by artillery fire. An additional fixing force, an attack helicopter, is tasked with fixing the blue battalion reserve. While the blue main defense force is fixed, an SPF company infiltrates to the enemy's rear in order to observe the combat service support element. With the area under observation and the enemy battalion's main defense forces fixed, the exploitation force—two armored battalions, an air defense platoon, and indirect fire from a naval vessel—seize initiative to attack and destroy the battalion's combat service support.

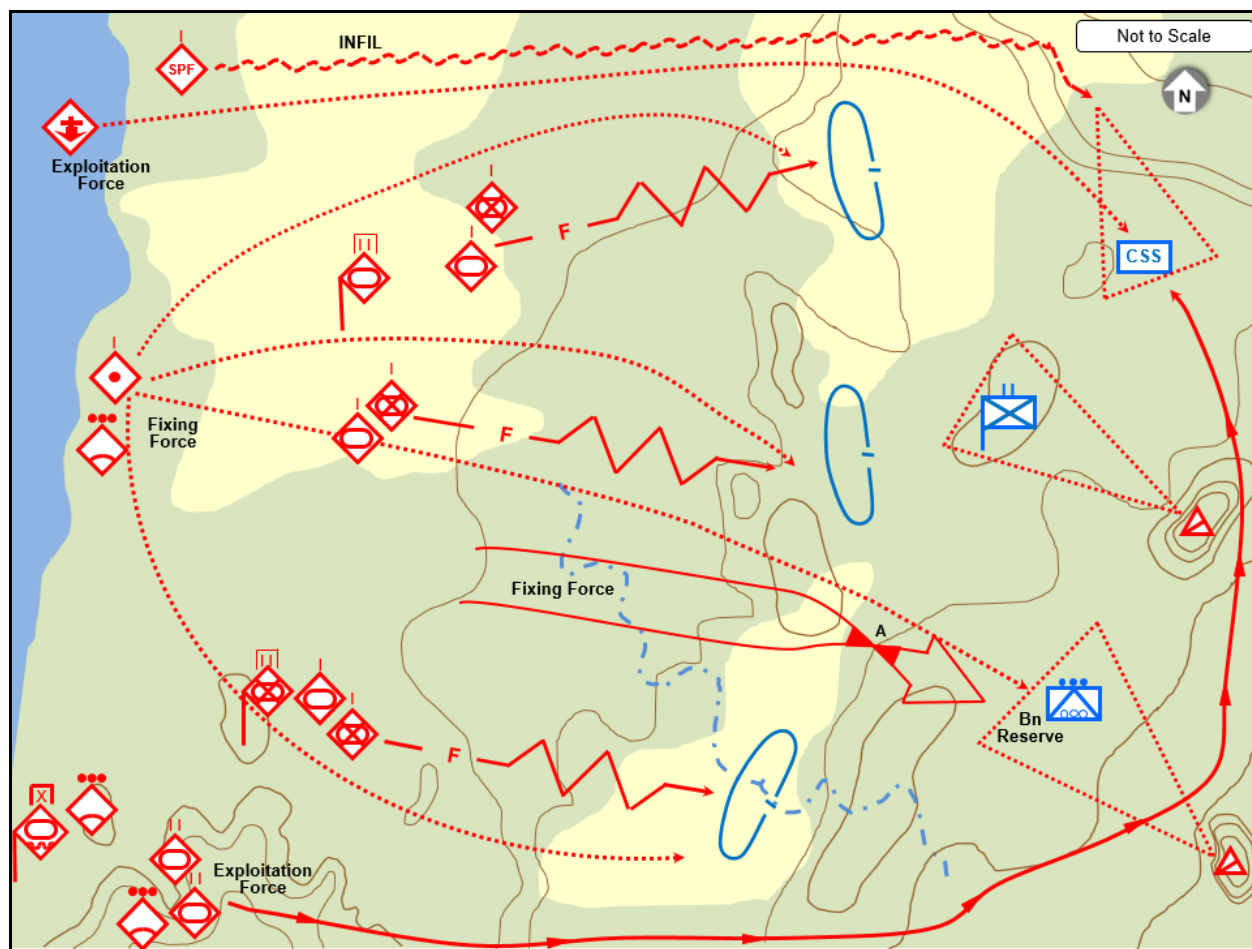


Figure 5. Operational Offense: Offensive operations toward the enemy in the defense (integrated attack)

Tactical Defense: Mobile defense (maneuver defense)

For this next diagram, the PLA red force, a motorized infantry battalion, is in the defense. The blue force is conducting an offensive action, attacking from two avenues. The red force elects to conduct a maneuver defense in order to inflict as many casualties as possible while preserving its own forces.

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This diagram is an example of a Chinese mobile defense and the following Chinese doctrinal tasks are depicted: suppress and attract the enemy to create favorable battle opportunities for annihilating the enemy and consolidate occupied areas. Additionally, this graphic demonstrates three key defensive principles: amassing strength to form focused resistance; close combination of protection, resistance, attack, and counterattack actions; and fight for initiative through firm and active actions.

Graphic description: A red force motorized infantry battalion is in the defense. In order to preserve its forces for a follow-on counterattack, the battalion elects to use the terrain to its advantage and conduct a maneuver defense. As the enemy approaches from the east, it will be engaged by the battalion's disruption elements (three combat security outposts (CSOPs), concealed in the forested terrain. While the disruption element is engaging the enemy, the battalion's artillery (tasked down from higher), fires on the enemy, targeting key components of the enemy's combat system. The artillery barrage and disruption element provide an opportunity for the main defense elements to engage the enemy. After hitting the enemy with max firepower, the contact elements, on order, move to preplanned defensive positions to the west. The main defense's shielding elements conduct ambushes along the enemy's route in order to delay the enemy and provide the necessary cover for the contact elements maneuver.

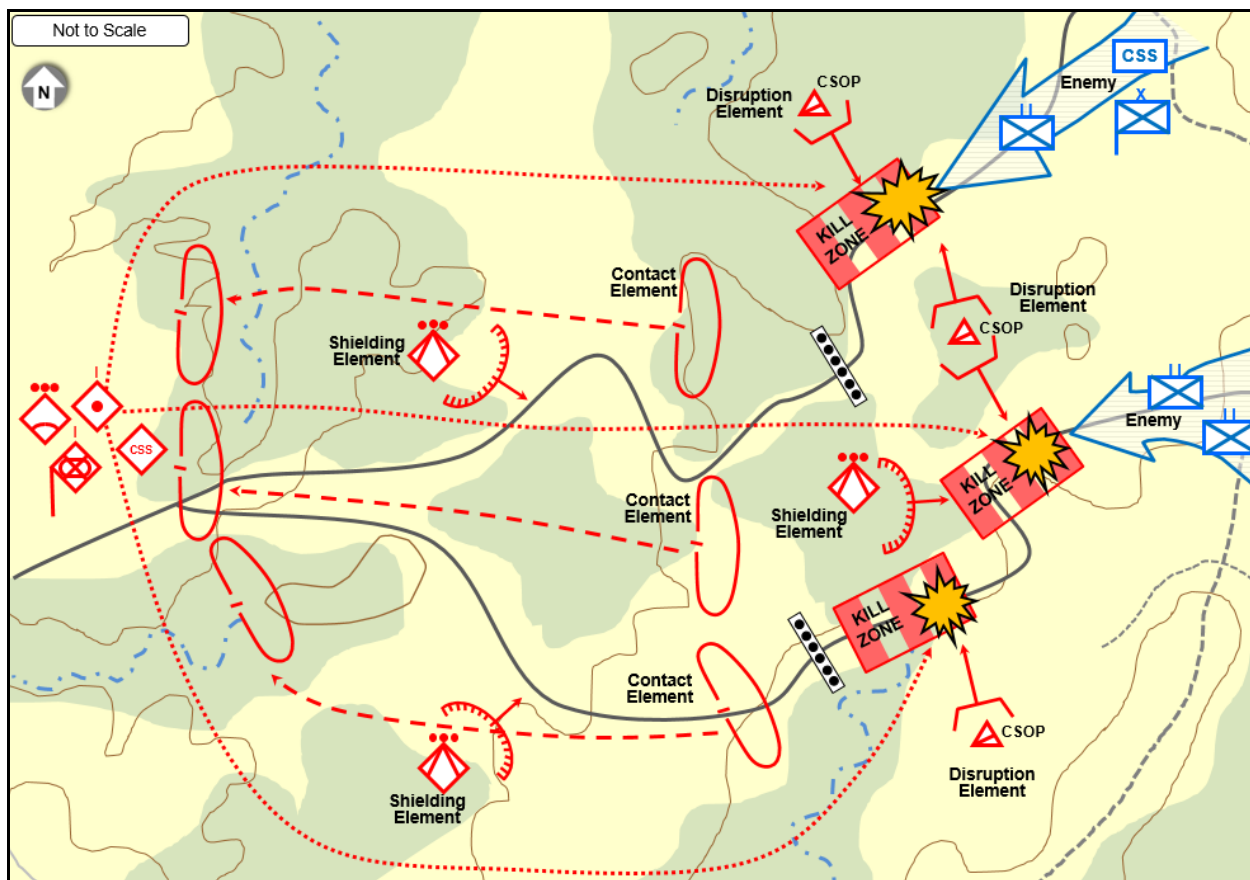


Figure 6. Tactical Defense: Mobile defense (Maneuver defense)



Operational Defense: Positional defense (area defense)

For this final diagram, the PLA red force, an amphibious armored brigade, is in the defense after seizing terrain. The blue force is attacking from the east. The red force elects to conduct an area defense in order to deny the enemy access to the recently seized terrain.

This diagram is an example of a Chinese *positional defense*, or area defense, and the following Chinese doctrinal tasks are depicted: safeguard important areas or targets, delay enemy actions, suppress and attract the enemy to create favorable battle opportunities for annihilating the enemy, and consolidate occupied areas. Additionally, this graphic demonstrates four key defensive principles: full-depth, integrated defense; amassing strength to form focused resistance; close combination of protection, resistance, attack, and counterattack actions; and fight for initiative through firm and active actions.

Graphic Description: A red force brigade consisting of three armored battalions and one mechanized infantry battalion, supported with one artillery battery, one air defense company, one SPF company, and close air support tasked from higher is in the defense. The force is protecting recently seized terrain. As the enemy approaches from the east, it is engaged by the brigade's disruption force. The disruption force has created three defensive positions in order to deceive the enemy into believing the main defense force is farther east than it actually is. The disruption force uses these positions to channelize the enemy. As the enemy progresses farther east, two disruption forces will block the enemy forces while the third disruption force will delay the enemy and on order begin movement back to the main defense force. The enemy, deceived into thinking the red force is retrograding, advances west and encounters the main defense force.

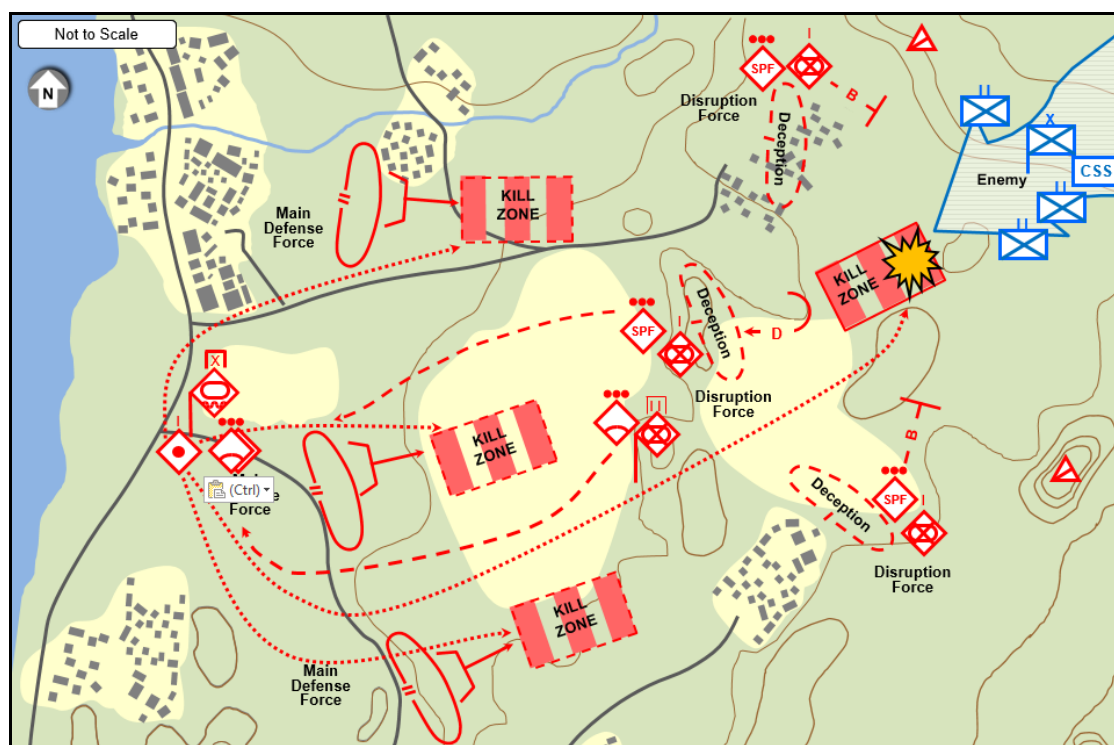


Figure 7. Operational Defense: Positional defense (area defense)



Section 4: PLA Army Weapons and Equipment

This section details a snapshot of the main types of weapons and equipment available in the Chinese arsenal. This section does not provide an exhaustive list, but rather includes the most common, most important, and most recently acquired systems available to China's PLA forces.

The PLAA's ground combat vehicles consist of main battle tanks, light tanks, and armored personnel carriers. The PLA is slowly modernizing these vehicles by replacing the oldest ones in service with newer, more modern systems. For its MBTs, the PLA still relies heavily on its Type 59 systems, first introduced to the PLA in the 1950s; however, these systems have been retrofitted and modernized with new weapon control system, infrared searchlights, and laser rangefinders.⁴³ The second most prolific tank type in the PLA is the Type 96. These tanks are considered part of China's second-generation battle tanks. Most recently China has been fielding the Type 99 MBT. This system is more enhanced than the majority of systems at the PLA's disposal, particularly because it is equipped with explosive reactive armor.⁴⁴ In addition to fielding more tank systems, the PLA is equipping its forces with armored personnel carriers (APCs) and infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), many of which are amphibious.

The PLA has a significant artillery arsenal and is believed to have more than 13,000 systems.⁴⁵ It is following its modernization trend of motorizing its forces by seeking out self-propelled systems for procurement and development. Some of the PLA's artillery pieces are specifically designed for anti-tank (AT) employment. The PLA's additional AT capability is found in its AT missile arsenal. Recent PLA exercises have demonstrated significant AT missile proficiency with capabilities such as fire-and-forget features and automatic self-guidance systems.⁴⁶

Table 4: Key PLA Army Weapons and Equipment

| Ground Combat Vehicles in Service | | Artillery Systems in Service | | AT/SAM Systems in Service | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|---------------------------|-----|
| Type 59 MBT | 2200 | 120mm Type 89 SP AT | 750 | HJ-9 SP AT | 400 |
| Type 96/96A | 2000 | 100mm Type 73 towed AT | 1300 | HJ-12 ATGM | UNK |
| Type 98A/99/99A | 640 | 152mm Type 54/66 towed | 2100 | SA-10 | UNK |
| Type 63/63C | 1650 | 122mm Type 54-1 towed | 3800 | HQ-16 SP SAM | UNK |
| Type 99/99A | 600 | 122mm Type 89 SP | 750 | HY-6 MANPADS | UNK |
| Type 86/86A AIFV | 1250 | 300/370mm AR3 MRLS | UNK | PGZ-07 SPAAG | UNK |
| Type 89 APC | 1500 | | | | |
| Type 92/92A/92B AIFV | 1850 | | | | |
| Type 04 AIFV | 750 | | | | |

The PLA Army is well prepared to conduct air defense. Air defense units are equipped with anti-aircraft guns, self-propelled anti-aircraft guns (SPAAGs), self-propelled gun-missiles, and surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems.⁴⁷



Table 5: PLA Army Aviation Assets

| Rotary Wing Aircraft in Service | | Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Service | |
|------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| WZ-10 Attack Helicopter | 60+ | ASN-15 (hand launched) | UNK |
| Z-9 Family Attack Helicopters | 255 | ASN-104/ASN-105 | UNK |
| Z-19 Attack Helicopter | 48+ | ASN-206 | UNK |
| Mi-17 Family Transport Helicopters | 202+ | | |

The PLA Army's aviation capabilities are primarily made up of attack and transport helicopters and UAVs. The PLAA has been dramatically increasing the number of aircraft at its disposal, both manned and unmanned systems. China's increased procurement of transport helicopters is indicative of China's efforts to make the PLAA more maneuverable. China's increased purchases of attack helicopters is indicative of the PLAA's intention to utilize close air support during tactical engagements. The PLAA is estimated to have more than 300 unmanned systems currently in service. These systems are used for short-range reconnaissance missions and to support artillery targeting.⁴⁸

It is important to note that despite extensive modernization efforts and significant procurement of modern platforms, more than half of the PLAA is still equipped with dated technology. The PLAA has attempted to mitigate this weakness by upgrading the dated technology with after-market upgrades. While these upgrades make the platform itself more capable in general, particularly versus a tier 3 or 4 enemy, it does not make it capable versus a better-equipped enemy.

Section 5: Conclusion

Currently, there are no open source US government products that detail the PLAA. This product is designed to fill that gap and provide the training community with a snapshot look at conditions that shape China's operational environment, and a detailed look at the PLAA's military capabilities, tactics, and techniques.

As has been featured in this report, China has prioritized the modernization of its military in an effort to increase its capabilities and refine its tactics and techniques. Chinese leadership has placed this emphasis on its military because it believes a strong military is essential to achieving great power status and critical to preventing other countries from damaging Chinese national interests.⁴⁹

China holds a unique position in US foreign affairs because it is seen as a partner and a threat at the same time. This unique position exists because Chinese national interests are often times in line with those of the US. However, they are just as often in contradiction to the US. It is these areas of contradiction that should be of particular interest to the US training community. While China may not pose an immediate direct threat to the US and its interests today, its actions can create the potential for future threats to US national interests.

China recognizes this situation, and while professing to be following a peaceful rise, still takes steps to prepare its military to fight in an environment where the US may be present. Its military trains against what are perceived to be US tactics and techniques while the government prioritizes acquisition of systems designed to counter the US's technological overmatch. Understanding this dynamic in a global

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context and understanding the specifics of the PLAA’s capabilities and tactics makes the US Army more prepared for any and all contingencies.

REAL-WORLD CONDITIONS APPLIED TO TRAINING

The [TC 7-100 Hybrid Threat series](#), the [Decisive Action Training Environment \(DATE\)](#), and the [Worldwide Equipment Guide](#) provide training resources for applying real-world conditions to training. The tactics used by the Chinese PLAA can be found as part of the composite threat model that exists in the hybrid threat doctrine series. The PLAA uses principles of offense and defense very similar to those present in [TC 7-100.2, Opposing Force Tactics](#). Additionally, the operational environment outlined in the DATE also includes characteristics of the PLAA and the Chinese OE.

Replication in Training

Of the countries in the DATE, the one that can most realistically replicate China is Donovia. Like China, Donovia is a country intent on growing its national power through diplomatic and military means. Recent years of economic growth have enabled Donovia to focus on its military development and increase its capabilities. Donovia is not a complete representation of China however due to how its military is equipped. In order to portray China in a training environment, Donovia’s military equipment would need to be downgraded to tier 2 and tier 3 systems; Donovia’s integrated air defense system (IADS) could remain tier 1.

All four of the PLAA’s tactics graphically depicted in this report can be found in [TC 7-100.2, Opposing Force Tactics](#). For more information on how to replicate these actions, reference the TC 7-100.2. For information on how to build a force structure to conduct these actions, reference [TC 7-100.4, Hybrid Threat Force Structure Organization Guide](#) (Chapter 3, Section VIII “Building an OPFOR Order of Battle”). The table below contains excerpts from the TC 7-100.2 that define the tactical actions discussed in this report.

Table 6. Excerpts from TC 7-100.2 Opposing Force Tactics

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Offensive Operations toward an Enemy on the Move (Annihilation Ambush)</i> | 3-151. The purpose of an <i>annihilation ambush</i> is to destroy the enemy force. These are violent attacks designed to ensure the enemy’s return fire, if any, is ineffective. Generally, this type of ambush uses the terrain to the attacker’s advantage and employs mines and other obstacles to halt the enemy in the kill zone. The goal of the obstacles is to keep the enemy in the kill zone throughout the action. Using direct, or indirect, fire systems, the support element destroys or suppresses all enemy forces in the kill zone. It remains in a concealed location and may have special weapons, such as antitank weapons. |
|--|---|

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| | |
|---|--|
| Offensive Operations towards an Enemy in the Defense (Integrated Attack) | 3-64. <i>Integrated attack</i> is an offensive action where the OPFOR seeks military decision by destroying the enemy's will and/or ability to continue fighting through the application of combined arms effects. Integrated attack is often employed when the OPFOR enjoys overmatch with respect to its opponent and is able to bring all elements of offensive combat power to bear. It may also be employed against a more sophisticated and capable opponent, if the appropriate window of opportunity is created or available. |
| Mobile Defense (Maneuver Defense) | 4-62. In situations where the OPFOR is not completely overmatched, it may conduct a tactical <i>maneuver defense</i> . This type of defense is designed to achieve tactical decision by skillfully using fires and maneuver to destroy key elements of the enemy's combat system and deny enemy forces their objective, while preserving the friendly force. Maneuver defenses cause the enemy to continually lose effectiveness until he can no longer achieve his objectives. They can also economize force in less important areas while the OPFOR moves additional forces onto the most threatened axes. |
| Positional Defense (Area Defense) | 4-85. In situations where the OPFOR must deny key areas (or the access to them) or where it is overmatched, it may conduct a tactical area defense. Area defense is designed to achieve a decision in one of two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By forcing the enemy's offensive operations to culminate before he can achieve his objectives. • By denying the enemy his objectives while preserving combat power until decision can be achieved through strategic operations or operational mission accomplishment. |

Additional considerations for replicating China in training environments would be replicating China's capabilities in five key areas. These areas are INFOWAR, RISTA, fire support, air defense, and SPF. China's capabilities in these five areas have received significant emphasis and growth in the past several decades resulting in capabilities worthy of replicating in training environments. The chart below details how training centers could replicate a capability comparable to China's.

Table 7. How to use doctrine to replicate China

| Capability (What) | Actor/Order of Battle (Who) | Tactic (How) |
|-------------------|--|--|
| INFOWAR | Donovia has an INFOWAR brigade (section 2C-9 of the DATE) that can be used to for INFOWAR replication. | TC 7-100.2 <i>Opposing Force Tactics</i> Chapter 7 FM 7-100.1 <i>Opposing Force Operations</i> Chapter 5 To replicate China: Highlight strategic INFOWAR operations discussed in the FM. |
| RISTA | Donovia has a very robust RISTA capability with a dedicated command. The order of | TC 7-100.2 <i>Opposing Force Tactics</i> Chapter 8 FM 7-100.1 <i>Opposing Force Operations</i> Chapter 6 |

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| Capability (What) | Actor/Order of Battle (Who) | Tactic (How) |
|---------------------|---|--|
| | battle of this command can also be found in the DATE section 2C-9. | To replicate China: Place emphasis on satellite RISTA capabilities. |
| Fire Support | Donovia has a very powerful fire support capability. Its units are equipped with tier 1 fire support. To replicate China, a training center could use Donovia's fire support orders of battle, however the systems would need to be reduced to tier 2 capability. | TC 7-100.2 <i>Opposing Force Tactics</i> Chapter 9 FM 7-100.1 <i>Opposing Force Operations</i> Chapter 7 To replicate China: Make prolific use of "annihilation fire." |
| Air Defense | Donovia has a robust air defense capability made of primarily tier 1 systems. Donovanian air defense units can be used to replicate China's air defense assets. | TC 7-100.2 <i>Opposing Force Tactics</i> Chapter 11 FM 7-100.1 <i>Opposing Force Operations</i> Chapter 9 To replicate China: Highlight missile systems. |
| SPF | China has placed great emphasis on growing its SPF capability in recent years and Donovia's SPF capability can sufficiently represent China's. | TC 7-100.2 <i>Opposing Force Tactics</i> Chapter 15 FM 7-100.1 <i>Opposing Force Operations</i> Chapter 13 To replicate China: Highlight amphibious and airborne operations discussed in the FM. |

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Related Products

See the [Red Diamond Newsletter](#), which contains current articles on a variety of topics useful to both soldiers and civilians ranging from enemy tactics and techniques to the nature and analysis of various threat actors.

For detailed information on weapons and equipment, see the [Worldwide Equipment Guide](#).

To see more products from TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration, visit the Army Training Network (ATN) with CAC access: https://atn.army.mil/dsp_template.aspx?dplD=377.

POC

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Table and Figure Credits

Table 1. PLA Army Combat Unit Roll-up. Source: Source: "China – Army – Armed Forces Structure," *Military Periscope*, 1 February 2015; "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, 2015," Office of the Secretary of Defense, 07 April 2015.

Table 2. PLA Army Offensive Tactics. Source: Cui Yafeng, "Science of Army Operations," *PLA Press*, June 2009.

Table 3. PLA Army Defensive Tactics. Source: Cui Yafeng, "Science of Army Operations," *PLA Press*, June 2009.

Table 4. Key PLA Army Weapons and Equipment. Source: "China – Army – Armed Forces Structure," *Military Periscope*, 1 February 2015.

Table 5. PLA Army Aviation Assets. Source: "China – Army – Armed Forces Structure," *Military Periscope*, 1 February 2015.

Table 8. Excerpts from TC 7-100.2 *Opposing Force Tactics*. Source: TC 7-100.2 *Opposing Force Tactics*.

Table 9. How to use doctrine to replicate China. Source: TC 7-100.2 *Opposing Force Tactics*.

Figure 1. China's Military Regions and Group Army Locations. Source: "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, 2014," *Office of the Secretary of Defense*, 24 April 2012.

Figure 2. Chinese soldiers learn how to use new command and control platform. Source: Asia Studies Detachment Report, 2015.

Figure 3. 2006 Motorized Division Exercise. Source: [PLA's Motorized Division Launches War Exercise](#), 2006.

Figure 8. Tactical Offense: Offensive operations toward the enemy on the move (Annihilation ambush). Source: Analyst Interpretation.

Figure 9. Operational Offense: Offensive operations toward the enemy in the defense (Integrated Attack). Source: Analyst Interpretation.

Figure 10. Tactical Defense: Mobile defense (Maneuver defense). Source: Analyst Interpretation.

Figure 11. Operational Defense: Positional defense (Area defense). Source: Analyst Interpretation.

Endnotes

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