

Abstract

At the Third Plenum of the 18th Communist Party Congress from November 9-12, 2013 China's new leadership that took over in late 2012 announced the formation of a new National Security Commission, apart from reorganising the economic sector of the country. These two issues - reorganising China's policy structures into two main modularised priority entities in economic and security domains - are expected to last at least till the next decade and beyond. In early 2014, it was announced that the new leader Xi Jinping will head this Commission, in addition to his duties as General Secretary of the Communist Party, President of the republic, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Apart from consolidation of Xi Jinping with this new post, the debate about this new institution itself puts the issue of national security once again to the fore in China today. This is in the light of innumerable challenges to the leadership ranging from internal to external at a time when China is poised to be the largest economy in the world by the next decade. This article looks at the national security issues that are affecting China today and the responsive apparatus in place, and the efforts made by the leadership recently to cope with such challenges.

Introduction

China's national security considerations in the recent period are varied in nature and indicate to their diversification in both military and non-military aspects.¹ National security in the People's Republic of China (PRC) is in many ways different from most other countries. National security is of utmost importance to the country's leadership given its mandate drawn from the Communist Party (CCP) and State Constitutions. In China's set-up, the armed forces (the People's Liberation Army - PLA) - including the paramilitary forces (the People's Armed Police Force-PAPF) - also occupy a special place as they contributed to bringing the CCP to power in 1949. With 80-odd million cadres electing the leadership at the national, provincial and at other levels, political stability and security remain the watchwords. National security of China also encompasses domestic stability including at the political, ethnic, economic and other related levels and also ways to counter any external intervention.² It includes ways to counter other countries as well in case of a territorial dispute with neighbours or based on the China's leadership's current threat assessment. Broadly, then China's national security encompasses both domestic and external dimensions, and includes subjects such as internal control mechanisms, foreign policy, economic, information and other subjects.³

Geo-political Context

China's national security is linked to the country's geo-political settings, issues inherited from the past, links to the periphery especially, as these are linked to the sovereignty issues and connections of the ethnic minorities with neighbouring regions, perceptions of the leadership on the emerging threats and intentions. China's geo-political context had to an extent influenced the country's security aspects, in addition to the leadership's changing perceptions and the ways to tackle such challenges. Briefly, the geographical context had resulted in several trials and tribulations for various Chinese dynasties - such as the debilitating attacks from the North from Mongolia, resulting in the powers-that-be constructing the Great Wall (although not built in one decade or even a century but under different periods). The geographical context had also partly cushioned China from outside influences after the peripheries where the ethnic minorities willy-nilly accepted the overall Chinese rule.⁴ Also, it was only once that the Chinese historically thought of venturing out on the high seas during the Ming Dynasty and indicates the continental mindset during the historical period. Since the reform programme was launched in the late 1970s, the PRC is in the process of going beyond its borders and also to the high seas with implications not only for India but to other countries as well. The current context of China can be summarised as follows:-

- (a) Two-thirds of China's territory is populated by the 55 minorities; hence the imperative of preventing any prospect of 'split' in the Five China's (Tibet, Mongolia, Xinjiang, Manchuria and Greater Han China) and the official emphasis on the 'Unity of Motherland.'
- (b) The Opium Wars of 1842 and 1856, and the 1894 defeat in the Sino-Japanese war exposed China's vulnerability in the maritime domain. China's current maritime trade is nearly 70 per cent of its gross domestic product; hence the leadership's emphasis on securing her maritime interests.
- (c) Imperatives of Globalisation resulting in dependence on expansion of trade, investments, resources supply and connectivity with neighbours.⁵

While the above have contributed in shaping the geo-political imperatives of current China, the following could be broadly identified as having significant influence on the Chinese leadership:-

- (a) Sovereignty and territorial disputes with 14 land neighbours and 6 maritime neighbours - land borders mostly resolved, except with India and Bhutan while maritime disputes have become volatile.
- (b) Ethnic connections with the neighbourhood - Mongols (with pan-Mongolian connections to Outer Mongolia), Uighurs (present from Turkey to Central Asian neighbours of China), Tibetans (with links to Nepal, Bhutan and India), Dai and others across the peripheries along the Southeast Asian region.
- (c) Assertion for geo-political space by China is part of a complex competition with several contending actors and has both regional and global dimensions.
- (d) Imperatives of development and rise of China - Comprehensive National Power; global access to natural resources, markets, investments, trade etc.⁶

Yet, the leadership of China, till about the reforms were launched, consciously avoided explicitly articulating the national interests as the left ideological trend continued till the passing away of first generation of leaders. Indeed, Yan Xuetong points out that the 12th CCP Congress in 1982 for the first time in the history of the PRC had specifically mentioned 'national interests.'⁷ The national interests of China which have a bearing on the foreign and security policies as well as domestic determinants for the foreseeable future, include the following, according to the then State Councillor Dai Bingguo's July 28, 2009 statement on China's core interests:-⁸

- (a) Maintenance of its fundamental system and state security.
- (b) Protection of state sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- (c) Stable development of the economy and society.

Yan Xuetong suggested that China's national interests should also include : international environment, national power, the level of technology and subjective understanding of the world.

In the current post-Cold War environment, Yan suggested certain new phenomenon should be factored in, including:-

- (a) Militarily peaceful but economically intensely competitive.
- (b) International economic environment including export of products, technology, labour, investments and tourism etc.
- (c) Security environment seeks to avoid war.
- (d) Political interests emphasise complete sovereignty.
- (e) Cultural interests.

Overall, according to Yan, China's objectives include:-

- (a) Short-term - core interests of the state.
- (b) Medium term - economic development.
- (c) Long-term - ideology (socialism/independence).

To protect these interests, China's leadership had made several efforts including in the diplomatic, military and security policies in the past and had been preparing for the future to tackle challenges to its perceived security interests, both domestic as well as external. Thus, several of the wars that China waged with its neighbours are related to the territorial disputes including with India in 1962, the then Soviet Union in 1969 and Vietnam in 1979; while its entry into the Korean War in the early 1950s was to protect its perceived peripheral security; and on Taiwan in the two crises of 1958 and 1995-96 as part of its claim on Taiwan. It is likely that in future, China will further consolidate its position on its perceived geo-political interests. These are likely to include the following:-

- (a) Ways and means to expand the natural geographical barriers of the heartland (Han China which includes one-third of densely populated Han Chinese in the central and eastern parts of the country) and thereby; control and dominate the frontier regions (two-third of China's landmass, mainly populated by ethnic minorities of Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, etc. and beyond into Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia and the Korean Peninsula in the land frontiers through the Western Development Programme and,
- (b) Make concerted entry into the maritime domains in East and South China Seas to finally execute its two ocean strategy of control of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.⁹

To pursue the above, China has been following several policies in the diplomatic, political, strategic, economic and military domains and achieving many of the above goals. China also has to ward off challenges to the Han unity reflected in globalisation, migration and 'mass incident' protests by advocating neo-Confucianism, harmonious society, etc. In addition, since the ethnic minorities are dispersed (Uighurs from Turkey to Central Asia; Tibetans in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Dai people in South East Asia, Mongols in Mongolia, Koreans across the Northeast and Korean peninsula), China has to exert diplomatic pressures on the neighbouring countries and bind them within the 'One China' and 'three evils' (i.e., opposing separatism, extremism and splittism) discourse. While major challenges for China in the recent historical period came from the seas (the debilitating Opium Wars of 1842 and 1856), today China is overcoming the 'century of humiliation' and building a potent 'blue water' navy.

Towards north and northwest, China had always faced challenges to its national security from Russia, Mongolia and Central Asian Republics in the continental domain. While traditionally, China considered Mongolia as a part of the Chinese empire - given the background of the Yuan and Qing dynasties - after the Soviet Union declared Outer Mongolia as a republic, China came to terms with the existence of Mongolia since the 1940s, although the CCP quickly established the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region even before the formation of the PRC. One main consideration behind Chinese efforts to secure and stabilise borders with Mongolia is to avoid any suspicions and tensions between the two sides given the historical nature of their relations. Specifically, given the equations between Inner Mongolia and Mongolia over a period of time, the security of Inner Mongolia is uppermost for the Chinese leadership. Cross-border movements suffered as both sides entered into a cold war following the Soviet skirmishes with China in the 1960s through 1980s. While Mongolia is sparsely populated (with less than 3 million), Inner Mongolia, on the other hand has more than 20 million inhabitants. Any generation of common identities between the two could pose concerns for the Chinese leadership. China is wary of the Mongolian Democratic Party's stance on "Greater Mongolia" agenda of "Uniting the Three Mongolias" [of Mongols in Mongolia, Inner Mongolia (in China) and Mongolian Buryatskaya (in

Russia]).10 When a call for forming “Inner Mongolian People’s Party” was made at Princeton University in March 1997, China’s concerns increased. To curb such pan-Mongolian nationalist movements, China is said to have followed a policy of expanding economic contacts with Mongolia, in addition to tying down the latter with legal guarantees and multilateral processes, and counter-terrorism efforts.¹¹

As a part of this strategy, China has insisted that Mongolia denounce “three evils” issue [viz., separatism, extremism and splittism]. This is a legal strategy that China started coinciding with the September 11 events in the USA. This is a strategy to counter challenges to China from groups in Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia. The Mongolian leaders today have announced their support to the Chinese position on “splittist” phenomenon and oppose Inner Mongolian splinter groups position on nationalism.

To create more concrete stakes and bring about stability between the two regions, China has initiated annual economic cooperation meetings between Inner Mongolia and Mongolia. Specific areas of cooperation were identified in these meetings and both sides resolved to focus on mining, ports and transportation networks with a majority of such work initiated by the Chinese side. Baotou Steel, for instance has plans for extensive mining operations in Mongolia. As a part of this effort, railway networks are also being strengthened. On connectivity, China launched several programmes of roads and railways. One such project was launched in 2007 to connect Mongolia to a sea port in China. Three phases of railway lines have commenced between Inner Mongolia, Mongolia and Russia. These include:-

- (a) 487-km long railway line from Xinqiu (Fuxin City in Liaoning Province) to Bayan Ul in northern Inner Mongolia at a cost of \$790 million and to be completed by 2010. This line is to handle 12 million tonnes of coal in three to five years and 25 million tonnes in five to ten years and 35 million tonnes in 15 years
- (b) 230 km long line from Bayan Ul northward to Zhuengadabuqi Port, on the border of Mongolia.
- (c) The third section would stretch northward to Choibalsan City in Mongolia, where it would join the railway to Russia’s Borzya.

Further, towards the western regions of the country, controlling ethnic unrest in Xinjiang is another primary concern for China in its interactions with the Central Asian Republics as pan-Turkic movements spread throughout these regions. As a sovereignty and territorial-integrity related issue in China’s foreign policy, issues related to Xinjiang garner high priority for the country. This has also, in the post-9/11 global consensus, taken the form of countering terrorism in the region. Inter-linked to this phenomenon is the urge to control drug-trafficking routes in the Afghanistan-Central Asian Region as it was reported in the last decade that drug cultivation, export and seizures have increased, including in China.

With Central Asia, China borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In 1999 all these disputes were resolved. With Kazakhstan, China’s disputed area amounted to about 944 sq km across the 1,700 km border. With a reported 57: 43 percent (i.e., 57 percent to Kazakhstan and 43 percent to China) formula a border deal was signed. Kyrgyzstan – China have a border dispute over 1,110 km. This was also resolved in 1999 but negotiations may reopen as no demarcation on the 150,000 hectares of land was made. China-Tajikistan resolved the land dispute over 400 km of border.¹²

While these disputes were resolved, some uncertainty prevails. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, several deputies of Kyrgyzstan Legislative Assembly called for the annulment of the border agreements signed with China in 1996 and 1999 that ceded Kyrgyz territory to China. It was reported that the transcript of the agreement details, tape recordings of the session, etc could not be traced in Bishkek. Consequently, the Kyrgyz government proposed to the Chinese government that the process of demarcation of the border be postponed. Nevertheless, on the whole, China’s border with these Central Asian states is relatively tranquil. China was also able to transform regional dynamics by engaging with the region in geo-energy politics and geo-economic integration.

While China had been able to relatively stabilise its western borders through a series of diplomatic and military measures (including “Peace Mission” counter-terrorism exercises with Central Asia and Russia), security challenges to the country remain unabated. While Taiwan had been identified as number one security challenge to the country since 1949, recent period saw a re-configuration in the country’s security challenges. China’s national security since the 2012 White Paper on National Defence was issued emphasised on countering “three evils” which broadly suggest challenges for China in Xinjiang and Tibet. The white paper termed these as the “biggest challenge” to the country. [See Appendix for the changing security discourse between 1995-2012]. This white paper, released on April 16, 2013 is China’s eighth white paper on defence with passages on national security environment and efforts made by China to counter these. The main purpose of this paper is to convey to the world China’s intentions, security perceptions and military capabilities to counter these challenges, enhance the country’s transparency as it became the second largest economy in the world; and broadly to drive out any negative image of the country in the international community. The previous seven white papers have reflected on these as well; and the current one continues to inform the international community about China’s perspectives on the security situation at the global and regional levels. The main thrust of this white paper is to suggest that the PLA is itching to go far away from China’s landmass to protect and expand China’s objectives and interests abroad.

The distinctive features of this paper, in comparison to the previous ones of this genre, include a self-declaratory announcement that China will play a significant role internationally “commensurate with China’s international standing” (after this phrase was inserted in the November 2012, 18th Party Congress of the CCP which brought in the new leadership of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang), critique of United States rebalancing postures in the Asia-Pacific (in the light of the debates in the Obama-1 Administration), elaborations for the first time on conventional force structures and personnel, military exercises, unambiguous positions to carry forward pan-theatre military capabilities (even overseas operations such as the Chinese military conducted in Egypt and Libya), “joint[ly] safeguard the security of the international SLOC” (in the Gulf of Aden), a new task for the PLA of “safeguarding the peaceful labour of the Chinese people”; and finally the resolve to construct river projects across Yarlung Zangpo river in Tibet.¹³

This paper reiterated the country's independent foreign policy [See Appendix]; while it stated that the PLA will wage a local war under informationisation, and opposed to neo-interventionism, hegemony and power politics [generally attributed by China to the US], the naval and air forces as "strategic" forces (in addition to the traditional roles of the Second Artillery) and the like.

In this context, China views incidents related to the Uighur activism in Xinjiang and elsewhere as incidents of terrorism. To counter these, China had adopted several strategies. With the Central Asian Republics and Russia, China had conducted Peace Mission exercises annually with mainly counter-terrorism as the scenarios. China also conducted such counter-terrorism missions, of different magnitudes, with the US, the UK, France, Pakistan, India and others. It had participated in the post-September 11 global coalition on counter-terrorism in intelligence sharing, curbing illegal financial flows and the UN mandated missions. While China focused on this issue mainly in the continental spheres – especially in its western regions, it is also aware of the maritime dimensions of terrorism. Indeed, terrorism could also pose serious challenges to SLOC attacks on oil and gas tankers, blowing up of ports or hostage taking incidents.¹⁴

After the reform programme was initiated since the late 1970s, smuggling of goods to and from China increased substantially. Smuggled items include art relics, counterfeit currency and identity cards, cigarettes, drug and human trafficking, ivory, money laundering and small arms. Complicating the curbing of these activities is the rampant corruption among the ranks of the local customs, police and the military forces that are seen as abetting such crimes. In this context, the cases of Yang Kaiqing, a former truck driver in the army, General Ji Shengde (son of General Ji Pengfei) in the notorious multi-billion Yuanhua smuggling syndicate, involvement of triads and others can be cited.¹⁵

China intends to reform its domestic legislation and security apparatus. Countering piracy, drug trafficking, smuggling, terror-related incidents etc. are now being tackled by the Ministry of Public Security. It has an estimated 50 patrol boats and 2,000 mobile patrol teams in the coastal regions to counter piracy. Also, roles were assigned to the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Land and Resources and local governments. In addition, the China Maritime Safety Administration pitches in with counter-piracy combat missions. However, it was felt that these forces were inadequate to deal with the vast maritime territory.¹⁶ In March 2013, China established a National Oceanic Administration by merging four maritime units - including the coast guard, organisation related to fisheries and anti-smuggling forces – for effective law enforcement duties.¹⁷

National Security Apparatus

For a country that identifies sharply its enemies and friends the security apparatus should be all-encompassing and effective with swift coordination among the constituent units. However, while the PRC inherited and gradually reformed the security apparatus over decades, the organisational set-up still needed to be updated. The security challenges have also become more diversified and complicated in the recent period with non-traditional security challenges mushrooming. The traditional institutional responses have been found quite inadequate to tackle these challenges and the old institutional structures needed to be reformed in the recent period.

While the PLA (and its predecessor Red Army of Workers and Peasants from 1927) helped the CCP to win battles against the Nationalist Kuomintang Party, establish and consolidate internally the PRC since 1949, it had acquired on the whole external missions of protecting sovereignty and territorial integrity. Even though many a time the PLA was directed to counter internal enemies of the CCP, its main missions remained external. To respond to the internal security challenges China had set up the Peoples Armed Police Force (PAPF) on June 19, 1982 with military and security missions.¹⁸ Broadly, its duties include protecting national security, life and property, curbing sabotage, defending social security, guarding installations, border and coastal defence, fire fighting, traffic, water conservation, power, gold mining, forest and transportation, etc. During peace time, the Ministry of Public Security exercises jurisdiction since 1987 over this force while in war time the Central Military Commission (CMC) exercises control for battlefield security, counter-infiltration duties etc.¹⁹ The August 2009 law of China provided the PAPF with legal powers to intervene to maintain law and order in the country. The PAPF has more than 1.5 million troops including 14 mobile divisions with about 100,000 forces for law and order and other duties. The force has been modernising to counter the new security challenges to the country; viz, "three evils". To enhance internal security mechanisms, in 2011, the budget for the PAPF was raised to over US \$95 billion, a figure higher than the allocations for the defence of the country. This allocation continued to rise recently. In 2013, the PAPF received \$123 billion in allocations (in comparison to \$115 billion for the military).²⁰

The late 2013 announcement of National Security Commission [NSC] indicates a rethinking and re-evaluation of the existing security apparatus in China in addressing security challenges, specifically on the inability of the current system to address crisis management aspects.²¹ President Xi Jinping was named the chairman of the National Security Commission, while Premier Li Keqiang and the speaker of the Parliament Zhang Deqiang were named as the vice chairmen of the NSC.²² As a Communist Party Central Committee body, answerable to the Politburo and its Standing Committee, it will be "making overall plans and coordinating major issues and major work concerning national security" according to an official statement. Further, its responsibilities include "construction of the rule of law system concerning state security, research, resolving major issues of national security, setting principles and policies, as well as stipulating and implementing strategies".²³ According to President Xi, "the variety of predictable and unpredictable risks have been increasing remarkably, and the system has not yet met the needs of safeguarding national security... Establishing a national security commission to strengthen the unified leadership of the state security work is an urgent need".²⁴

According to Senior Colonel Gong Fangbin of the National Defence University, the NSC will tackle five threats, including "unconventional security threats" such as countering extremist forces, ideological challenges to the culture posed by western nations, cyber security, etc.²⁵ While the Central Military Commission is to handle traditional security issues, the newly formed NSC is to address largely the non-traditional security challenges.²⁶ According to Li Wei of China Institute of Contemporary International Relations –

"...the [NSC] committee is an organisation that has the power to coordinate different government organs at the

highest level in response to a major emergency crisis and incidents which pose threats to the national security... China desperately needs an organisation like the state security committee to develop long-term national strategies to tackle the problem from its roots.²⁷"

In practice, this new commission appears to be taking over some of the responsibilities already assigned to other organisations hitherto fore, not only to enhance the command system but also the responsive mechanisms.²⁸ One of the main high level apparatus in China had been the Small Leading Groups under the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) members - the highest in China's hierarchy of decision-making. Seven such Groups exist today under each of the seven PBSC members. As outlined by Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell, these Groups discuss, sort out and take decisions on major walks of life of China. The following seven thus are significant in China:-

- (a) **Foreign Affairs Group.** Chaired by the General Secretary of the CCP/Premier of the State Council; includes members from Vice-Premier/State Councilor [Cabinet rank above the ministers]; International Liaison Department; defence, foreign, commerce and culture ministries; the party's central Foreign Affairs Office, the party's central news office, and General Staff Department of the PLA.
- (b) **State Security Group.** Chaired by General Secretary; PBSC member in charge of state security and public-security affairs, the senior military intelligence officer, and representatives from the State Council offices on Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao affairs.
- (c) **Overseas Propaganda Group.** Consists of the heads of the party's Propaganda and United Front Work Departments and the leaders of the party's central news office, Xinhua, People's Daily and the Ministry of Culture.
- (d) **Taiwan Affairs Group.** Chaired by General Secretary; PBSC members on Taiwan; coordinates the Taiwan-related work of the Ministry of State Security, the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, the PLA General Staff's intelligence department, and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait.
- (e) **Hong Kong & Macao Affairs Group.**
- (f) **Finance & Economics Group.** Chaired by General Secretary/Premier.
- (g) **Energy Group.** Established in 2006 ; Chaired by Premier.²⁹

Next to this level after the Politburo are several National Leading Groups under the ministries. Thus the newly formed National Security Commission is likely to draw from the Foreign Affairs, State Security and Energy Groups advice, expertise and possibly, even the personnel in future.³⁰

Conclusion

China today is in the midst of a fundamental shift from the inherited security apparatus to that of forming new structures to cope up with the veritable challenges being faced by the country in the security field. The new leadership, under Xi Jinping since 2012, clearly understands that new circumstances need new institutional responses, although centralisation of powers under Xi is also one of the considerations in this effort. Clearly, the new leadership finds the recent spate of incidents at Tiananmen Square (Beijing) in October 2013, Taiyuan (Shanxi Province) in November 2013 and in Xinjiang - in addition to the popular protests across the countryside - as complicated to tackle with the old institutional mechanisms. The newly formed NSC is supposed to amalgamate many of the agencies, personnel and doctrines to the current conditions into a modularised mechanism. The NSC is also to be geared to tackle security challenges which have cross-border linkages at a time when China is linked up with these regions as it keeps raising its comprehensive national power indicators. Yet, while the new leadership in China has woken up to these challenges, it appears that some of these challenges are related to political legitimacy issues of representation and the CCP rule. With global financial crisis impacting on the growth rates and exports, resulting in unemployment, the CCP rule is expected to face more turbulence in the coming future. This is where the limitations of the security apparatuses of China will be exposed.

Appendix

China's White Papers on National Defence, 1995-2013

White Paper	Verbatim remarks on national security/defence
November 1995	China's national defence policy is defensive in nature. Its basic goals are to consolidate national defence, resist foreign aggression, defend the nation's sovereignty over its land, sea and air as well as its maritime rights and interests, and safeguard national unity and security.
July 1998	Military factors still occupy an important position in state security.... Defending the motherland, resisting aggression, safeguarding unity and opposing split are the starting point and underpinning of China's defense policy.
October 2000	China's fundamental interests lie in its domestic development and stability, the peace and prosperity of its surrounding regions, and the establishment and maintenance of a new regional security order based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Strengthening national defense is a strategic task in China's modernisation drive, and a key guarantee for

safeguarding China's security and unity and building a well-off society in an all-round way.... The fundamental basis for the formulation of China's national defense policy is China's national interests. It primarily includes: safeguarding state sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security; upholding economic development as the central task and unremittingly enhancing the overall national strength; adhering to and improving the socialist system; maintaining and promoting social stability and harmony; and striving for an international environment of lasting peace and a favorable climate in China's periphery.

The military factor plays a greater role in international configuration and national security.... China's national security environment in this pluralistic, diversified and interdependent world has on the whole improved, but new challenges keep cropping up. The vicious rise of the "Taiwan independence" forces, the technological gap resulting from RMA, the risks and challenges caused by the development of the trends toward economic globalisation, and the prolonged existence of unipolarity vis-a-vis multipolarity - all these will have a major impact on China's security.... The main tasks of China's national defence are to step up modernisation of its national defence and its armed forces, to safeguard national security and unity, and to ensure the smooth process of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way.

The growing interconnections between domestic and international factors and interconnected traditional and non-traditional factors have made maintaining national security a more challenging task.... China December persists in continuing its peaceful development road. Balancing developments in both domestic and 2006 international situations, it is well prepared to respond to complexities in the international security environment.

China's security situation has improved steadily. China's overall national strength has increased substantially, its people's living standards have kept improving, the society remains stable and unified, and the capability for upholding national security has been further enhanced.... China is still confronted with 2008 long-term, complicated, and diverse security threats and challenges.... China is encountering many new (issued in January 2009) circumstances and new issues in maintaining social stability. Separatist forces working for "Taiwan independence," "East Turkistan independence" and "Tibet independence" pose threats to China's unity and security.

China is still in the period of important strategic opportunities for its development, and the overall security 2010 environment for it remains favourable.... China is meanwhile confronted by more diverse and complex (issued in March 2011) security challenges. China has vast territories and territorial seas. It is in a critical phase of the building of a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way. Therefore, it faces heavy demands in safeguarding national security.

China has an arduous task to safeguard its national unification, territorial integrity and development interests. Some country has strengthened its Asia-Pacific military alliances, expanded its military presence in the region, and frequently makes the situation there tenser. On the issues concerning China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, some neighbouring countries are taking actions that complicate or exacerbate the situation, and Japan is making trouble over the issue of the Diaoyu Islands. The threats posed by "three forces; namely, terrorism, separatism and extremism, are on the rise.... Responding to China's core security needs, the diversified employment of the armed forces aims to maintain peace, contain crises and win wars; safeguard border, coastal and territorial air security; strengthen combat-readiness and warfighting-oriented exercises and drills; readily respond to and resolutely deter any provocative action which undermines China's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity; and firmly safeguard China's core national interests.

Source : White Papers issued by the State Council and published at the official website : China.org.cn (various)

Endnotes

1. Some Chinese take national security to the period 1840 and is linked to the discourse of "century of humiliation" of China since the Opium Wars. See Chen Ou, "The Characteristics of China's National Security" Journal of Politics and Law Vol. 4, No. 1; March 2011 accessed at
2. Linda Jacobson argued that China's leaders focus currently is on domestic stability rather than on foreign policy. See "China's Foreign Policy Dilemma" Lowy Institute February 2013 accessed at
3. See David L. Shambaugh, "China's National Security Research Bureaucracy" The China Quarterly No. 110 (June 1987) pp. 276-304; David Shambaugh, "China's 'Quiet Diplomacy': The International Department of the Chinese Communist Party," China: An International Journal 5, No. 1 (March 2007) pp. 26-54; David Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think-Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," The China Quarterly No. 171 (September 2002) pp. 575-596; Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's Foreign- and Security-policy Decision-making Processes under Hu Jintao" Journal of Current Chinese Affairs vol. 3 (2009) pp. 63-97; Sun Yun, " Chinese National Security Decision-Making: Processes and Challenges" The Brookings Institution May 2013 accessed at
4. For instance, Pan Zhiping argued that China's various dynasties efforts to expand imperial rule to the peripheries have not encountered much opposition by the neighbouring empires and specifically in Xinjiang this led to the consolidation of China's rule historically. See "Xinjiang de dixiang zhengzhi yu guojia anquan - lishi yu xianzhaung de kaocha" [Xinjiang's Geo-politics and national security - investigating history and the present] China. s Border land History and Geography Studies Vol. 13 No. 3 (September 2003) pp. 57-67
5. See "The Geopolitics of China: A Great Power Enclosed" Stratfor March 25, 2012 accessed at This duality of

geo-politics of opportunities and challenges were identified by Zhang Wenmu, "Zhongguo diyuan zhengzhi de tedian ji qi biandong guilu" [Changes in the characteristics and law of China's geopolitics] Daipingyang Xuebao Vol. 21 No. 1 (January 2013) Part One pp. 1-8

6. "The Geopolitics of China: A Great Power Enclosed" Stratfor March 25, 2012 accessed at
7. Yan Xuetong, Analysis of China's National Interests accessed at
8. See Dai Wei, "A clear signal of 'core interests' to the world" China Daily August 2, 2010 accessed at ; Xiao Qiang, "Dai Bingguo: The Core Interests of the People's Republic of China" China Digital Times August 7, 2009 accessed at While the core interests meant initially Tibet and Taiwan aspects, later, China's leaders started including South China Sea and Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands as well in these interests. For instance, China's foreign ministry spokesman stated on April 26, 2013 that "The Diaoyu [Senkaku] Islands are about sovereignty and territorial integrity. Of course, it's China's core interest." cited by Caitlin Campbell, Ethan Meick and Craig Murray "China's "Core Interests" and the East China Sea" May 10, 2013 accessed at . See also, "China's declaration of key interests misinterpreted" Beijing Review, August 26, 2013 accessed at
9. "The Geopolitics of China: A Great Power Enclosed" Stratfor March 25, 2012 accessed at For Kong Lingjie and Wang Dujun the land borders pose major geo-political problems for the country See "Zhongguo lujiang anquan xingshi fenxi jiqi duice" [Analysis and countermeasures of China's borderland security situation] Journal of Shanxi Normal University Vo .1 21 No. 3 (September 2007) pp. 121-24.
10. See Uradyn E Bulag, Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) p. 28 and Wang Peiran, "Mongolia's Delicate Balancing Act" China Security, Vol. 5 No. 2 accessed at
11. This is based on Srikanth Kondapalli, "Stabilising Borders: Sino-Mongolian Relations" in K.Warikoo and Sharad K. Soni eds. Mongolia in the 21st Century: Society, Culture and International Relations (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2010) pp. 207-27 (p.211).
12. See M Taylor Fravel, Strong Borders Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) chapter 3.
13. According to Pan Zhongqi and Huang Renwei, China in this period need to reformulate its national security policy and adopt a "cooperative engagement oriented geo-political and security strategy" that addresses both external and internal challenges of China. See "Zhongguo de Dixiang Zhengzhi yu anquan zhanlue" [China's Geo-political and security strategy] Shehui Kexue (Social Sciences) No. 10 (2011) pp. 4-11
14. Zhang Yueling, "Zhongguo shiyou anquan de guoji zhengzhi jingji xue fenxi" [An analysis of the international politico-economic aspects of China's oil security] M.A. Dissertation submitted to Nanjing Aeronautical and Astronautics University, March 2007 p. 21
15. See for such activities in the Greater China area, Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, The Politics of Cross-Border Crime in Greater China: Case Studies of Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macao (Armonk, New York: ME Sharpe, 2009) pp. 23-24 and 47-61
16. Wang Lirong, "Guoji haidao wenti yu Zhongguo haishang tongdao anquan" [International Piracy issues and security of China's sea lanes] Dangtai Yadai No. 6 (2009) pp. 120-31 (p.129)
17. "China to restructure oceanic administration, enhance maritime law enforcement" Xinhua March 10, 2013 accessed at < http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-03/10/c_132221768.htm > and Dean Cheng, "China Streamlines Its Maritime Forces" March 19, 2013 accessed on July 26, 2013 at <http://blog.heritage.org/2013/03/19/honing-capabilities-china-streamlines-its-maritime-law-enforcement-forces/>
18. Guo Xuezhi, China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2012)
19. Tai Ming Cheung, "Guarding China's Domestic Front Line: The People's Armed Police and China's Stability" The China Quarterly No. 146 (June 1996), pp 525-547
20. See "China domestic security spending rises to \$111 billion" Reuters March 5, 2012 at ; "China hikes defense budget, to spend more on internal security" Reuters March 5, 2013 at accessed on August 24, 2013
21. See the MA Dissertation of Wang Yuan, "Zhongguo zhengfu weiji guanli de zuzhi jigou yanjiu" [Study of China's government's crisis management mechanism] China National Maritime University June 2008
22. Sui-Lee Wee and Hui Li, "China appoints Xi to head national security commission" Reuters January 24, 2014 accessed at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/24/us-china-politics-xi-idUSBREA0N0LM201> 40124
23. "Xi Jinping to lead national security commission" Xinhua January 24, 2014 accessed at
24. Xi cited at "China's new security commission conducive to world peace" Xinhua November 22, 2013 accessed at < http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-11/22/c_125742993.htm >
25. Gong cited by Teddy Ng, "'Cultural threats' among five focuses of new national security panel, colonel says'" South China Morning Post January 14, 2014 accessed at
26. Nozomu Hayashi, "China's security commission targets Western values, other 'unconventional' threats" February 12, 2014 accessed at

27. Li cited by Samantha Hoffman and Peter Mattis, "Inside China's New Security Council" November 21, 2013 accessed at <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/inside-chinas-new-security-council-9439>

28. See Qin Liwen, "Securing the "China Dream": What Xi Jinping wants to achieve with the National Security Commission" China Monitor No. 4 February 28, 2014 accessed at http://www.merics.org/fileadmin/templates/download/china-monitor/China_Monitor_No_4.pdf

29. This is based on Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell, *China's Search for Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) Part 1 Chapter 2

30. See Ching Cheong, "China's new national security agency guards from threats outside and within" The China Post February 16, 2014 accessed at This reports cites the creation in China of a new National Leading Group on Anti-Terrorism in mid 2013.

*This is a full text of the USI National Security Paper 2013 authored by Professor Srikanth Kondapalli.

***Professor Srikanth Kondapalli** is an Associate Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University and an Honorary Fellow at Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi and Research Associate at Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. He is an Associate Member of USI. He is also a recipient of IDSA's K Subrahmanyam Award for 2010 in recognition of his outstanding work on China and its Armed Forces.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLIV, No. 595, January-March 2014.