

Chinese Views and Commentary on Periphery Diplomacy

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Recent Chinese initiatives that imply a more pro-active approach in foreign and defense policy are the product of ongoing debate in Beijing over how to define PRC national interests toward China's periphery. Departing from Beijing's approach during most of the reform era, they suggest a decreased emphasis on Deng Xiaoping's longstanding exhortation for China to remain modest and maintain a low profile in its external relations. Among the many questions this raises for China's external relations going forward, the most important is how Beijing will reconcile the contradictory policy imperatives of deepening positive relations with neighboring countries while more firmly advancing China's territorial and resource interests and claims.

Introduction

On October 24–25, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) held an unprecedented work forum (*zuotan* 座谈) on Chinese diplomacy toward the periphery (*zhoubian* 周边), that is, those land and maritime areas adjacent to China. This was reportedly the first major meeting on foreign policy since 2006 and the first forum specifically on periphery diplomacy since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. It was attended, most notably, “by the entire Standing Committee of the Politburo, various organs of the Central Committee, State Counselors, the central leading small group with responsibility for foreign affairs, and Chinese ambassadors to important countries.”¹

While reflecting the growing significance of these areas for Chinese national security and economic development, the forum was also presumably held at least in part to respond to increasing tensions between Beijing and many nearby states in recent years due to worsening territorial and resource disputes. Such tensions are arguably undermining China's longstanding effort to strengthen positive and beneficial political, economic, and security relations with its neighbors.

The forum's apparent objective was to improve Beijing's management of its relations with the periphery and resolve existing problems by embedding PRC diplomacy toward this critical region more fully into China's overall strategic objectives of peaceful, reform-based national development, the strengthening of security along the Chinese border, and the protection or advancement of Chinese territorial and natural resource claims.² Specifically, Chinese media reported that the work forum aimed to “establish the strategic objectives, basic principles, and overall setup of the peripheral diplomatic work in the next five to ten years, and define the line of thinking on work and the implementation plans for resolving major issues facing peripheral diplomacy.”³

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In addressing such ambitious objectives at the work forum, General Secretary Xi Jinping reportedly provided policy guidance designed to “1) enhance political good will; 2) deepen regional economic integration; 3) increase China’s cultural influence; and 4) improve regional security cooperation.”⁴ However, Xi also “directed efforts to socialize the region to accept China’s view of its ‘core interests’ and validated efforts to enforce PRC sovereignty and territorial claims against rival disputants.”⁵

These initiatives imply a higher level of Chinese pro-activism in foreign and defense policy and a broader definition of PRC national interests toward its periphery than has characterized Beijing’s approach during most of the reform era. In particular, they suggest at the very least a decreased emphasis on Deng Xiaoping’s longstanding exhortation for China to remain modest and maintain a low profile in its external relations.⁶ They also raise many questions and potential problems for China’s external relations going forward. This includes, most importantly, how Beijing will reconcile the potentially contradictory policy imperatives of deepening positive relations with neighboring countries while more resolutely advancing or protecting China’s territorial and resource interests and claims.⁷ While Xi Jinping’s remarks at the work forum and elsewhere address this issue to some extent (as discussed below), there is little doubt that it and other related issues continue to generate significant discussion and debate in China, given the overall importance of periphery diplomacy to the success of Beijing’s reform-era policy objectives, as well as the inherent tensions resulting from the simultaneous attempt to improve relations with neighboring states while advancing contentious sovereignty and resource claims.

This article examines views among Chinese leaders and officials and between the leadership, informed observers or analysts, and various scholars and commentators regarding periphery diplomacy, focusing primarily on commentary and statements appearing during and after the October 2013 work forum. As in several previous issues of *CLM*, our examination of Chinese views on this topic distinguishes between three basic types of Chinese sources: authoritative; quasi-authoritative; and non-authoritative.⁸ In examining these sources, particular attention is given to: a) the authoritative PRC government viewpoint (if publicly available); b) variations that might exist among Chinese commentators (both authoritative and otherwise), in both substance and tone; c) those views that appear to constitute a mainstream or consensus approach; and d) those views that appear most controversial among Chinese observers. Our analysis of these sources is primarily based on a qualitative assessment of individual views appearing in a wide range of Chinese official and unofficial media.

The article examines Chinese views on four basic aspects of periphery diplomacy, presented below as four sections: definitions and features; rationale and objectives; methods and challenges of implementation; and evaluations and implications.

In examining Chinese views on this topic, the article seeks to answer several specific questions about China’s foreign policy: How do the Chinese define their nation’s periphery, and what do they think are or should be the core elements of China’s diplomacy toward its periphery? What has motivated this new emphasis on China’s

periphery, and what are the primary and secondary objectives of periphery diplomacy? What diplomatic and other measures, including military force, is Beijing using, and in what manner, to attain its goals toward the periphery? How is Beijing attempting to balance the need to maintain beneficial relations with periphery states and the need to protect and advance its territorial and resource claims? How should periphery diplomacy relate to China's larger foreign and domestic policy goals, including the maintenance of constructive relations with the United States? Are there significant differences on these issues among authoritative Chinese sources, between authoritative and non-authoritative sources, and between civilian and military sources?

The article concludes with a summary of the findings and an assessment of some implications of the preceding analysis for Chinese foreign policy, the regional order, and U.S.-China relations in particular.

Definitions and Features

The development of positive relations with China's neighbors has been an important part of Beijing's overall reform-era foreign policy since at least the early 1990s, when statements emphasizing this need became relatively commonplace.⁹ China's periphery was first stressed as being of "primary importance" in China's foreign policy at the 16th Party Congress in 2002. At that time, the CCP formulated a diplomatic approach that stated: "big powers are the key; neighbors are paramount; developing countries are the foundation; and multilateralism is an important stage." A year later, the concept of "good neighborhood, secure neighborhood, and wealthy neighborhood" was coined by former Premier Wen Jiabao as an overarching description of China's objectives toward periphery states.¹⁰

Overall, under former President Hu Jintao, periphery diplomacy was seen as part of the very positive notion of developing a "harmonious world" and was distinguished from more complex and potentially contentious relations with great powers.¹¹ However, in recent years, the positive features of periphery diplomacy in advancing stability, harmony, and development have been augmented by a clearer and greater stress on the need to safeguard China's national interests and defend its rights in periphery regions, especially with regard to territorial sovereignty and maritime resources. This will be discussed in more detail later in this section.¹²

Authoritative and quasi-authoritative Chinese sources do not specifically define the geographical extent of China's periphery. However, the public remarks of senior Chinese officials suggest that the main countries on China's periphery, and thus the primary focus of periphery diplomacy at present, include nearby smaller and middle-range states.¹³

Some non-authoritative Chinese observers offer similar but generally more explicit definitions of China's periphery. For example, one observer states that periphery diplomacy includes relations with nations located in six bordering and nearby regions, including Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and, for some observers, parts of West Asia and the South Pacific.¹⁴

Other definitions of China's periphery are extremely expansive, in both geography and the types of nations and diplomacies involved. For example, one non-authoritative but well-placed observer (Yuan Peng, vice president of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, or CICIR, a think tank attached to the Ministry of State Security) defines China's periphery in terms of three rings. The "inside ring" consists of the 14 nations that share land borders with China. The "middle ring" includes the maritime countries that extend from the inner ring, as well as areas in the west Pacific to the Indian Ocean and to parts of central Asia and Russia that do not directly border China. The so-called "outer ring" extends to the circle of Africa, Europe, and America. Together, Yuan (and a few other non-authoritative observers) refer to these areas as the "great periphery."¹⁵

From such broad definitions, it is clear that, for many Chinese observers, China's entire periphery is conceived of as a very large region that includes both developing and developed powers, as well as small, middle, and great powers such as Russia, India, Japan, and the United States. As a result, for many such observers, periphery diplomacy should contain elements of great power diplomacy, "developing country diplomacy," and even "multilateral diplomacy," considering the fact that various regional and sub-regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the East Asia Summit (EAS), APEC, and so forth, are composed of periphery nations and engage in activities on China's periphery.¹⁶

However, as noted above, authoritative sources generally present a less broad and complex definition of the main elements and features of periphery diplomacy, focusing on relations with small and medium powers. At the October 2013 work forum, Xi Jinping and other senior officials identified a four-part philosophy or approach to guide diplomacy toward such nations, centering on efforts to convey or realize *affinity or amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness*.¹⁷

According to a subsequent authoritative source,

Amity refers to consolidating the friendship marked by geographical proximity and intimate relationship. . . . Sincerity refers to the way of treating people with sincerity and getting along with other people by gaining their trust. . . . Mutual benefit refers to the idea of cooperation that benefits the surrounding areas and produces mutually beneficial win-win outcomes. . . . Inclusiveness refers to demonstration of the big power broadmindedness, openness, tolerance and readiness to seek common grounds while reserving differences.¹⁸

These are of course all positive and friendly (i.e., "good-neighborly") features of periphery diplomacy that generally resonate with earlier approaches to nearby states.¹⁹

For some authoritative, quasi-authoritative, and non-authoritative Chinese observers, such features are closely linked with several recent initiatives in foreign policy and economic development, including "the new type of great power relationship," the "China

Dream,” and the Silk Road and Maritime Silk Road Economic Belts proposed by Xi Jinping, as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. All these concepts stress the deepening of mutually beneficial, cooperative, and “win-win” relationships with countries in Asia and beyond. Moreover, the concept of the Silk Road economic belts and the economic corridors, along with other initiatives such as planned oil pipelines and energy agreements, envisions the development of a closer web of common economic and other interests in periphery countries that will benefit Chinese and local interests (more on this important point below.²⁰

Beyond such economic features, some authoritative sources also refer to political and security activities that support the positive, “win-win” objectives of periphery diplomacy. These include the signing of a “Central Asian Nuclear Free Weapon Zone Treaty” and progress in border negotiations with India, for example.²¹ But much of the emphasis is on the economic aspects of periphery diplomacy.

At the same time, as noted above, in recent years, periphery diplomacy is now also defined as including approaches designed to “safeguard” China’s sovereignty over both territory and resources. Although the official press releases of the October 2013 work forum did not mention sensitive territorial or resource disputes with nearby states, such issues were definitely discussed, according to knowledgeable observers.²² Xi Jinping hinted at this in remarks to the October 2013 work forum. He twice mentioned the need for China to safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests as part of periphery diplomacy.²³

This echoes views expressed in former General Secretary Hu Jintao’s work report to the 18th Party Congress held nearly a year earlier, in November 2012. The report stated that “while China should deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and strive to further develop to assist neighboring countries, it also should ‘resolutely safeguard’ national sovereignty, security, development interests; never succumb to any outside pressure; and ‘resolutely safeguard China’s maritime rights and interests, and build a maritime power.’”²⁴

In general, authoritative sources that address China’s periphery diplomacy since the 18th Party Congress do not repeat the strong phrase “never succumb to outside pressure,” nor do they emphasize the need to resolutely safeguard China’s maritime rights and interests. One above-cited authoritative source states that, in handling disputes with neighbors, China has attempted to follow the above four-part “maxim” outlined at the October 2013 work forum and display “sincerity in conducting consultations on an equal footing with the relevant nations.”²⁵

The standard Foreign Ministry statement on China’s general approach to handling disputes over territorial and maritime rights is similarly moderate. For example, Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated in March 2014:

Regarding our disputes with some countries over territorial and ocean rights and interests, we are willing to peacefully and properly handle them

through equal consultations and talks on the basis of respecting historical facts and of international laws. In this regard we will also absolutely not change in the future. We will absolutely not bully small countries just because we are a big country, nor will we accept small countries to kick up a row. China's position is resolute and clear on issues involving territory and sovereignty. We do not want an inch of territory that does not belong to us. But we will protect each inch of the territory that belongs to us.²⁶

Stronger assertions of the need to staunchly defend China's maritime sovereignty rights, as part of periphery diplomacy, are most often found in authoritative military sources, as well as quasi- and non-authoritative sources on the subject.

For example, on May 23, 2014, Ministry of National Defense spokesperson Geng Yansheng stated:

Our determination and will to defend national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests are unswerving; on this issue there is absolutely no room for bargaining, and any provocative actions will not be tolerated. . . . At present, we have with certain periphery countries some disputed issues regarding territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests; these problems are all provoked by other countries, and the responsibility is not on China.²⁷

The quasi-authoritative source "Zhong Sheng" states that, although China adheres to the path of peaceful development, it "will, under no circumstance, abandon our legitimate rights and interests and sacrifice the national core interests. On the strength, China is strong but 'does not show off its force' and 'does not flex its muscles.' We insist on properly handling and resolving disputes through consultation and negotiations."²⁸

Some non-authoritative sources characterize Beijing's greater emphasis on defending China's interests regarding sovereignty and resource disputes on its periphery as the "bottom line principle" (底线原则). This conveys the notion that, while adhering to the past dictum of shelving disputes and engaging in joint development, Beijing now allegedly stresses the need to "stick to the bottom line" of defending China's sovereignty rights.²⁹ According to some (foreign) observers, this concept derives from Xi Jinping's increased emphasis on defending China's "core interests" and "validates recent PRC efforts to enforce its sovereignty claims against rival claimants."³⁰

Rationale and Objectives

As the above discussion suggests, Beijing's stress on periphery diplomacy is intended to strengthen China's relations with periphery countries in many areas while defending its core interests regarding sovereignty issues. But what exactly has prompted the Chinese leadership to place such an unprecedentedly strong and specific emphasis on these activities at this time? And what specific goals or outcomes does Beijing have in mind regarding periphery diplomacy?

Both authoritative and non-authoritative sources assert that periphery diplomacy reflects the recent, growing importance of periphery regions to China's overall security and national development. In his remarks to the October 2013 work forum, Xi Jinping highlighted the new situation emerging along China's periphery. He stated that "there have been great changes in the peripheral environment, that there have been great changes in our country's relations with peripheral countries, that our country's economy and trade ties with peripheral countries have become closer and closer, and our interactions with them have become close in an unprecedented way."³¹ Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that "China's destiny is linked with those of peripheral countries," given the forces of regional integration and the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region for the world's economic growth.³²

One quasi-authoritative source also points to a variety of Asian economic issues and problems underlying the new emphasis on periphery diplomacy, including a "lack of balance among various sub-regions in Asia in terms of development" and an absence of "strong [economic] bonds" between these sub-regions. The concepts of a Silk Road economic belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, stretching across Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Western Asia, along with the economic corridors in Southeast and South Asia, are intended to address this situation.³³

Non-authoritative sources provide far more detail regarding the motivation behind Beijing's unprecedented focus on periphery diplomacy since late 2013 and its more assertive approach to handling sovereignty disputes. Analyses appearing in the period from roughly 2008–2010 present a picture not only of the increasing overall importance, economic and otherwise, of periphery regions for an emerging China, but also of growing Chinese concerns over adverse security developments in periphery countries.

A researcher at CICIR identified three reasons why China's periphery region holds a very high level of strategic importance:

First . . . [it] is the main theater where China preserves national security, defends its sovereign unity and territorial integrity, and unfolds the struggle against separatism; it is the frontline and outpost for China's defense against enemy incursions, and the buffer zone and strategic screen for China in keeping the enemy outside the gate. . . . Second . . . [it] is "the key link and vital area for China's rise that world powers cannot cross [!], the main support point and strategic dependence zone for China to become an independent pole in a multipolar pattern, and the main stage for China to display its strength to the outside world, exert influence, play a role, and undertake its 'responsibilities as a power.' Third, . . . it is not only an important trade market and investment site for China but is also the main source of China's energy source and resource imports, or the strategic route for such imports; it is a region where land and sea routes are highly concentrated."³⁴

In 2008, another CICIR researcher offered several additional reasons why the strategic

value of the periphery had increased and become more challenging. First, periphery states now desire that China “show more concern for them” as China’s economic, political, and military influence grows and Beijing is asked to contribute more to the growth of developing countries in general. Second, the security environment on China’s periphery is becoming more complex, with the strengthening of traditional military alliances, the expansion of foreign military bases, and the deployment of new weapons systems such as ballistic missile defenses. In addition, “some people are plotting ‘color revolutions’ and ‘kasaya revolutions’ to revamp the regimes among China’s neighbors, and some people are pushing ‘values diplomacy’ in a bid to build a ‘democratic encirclement’ around China.” Third, inter-state or global issues involving periphery countries, such as environment, climate, disease, and various social issues, present complex advantages and disadvantages, successes and failures, and growing levels of competition. Fourth, “globalization and informatization” have brought the world closer together, creating new linkages while magnifying both China’s impact on others and the impact of others on China.³⁵

By 2010, Chinese analysts at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies had produced a report, entitled “2010: Assessment Report on the Situation on China’s Periphery,” which concluded: “the security pressure in China’s periphery [has] increased and signs of deterioration [have] emerged in periphery diplomacy.” According to the report, such pressures include, in particular, worsening territorial and resource disputes along China’s maritime periphery and a deteriorating situation on the Korean Peninsula.³⁶

Another important, more recent non-authoritative source in many ways presaged the new emphasis on periphery diplomacy expressed in the October 2013 work forum, stressing the former of these two negative drivers of change along China’s periphery. It stated: “China’s relations with neighboring countries that have economic ties in East Asia have deteriorated since the escalation of several maritime disputes in the last few years, notably the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the Diaoyu Islands. This new development had compelled China to reconsider its peripheral policy.”³⁷

Other non-authoritative sources provide additional details on the economic factors influencing the situation along China’s periphery and their relationship to security issues. For example, one researcher at the Central Party School cites the challenges presented by the frequently cited notion of a “dual structure” or “Asia paradox,” in which dynamic economic growth among many countries—of great relevance to China, the region, and the world—coexists alongside geopolitical, cultural, and historical complexities and tensions that make Asia “one of the most fragile regions in the world for security.” This has led to a situation in which many Asian countries depend increasingly on China for economic development, yet continue to receive crucial security assistance from the United States—hence the paradox.³⁸

The growing importance and increasingly challenging nature of China’s periphery environment has placed a premium on clarifying and strengthening efforts to attain certain strategic objectives via Beijing’s periphery diplomacy. In his remarks to the

October 2013 work forum, Xi Jinping stated that periphery diplomacy should strive to:

comprehensively develop relations with peripheral countries; consolidate good-neighborliness and friendship; deepen mutually beneficial cooperation; maintain and use well the important strategic opportunity period of our country's development; safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security, [and] development interests; strive to make the political relations of peripheral countries with our country even better, the economic links with our country even more solid, the security cooperation even more deeper, and the people-to-people ties even more closer.³⁹

Echoing Xi, Foreign Minister Wang Yi summed up these objectives as involving the search for a periphery environment of “peace, stability, and common development.”⁴⁰

Similarly, a quasi-authoritative source stresses that China’s periphery diplomacy should aim at creating “friendly, peaceful, and prosperous neighborhoods.”⁴¹

Among authoritative or quasi-authoritative sources, these largely platitudinous descriptions of Chinese goals rarely include specific examples. However, non-authoritative sources provide ample cases. One very notable example is provided by a Chinese scholar who states that Beijing’s periphery diplomacy should address four distinct goals or aspects.

First, Beijing must maintain peace and stability with neighboring countries, in part by seeking “a peaceful solution to the territorial disputes with some of [China’s] neighbors through dialogue and consultation,” although the author adds that Beijing “will oppose any party’s provocative acts that stir up trouble in the region.” Second, Beijing must develop mutually beneficial cooperation by forming a greater web of “crossed economic corridors from south to north and west to east,” thereby “hastening interconnectivity and infrastructure construction.” This apparently relates to the notion of the Silk Road economic belts and economic corridors, as mentioned above. Third, it must enhance security in the periphery by creating “a common security circle in neighboring regions,” in which China “adhere[s] to a security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and coordination . . . and positively provide[s] public products for regional security.” Fourth, Beijing should work “to establish a community of common destiny and promote friendly exchanges through various channels, cultivate more friends and partners, and share weal and woe with them.”⁴²

Another source cites three important elements of Beijing’s approach to the periphery. First it should deepen and expand “a new type of great power relationship” and “the concept of mutual profit, cooperation, and win-win” not only with the United States, but also with other major countries within the periphery, including India, Russia, and Japan.

Second, it should shelve disputes, engage in joint development and promote the so-called “bottom line principle.” Third, Beijing should build strategic partnerships and strengthen bilateral economic ties. Together, these initiatives amount to a supposed grand strategy

of “‘giving impetus to Asia-Pacific regional economic cooperation,’ and the general line of thought can be summed up as ‘seek development through cooperation, maintain stability through development.’”

According to this same source, the economic realm involves the Silk Road economic belts and other similar initiatives, while the security realm involves what Beijing calls the “new security concept,” intended to “give impetus to a kind of pan-regional open- dispel their strategic misgivings regarding China in the security field.”⁴³ style comprehensive security mechanism, and proceeding to use this mechanism to regulate and explain China’s own conduct, so that the relevant member states in the region will

Hence, non-authoritative sources readily recognize that many periphery states are concerned about China’s motives and policies and link that development to the increasing importance of periphery diplomacy.

Several non-authoritative sources provide additional, very significant reasons for Beijing’s new “bottom line principle” of defending sovereignty rights and interests in periphery diplomacy. One analyst explains the need for Beijing to display greater “strategic resolve” in this area as reflecting the general problem faced by powers (read China) that adhere to an allegedly peace-seeking, defensive-style approach to sovereignty and other disputes. For such powers, “long-term extensive and deep-going pledges of a desire for peace...gradual[ly] lower the power's strategic deterrent force” and possibly create “a motive...for [others] acquiring interests through opportunist behavior” in the belief that the peace-seeking power will not use force to defend its own interests. Under such circumstances, the analyst argues, “harassment of the power or nibbling away at its interests, will become more frequent, and may even reach some brazen degrees.” Hence, to this analyst, the existing Chinese policy of “shelving the disputes” might result in greater problems over time.⁴⁴

Other sources similarly point to China’s recent, more assertive behavior toward maritime sovereignty disputes as reflecting the need to “bring stability to its peripheral regions.” (!) For example, one notable example states that:

since the territorial dispute with the Philippines over Huangyan Island broke out in mid-April 2012 . . . China now sees defending rights as a priority by which it seeks to maintain stability. China is no longer silent or passive when faced with obvious provocations from neighboring countries. Instead, it is determined to take action to bring stability to its peripheral regions.⁴⁵

In other words, for some important non-authoritative sources, Beijing’s more assertive approach to dealing with disputes along its periphery is a necessary corrective to its overall peace-loving approach to other nations, but a corrective that is nonetheless intended to stabilize, not disrupt, that critical region.

Methods and Challenges of Implementation

The above examination of definitions, rationales, and goals clearly indicates that Beijing will utilize a wide variety of methods and approaches to implement periphery diplomacy, including not only traditional interstate diplomatic overtures, but also many initiatives in the economic, political, military, and cultural spheres.

In his October 2013 remarks, Xi Jinping laid out the primary means for implementing periphery diplomacy. As suggested above, the economic sphere received a particular emphasis. Xi stated that China is

to make overall arrangements for economy, trade, science and technology, financial resources, use well relative advantages, find correct strategic converging points to deepen the mutually beneficial cooperation with neighboring countries, and actively take part in regional economic cooperation . . . ; make common efforts with relevant countries to accelerate the pace of infrastructure and connectivity construction; build well the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road . . . ; accelerate the pace of implementing the free trade zone strategy, expand trade and investment cooperation space, and establish a new setup for regional economic integration . . . ; constantly deepen regional financial cooperation, make active arrangements for the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and perfect the regional financial security network . . . [and] the pace of the opening-up of border regions should be accelerated, and the mutually beneficial cooperation between border regions and peripheral countries should be deepened.

In the security realm, Xi emphasized the need to “persist” in promoting the longstanding notion of the “new security concept,” centered on the development of “mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality, and cooperation” and the ideas of “comprehensive security, common security, and cooperative security.” This should include voluntary participation in “regional and sub-regional security cooperation...cooperation mechanisms . . . [and efforts to] increase strategic trust.” He also noted, as mentioned above, the need to maintain “the state’s sovereignty,” although he did not specify what methods were to be used to achieve that objective (see below for more on this point).

In the social and diplomatic spheres, Xi urged greater efforts “in enhancing publicity work in peripheral countries, in public diplomacy, in people-to-people diplomacy, in people-to-people exchanges, and in consolidating and expanding the social and popular foundation for long-term development of our country's relations with peripheral countries.” In all these undertakings, Xi also cited the need “to find the common and converging points of interests, persist in a correct concept between justice and profit, in principles, in stressing friendship, in emphasizing justice, and in providing more assistance to developing countries within our means.”⁴⁶

Other authoritative figures, such as Premier Li Keqiang, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and

Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin, have provided additional details on key aspects of the implementation of periphery diplomacy. For example, in addressing the issue of justice in relations with developing states (along the periphery and elsewhere), Foreign Minister Wang Yi has stated that “sometimes we should even emphasize moral obligation and neglect the profits; we should absolutely never solely seek profits and haggle over the gains.”⁴⁷ This point is also made by some non-authoritative sources.⁴⁸

With regard to sovereignty disputes with periphery neighbors, as noted above, Wang Yi and other senior PRC officials have similarly reiterated the general desire to peacefully and properly handle such disputes through consultations and talks based on historical facts and international law while protecting every inch of Chinese territory and “not accept[ing] small countries to kick up a row.” What the latter remark means is left undefined.⁴⁹

In implementing periphery diplomacy, Wang Yi and other senior Chinese officials, including Xi Jinping, have stated that Beijing’s relations with the ASEAN in particular constitute the “priority direction” (*youxian fangxiang*) for China’s periphery diplomacy. Premier Li Keqiang said: “On behalf of the Chinese government, I solemnly declare that China’s good-neighborly policy toward the ASEAN is not a matter of expediency, but a long-term strategic option of China. China will firmly prioritize ASEAN member countries in the country’s peripheral diplomacy, firmly deepen the strategic partnership with the ASEAN, and firmly cooperate with the ASEAN to jointly safeguard peace and stability in the region, including the South China Sea.”⁵⁰ This is a clear attempt to respond to the concerns expressed by ASEAN states over Chinese behavior.

Although the ASEAN-related occasions surrounding these remarks no doubt called for such an emphasis, there is little doubt that Beijing’s relations with Southeast Asia play a major role in its efforts to implement the new emphasis on periphery diplomacy, given the fact that China’s arguably worsening sovereignty disputes with several ASEAN states constitute both a major driver of the initiative and a major challenge to its successful implementation.

Both Premier Li and Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin have made statements that address in greater detail how Beijing intends to advance its relations with ASEAN and at the same time manage its disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests going forward.

Regarding the former, Premier Li Keqiang put forward a seven-point proposal for strengthening China-ASEAN relations over the next decade, involving seven new initiatives:

First, actively discuss and sign a treaty of good neighborliness, friendship, and cooperation between China and the ASEAN states, to provide the legal and system backing for China-ASEAN strategic cooperation and lead forward the development of the relationship.

Second, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the security field. Perfect the China-ASEAN defense chief meeting system, and deepen cooperation in nontraditional security fields such as disaster prevention and relief, cyber security, cracking down on cross-border crime, and joint law enforcement.

Third, launch the negotiations on the upgraded version of the China-ASEAN free trade area, strive to raise two-way trade to \$1 trillion by 2020, and let the ASEAN states benefit more from China's economic growth through regional integration.

Fourth, speed up interconnectivity infrastructure construction. Expand the scope of bilateral currency swaps, expand the pilot projects in settling cross-border trade accounts in national currency, reduce the exchange rate risks and the cost of settling accounts in regional trade and investment, and give good play to the role of the China-ASEAN inter-bank association.

Sixth, steadily promote maritime cooperation. Build together the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and focus on implementing cooperation in maritime economy, maritime interconnectivity, environmental protection, scientific research, search and rescue, and fishery.

Seventh, bring about closer exchanges in culture, science and technology, and environmental protection and consolidate the foundation of friendship and cooperation.

However, with regard to the sovereignty disputes with some ASEAN states, Li largely reiterated the longstanding general Chinese position, stating that “the immediate disputing parties should seek sound solutions through friendly negotiations on the basis of respecting historical facts and international laws” and that before a peaceful solution has been reached, they should actively promote joint development. Moreover, any negotiations must be bilateral, since “the South China Sea disputes are not an issue between China and the ASEAN, and they should not and will not affect the overall China-ASEAN cooperation.” Li reiterated that China will undertake efforts to stabilize the general situation through implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and the eventual development of a Code of Conduct.⁵¹ These proposals, and the views toward disputes, largely echoed those made by Liu Zhenmin earlier, in August 2013, at a China-ASEAN special foreign minister's meeting.⁵²

Regarding the implementation of periphery diplomacy in areas other than Southeast Asia, comment by authoritative sources before the October 2013 work forum anticipated many of the general points made by Xi Jinping at that meeting and since have tended to repeat them, as well as the various points made by other officials with regard to Southeast Asia noted above.

For example, in April 2011, at the Boao Forum, Hu Jintao delivered general remarks about relations with periphery countries across Asia that were quite similar to those delivered by Xi over two years later. He stated:

We will strengthen cooperation with periphery countries on building infrastructure for transportation, resource linkages, communications, internet etc, to increase the interconnectedness of these areas. China will continue to promote cooperation in exchanges with Asian nations in tourism, culture, education, youth etc, to deepen the understanding and friendship between of the peoples of China and various Asian countries. . . . [China] will always place Asia in the primary position of its foreign policy, uphold the periphery diplomacy policy of treating neighbors with kindness and treating neighbors as partners, actively develop good-neighborly and mutually beneficial cooperation with various Asian countries, and constantly improve mutual understanding and trust. China will remain committed to a peaceful resolution of territory and maritime rights disputes with neighboring countries via friendly negotiations, play a constructive role on regional hotspot issues, actively participate in various regional security dialogues and cooperation, and make efforts to preserve a regional environment conducive to Asia's peace and development. China will forever be a good neighbor, good friend, and good partner to Asian countries.⁵³

Around the time of the 2013 work forum, an MFA spokesperson similarly stated: “Distant relatives cannot equal to nearby neighbors, and friendly neighbors mean prosperity . . . We are willing to make joint efforts with periphery nations, to continuously improve strategic trust, to deepen pragmatic cooperation, and to realize win-win from mutual benefits and common development.”⁵⁴

Beyond these general statements, very few authoritative sources provide the kind of detailed descriptions of China's periphery diplomacy and behavior toward other individual countries or sub-regions as are found in the case of Southeast Asia. In response to press queries, MFA spokespersons have made disparate references to periphery diplomacy in relations with countries in Central and South Asia. For example, Beijing's signing of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty is described as “an important measure that fulfills the principles of periphery diplomacy and deepens regional security cooperation, amply demonstrating China's firm promise to safeguard peace, stability, and development in the five Central Asian countries and in the region.” Other spokesperson statements suggest that Pakistan is also a “priority direction” in China's periphery diplomacy, and that Beijing is willing to advance border negotiations with India as part of its friendly periphery policy.⁵⁵

That said, the above general statements by Xi Jinping and other senior leaders suggest that Beijing's diplomacy toward not only Southeast Asia, but also Northeast Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Russia, and other periphery areas will in most cases involve attempts to leverage China's growing economic power and influence in order to strengthen and expand cooperative interactions, create an integrated web of mutually beneficial

economic, social and political ties, and ultimately lower distrust and enhance a sense of common security. Under this framework, the notion of the Silk Road Economic Belt and similar economic corridors explicitly seeks to improve interconnectivity and cooperation among several sub-regions, in which Sri Lanka and Pakistan have been cited as specific South Asian examples.⁵⁶

In addition, on the political-diplomatic front, authoritative sources often cite the need for China to deepen existing strategic cooperative partnerships with major nations on China's periphery. The simultaneous visits to China in October 2013 by the prime ministers of Russia, India, and Mongolia were further referred to as "a true portrayal of the advanced level of China's good-neighborly and cooperative relations with periphery countries."⁵⁷

Such an ambitious undertaking requires extensive and prolonged direct economic, political, and social contact with periphery nations, and even though few authoritative statements describe Chinese intentions toward individual states or sub-regions beyond Southeast Asia, the pattern of visits by very senior Chinese civilian leaders confirms that such contact is part of periphery diplomacy.⁵⁸

On the military side, Beijing has for a long time stressed "military diplomatic work" as a key part of its relations with neighboring nations. However, what one authoritative source described in January 2012 as "new changes in the security situation of the neighboring countries" resulted in a particular emphasis on "stabilizing" those countries, well before the October 2013 work forum. This involved extensive visits by senior PLA leaders to such countries as Vietnam, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, the DPRK, Pakistan, and India. The visits deployed overall efforts to "strengthen strategic communication, further elevate the level of strategic mutual trust and reach a general consensus on maintaining regional peace and stability with . . . neighboring countries. . . . In terms of the construction of multilateral mechanisms, China has actively promoted the construction of regional security mechanism with mutual respect, equality and mutual trust, win-win cooperation and openness and inclusiveness in a bid to safeguard the common interests of the Asia-Pacific countries." Beijing also conducted joint drill and training exercises with nearby nations such as Pakistan and Indonesia.⁵⁹

Such activities have arguably intensified in 2012 and 2013, especially after the October work forum. In the roughly nine months since that event, the Chinese military has conducted over 80 different types of activities and visits with countries in Northeast, Southeast, South, and Central Asia, the South Pacific, and Russia.⁶⁰

Regarding the handling of China's sovereignty or resource disputes with countries beyond those in Southeast Asia—such as Japan and South Korea—authoritative sources do not provide many details on what types of approaches should be employed as part of periphery diplomacy. However, as mentioned above, one MFA spokesperson did reference Sino-Indian border negotiations as part of China's periphery policy.⁶¹

With regard to Japan, authoritative sources assert, as Wang Yi has done, that "the

predicaments in the current Sino-Japanese relations have been triggered and caused by the Japanese side and are not what we want to see.” Hence, the successful handling of this dispute requires that Tokyo “sternly face the reality, speak and act discreetly, and refrain from redoing things that harm the rights and interests of China's sovereignty.” In this regard, Wang continued, Japan must learn the historical lessons from its militarist past, “open up the future,” and “by persistently following the direction of peace . . . gain the neighboring nations’ trust.”⁶² An authoritative military source conveys the same message of Japanese fault and applies it not only to Japan, but to all nations with which China has disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.⁶³

In other words, in all these disputes the onus is on the other party, as is the responsibility to take actions to successfully manage or resolve them. Unfortunately, authoritative Chinese sources provide no specific indication as to how Beijing might encourage or pressure Tokyo or other countries into taking such actions.

Authoritative Chinese sources generally do not take such a hard line toward the handling of disputes with other periphery nations, such as India and South Korea. In fact, such sources usually just repeat the desire to “peacefully and properly handle [disputes] through equal consultations and talks on the basis of respecting historical facts and of international laws,” as indicated above.⁶⁴

One of the challenges in dealing with these disputes mentioned by authoritative sources is the disruptive involvement of “some external forces.” For example, Liu Zhenmin has stated in reference to China-ASEAN disputes that “some external forces with an ulterior motive have deliberately exaggerated to misguide public opinion and popular feeling and disturb the development of China-ASEAN relations. . . . Involvement of external forces not only cannot help solve the problem but also will affect the confidence in dialog and cooperation between China and the ASEAN.”⁶⁵

These remarks presumably refer to the United States, although they could also include other states such as Japan in the case of disputes in the South China Sea. As discussed in a previous edition of the *Monitor*, authoritative sources are more explicit in blaming the U.S. for causing the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute with Japan.⁶⁶

As is often the case regarding other foreign policy topics, non-authoritative Chinese sources usually present more details, reflect a greater variation of viewpoints (some critical of Chinese policy), and are more blunt in their criticism of other states when discussing the methods of implementation and challenges facing Beijing’s peripheral diplomacy.

Well before the October 2013 work forum, Chinese analysts were calling for the need for a more integrated periphery strategy toward areas such as Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and parts of West Asia and the South Pacific.⁶⁷

In particular, some non-authoritative sources criticized Beijing’s periphery policy for not coordinating economic aspects with security dimensions. As Sun Xuefeng (a professor at

Tsinghua University) states:

We pay extremely great importance to promoting economic cooperation and aid but are not very willing to talk about security issues and resolve periphery security issues, and more needs to be done to enhance political mutual trust. As a result the dilemma has emerged in which the more that periphery diplomacy preserves stability, the less stability there is.⁶⁸

Such criticisms have not been as evident in the months following the October 2013 work forum.

Just before that meeting, one important source cited above identified four major activities that Beijing must focus on in implementing peripheral diplomacy: first, to give priority to economics and development “and let every country fully enjoy tangible economic benefit brought by cooperation with China”; second, “to respect the dominance of regional blocs in the cooperation process” such as ASEAN and the SCO; third, to highlight “practical results by grasping things from reality and implementing cooperation and showing the results publicly; and fourth, to adhere to “the principle of open regionalism . . . to let the fruits of China’s and Asian-Pacific development be enjoyed by the whole world.”⁶⁹ Again, economics is emphasized.

More specifically, other observers cite the development of existing and new diplomatic and economic initiatives throughout Northeast, Southeast, South, and Central Asia as essential parts of the new periphery diplomacy. One extensive listing includes “the existing China-Russia-India dialogue mechanism, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China and ASEAN (10+1) mechanism, East Asia Summit, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Regional Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank . . . the China-Central Asia C and D oil and gas pipelines, China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, China-Pakistan Highway, and the ‘Golden Corridor’ of China-ASEAN High-Speed Railway” as well as the Silk Road economic belts and the above-mentioned corridors.⁷⁰

As with authoritative sources, many non-authoritative Chinese observers particularly stress Beijing’s recent positive interactions with Southeast Asian nations and future Sino-ASEAN relations as a necessary focal point of many of these aspects of periphery diplomacy. One observer confirms the above impression that “Beijing is using economic investments to strengthen bilateral relations with countries in Southeast Asia. . . . This focus on improving bilateral ties and forging strategic partnerships with key neighbors may be one of the most substantial changes in Chinese diplomacy during Xi’s term.”⁷¹

While emphasizing the importance of southeast Asia, another Chinese observer cites three key factors that any country must observe in order to “win the hearts” of the ASEAN states: “First . . . value and trust ASEAN instead of counting on it for help . . . Second . . . treat ASEAN as small neighbors, not big powers, by respecting ASEAN,

putting oneself in its position, and taking care of its concerns . . . Third . . . turn trouble into opportunity for cooperation instead of intensifying conflict.”⁷²

Another observer asserts that “Southeast Asia’s fondness for China is lower than that for the United States or even Japan” [!] and somewhat surprisingly calls for Beijing to change the

mentality and approach of local bully diplomacy, increasing the effects of economic aid while building up an effective mechanism, and formulating concrete plans of operation to ensure inclusiveness and avoid going it alone. In military security, we should start with non-conventional security, and expand security cooperation with ASEAN, such as Mekong river’s four-nation patrol mechanism and international cooperation on disaster prevention and alleviation, using this to expand the identification with the “community of destiny” and China’s leadership power. Moreover, we should strengthen people-to-people exchanges.⁷³

However, beyond these references to Southeast Asia, other observers also stress Beijing’s initiatives toward South and Central Asia (as reflected primarily in the Silk Road economic belts and the China-Pakistan and the Bangladesh-China-India-Burma Economic Corridors) as key parts of a “move westward” effort designed to “fortify peripheral diplomacy and strengthen friendly ties.” In this manner, China will “fulfill its responsibility and perform its duty as a leading regional power . . . and [stabilize] the regional security situation.”⁷⁴

Some non-authoritative Chinese observers interpret Beijing’s new emphasis on periphery diplomacy as part of a fundamental shift in the nature of China’s overall foreign policy. According to Yan Xuetong, Xi Jinping’s use of the phrase 奋发有为 at the October 2013 work forum, which he translates as “striving for achievement,” indicates a new approach that rejects the past emphasis on cultivating beneficial relations with all nations largely for the sake of continued economic growth in favor of a selective strategy of rewarding those “who are willing to play a constructive role in China’s rise” while punishing those who show hostility toward China.

Yan states:

In the future, China will decisively favor those who side with it with economic benefits and even security protections. On the contrary, those who are hostile to China will face much more sustained policies of sanctions and isolation.⁷⁵

Yan points to the above-mentioned emphasis in China’s periphery diplomacy on developing a web of positive economic ties—via the two “Silk Road” economic belts and an economic corridor through India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh—as the primary means of “tying up certain nations’ incentives along with China’s development.” In his view, this will eventually “cover a much wider range of strategic elements beyond mere

economic interests. A strong political dimension will be a must. Eventually this may even extend to providing security guarantees to select countries.”⁷⁶

Other analysts have similarly concluded that China’s periphery diplomacy reflects a broader change in PRC foreign policy. One again cites 奋发有为, translated in this instance as “bracing up and pressing ahead,” to describe China’s diplomacy as signifying a shift from the past strategy of four no’s (no making of enemies, no confrontation, no hoisting of banners, and no serving as vanguard), to the current strategy of:

three points, one circle, and four banners, meaning the three major diplomatic relations (Sino-Russian, Sino-US, and Sino-Japanese relations), one circle (the periphery, especially making diplomatic breakthrough in the Southeast Asian direction), and four banners (peace, development, cooperation, and win-win outcome).⁷⁷

Several analysts seem to agree with Yan Xuetong that this new approach in foreign policy involves efforts to “guide other countries to act in the direction favorable to China” while “put[ting] more pressure to bear on the countries that step forward to provoke China.”⁷⁸

As indicated above, in contrast to authoritative sources, many non-authoritative observers emphasize the intimate connection between great power diplomacy and periphery diplomacy. Several observers point to the potential instability along China’s periphery resulting from the increasingly complex and at times fractious relationships existing between China and other major powers, especially the United States. Hence for these observers, it is important for Beijing to focus much of its periphery diplomacy on improving relations with the United States, Japan, India, Russia and other powers.⁷⁹

Unsurprisingly, among these major powers, the relationship with the United States is viewed as paramount. The above-mentioned 2010 CASS report on the situation on China’s periphery stated that “as China goes global and the United States returns to Asia, the instability in relations between these two powers will cause vibrations in China’s peripheral region, affecting China’s relations with the countries on its periphery.”⁸⁰

In a more confrontational vein, another 2010 source outlined the many ways in which Washington is allegedly attempting to deepen its penetration of China’s periphery, in large part in order to check Chinese power and influence.⁸¹

For many Chinese observers, such U.S. actions, as well as other problems emerging along China’s periphery such as maritime territorial disputes, are closely linked to the “pivot” or “rebalancing” toward Asia enunciated by the Obama administration in 2009-2010. In particular, increased U.S. security involvement in the region has allegedly provided impetus for some peripheral states “to make trouble for China over sensitive issues such as disputed territory.”⁸² This is a very common Chinese argument, even though maritime territorial disputes had begun to intensify prior to the U.S. rebalancing policy.⁸³

Some non-authoritative Chinese sources view Beijing's efforts to improve ties with peripheral nations as part of an effort to circumvent or surround the growing and threatening U.S. intrusion into the periphery. One describes Beijing's approach as "the diplomatic application of the strategy of 'surrounding the cities from the countryside.'"⁸⁴ Another observer stresses the positive impact of increasingly important multilateral structures and fora on U.S.-China interactions within the periphery, urging Beijing to use such multilateral interactions to counter Washington's strong "agenda-setting power."⁸⁵

At the same time, and somewhat surprisingly, other Chinese sources point out that some Chinese believe that Beijing also contributes to problems along its periphery and that there is no single "villain" behind China's increasingly challenging periphery environment.⁸⁶

Zhu Feng, a well-known, liberal-minded Chinese international relations scholar, argues this:

[I]t is . . . unhelpful to simply hold the view that the United States is trying to push a strategy of containing China. So long as China can remain stable, coherent, and powerful, China's periphery security situation can only tend to develop in a constructive way. Stabilizing China itself is the key to stabilizing China's periphery. However, we must squarely face the fact that new problems and challenges are appearing in China's periphery security.⁸⁷

Other Chinese scholars have similarly sought to rebut the notion that problems along China's maritime periphery are largely the result of U.S. actions.⁸⁸ In line with this view, other observers argue for the need "for China, the U.S. and other relevant parties to reach a strategic common understanding on the security and stability of the overall regional situation and put in place crisis management mechanisms and a security code of conduct in the Asia Pacific."⁸⁹

Moreover, for one Chinese observer, this more complex situation implies that China should not evaluate the smaller countries within the periphery as

either black or white, and either friend or enemy. Most Asian-Pacific nations do not want Sino-US relations to be too close lest they are controlled by joint Sino-US rule, nor do they want Sino-US relations to be too poor lest they are forced to choose side between China and the United States. This policy psychology and external behavior of "betting on both sides" is understandably normal.⁹⁰

Many non-authoritative analysts, in contrast to authoritative sources, provide significant details on what Beijing has done, and should do, to effectively manage the disputes with neighbors over sovereignty and maritime rights and interests. But both types of sources blame "some peripheral countries" as provoking the current tensions over sovereignty

issues, thereby “causing a hindrance to China’s entire diplomatic arrangements.”⁹¹ Hence, for both non-authoritative and authoritative sources, the responsibility for moderating the disputes is primarily on the other parties, not China.⁹²

As a way of handling these disputes at the broadest and indirect level some analysts point to the above-outlined Chinese intent to create across the periphery a web of economic and political interests favoring China. According to such sources, these developments will reduce the incentives of other countries to continue to “make trouble for China over sensitive issues such as disputed territory.”⁹³

More directly, one analyst approvingly lists a variety of more assertive actions and organizational changes already undertaken in periphery diplomacy and related decision making that purportedly benefit stability and protect Chinese interests. These include: a) the CCP’s establishment of “an authoritative leading organ to safeguard maritime rights and interests” (presumably meaning the leading small group headed by Xi Jinping)⁹⁴; b) the creation of a state “integrated organ for maritime law enforcement and defense of rights”; c) the initiation of “regular law-enforcement patrols in the waters near the Diaoyu Islands, thus breaking Japan’s de facto control over the water areas”; d) the establishment of Sansha City “to take charge of the security and development of China’s water areas in the South China Sea in a unified manner”; e) the furthering of “management and control over the water areas surrounding Huangyan Island and Renai Reef, thus enhancing China’s de facto presence in the entire South China Sea”; and f) various efforts to deal with those states that have disputes with China over maritime rights, including the reaching of a “consensus with Brunei on cooperation in developing maritime oil and gas resources, [a] tacit understanding with Malaysia, and [success in] prompt[ing] Vietnam to walk toward us, thus isolating the Philippines and foiling its scheme to abduct ASEAN countries into taking unanimous action against China.”⁹⁵

Other analysts point to still other actions as key to China’s implementation of its peripheral diplomacy, such as the establishment of an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) that includes the Diaoyu Islands,⁹⁶ described by one observer as “a measured and restrained response” given Japan’s alleged provocations.⁹⁷ Yet another source stresses the need “to make full use of the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Foundation and the Disaster Prevention and Relief Fund to strengthen maritime cooperation with the ASEAN countries within the framework of implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, to carry out cooperation in the domain of maritime law enforcement, [and] to push forward the concrete cooperation projects in the building of the Maritime Silk Road in the 21st century.”⁹⁸

As for the future handling of these disputes, one source correctly observes that:

The future success of defending rights depends on whether China has mastered the art of knowing and discerning which situations require the use of diplomacy and which require the use of force. China will benefit by taking practical steps with strong determination, which will result in a

renewed understanding of China on its periphery. . . . The primary objective of the revision of China's peripheral diplomacy centers on the question: Should China maintain stability or defend rights?⁹⁹

Although published before the October 2013 work forum, this same non-authoritative source provides perhaps the most detailed and thorough set of strategic recommendations and considerations for how Beijing should proceed in dealing with disputes along the periphery. Beijing should:

In the short term, defend rights, strengthen actual control over Huangyan island, and break Japan's absolute control over the Diaoyu Islands, which stretch over 12 nautical miles. Maintain regular routine patrols, declare sovereignty, and prevent Southeast Asian countries from forming a "united front against China" on the South China Sea issue. In the mid-term, greatly enhance the ability of China to independently develop maritime resources. Develop the marine economy, and build up China's maritime power. A fight over resources is at the core of the maritime disputes. Large scale, substantial development is conducive to exerting pressure on respective countries, as this is a way to invite them to jointly develop with China. Increase China's chances to succeed; reduce the loss of larger scale limited resources; increase China's energy supply; and boost China's international competitiveness in oil and gas fields. In the long term, explore new ideas to solve maritime disputes. If China is blinded by a particular theory or vision, it will become powerless to identify patterns of complex issues, and fail to recognize obvious mistakes and contradictions.

. . . try not to get involved in any fights over sovereignty. If possible, maintain the status quo on the disputed islands and reefs, and focus on common interest in the development of oil, gas, and other natural resources. Ensure that islands with military value are not transferred to other parties, which may present security threats to China. . . . properly handle relations among major powers, explore new venues for cooperation, and avoid being "kidnapped" by members of a third party. . . . The stability of China's periphery is becoming increasingly inseparable from its relations to major powers, especially the stability of U.S.-China relations.¹⁰⁰

This assessment is by and large in line with existing Chinese policy toward the sovereignty and resource disputes along the periphery.

Evaluations and Implications

The above examination of Chinese views on periphery diplomacy confirms that this aspect of Beijing's foreign policy has emerged as a major priority for a variety of reasons.

Some are long-term and largely associated with the pattern of China's outward-oriented economic development and growing political presence, while others are more recent and linked most notably with growing tensions over territorial sovereignty and resource disputes with nearby states and secondarily (according to some sources) events on the Korean Peninsula.

The latter factors, more than anything else, are viewed by many Chinese, either implicitly or explicitly, as constituting the main driver for a new emphasis on and approach to periphery diplomacy. Hence, even though some non-authoritative sources define the realm of Beijing's periphery diplomacy as encompassing vast regions extending well beyond nearby countries and incorporating a very wide variety of diplomatic activities, it is evident that on an authoritative level Beijing's periphery diplomacy—at least over the near to medium term—is designed to address the increasingly challenging security environment along China's immediate (especially maritime) region, centered on the views and actions of neighboring nations. That said, for at least some authoritative sources, this challenging environment also involves relations with some major powers involved in this nearby region, especially the United States.

As noted in the introduction, the key challenge confronting China's diplomacy toward the periphery region therefore focuses on how to craft and implement an integrated strategy that simultaneously maintains and expands existing positive and beneficial, long-term relations with periphery nations and organizations (and involved powers such as the United States), while more effectively protecting and advancing China's sovereignty interests.

While not explicitly identified as such in authoritative sources, many Chinese observers readily recognize this challenge. Moreover, for some observers, it is linked to certain weaknesses in China's periphery diplomacy, such as coordinating between economic and security objectives, and the inability to reverse an image of China as a threat to periphery states.

That said, the above analysis also indicates that both similarities and differences exist among Chinese observers as to how Beijing can best meet this challenge. By and large, both authoritative and non-authoritative sources stress fairly longstanding and well-known approaches that simultaneously involve the deepening of mutually beneficial political and especially economic ties and interactions with periphery states and related multilateral organizations, alongside continued efforts to consult and negotiate with individual disputants.

Many Chinese sources, and especially authoritative ones, stress the positive elements of such periphery diplomacy, involving, for example, the development of new economic ties through the Silk Road Economic Belt and economic corridor concepts, and the desire to manage periphery disputes in a peaceful manner. Nevertheless, few (if any) sources of any type argue that China should exercise greater restraint than in the past regarding those disputes in order to reinforce overall good will. And no Chinese sources that we have identified advocates submitting disputes to international judicial authorities or

placing them under the purview of multilateral security organizations or processes. They are to be managed or resolved by Beijing in interaction with individual disputants.

Instead of advocating restraint, and despite a recognition that many periphery countries hold a more negative image of China as a result of the disputes, many if not most sources argue that now and in the future China should exercise greater “strategic resolve” in a variety of ways to protect its sovereignty and resource interests. And authoritative military sources in particular stress the need to show unflinching resolve. This is probably the most significant difference between military and civilian sources with regard to periphery diplomacy, although it is not much of a difference. Overall, the need to show greater resolve toward periphery disputes arguably constitutes the most important new element in China’s periphery diplomacy overall.

Somewhat surprisingly, non-authoritative sources and by implication some authoritative sources argue that such greater resolve or assertiveness will increase, not decrease, stability along China’s periphery, most often by clearly showing to both rival claimants and others that no one will be allowed to take advantage of Beijing’s general policy of peace and consultation to engage in provocative behavior.

This latter point reflects another common viewpoint shared by both authoritative and non-authoritative sources: the tensions over sovereignty and resource issues with China have been caused and exacerbated by other parties, either directly (in the case of the disputants themselves) or indirectly, in the case of the United States and Japan (the latter concerning the South China Sea disputes). Although few if any nations would publicly acknowledge that they might be to blame for sovereignty disputes, Chinese sources are especially adamant on this point, which contributes to a fervent level of self-righteousness.¹⁰¹

The involvement of Washington and Tokyo in these disputes is almost uniformly seen as unhelpful at best, and fundamentally disruptive and threatening at worst. Indeed, although authoritative sources usually avoid making such an explicit connection, many other Chinese sources believe that increased U.S. involvement in China’s periphery disputes encourages or permits other claimants to “make trouble.” This is a common Chinese refrain noted in previous articles in the *Monitor*.¹⁰²

Given such challenging circumstances, for Chinese analysts, the key to a strategy of continued or greater resolve is of course to determine what ways Beijing can best show resolve without exacerbating China’s larger interests in the peaceful development of the periphery and precipitating a sharp confrontation with the United States. In this regard, no Chinese observer explicitly argues in favor of China acting militarily to resolve its sovereignty disputes either now or over the long term. Virtually all observers stress the desire to maintain a peaceful approach indefinitely, while implying that China certainly will not forgo any use of force if necessary, especially to prevent a loss of claimed territory.

At the same time, many authoritative and non-authoritative sources endorse what many foreign observers regard as provocative and unhelpful measures, such as Beijing's physical challenge to Japanese administrative authority over the Senkaku-Diaoyu Islands, the establishment of the East China Sea ADIZ, and the creation of new administrative structures such as the Sansha City authorities. These are usually seen as necessary and, for some sources, restrained reactions to the provocations of others.¹⁰³ It is notable that few if any Chinese sources criticize any of these actions.

Some non-authoritative Chinese sources view Beijing's supposedly justifiable resort to more assertive measures on periphery disputes as part of a larger change in China's foreign policy toward a selective application of rewards and punishment toward countries that support or oppose vital Chinese interests. While this is not confirmed by authoritative sources, it is a common enough assessment among Chinese observers to suggest that many government officials probably share the belief that in general Beijing should increasingly utilize its growing economic, political and even military power at the very least to discourage (if not punish) other powers, and to shape their perceptions, so that they do not oppose or obstruct Chinese interests. Indeed, it would be surprising if Beijing did not follow such a path, while seeking to strengthen positive relationships. Most nations would do the same.

In fact, in addition to the general emphasis on taking a more assertive stance toward territorial and other disputes, the other main feature of Beijing's new periphery diplomacy is the emphasis on using China's growing economic clout to develop an enduring, integrated set of relationships with periphery states that will eventually alter their incentive structure in ways that benefit China and themselves. This undertaking—centered on the creation of the Silk Road economic belts, economic corridors, major infrastructure investments, oil pipelines, and other transnational or regional development projects—is usually cast in positive terms by authoritative and some non-authoritative sources as an effort to build and deepen positive-sum, mutually beneficial development ties. That said, as we have seen, several non-authoritative sources emphasize the importance of such undertakings in an overall effort to create a set of positive and negative inducements for other states to not “make trouble for China.”¹⁰⁴ For some such observers, this changed environment could and should eventually result in new security arrangements that favor China, as well as in clearer, more determined efforts to punish wrong-doing as defined by Beijing.

It is tempting to conclude from such apparent desires and intentions that most Chinese, and hence probably the Chinese leadership, view the new periphery diplomacy not only as a more effective way of balancing the potentially conflicting goals of cooperative development and the defense of sovereignty, but also as a means of challenging the current U.S.-led security order in the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that while undoubtedly suspicious of U.S. intentions, some Chinese observers reject the idea that Beijing's problems along its periphery are due primarily to the United States and the U.S.-led security order. More importantly, several observers also imply, if not outright argue, that the only viable long-term environment for China's periphery and the Asia-Pacific region is one that involves a more cooperative Sino-U.S.

relationship. This fact, and the absence of overtly confrontational rhetoric toward the U.S. in authoritative commentary on periphery diplomacy, suggests that Beijing does not necessarily regard its relations with periphery states as part of a zero-sum competition with Washington.

For Washington, Chinese views toward periphery diplomacy thus imply several challenges and some opportunities. Arguably the greatest challenge resides in China's self-righteous stance toward periphery disputes, its general self-image as a restrained and defensive power reacting to the provocations of others, and its tendency to view the U.S. as a meddling power. As discussed in previous issues of the *Monitor*, these and other features increase the chances of more dangerous crises along China's periphery that could draw in the United States.¹⁰⁵ But Chinese incentives to employ forceful or other threatening means to handle its periphery disputes are not high and immutable. They must be weighed by China's leaders against the many economic, political, and security incentives that Beijing has, and will continue to have, to avoid scaring periphery states into the arms of the United States and into an arms race with China. Hence, they are still subject to outside influence.

For many foreign observers, this simply means that Beijing's resulting strategy toward the periphery will consist of efforts to develop increasingly strong economic and political incentives for others to submit to Chinese demands on many issues, while engaging in an aggressive variety of "salami tactics" toward various disputes that involves persistent low-level intimidation and the incremental seizure of territory where possible. If the Chinese were clearly committed to a larger zero-sum strategy of dominating Asia and confronting the U.S. from an assured position of growing strength and saw the resolution of its sovereignty disputes with other nations as its top priority in periphery diplomacy, such a strategy might make sense. But this and previous *Monitor* articles cited earlier suggest that Beijing has not made such a commitment, does not possess such confidence at present, and does not view the resolution of these disputes as a top priority. As many Chinese sources assert, Beijing requires an open economic system in Asia and along its periphery and reasonably cooperative relations with periphery powers who are not scared or intimidated into compliance and with the United States. Hence, while it certainly wants to improve its position along its periphery and with respect to territorial disputes, it also wants to create a genuinely positive environment for its neighbors, so that it can continue to generate positive economic and political results.

This incentive and its underlying emphasis on economic development ties provide an opportunity for Washington and its allies and friends. Initiatives such as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other transnational economic undertakings that offer the prospect of using U.S. economic strengths to benefit periphery nations, including China, should be combined where possible with Chinese notions of regional development. Such a deeper level of U.S.-involved regional economic integration could create more incentives for Beijing to exercise restraint in handling potentially disruptive issues such as sovereignty disputes than to use its growing economic capabilities to manipulate or punish others. Ideally, this effort should also include greater American investment in the kinds of infrastructure and other projects that would benefit many periphery states.

However, such undertakings are unlikely as long as the U.S. remains unable to recover fully from its current economic difficulties.

Aside from focusing on such positive dimensions of China's periphery diplomacy, how can Washington more directly increase Chinese incentives to exercise restraint toward its disputes with periphery states, especially when most Chinese believe that showing greater resolve is necessary and that Beijing is already exercising considerable restraint? Beijing's overall desire to avoid an outright use of force toward periphery disputes clearly suggests that Washington will probably continue to face few obstacles in its efforts to discourage such Chinese behavior, assuming other claimants do not first employ outright force themselves. However, attempts at coercive behavior are a different case. As the above analysis indicates, Beijing is committed to discouraging what it regards as unacceptable provocations, using coercive means if necessary. Thus, Washington should show clearly and convincingly that it is every bit as opposed to the provocative actions of other disputants as it is to those of China. While remaining clear about its intent to assist directly in the defense of allies if attacked by China, Washington also must decide how vital it is to American interests in Asia to prevent any non-violent Chinese coercion of rival disputants and how far it is willing to go in that effort. If the U.S. incorrectly assumes that Beijing's periphery diplomacy—and hence its actions toward periphery disputes—are part of a larger strategy aimed at achieving regional dominance through aggressive means, then the resulting U.S. response to future Chinese coercion (along with any Chinese actions that result in apparent gains in sovereignty disputes) will almost certainly lock in a spiral of escalating confrontations with Beijing and ultimately, a zero-sum competition for dominance in Asia. To avoid such an eminently avoidable outcome, Washington must develop a periphery strategy that creates a deepening pattern of mutual incentives with Beijing to emphasize the positive, developmental aspects of periphery diplomacy, while in the process diminishing the importance and relevance of the surrounding disputes. This is no easy task.

Notes

¹ Pei Guangjiang and Wang Di, "Steadfastly Take the Path of Peace and Development, Create A Good International Environment for Chinese Nation's Great Rejuvenation—Series of Report Meetings on Propaganda and Education on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics and Chinese Dream," *People's Daily*, November 22, 2013; Bonnie Glaser and Deep Pal, "China's Periphery Diplomacy Initiative: Implications for China Neighbors and the United States," *China-US Focus*, November 7, 2013. According to Xinhua reporting on the event, those "attending the meeting were members of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau, members of the CPC Central Committee Secretariat, state councilors, members of the leading group for foreign affairs under the CPC Central Committee who are in Beijing. . . . Also attending the forum were responsible comrades from various provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities, from the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, from relevant departments of party, government, army, and mass organizations, from relevant financial organs, from key state-owned enterprises; representatives from envoys stationed in relevant countries, from some

permanent international and regional organizations; special commissioners from offices of the mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong and Macau; some special affairs ambassadors, special envoys and representatives.” See “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum, Stresses Need to Strive for Excellent Peripheral Environment for Our Country and Promote Our Country’s Development and Bring More Benefits for Peripheral Countries; Li Keqiang Chairs the Forum; Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshang, Wang Qishan, and Zhang Gaoli Attend the Forum,” Xinhua, October 25, 2013.

² Michael D. Swaine et al., “China’s Military and the U.S.-Japan Alliance: A Strategic Net Assessment,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2013).

³ “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum.”

⁴ Timothy Heath, “Diplomacy Work Forum: Xi Steps Up Efforts to Shape a China-Centered Regional Order,” *China Brief*, Vol. 13, No. 22, November 7, 2013.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Douglas Paal, “Contradictions in China’s Foreign Policy,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 13, 2013.

⁷ Philip C. Saunders, “China’s juggling act: balancing stability and territorial claims,” PacNet #33, Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 29, 2014.

⁸ Several types of PRC sources are considered authoritative in the sense of explicitly “speaking for the regime.” They generally include MFA and MND statements and briefings and remarks by senior civilian and military officials appearing in the leading Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (or CCP CC) and military (People’s Liberation Army or PLA) newspapers: *People’s Daily* (人民日报) and *Liberation Army Daily* (解放军报). Authoritative statements include, in descending order of authority, PRC government and CCP statements, MFA statements, MFA spokesperson statements, and MFA daily press briefings. Authoritative commentaries in *People’s Daily* and *Liberation Army Daily* include, in descending order, “editorial department articles,” editorials, and commentator articles.

Several types of usually homophonous, bylined articles appearing in the *People’s Daily* are considered quasi-authoritative in the sense that, although indirect and implicit, they are intended to convey the view of an important PRC organization. A major example of this is articles using the byline “Zhong Sheng” (钟声), which is an apparent homophone for “the voice of the Central,” and appears to be written by the editorial staff of the *People’s Daily* International Department. Other quasi-authoritative homophonous bylines include “Ren Zhongping” (任仲平), homophonous with “important *People’s Daily* commentary”), “Zhong Zuwen” (仲组文), homophonous with “CC Organization Department article”), and “Zhong Xuanli” (钟轩理), homophonous with “CC Propaganda Department commentary”).

Many types of low-level commentary and signed articles appearing in a wide variety of PRC and Hong Kong media convey notable yet decidedly non-authoritative views. Such articles appear in the PRC government news service (Xinhua), CCP and PLA newspapers, the Hong Kong-based (and *People’s Daily*-owned) *Global Times* (环球时报), and many minor PRC and Hong Kong newspapers and academic publications. Despite the view expressed by some pundits, nothing published in the *Global Times* is “authoritative” in any meaningful sense, “because the newspaper is a commercial vehicle

and doesn't stand for the *People's Daily*, even though it is subordinate to that organ."

Alice Miller, personal correspondence, June 27, 2012.

⁹ See "Main Characteristics of China's Foreign Policy," Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the United States of America, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgx/zgwjzc/t35077.htm>, accessed June 19, 2014; "China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept," Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, <http://www.china-un.org/eng/xw/t27742.htm>, accessed June 19, 2014; "China's Peaceful Development Road," PRC State Council, December 22, 2005, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200512/22/eng20051222_230059.html, accessed June 19, 2014.

¹⁰ See Zhang Yunling and Zhou Fangyin, "Chapter One: China's Relations with Its Neighbors after Reform and Opening up," ed. Wang Yizhou, *Transformation of Foreign Affairs and International Relations in China, 1978–2008*, Brill (2011).

¹¹ See Yuan Peng, "'Harmonious World' and China's 'New Diplomacy,'" *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, April 20, 2007. Yuan Peng is director, Institute for American Studies, China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR); and Ji Zhiye, "China's Geopolitical '1, 2, 3. . .,'" *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, May 20, 2008, OSC CPP20080718508005. Ji is deputy director of CICIR.

¹² For discussions of the general evolution of China's periphery diplomacy in recent years, see Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, "New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China's Response," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. Jin Canrong is deputy dean and professor and Duan Haowen is a postdoc at the School of International Studies, Renmin University of China; and Wang Yu, "China Changes the Gear and Upgrades Its Periphery Diplomacy," *People's Daily* (Overseas Edition).

¹³ Senior leaders such as Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, and Wang Yi refer to "the vast reaches of the Asia-Pacific," Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and Central Asia in addressing periphery diplomacy. However, in his address to the October 2013 work forum, Xi Jinping describes the key features of China's periphery diplomacy in ways that suggest he is referring to small or middle-sized bordering or very nearby nations in these areas. He states: "the basic principle of our country's peripheral diplomacy is to persist in treating neighbors with consideration, treating neighbors as partners, persist in maintaining good-neighborliness with neighbors, in pacifying neighbors, in enriching neighbors, and persist in giving prominence to realizing the ideals of familiarity, sincerity, benefits, and inclusiveness." See "Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum." For similar descriptions of the targets of periphery diplomacy, see "Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping's Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders," Xinhua, October 8, 2013.

¹⁴ See Chen Xiangyang, "Deal With the Six Plates of the 'Grand Periphery,'" *Liaowang*, August 23, 2010. Chen is deputy research fellow of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations. Chen refers to the above six areas as six large "plates" that together constitute China's "grand periphery." A military source cites six major aspects of China's periphery environment in 2014: Russia, Japan, North Korea, India, Central Asia, and ASEAN. See "2014, 中国周边形势六大看点" (2014: Six major aspects of China's

periphery situation), *Liberation Army Daily*, January 6, 2014, translated by Audrye Wong.

¹⁵ Yuan Peng, “Thoughts on China’s Great Periphery Strategy in the New Period,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* is the monthly journal of the State Council’s Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations, publishing articles on international relations with an emphasis on the Asia Pacific Region. For less systematic references to the extent of China’s periphery that nonetheless seem compatible with the above definition, see Ji Zhiye, “China’s Geopolitical ‘1,2,3.’” Ji is deputy director at CICIR. See also Li Ying and Liang Jiawen, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity,” *Guoji Xianqu Daobao*, December 24, 2010. This article presents the views of nine regional experts regarding China’s periphery.

¹⁶ Yuan Peng, “Thoughts on China’s Great Periphery Strategy.” For a similar viewpoint, also see Chen Xiangyang, “Deal With the Six Plates of the ‘Grand Periphery.’”

¹⁷ “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum, Stresses Need to Strive for Excellent Peripheral Environment for Our Country and Promote Our Country’s Development and Bring More Benefits for Peripheral Countries; Li Keqiang Chairs the Forum; Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshang, Wang Qishan, and Zhang Gaoli Attend the Forum,” *Xinhua*, October 26, 2013. Xi also called for China to “comprehensively develop relations with peripheral countries; consolidate good-neighborliness and friendship; deepen mutually beneficial cooperation; maintain and use well the important strategic opportunity period of our country’s development.

¹⁸ Pei Guangjiang and Wang Di, “Steadfastly Take the Path of Peace and Development, Create A Good International Environment for Chinese Nation’s Great Rejuvenation—Series of Report Meetings on Propaganda and Education on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics and Chinese Dream,” *People’s Daily*, November 22, 2013. For non-authoritative affirmations of this approach, see “Weaving a web of common interests, mutually beneficial cooperation promotes development—*People’s Daily* reporter describes ‘benefit’ between China and its periphery nations,” *People’s Daily*, November 1, 2013; “Stories of friendship warm people’s hearts, keeping watch over neighbors reveals true feelings—*People’s Daily* reporter describes the ‘affinity’ between China and its periphery nations,” *People’s Daily*, October 30, 2013; Chen Xiangyang, “New Vista for China’s Peripheral Diplomacy,” *Liaowang*, November 4, 2013; Gao Qiufu, “Bright Spots and Difficulties in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy,” *Liaowang*, January 13, 2014; and “Building a platform of inclusiveness and openness, promoting shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific—*People’s Daily* reporter describes ‘inclusiveness’ between China and its periphery nations,” *People’s Daily*, November 2, 2013.

¹⁹ See, for example, Zhang Yunling and Zhou Fangyin, “Chapter One: China’s Relations with Its Neighbors after Reform and Opening up,” ed. Wang Yizhou, *Transformation of Foreign Affairs and International Relations in China, 1978–2008*, Brill (2011).

²⁰ For authoritative sources linking these concepts to periphery diplomacy, see the remarks of PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in Wang Yi, “Start a New Journey of Chinese Diplomacy—Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s Speech at the ‘New Starting Point, New Ideas, New Practice—2013 China and the World’ Seminar,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, December 18, 2013; “Create a New Situation

in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” Xinhua, October 8, 2013; “2014年2月18日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on February 18, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 18, 2014; and “2014年2月12日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on February 12, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 12, 2014. MFA statements extracted from the “Database of the Chinese government” (人民数据库) accessed via the Library of Congress, and translated by Audrye Wong. Also see Cui Wenyi and Liao Lei, “Wang Yi: 2013 Is An Extraordinary Year in China’s Diplomatic Course,” Xinhua, December 16, 2013. For a quasi-authoritative source that stresses the benefits of greater regional economic integration under the Silk Road economic belt concept, see Zhong Sheng, “Epoch-Making Significance of ‘Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road’ Proposal,” *People’s Daily*, February 25, 2014. The author states: “By linking Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and western Asia, “one belt and one road” will help the various subregions put to use the others’ strengths and take advantage of one another to offset their own weaknesses. It will help create and perfect Asia’s own supply chain, industrial chain, and value chain, thus taking Pan-Asian and Eurasian regional cooperation to a whole new level.”

For similar views in non-authoritative sources, see Shi Yinhong, “An Analysis of the ‘New Type of Major Country Relationship’,” *China-US Focus*, April 3, 2014; Shao Yuqun, “Two Roads, But One Destination?” *China-US Focus*, February 24, 2014. Shao Yuqun is the Director of Center for American Studies, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies; Zhou Bo, “The String of Pearls and the Maritime Silk Road,” *China-US Focus*, February 11, 2014; Gao Qiufu, “Bright Spots and Difficulties in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy,” *Liaowang*, January 13, 2014; Shen Dingli, “China’s Amity Diplomacy Sailing into the Future,” *China-US Focus*, January 3, 2014; Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response”; Gao Zugui, “China Enters New Period for Shaping International Environment,” *Liaowang*, November 11, 2013; Luo Chaowen, “Focus on Visits of Three Countries’ Prime Ministers to China on the Same Day,” *Liberation Army Daily*, October 24, 2013; Yuan Peng, “Thoughts on China’s Great Periphery Strategy in the New Period,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013; “Stories of friendship warm people’s hearts, keeping watch over neighbors reveals true feelings—*People’s Daily* reporter describes the “affinity” between China and its periphery nations,” *People’s Daily*, October 30, 2013; Zhao Kejin, “Common destiny needs stability,” *China Daily*, December 31, 2013. The author is deputy director of Center for US-China Relations, Tsinghua University. See also Zhai Kun, “The Xi Jinping Doctrine of Chinese Diplomacy,” *China-US Focus*, March 25, 2014. Zhai Kun is Director of the Institute of World Political Studies at CICIR.

²¹ See “2014年5月7日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on May 7, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, May 7, 2014; and “2014年2月24日外交部发言人

华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on February 24, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 24, 2014. Sources extracted from the “Database of the Chinese government” (人民数据库) accessed via the Library of Congress, and translated by Audrye Wong.

²² Douglas Paal, “Contradictions in China’s Foreign Policy,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 13, 2013.

²³ See “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum”; and Bonnie Glaser and Deep Pal, “China’s Periphery Diplomacy Initiative: Implications for China Neighbors and the United States,” *China-US Focus*, November 7, 2013.

²⁴ As cited in Wang Sheng and Luo Xiao, “The Transformation of the International System and the Change in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy: From Maintaining Stability to Defending Rights,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, January 13, 2013. Wang Sheng is a professor and Luo Xiao a graduate student at the School of Administration, Jilin University.

²⁵ Pei Guangjiang and Wang Di, “Steadfastly Take the Path of Peace and Development, Create A Good International Environment for Chinese Nation’s Great Rejuvenation—Series of Report Meetings on Propaganda and Education on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics and Chinese Dream,” *People’s Daily*, November 22, 2013.

²⁶ “Full Text of PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s News Conference 8 March 2014,” CCTV-1, March 8, 2014. For an even more recent, similar statement, see “2014年6月5日外交部发言人洪磊主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on June 5, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, June 5, 2014. The MFA spokesperson states: “with regard to the minority of countries that wantonly violate Chinese sovereignty and rights, and deliberately destroy maritime peace and stability with provocative actions, China will respond resolutely.” Source extracted from the “Database of the Chinese government” (人民数据库) accessed via the Library of Congress, and translated by Audrye Wong.

²⁷ Pang Qingjie, “在领土主权和海洋权益上绝对没有讨价还价余地” (On territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, there is absolutely no room for bargaining), *Liberation Army Daily*, May 30, 2014, translated by Audrye Wong.

²⁸ Zhong Sheng, “Good Neighbors, Priceless Treasures,” *People’s Daily*, March 10, 2013.

²⁹ For example, see Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. Also see Zhai Kun, “The Xi Jinping Doctrine of Chinese Diplomacy,” *China-US Focus*, March 25, 2014. Zhai stresses the need to “ensure peace and development with bottom line thinking. Peace and development are not achieved without conditions and Chinese core interests of security, development and sovereignty brook no violation.” Another source defines China’s “bottom line thinking” as a central element of its overall diplomacy in 2013: “China not only persistently held high the banner of peace, development, cooperation, and win-win outcome but also attached importance to the ‘bottom line thinking’ and the resolution to safeguard its own core interests, and not only did things for the good of others and made friends extensively but also persisted in principles and necessary struggles.” See Chen Xiangyang, “Five New Major Trends in Current International Strategic Situation,” *Liaowang*, January 6, 2014.

³⁰ See Timothy Heath, “Diplomacy Work Forum: Xi Steps Up Efforts to Shape a China-Centered Regional Order,” *China Brief* Vol. 13 No. 22, November 7, 2013.

³¹ “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum.”

³² “Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” Xinhua, October 8, 2013.

³³ Zhong Sheng, “Epoch-Making Significance of ‘Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road’ Proposal,” *People’s Daily*, February 25, 2014.

³⁴ Chen Xiangyang, “Deal With the Six Plates of the ‘Grand Periphery,’” *Liaowang*, August 23, 2010. Chen is deputy research fellow of China Institute of Contemporary International Relations.

³⁵ Ji Zhiye, “China’s Geopolitical ‘1,2,3.’”

³⁶ A report on the situation along China’s periphery is issued annually by CASS. See Li and Liang, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity”; and Shen Dingli, “A Chinese Assessment of China’s External Security Environment,” *China Brief* Vol. 11 No. 5, Jamestown Foundation, March 25, 2011. In responding to this rather dire assessment, several Chinese Asia experts were convened to comment on China’s periphery environment for the former article. In line with the CASS report, some of these experts viewed Northeast Asia as the weakest periphery region for China at the time, “with DPRK-ROK relations worsening, the United States intervening in depth, Japan’s defense policy turning toward China, and the embryonic formation of a trilateral US-ROK-Japan military alliance.”

³⁷ Wang and Luo, “The Transformation of the International System and the Change in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy.” On a cautionary note, however, another analyst observes that: Politically, the judgment that China’s peripheral security environment is now worsening may fall into the trap of people who are trying to sow discord between China and the periphery countries and to take advantage of this.” See Li and Liang, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity,” citing Zhang Xiaoming, professor of Beijing University Faculty of International Relations.

³⁸ Chen Jimin, “The Motivations for China’s New Periphery Strategy,” *China-US Focus*, November 18, 2013. Chen Jimin, Ph.D, is an assistant research fellow for the Institute for International and Strategic Studies at the Party School of Central Committee of C.P.C.

³⁹ “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum.”

⁴⁰ “Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” Xinhua, October 8, 2013; and Pei Guangjiang and Wang Di, “Steadfastly Take the Path of Peace and Development, Create A Good International Environment for Chinese Nation’s Great Rejuvenation—Series of Report Meetings on Propaganda and Education on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics and Chinese Dream,” *People’s Daily*, November 22, 2013.

⁴¹ Guo Jiping, “Create a Favorable External Environment for the Realization of the China Dream—Written on the Occasion of President Xi Jinping’s Major Diplomatic Action Toward the American Countries,” *People’s Daily*, May 31, 2013. Guo Jiping is probably

a pseudonym for the International Department of the *People's Daily*. The author is indebted to Alice Miller for this information.

⁴² Zhao Kejin, “Common destiny needs stability,” *China Daily*, December 31, 2013. The author is deputy director of Center for US-China Relations, Tsinghua University. Also see Chen Xiangyang, “New Vista for China’s Peripheral Diplomacy,” *Liaowang*, November 4, 2013; and Zhu Feng, “China’s Security Situation in the Periphery: Problems and Challenges,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. Zhu in particular stresses the importance, as objectives, of the land and maritime Silk Road economic belts put forward by Xi Jinping, stating that they “to a considerable degree [point] out for us the new direction for future periphery strategic planning.” For a similar point, see Shao Yuqun, “Two Roads, But One Destination?”

⁴³ Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. Jin Canrong, deputy dean and professor, School of International Studies, Renmin University of China, and Duan Haowen, postdoc, School of International Studies, Renmin University of China.

⁴⁴ Zhou Yinfang, director of editorial office of *Dangdai Yatai* published by CASS Asia-Pacific Studies Institute, in Li and Liang, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity.”

⁴⁵ See Wang and Luo, “The Transformation of the International System and the Change in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy.” The title of this source therefore seem somewhat contradictory, since the apparent argument put forward is that “defending rights” is all about “maintaining stability.”

⁴⁶ “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Peripheral Diplomatic Work Forum.” For similar remarks by Li during his visit to southeast Asia just prior to the October 2013 work forum, see “Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” *Xinhua*, October 8, 2013.

⁴⁷ See Pei Guangjiang and Wang Di, “Steadfastly Take the Path of Peace and Development, Create A Good International Environment for Chinese Nation’s Great Rejuvenation—Series of Report Meetings on Propaganda and Education on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics and Chinese Dream,” *People’s Daily*, November 22, 2013.

⁴⁸ “Weaving a web of common interests, mutually beneficial cooperation promotes development—People’s Daily reporter describes “benefit” between China and its periphery nations,” *People’s Daily*, November 1, 2013. Also see “Building a platform of inclusiveness and openness, promoting shared prosperity in the Asia-Pacific—People’s Daily reporter describes ‘inclusiveness’ between China and its periphery nations,” *People’s Daily*, November 2, 2013. This author adds that “China’s peripheral diplomacy does not seek regional dominance and exclusiveness.”

⁴⁹ “Full Text of PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s News Conference 8 March 2014,” CCTV-1, March 8, 2014. What the last phrase means in practice remains unclear. For a similar statement, see Zhang Jiangwei and Lv Desheng, “中国讲原则讲道理但也有底线” (China follows principles and reason but also has bottom lines), *Liberation Army Daily*, December 29, 2012, translated by Audrye Wong.

In this source, Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Zhijun also states: “Before the dispute has been thoroughly resolved, the various parties should avoid taking actions that expand or complicate the dispute, so as to preserve regional stability.”

⁵⁰ “Premier Li Keqiang’s Keynote Speech At 10th China Asean Expo,” Xinhua, September 3, 2013. For similar high-level authoritative statements on the priority of Sino-ASEAN relations within China’s periphery diplomacy, see “习近平主席接受印度尼西亚和马来西亚媒体联合采访” (Chairman Xi Jinping is interviewed by media in Indonesia and Malaysia), *Liberation Army Daily*, October 3, 2013, translated by Audrye Wong; “Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” Xinhua, October 8, 2013; and Zhang Yi, “China, ASEAN Hold Special Foreign Ministers’ Meeting,” Xinhua, August 13, 2013.

⁵¹ “Premier Li Keqiang’s Keynote Speech At 10th China Asean Expo,” Xinhua, September 3, 2013; and “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on October 10, 2013,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, October 10, 2013. Also see Chen Xiangyang, “Seizing the strategic initiative,” *China Daily*, October 21, 2013. For a somewhat similar listing of seven initiatives that Beijing is undertaking with the ASEAN states as part of peripheral diplomacy, see an interview with Xi Jinping conducted during his trip to Indonesia and Malaysia, in “习近平主席接受印度尼西亚和马来西亚媒体联合采访” (Chairman Xi Jinping is interviewed by media in Indonesia and Malaysia), *Liberation Army Daily*, October 3, 2013, translated by Audrye Wong. Regarding sovereignty disputes, Xi merely states that “China has always advocated suitable resolution via friendly consultations and dialogue, and will continue striving toward this.”

⁵² See Liu Zhenmin, “China-ASEAN: Fruitful Results of Good-Neighborly Friendship,” *People’s Daily*, August 29, 2013. Li stated that China will work “vigorously” in three areas: first, build an “upgraded version” of the existing China-ASEAN free trade zone “to further raise the level of trade, investment, and service facilitation.” Second, promote interoperability with the ASEAN in infrastructure, including the establishment of “an Asian infrastructure investment and financing platform to provide the guarantee of funds for infrastructure construction in the region.” Third, deepen maritime cooperation “in such areas as fishery base construction, harbor city cooperation network, maritime satellite information application, ocean science and technology, disaster prevention and mitigation, navigation safety, and search and rescue.” In addition, Liu stated that Beijing will work to enhance political mutual trust with the ASEAN states by increasing exchanges at various levels, “bring[ing] into full play the role of governmental mechanisms such as China-ASEAN leaders’ meeting and foreign ministers’ meeting; and, at the same time, increas[ing] exchanges and communication between think tanks, media, youths, and other social circles. . . [while] “actively explor[ing] ways to utilize the existing frameworks such as the ASEAN defense ministers’ expanded meeting and ASEAN regional forum to strengthen security dialog and cooperation.” He also stated that China will further promote bilateral cultural exchanges and “step up coordination and cooperation with such regional mechanisms as the 10+3, East Asia summit, and ASEAN regional forum in order to promote regional integration and maintain Asia’s position as

the engine of global economy. The two sides should explore cooperation in non-traditional security realms such as climate change and cyber security to provide more public security provisions for the region.” With regard to the disputes, Liu stressed the common Chinese view that the issue is with “some Southeast Asian countries” and not an issue between China and ASEAN, and he repeated Beijing’s position that it will work with ASEAN states “to comprehensively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and carry out consultation on the “Code of Conduct in the South China Sea” under the framework of implementing the Declaration.”

⁵³ See “推动共同发展 共建和谐亚洲在博鳌亚洲论坛2011年年会开幕式上的演讲 (2011年4月15日, 海南博鳌) 中华人民共和国主席胡锦涛” (Advancing common development and together building a harmonious Asia: Boao Forum 2011 Opening Ceremony Speech by PRC President Hu Jintao), *Liberation Army Daily*, April 16, 2011, translated by Audrye Wong. Also see remarks by then Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi at roughly the same time, cited in “杨洁篪就中国外交政策和对外关系答中外记者问” (Yang Jiechi responds to Chinese and foreign media queries on China’s foreign policy and foreign relations), *Liberation Army Daily*, March 8, 2011.

⁵⁴ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on October 25, 2013,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, October 25, 2013, translated by Audrye Wong.

⁵⁵ On Central Asia, see “2014年5月7日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会 [Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on May 7, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, May 7, 2014. On Pakistan, see “2013年10月25日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on October 25, 2013), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, October 25, 2013. On India, see “2014年2月24日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会 [Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on February 24, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 24, 2014. Sources translated by Audrye Wong. See also Wang Yi, “China’s Dream in A Changing World—New-Term Party Central Committee Kicks Off A Good Start in Diplomacy in 2013,” *Qiushi*, January 1, 2014.

⁵⁶ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on February 12, 2014,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 12, 2014. “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on February 18, 2014,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 18, 2014. Sources translated by Audrye Wong.

⁵⁷ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on October 25, 2013,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, October 25, 2013, translated by Audrye Wong. As another example, in commenting on Xi Jinping’s efforts to “create an even better and stable peripheral environment,” Wang Yi has cited the deepening of the “Sino-Russian strategic cooperative partnership.” See “Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” *Xinhua*, October 8, 2013.

⁵⁸ For example, in April 2013, Xi Jinping delivered the keynote speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Boao Forum For Asia Annual Conference 2013. In June 2013, Li Keqiang visited India and Pakistan. In September 2013, Xi paid a state visit to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In October 2013, Li attended meetings of East Asian Leaders (ASEAN-China, East Asian Summit, ASEAN Plus Three), and paid official visits to Brunei, Thailand and Vietnam. In February 2014, Xi attended the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, and met with the president of Afghanistan. In April 2014, Li Keqiang attended the Boao Forum and met with the prime ministers of Laos and Australia, among others. See PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs website http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/. For a similar listing of high-level leadership trips to periphery states in 2013, see Chen Jimin, “The Motivations for China’s New Periphery Strategy,” *China-US Focus*, November 18, 2013.

⁵⁹ See, for example, “Qian Lihua interprets China’s military diplomacy in 2011,” *Liberation Army Daily*, January 18, 2012. Qian, then director-general of the Foreign Affairs Office of the Ministry of National Defense (MND), states that in 2011 alone:

The leaders of the Central Military Commission (CMC) and the general headquarters/departments of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) visited such countries as Vietnam, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, the DPRK, Pakistan and India, and the leaders of the defense departments and the armed forces of 14 neighboring countries also visited China. We held defense and security consultations with neighboring countries including Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and India, participated in the defense ministers’ meeting of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Shangri-La Dialogue and the ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference, and held the meeting of chiefs of general staff of the member states of the SCO, the SCO Defense and Security Forum, and the China-ASEAN Defense and Security Dialogue.

Also see Luo Zheng, “中国国防部新闻发言人 日本政府肆意渲染“中国威胁论”是别有用心的” (PRC Ministry of National Defense News Spokesperson: the Japanese government’s wilful perpetration of the ‘China threat theory’ has ulterior motives), *Liberation Army Daily*, August 5, 2011; “就日本新版《防卫白皮书》 我外交部发言人答记者问” (On Japan’s newly published Defense White Paper: China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson responds to media queries), *Liberation Army Daily*, August 4, 2011; “政府工作报告 二〇一一年三月五日在第十一届全国人民代表大会第四次会议上 国务院总理 温家宝” (Government work report: March 5, 2011 Premier Wen Jiabao at the Fourth Meeting of the 11th National People’s Congress), *Liberation Army Daily*, March 16, 2011; “杨洁篪就中国外交政策和对外关系答中外记者问” (Yang Jiechi responds to Chinese and foreign media queries on China’s foreign policy and foreign relations), *Liberation Army Daily*, March 8, 2011.

⁶⁰ See a list of military exchanges at the PRC Ministry of National Defense website <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/MilitaryExchanges/index.htm>. For a non-authoritative summary of military activities in 2013 as part of periphery diplomacy, see Luo Zheng, “军事外交，经略致远谱新篇” (Military diplomatic and economic strategy reaches a new

chapter), *Liberation Army Daily*, January 16, 2014: “In 2013, leaders of the CMC and General Headquarters visited Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and others. Ministers of defense and army leaders from over 10 countries, including Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Cambodia, Mongolia, visiting China. . . . In 2013, from academic experts to rank and file troops, from dialogue exchanges to emergency relief, even more PLA troops have participated in regional security platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting, ASEAN Regional Forum, Shangri-La Dialogue. . . . Last year, the PLA established Navy dialogue mechanisms with India, strategic security consultation mechanisms with the Myanmar army, signed an agreement with Vietnam on a defense ministry hotline and border cooperation agreement, and signed a border cooperation agreement with India. These new initiatives symbolize a new level of mutual trust and cooperation between the militaries of China and its periphery nations.”

⁶¹ “2014年2月24日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference February 24, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 24, 2014, translated by Audrye Wong. She said, “China’s position on the disputed Sino-Indian eastern boundary region is clear and consistent. China is firmly committed to peaceful development, is committed to developed friendly neighbor relations with periphery nations, and is committed to using negotiations and consultations with relevant countries to suitably resolve the relevant disputes and differences. Currently, Sino-Indian relations have maintained positive momentum. Leaders of both countries have deep consensus on the importance of further developing Sino-Indian ties, and have agreed to use negotiations for an early solution of the existing border issues between the two countries.”

⁶² “Create a New Situation in Periphery Diplomacy and Promote Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region—Foreign Minister Wang Yi Discusses President Xi Jinping’s Visit to Indonesia and Malaysia and Attendance at 21st Informal Meeting of APEC Leaders,” *Xinhua*, October 8, 2013. For similar statements, see “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang’s Remarks on Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s Words at the Shangri-La Dialogue,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, June 1, 2014; and “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on June 18, 2014,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, June 18, 2014.

⁶³ MND spokesperson Geng Yansheng states:

Our determination and will to defend national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests are unswerving; on this issue this is definitely no room for bargaining, and any provocative actions will not be tolerated. . . . At present, we have with certain periphery countries some disputed issues regarding territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, these problems are all provoked by other countries, and the responsibility is not on China. China has consistently advocated peaceful negotiations to resolve disputes, and has exercised the greatest restraint.

See Pang Qingjie, “在领土主权和海洋权益上绝对没有讨价还价余地” (On territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, there is absolutely no room for bargaining), *Liberation Army Daily*, May 30, 2014, translated by Audrye Wong.

⁶⁴ See “Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on December 9, 2013,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, December 9, 2013; and “2014年2月24日外交部发言人华春莹主持例行记者会” (Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference February 24, 2014),

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, February 24, 2014, translated by Audrye Wong.

⁶⁵ Liu Zhenmin, "China-ASEAN: Fruitful Results of Good-Neighborly Friendship," *People's Daily*, August 29, 2013. Top China officials (e.g., Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang) rarely if ever level this charge.

⁶⁶ Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Views Regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Dispute," *China Leadership Monitor* No. 41 (Spring 2013).

⁶⁷ Chen Xiangyang, "Deal With the Six Plates of the 'Grand Periphery'," *Liaowang*, August 23, 2010.

⁶⁸ Li and Liang, "Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity."

⁶⁹ Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, "New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China's Response," *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. Jin Canrong is deputy dean and professor, and Duan Haowen is a postdoc at the School of International Studies, Renmin University of China.

⁷⁰ See Gao Zugui, "China Enters New Period for Shaping International Environment," *Liaowang*, November 11, 2013. Gao states that "implementation of these ideas will serve as an important engine to promote comprehensive interactions and in-depth integration throughout the region. Thanks to implementation of these ideas and measures, China will develop multidimensional, in-depth, frequent and closer interactions with peripheral countries. Following this, forces in and outside the region will adjust their policies and reorganize their relations at varying degrees and then facilitate building of new regional political habits and a new international setup." Also see Ruan Zongze, "The New Diplomatic Mindset Behind the Xi and Li Foreign Trips," *People's Daily*, May 22, 2013. Ruan is deputy director of China Institute of International Studies.

⁷¹ See, for example, Zhao Kejin, "China Turns to Southeast Asia," Carnegie-Tsinghua Center, March 28, 2014. Also see Li Xiaokun, Fu Jing, Zhang Chunyan, and Chen Jia, "Diplomacy to focus on neighborhood," *China Daily*, January 2, 2014; Ruan Zongze, "The New Diplomatic Mindset Behind the Xi and Li Foreign Trips," *People's Daily*, May 22, 2013. Ruan is deputy director of China Institute of International Studies; Wei Ling, "A Community of Common Destiny," *China Daily*, October 10, 2013; Chen Xiangyang, "Seizing the strategic initiative," *China Daily*, October 21, 2013; Xu Jianmei, "China's new situation of periphery diplomacy," *Liberation Army Daily*, October 26, 2013.

⁷² See Wang Yiwei, "Who Will Ultimately Win the Heart of ASEAN?" *People's Daily (Overseas Edition)*, December 16, 2013.

⁷³ Li Ying, "China's Diplomacy—From Laying Low and Biding Time To Bracing Up and Pressing On," *Guoji Xianqu Daobao*, January 14, 2014, OSC CHL2014011780879863.

⁷⁴ See Shao Yuqun, "Two Roads, But One Destination?"

⁷⁵ Yan Xuetong, "China's New Foreign Policy: Not Conflict But Convergence Of Interests," *Huffington Post*, January 28, 2014. Yan is Dean of the Institute of Modern International Relations at Tsinghua University and the Chief Editor of *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*.

⁷⁶ Yan Xuetong, “China’s New Foreign Policy: Not Conflict But Convergence Of Interests,” *Huffington Post*, January 28, 2014. At least one other analyst suggests, similar to Yan, that China’s periphery diplomacy could involve the development of security arrangements with some periphery states. See Zhao Kejin, “China Turns to Southeast Asia,” Carnegie-Tsinghua Center, March 28, 2014.

⁷⁷ See Li Ying, “China’s Diplomacy—From Laying Low and Biding Time To Bracing Up and Pressing On,” *Guoji Xianqu Daobao*, January 14, 2014. This article cites several analysts, and this quote is attributed to Zhao Kejin.

⁷⁸ Li Ying, “China’s Diplomacy—From Laying Low and Biding Time To Bracing Up and Pressing On. . .” The former quote is attributed to Zhou Fangyin, researcher of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences [CASS] National Institute of International Strategy, and the latter to Associate Professor Sun Xuefeng of Tsinghua University’s Department of International Relations.

⁷⁹ One well-known international relations expert states:

Since great powers and the periphery already overlap, purely great power diplomacy or periphery diplomacy no longer meets requirements, so it is necessary to carry out establishing of ties between the powers and the periphery. Thus, tripartite diplomacy such as China-US-Japan, China-US-India, China-US-Russia, China-US-Australia, China-Russia-India, and China-Japan-ROK must be assigned an important position and operated in China’s periphery diplomacy. Only thus can we ensure no fighting between each other and can we achieve benign interaction between great power diplomacy and periphery diplomacy. (Yuan Peng, “Thoughts on China’s Great Periphery Strategy in the New Period,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013.)

Also see Zhao Minghao, “Coping With Versatility, Complexity, and Plasticity of Peripheral Strategic Environment,” *Liaowang*, January 20, 2014; and Xin Shengzhi, “Experts Analysis on Seven Standing Committee Members of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau Attending China’s High-Level Conference on Relevant Work for the First Time; Peripheral Diplomat Work Will be Upgraded,” *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, October 26, 2013. In this article, Jin Canrong, another well-known international relations expert, states that China “needs first of all to stabilize relations with major powers in order to do well in peripheral diplomatic work.”

⁸⁰ See Li and Liang, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity.” A similar argument has been made more recently. For example, see Zhao, “Coping With Versatility, Complexity, and Plasticity.” Zhao states that China’s growing capabilities and presence alongside Washington’s energetic response will create growing dilemmas for smaller periphery powers.

⁸¹ Chen Xiangyang, “Deal With the Six Plates of the ‘Grand Periphery,’” *Liaowang*, August 23, 2010. Chen writes: “The United States is continually stepping up penetration in China’s periphery regions, pushing from the west the so-called “greater Middle East” and “greater central Asia” strategy, and “switching eastward” the center of gravity of the war on terror to Afghanistan and Pakistan; through occupying Iraq and Afghanistan, it is checking Iran, penetrating into Pakistan, and proceeding to “open access” in west, south, and central Asia, and lure central Asian countries to “develop southward” so as to weaken the influence of China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; at the same time it is also continuing to back the “Tibet independence” and “East Turkistan” forces;

to the east, it has taken advantage of the “Ch’o’nan” (Cheonan] incident to boost the US-ROK and US-Japan alliances, taken advantage of the South China Sea dispute to speed up its “return” to southeast Asia, and has made use of the “Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement” (TPP) to dismantle east Asian regional cooperation. The United States has even made irresponsible remarks about China’s maritime rights and interests, and exerted every effort to check the maintenance and expansion of China’s sea power.” Also see Li and Liang, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity”; and Wang and Luo, “The Transformation of the International System and the Change in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy.”

⁸² See Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013. The authors emphasize that as the U.S. rebalancing strategy has deepened Sino-U.S. suspicion, “some countries on the periphery have seized the chance to take advantage of the twists and turns in Sino-U.S. relations to try to realize their unreasonable demands in the region; countries such as Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam have similar thinking and action in this regard.” For similar assessments, see Xin Shengzhi, “Experts Analysis on Seven Standing Committee Members of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau Attending China’s High-Level Conference on Relevant Work for the First Time; Peripheral Diplomat Work Will be Upgraded,” *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, October 26, 2013; and Zhao, “Coping With Versatility, Complexity, and Plasticity.”

⁸³ See Michael D. Swaine and M. Taylor Fravel, “China’s Assertive Behavior—Part Two: The Maritime Periphery,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 35 (Summer 2011).

⁸⁴ Li Ying, “China’s Diplomacy—From Laying Low and Biding Time To Bracing Up and Pressing On,” *Guoji Xianqu Daobao*, January 14, 2014.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* The analyst quoted is Xu Qiyu, a deputy researcher at the National Defense University’s Institute of Strategic Studies.

⁸⁶ Li and Liang, “Periphery Diplomacy Requires Learning How to Rise Above Adversity.”

⁸⁷ Zhu Feng, “China’s Security Situation in the Periphery: Problems and Challenges,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013.

⁸⁸ See Zhao Kejin, “Common destiny needs stability,” *China Daily*, December 31, 2013. The author is deputy director of the Center for US-China Relations, Tsinghua University; Gao Zugui, “China Enters New Period for Shaping International Environment,” *Liaowang*, November 11, 2013; and Chen Jimin, “The Motivations for China’s New Periphery Strategy,” *China-US Focus*, November 18, 2013. Chen states: “Some analysts believe that China’s periphery diplomacy is mainly motivated by the U.S. ‘Asia-Pacific rebalancing’ strategy. Personally, I believe it is one of the driving factors, but not the main one. Actually, the Chinese government holds a clear and consistent policy standpoint on the U.S. presence in Asia, that is, China recognizes and respects the U.S. interests in Asia while hoping and calling for the United States to be a constructive force in the Asian regional affairs. In other words, China does not try to exclude the United States from Asia as part of its Asia strategy objectives. Therefore, China’s periphery strategy has the characteristics of inclusiveness and openness.”

⁸⁹ Zhai Kun, “China’s Neighborhood Diplomacy in 2014,” *China-US Focus*, February 19, 2014. For an equally broad perspective, also see Shi Yinhong, “An Analysis of the ‘New Type of Major Country Relationship,’” *China-US Focus*, April 3, 2014.

⁹⁰ Zhao, “Coping With Versatility, Complexity, and Plasticity of Peripheral Strategic Environment.” Zhao adds: “If some nations can find a ‘comfortable’ position between China and the United States, then their relations with China may be more stable, sustained, and predictable, and some big powers might be more limited in their attempts to sow discord and provoke confrontations.”

⁹¹ Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013.

⁹² See, for example, Shen Dingli, “China’s Amity Diplomacy Sailing into the Future,” *China-US Focus*, January 3, 2014; Zhou Fangyin, “Community of Common Destiny Wise Way To Counter US Shift to Asia,” *Global Times*, April 27, 2014; and Zhang Xin, “安倍の算盤南如意” (Abe’s Wishful Abacus in the South), *Liberation Army Daily*, December 14, 2013, translated by Audrye Wong.

⁹³ For example, see Jin and Duan, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response.” Also see Wang and Luo, “The Transformation of the International System and the Change in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy.” The authors state: “As the global economic recession drags on, the global market is plagued with insufficient demand and overproduction. Ironically, this provides China, which controls huge market resources and foreign exchange reserves, with powerful economic tools to defending rights. With courage and good intentions, China is expected to utilize its economy to assist diplomacy.”

⁹⁴ Michael D. Swaine, “The 18th Party Congress and Foreign Policy: The Dog that Did Not Bark?” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 40 (Winter 2013).

⁹⁵ Gao Qiufu, “Bright Spots and Difficulties in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy,” *Liaowang*, January 13, 2014.

⁹⁶ see Michael D. Swaine, “Chinese Views and Commentary on the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 43 (Spring 2014).

⁹⁷ According to one source: “these provocations include Japan’s placing Diaoyu Islands under its ADIZ in 1969, a change of status at that time and Japan’s ‘nationalization’ of the main islands there in 2012, a current change of status quo.” See Shen Dingli, “China’s Amity Diplomacy Sailing into the Future,” *China-US Focus*, January 3, 2014.

⁹⁸ Zong He, “China’s National Security Research Report (2014) Suggests: Comprehensively Plan the Formulation and Implementation of the National Maritime Security Strategy,” *Zhongguo Haiyang Bao*, May 7, 2014.

⁹⁹ Wang and Luo, “The Transformation of the International System and the Change in China’s Peripheral Diplomacy.”

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ This absolutist approach, at least publicly, is typical of Chinese views toward many issues relating to Chinese nationalism. Eds. Michael D. Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng with Danielle F.S. Cohen, *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2006).

¹⁰² See Michael D. Swaine, “Chinese Views Regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Dispute,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 41 (Spring 2013); Michael D. Swaine, “Chinese

Views and Commentary on the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 43 (Spring 2014).

¹⁰³ See Swaine, “Chinese Views Regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Dispute”; Swaine, “Chinese Views and Commentary on the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone”; and Swaine and Fravel, “China’s Assertive Behavior—Part Two: The Maritime Periphery.”

¹⁰⁴ Jin Canrong and Duan Haowen, “New Features of the Peripheral International Environment and China’s Response,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, October 20, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Swaine and Fravel, “China’s Assertive Behavior—Part Two: The Maritime Periphery”; Michael D. Swaine, “Chinese Leadership and Elite Responses to the U.S. Pacific Pivot,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 38 (Summer 2012).