



## China Military Buildup or Not?

By CK Wong 2005.09.10

<http://www.ck-wong.ca/China/China%20military%20buildup%20or%20not%2020050910.pdf>

### Introduction

US did not have any comments directed to the Sino-Russian war-game at the eastern China that involved the navy from both country. However, right after that the initiative championed by Zoelick started in August to have a dialogue with China has apparently suspended. The strong allegations from Zoelick on China's affiliation with non-US friendly countries did not responded by China at the same level of hardship. What is going on? Would it be the alleged military buildup?

### Triggers

During the last few decades, Japan and China's navy had many rendezvous at the controversial sea border. There has been significant sovereignty claims on many sea islands. While Japan has stepping up her navy, China is also in the process of upgrading her obsolete navy. When China has legislated to permit using force to maintain Taiwan's China sovereignty this raised a lot of eye brows among the American eagles.

I would say all these worries are not unfound. But are these worries justified? We have to take a closer look. American's military presence in Asia is absolutely visible. On top of this she has to maintain the military tour at Iraq and Afghanistan are really expensive. From what we have seen, it may not be a bad assumption that the American would like Japan to take up her role in Asia.

### The Family Feud between China and Japan Lasted more than a Century

This triggers the sore and wound on Japan's invasion of China. The military confrontation was not starting from the WW II. It started since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century during the last few Emperors of the Qing Dynasty. China is always extremely sensitive to this subject. Russian was part of foreign invasion during Boxer's Up-rise in 1900. With the establishment of the Communist Soviet and Chinese Communist, the Sino-Russian relationship has improved. This has been further fortified by the oil deal. The navy war game in August is just an indirect way to show the closeness between China and Russia. But Japan's military aggressiveness is escalating again.

Zoelick's strategic dialogue could be meant to slow down the Sino-Russian relationship. During that discussion, it could very possibly involve a proposal of strengthening Japan's military armed forces to replace American. The first step will be a permanent seat for Japan in the UN's Security Council.

In another vein, the 2005 Office of Defense's China's Military Assessment Report identified the breath of new military capability developments. This would definitely make Bush feeling very uncomfortable. The Zoelick's talk may proposed China to contain the development. The proposal from American could be very direct, strong and may be even imposing. There is no reason for China to accept these proposals. This leads to a strong response from China which pin-points America interfering China's internal affair and emphasized that Asia is China's stage.

## **Chinese Sponge Ball**

China did not play hard ball. She avoids any military, economic and communication confrontation. First, she postponed President Hu Jintao's visit to see during the North America tour. It is a slap on the face. But I don't think too many people pick it up. Second, a string of Sino-EU economic strengthening news was announced during the Eighth Sino-EU Summit. During the WW II Victory Anniversary, the China Daily has a series of articles on the China's resistance war to Japan. Should Japan won the war in China, American will have much high cost to fight the Pacific war during WW II. US might no able to win the war even it used up all its nucleus bomb.

A more direct but effective approach is to re-establish the broken dialogue through the military. Rumsfeld will discuss the issue more directly on China's turf, Beijing with the Chinese military. To prepare the visit, US Pacific Command Chief, Admiral William Fallon, spent a week in China and visited military bases. This is a great move and also reflects that the American pigeons may resolve the undercurrent conflict. I certainly hope so.

Sponge ball when dry may not be lethal. When it is soaked with water (Cantonese call money water), it can kill.

## **Does Chinese need the military buildup?**

Every country needs a reasonable defense force at all time. Military is non-productive. It is advantageous to keep it to minimal. China participates in UN's peace force but not in any military action. It does not have to continuously in alert state with Russia and India due to the economic relationship rather than military tension. In Asia, China's economic dominance is the best military and the cheapest. The only challenge is just Japan.

Outside East Asia, EU has the strong economic tie. Africans are mostly friends. Australian is very happy to sell coal and steel to China. Saudi Arabian has relying on China to build its infrastructure for decades. South Americans are not happy camper with US. There is not much threat except US. But remember, China has the ICBM. If US wants to write-off that U\$700B Treasury, the best and easiest way will be declaring war to China. But immediately, Wal-mart, Exxon, Chevron and many other oil companies will pressure Congress to prevent it. It is just getting more interesting.

## Resources

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[2] US Pacific Command Commander in Zhanjiang, China Daily, 2005.09.10

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[3] Setting Sino-US Agenda, Washington Times 2005.09.08

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[4] The Pentagon eyes China's military IISS, Volume 11, July 2005,

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