

# Thoughts on China's Border and Maritime Defense<sup>\*</sup>

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Border and maritime defense bears directly on national sovereignty, territorial integrity, maritime rights and interests, and that is why it matters, further, to economic growth, social stability, and ethnic solidarity. Amid recent social and economic development and evolving security landscape, China's border and coastal areas have emerged with pronounced strategic significance as a convergence of internal and external interests and conflicts, and a pressure point for regional and domestic stability concerns. Their rise in stature entails continued research on border and maritime defense as an effective approach to safeguarding national security and development interests.

## I

Since the advent of the 21st Century, constant growth in China's overall strength has delivered consequences felt increasingly worldwide, particularly in its border and coastal areas as well as its periphery. Progress has been made in fostering friendship and good-neighborliness, as evidenced by closer political, economic, and security ties. Years of efforts to reinforce border and coastal defense are rewarded manifestly with boosted capability in defense and control, strengthened security and stability in areas concerned, and enhanced position to pursue legitimate maritime rights and interests.

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Meanwhile, under new circumstances the future of China's border and maritime defense has also been confronted with prominent challenges and historic opportunities.

For all these achievements, China still faces salient challenges to its border defense. The current global strategic landscape is defined by a wave of shifts, resulting from a seesaw of world politics, uneven development in overall national strength, and frequent adjustments in security policies. China's periphery is no exception. Some major countries, which have cooperated with us one way or another, are increasing military presence in our neighbors as they find the rise of China a threat to their sphere of influence. The East and South China Seas have seen sovereignty disputes and competing maritime interests: some countries are engaging in military preparation and deployment in case of disputes with China, their presumed strategic rival in East Asia, contributing to the simmering geopolitical antagonism; some are devoted to naval capability development and military build-up along borders, efforts which are directed against China, their so-called "strategic competitor"; still some count on profiting by allowing major countries outside the region to step in and counterbalance China's increasingly established military presence in and control of the South China Sea.

Impacts from major countries' strategy adjustments, territorial sovereignty and maritime right disputes, regional hotspot issues, domestic instability, and security challenges to strategic interest expansion feature prominently in the periphery. Heavy military deployment, conflicting interests of countries in and out of the region, and the game of power further complicate the security and strategic landscape, rushing China into strategic interest expansion to the periphery. The mingling of internal and external challenges endows border and maritime defense with an increasingly prominent and strategic role to play in national security and development. Such defense is essential to addressing security threats

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of all kinds and improving peripheral environment and ties with major countries. It is also the testing ground of China's capability and determination to defend its interests.

After the Cold War, chances of direct military invasion in a rising China, either from peripheral countries or major countries outside the region, have been slimmed practically to none. The conclusion does not come groundlessly. On the one hand, the US has forgone its hegemonic dominance of the world in face of the rise of emerging countries, the shift in strategic landscape, and the labyrinth of national interests. On the other hand, China's military capability has developed – after years of commitments – to such an extent that even mighty military powers outside the region may find it challenging to launch effective military strikes and that neighboring countries are deterred from recklessly waging intense local or large-scale wars. The hostility and military confrontation in most land border and coastal regions is coming to an end. This is made possible as China has been committed to good-neighborliness and mutual benefits, which leads to closer political, economic, and security ties. The adherence to such principles as “Peaceful Reunification” and “One Country, Two Systems” has also lifted cross-Straits relations to a historic high.

But, these achievements should not obscure the fact that the post-bipolar world of economic globalization and widened application of IT has seen non-traditional security threats constantly surfacing and challenging the peace and stability of border and coastal regions. There has been intensifying terrorist and separatist activities in border regions. Meanwhile, neighboring countries' internal political, economic and military instabilities have potentially undermined China's border stability and maritime security. The nuclear issue and military confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, as well as North Korea's domestic uncertainties, put the stability of northeast border at stake. Myanmar's domestic instability, notably conflicts between government forces and armed ethnic militia, presents substantial challenges to the stability of the southwest border. Possible unrests in Afghanistan would also be detrimental to border security. Cross-border flows of drugs severely erode the law and order of border areas and threaten locals and their property. Illegal migration has

become a recurrent border security issue. Frequent natural disasters and accidents pose a threat to border stability and people's lives and property. Rows over resource exploration and environment pollution may potentially cause bilateral or multilateral disputes that could sour state-to-state relations.

The above-mentioned security issues not only derail social and economic development in border regions, but also present constant challenges to national sovereignty, territorial integrity, regional security and stability, and maritime rights and interests. Dealing with such issues requires the deployment of administrative and military resources that could be better used elsewhere.

Security and stability largely prevail along land borders. This owes much to China's commitments since the 1960s to developing defense capacity, revising and adjusting targeted defense policies, and signing agreements with neighboring countries to delineate borders – the latter proved effective in ending lingering border disputes. China has signed such pacts with North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, neighbors on the northeast, north and northwest borders, delineating territories with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia, and consequently diminishing the likelihood of disputes over ill-defined borders. China also seeks closer ties with them, as evidenced in China-Russia strategic partnership and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The latter, initiated jointly by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and taking on board Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Iran, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan as observers, marks significant progress in China's security cooperation with other countries and the development of multilateral security mechanism, contributing to improved external security along the northwest border. The southwest borders have also been defined under agreements signed with Myanmar, Nepal, Laos and Vietnam – practically all southern neighbor except India and Bhutan – leading to robust security along the border. In the case with India, its territorial disputes with China are largely manageable, as the desire by both countries to avoid military confrontation is manifested when they opened up boundary negotiations, clarified political guidelines for border dispute settlements, and

signed a border defense cooperation agreement in 2013 to lay the groundwork for reducing the risk of border conflicts.

China's territorial seas, contiguous zones, exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and extended continental shelves under its jurisdiction in the Yellow Sea, the East and South China Seas and waters in the Pacific Ocean east of Taiwan Island are plagued with imminent security challenges.

Within decades, China has evolved from an isolated country into a major regional player. This leads to its growing maritime dependence – on both resources and shipping lanes. In fact, oceans now undertake such a vital role in securing sustainable social and economic development that the building of a “maritime power” has been high on the government's strategic agenda, bearing with it strategic interests that extend beyond its maritime boundaries.

However, with the rise of China come rows about island sovereignty with some countries and delimitations with all its maritime neighbors. As a result, nearly half of China's maritime territory is under controversy. Tensions have worsened and grown complicated as claimants have long been developing and exploiting resources in the disputed waters and some even seek interventions from outsiders in an attempt to “globalize” these regional affairs. Specific challenges include:

1. **Delimitation:** Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, China has to take the most challenging and arduous delineation task in the world – delimitating its maritime boundaries with eight neighbors. This may introduce much uncertainty to its maritime security and stability.

2. **Sovereignty over islands and reefs:** Tensions with Japan over the Diaoyu Islands spiked as the highlight of China-Japan disputes after Tokyo “purchased” some of the islands in 2012. Along with Japan's rightwing inclination, the “purchase” decision soured China-Japan ties, leaving maritime law-enforcement vessels from the two countries facing off against each other in the area. Xisha and Nansha islands are also prone to maritime security crisis once the already acute disputes over islands and reefs escalate.

3. **Offshore oil and gas:** The extensive oil and gas reserves of the South China Sea within the U-shape line are supposed to be a blessing,

as China moves toward offshore oil and gas to power its economic and social development. However, its legitimate claim to the vast resources is challenged by some countries which expand drilling in areas where Chinese rigs are yet to be set up.

4. Fishery: Given contentious boundaries and sovereignty disputes over islands, reefs and waters, it is understandable that the maritime security landscape is dotted with sporadic fishing disputes, some of which even triggered diplomatic crises. This serves as a reminder that in pursuit of maritime resources, China may come into conflicts with countries that share these key interests.

In addition to competing maritime claims, high-stake rivalries – legitimate or illegitimate, implicit or explicit – over airspace above China's territorial seas are underway. They come as the US and other countries dispatch aircraft to patrol the area and South Korea and Japan declare ADIZs (Air Defense Identification Zones) that overlap with China's. Overall, land borders are – and will – remain stable in years to come with generally controllable disputes, while due to the complex security landscape, maritime borders are more likely to see escalations of imminent disputes or even crisis.

Internal discord, diplomatic frustration, or problems carried over from history have created regional or global flashpoints in some of our neighbors. Any worsening of status will pose direct threats to border and maritime defense.

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Neighboring environment has a direct impact on China's border and maritime defense.

The northeast land and sea borders are subject to security threats from the Korean Peninsula, including:

1. Nuclear crisis: the fact that North Korea has become a nuclear power raises the prospect of nuclear strikes and warfare on the Peninsula. Indeed, the US and South Korea have announced that upon detecting any sign of nuclear use, they will respond with preemptive strikes against North Korea's nuclear facilities. Since these nuclear facilities spread across mountains near the Chinese border and testing fields also fall in our periphery, the northeast border is particularly vulnerable to nuclear accidents and military

strikes, the consequences of which – nuclear leaks and facility failures – could lead to mass panic and undermine border security.

2. Military confrontation between North and South Korea: the Korean Peninsula is technically at war. Since what the two sides have inked is merely a ceasefire agreement, a lasting peace-building mechanism is still in want. Considering their constant military standoffs and such sporadic events as the *Cheonan* sinking and the bombardment of Yeonpyeong in 2010, land and maritime artillery engagement between the North and South is still likely.

3. More recently, border stability is challenged by illegal entry from North Korea to China or to other countries via China and cross-border crimes such as smuggling, drug trafficking and robbery.

The southwest border is sensitive to what happens in Myanmar. Sources of instability include:

1. Myanmar's domestic politics and policies

The Myanmar government has recently shifted away from its dependence on China towards closer ties with the West, seeking the removal of Western sanctions, improved international and domestic environment for its development, and solidified grip on power. This shift has huge security implications on the border area. The development of a hydropower facility – China's joint investment with Myanmar located in the country's border area – was suspended; Chinese-invested copper mines in Myanmar had to cease operation amid intensified political unrests; domestic woes also explain the country's incapability of supplying reliable oil and gas to China even with well-laid pipelines.

In addition, Myanmar follows border security policies that are devised primarily to disarm ethnic militias, leaving little room for trade between its minorities and China. As a result, the border region has seen a handicapped economy, infested with rebounding drug trade and smuggling.

2. Clashes between Myanmar's government forces and ethnic militias

The government's intensified clampdown on ethnic militias under the 2008 Constitution has inflamed armed conflicts, driving a huge influx of refugees to China. Consequently, local governments

in China are burdened with the arduous task of refugee repatriation and settlement. Such cross-border inflows also open up possibilities of organized crimes and spread of infectious diseases, raising extra security threats to the Chinese government and people along the border. Admittedly, the victory of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy in the election represents remarkable progress. However, it is not until the day when ethnic reconciliation pact is put into practice that this country will see real commitments to the interests of the minorities. In other words, rife with "ethnic militias", including the Kokang Army, Kachin Independence Army, Shan State Army, and United Wa State Army, the rugged terrain along the China-Myanmar border may still see clashes and potential instability unless conflicting sides can modify their position.

Myanmar and North Korea are but two of the 14 countries China borders on land, and on other frontiers challenges to stability persist. An intricate geopolitical landscape, coupled with conflicting interests, uneven development, lingering bitterness and opposite ideologies, will have an impact on China's and regional security and stability, making it all the more daunting to exercise border defense and administration.

Maritime border stability is susceptible to policy adjustments in relevant countries and interventions from major powers outside the region.

The East China Sea sees tensions ratchet up, as Japan is growingly assertive in its claims to Diaoyu Islands and maritime resources. Meanwhile, Japan has embraced a right-wing position and hastened its pace towards Constitution amendments to pave the way for increased armament and boosted capability of troop deployment abroad. Such measures are likely to trigger face-offs or even military engagements between Chinese and Japanese law enforcement agencies.

Rival countries in the South China Sea adopt twin approaches of enhancing control over islands, reefs, and rocks they have trespassed on, while pushing disputes into the international limelight. Their tactics include:

1. Intensifying buzz across the international community to challenge and delegitimize China's claims, plunging the South



China Sea into protracted instability;

2. Constructing more facilities in claimed areas and strengthening grips on waters of critical interests. Specifically, some countries are building anchorage and defense facilities, such as lighthouses, buoys, hydro-meteorological stations, airports and terminals. They step up surveillance over important waters with enhanced sea and air patrols, intercepting and expelling Chinese research vessels, survey vessels, and fishing boats that sail close to the area, as if they were policing their own territories;

3. Pressing ahead with offshore oil and gas explorations. Some countries have forged ahead with large-scale exploration projects across the Beibu Gulf, western Xisha and southwestern Nansha; some have carried out seismic surveys around the Reed Bank in the eastern part of Nansha Islands, preparing for oil and gas development in areas of core interests in the South China Sea; still some are drilling oil merely 120 nautical miles north of the Zengmu Reef.

Conflicts over the Yellow Sea are also possible as a result of, among others, disputed delimitations and under-defined maritime boundaries.

Worse still, any dispute over maritime territories and interests – regardless of what areas or countries it involves – is subject to interventions from major countries outside the region. In summary, China's maritime border defense is exposed to mounting security threats and strategic pressure. This comes as the maritime border security landscape becomes more complex, uncertain and unstable. In addition, the expansion of its strategic national interests makes China increasingly reliant on international trade, energy resources and strategic waterways. The concept of maritime security is, hence, growing in breadth and depth.

The nature and pattern of China's border and maritime defense have evolved throughout history in response to shifting political, social and economic climate and developing military doctrines and border defense strategies. In ancient China, the doctrine of "guarding against border barbarians" prevailed. This led to "inward-oriented" defense whose primary task was to cement rulers' power. Understandably, safeguarding the hinterland – particularly the

capital and its environs – overtook border security as the paramount defense mission.

At the time, China was virtually a stranger to the concept of “national boundary”, as its dealing with frontier regions of ethnic minorities featured more of reinforced administration and governance than of border defense. It was not until when the country was beleaguered by nomadic minorities, colonists, or Western powers that Chinese rulers came to shift their focus from frontier region governance to land and maritime border defense against external threats. After the First Opium War (1840-1842), China began to embrace the modern notion of “nation” and “territorial sovereignty” and embarked on a transformation towards “defending against foreign aggressions”.

Since the founding of the PRC, China has been on a critical transition towards state-led land and maritime border defense mechanism, with stages including:

**1949-the late 1950s:** Then devised border defense model focused primarily on responding to military conflicts, efforts underpinned later by the development of the Bureau for Border Control, border security forces, and policies and regulations on border and maritime defense.

**Cold War Era:** Defense forces were committed to safeguarding land and maritime borders as these regions became outposts of border security. They lived up to their mandate, contributing greatly in armed conflicts against India and the USSR. During this period, a military-defense-oriented model featuring joint army-police-civilian defense took shape.

**The reform and opening-up period:** The opening-up drive turned border and coastal regions as frontiers into the outside world instead of military outposts. Such shift brought about problems and scenarios as never before, urgently calling for effective administration and control of land and maritime borders. In response, the government reformed the border defense system. After the reorganization, a new administration system has emerged where, under the joint authority of the State Council and the Central Military Commission (CMC), local governments and the military performed their due share of responsibilities. The

reform also seeks to broaden the definition of “border defense” from merely military defense to a combination of defense and control that will lead to an enabling system for opening up, foreign trade, and ultimately social and economic development in border regions.

While the odds of foreign aggression have decreased remarkably due to political, economic, and security ties that have been greatly sweetened by border agreements signed with neighboring countries, non-traditional security issues become looming threats to border and maritime security and stability. Since the beginning of the 21st century, China has seen a continuous growth in its overall national strength, and along with it, increasing political, economic, and military heft. Such rapid development drives demand for expanded national interests beyond boundaries, and consequently requires additional strategic functions of border defense, including:

1. Boosting border and maritime defense capability that allows effective responses to complex and changing internal and external security landscape;
2. Unifying organization that underlies the development of efficient and professional border and maritime security forces;
3. Improving policy and regulatory system supportive of social and economic development, strategic interest expansion, and protection of territorial sovereignty, maritime rights and interests, and security;
4. Establishing control-based new border and maritime defense model that addresses both internally oriented administrative law enforcement and externally oriented rights protection in an effective and specialized manner.

## II

The leadership and management system of border and maritime defense plays a decisive role in the development of defense capability. It has kept changing with the development and change of China’s internal and external climate.

In the early years of the PRC, the responsibility for border defense was shared by public security forces and the military, with

the former being responsible for borders with friendly countries, and the latter in charge of regions under more serious military threats.

Such division of labor came to an end during the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, as the PLA public security troops, an integration of public security forces and PLA border defense troops, shouldered all the border security responsibilities under the unified command of the CMC.

From the late 1950s to mid-1960s, a new system of labor division emerged, where public security bodies shared between them the management of border defense, with the public security bodies being put in charge of general border administration, the People's Armed Police (PAP) focusing on areas with relatively moderate military risks, and the PLA being tasked with areas that saw intense hostility.

This did not last long. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s when China faced grave security challenges along its borders, the PLA assumed responsibility for overall management of border and maritime defense.

In the early 1970s, China renewed the division of labor in border defense, under which the public security bodies maintain public security in border regions, while the responsibilities of frontier patrolling and defense are turned over to the PLA border defense troops. This system has largely been held ever since, with a number of adjustments. For example, in the early 1980s, borders with Myanmar and North Korea, both being identified as friendly countries then, were briefly guarded by public security forces, with the rest under the umbrella of PLA troops. After the establishment of National Border Defense Commission in the early 1990s, responsibilities of frontline defense and administration were handed over to PLA troops, leaving border-related affairs elsewhere to public security and other government bodies.

As China faces a maritime security landscape increasingly overshadowed by bitter disputes over maritime territory and rights and interests, consolidating the law-enforcement arms of maritime agencies is high on the agenda.

In 2013, in accordance with the Plan for the Institutional

Restructuring of the State Council and Transformation of Functions Thereof, the China Marine Surveillance, the Fisheries Law Enforcement (FLE), the China Coast Guard and the Maritime Anti-Smuggling Police have been brought under the China Coast Guard (CCG) where they jointly play the law-enforcement role to safeguard maritime rights. The CCG is led by the newly restructured State Oceanic Administration (SOA) – which is in turn under the authority of the Ministry of Land and Resources – and subordinates its missions to directions from the Ministry of Public Security. The National Oceanic Commission has also been established as a high-level cross-ministerial coordination and consultation body whose practical operations are conducted by SOA.

In conclusion, the defense leadership and management system has evolved from dual command by the State Council and CMC to unified command by CMC to separate command by the State Council and CMC. Along with the shifting organization, the division of labor has been under constant changes. But the general

rule is that unified leadership of border defense only has brief existence, and for most of the time defense responsibilities are divided between PLA and public security forces: the former takes charge when and where military risks are looming, while the latter oversees borders during peacetime or in regions near friendly countries.

China's border and maritime defense force structure comprises defense and administrative arms.

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China's defense leadership and management system, including the division of labor, has evolved constantly due to changing situations and missions.

### **The Defense Arm**

PLA border defense troops are the main land border defense force. Patrolling borders, keeping facilities such as border markers and borderlines in good conditions, and rising up to security emergencies are at the core of their mandate to safeguard national

territorial integrity.

The responsibility of maritime defense is shared by the PLA Navy and the PLA Army coastal defense forces. The former is tasked with maritime defense in territorial waters and EEZs with cooperation from government bodies concerned, while the latter is supposed to defend against large-scale landing operations of enemy forces in coastal areas (islands).

### **The Administrative Arm**

The border public security troops are in charge of land border administration. They are responsible for entry-exit inspection in border ports, and security, maintenance of order and crackdown on cross-border crime in border and coastal areas.

China Marine Surveillance (under the SOA), China Coast Guard (under the Ministry of Public Security), Fisheries Law Enforcement (under the Ministry of Agriculture), and Maritime Anti-Smuggling Police (under the General Administration of Customs) form the arm of law enforcement on the sea. They are consolidated into China Maritime Police Bureau after a State Council institutional restructuring in 2013, an effort designed to better address maritime security challenges and protect the country's maritime rights and interests. This marks a significant move towards unified maritime law enforcement.

The development of a regulatory framework for border defense started in the early 1950s, when China formulated and put into effect laws and regulations on, among others, border inspection, border administration and border security management, and signed border treaties with relevant neighboring countries, thus laying the groundwork for border defense and administration. Such efforts slowed down and even came to a halt during and for a certain period after the chaotic Cultural Revolution when the legal system was largely paralyzed; it was only restored slowly later on. It was not until the launch of the reform and opening-up drive that great development began in the building of a legal system in relation to border and maritime defense with Chinese characteristics. The system consists of:

1. the Law on National Defense;

2. laws and statutory regulations on the management of the entry and exit of foreign and Chinese nationals;
3. laws and statutory regulations on fighting smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal migration, and other crimes;
4. laws and statutory regulations on order and security in border and coastal areas;
5. agreements signed with neighboring countries for joint management of the border;
6. rules and regulations on guard duties of the border defense forces; and
7. industry- and sector-related laws and statutes.

The local governments have played a prominent role in border administration and control in the absence of any border law, and a considerable number of local statutes and regulations have played a unique role in border administration.

In summary, China's current system of laws and regulations related to border defense remains primarily introverted, focusing on domestic stability and security and featuring the prominent role of local and industry-specific regulation.

In the early years of the PRC, the government adopted an enhanced border defense system as a tack for border administration and part of a basic state policy, underpinning border defense capability development with a theoretical ground. Since reform and opening-up policies were introduced, border defense organizations and teaching and research institutions have been established in military and police academies as the army and public security arms respond to the more demanding task of border defense. To the same end, the border has become a field of research at newly founded local institutes. They are dedicated to historical and geographical boundary studies and education covering not only general theories, as well as practical issues such as border administration and inspections, and the dissemination of research findings through publications. In 2001, a milestone was laid when border defense was listed in *Encyclopedia of China* as a subordinate discipline under national defense development, securing its position in the national defense studies. It was followed by the founding of the Border Defense Academy of PLA with approval by the CMC in 2011,

which provides a training platform for junior commanders of PLA border defense troops, marking a new step towards regular and scientific training for the border defense forces.

### III

Ever since it embraced reform and opening-up policies, China has seen a boost in its overall national strength and improved political, economic and security communication with other countries. Meanwhile, its pursuit to expand its national interests abroad is under internal and external pressure. Such pressure is felt mostly in the border regions and waters under China's jurisdiction, greatly enhancing their strategic position and making them key places where the nation's commitment and strategic capability are manifested in responding to synthetical security threats and safeguarding national security and development interests, and where the country crosses swords, games and cooperates with external forces. At the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, it was proposed to adjust and straighten out the leadership of frontier and coastal defense. Some important strategic ideas, including President Xi Jinping's "administration of border regions should be the priority of national governance", were put forward. This implies that frontier and coastal defense will assume a significant role in ensuring land border and maritime security and the stability and prosperity of relevant regions for some years to come. Given the unprecedentedly complex and conflict-ridden security landscape and increased demand for specialized forces, frontier and coastal defense should be designed in an overall manner by proceeding from the perspective of national strategy and governance, that is, from the perspectives of ensuring national security on the basis of the national and military situation and in line with the national security and military strategies.

At different historical periods, frontier and coastal defense in China has displayed different characteristics. In the early days of the PRC, as the country was subject to external military pressure, the focus in ensuring national security was to deal with external



military threats, including the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea, border clashes with certain neighboring countries and security threats to the national capital and hinterland. At that time, frontier and coastal regions and their development had not yet become the strategic priority. Border defense prioritized guarding against foreign aggression. However, as the world moves away from bipolarity and enters the post-Cold War era of economic globalization, expanded IT application and interconnectivity, the focus of national defense has shifted towards providing a safe and favorable environment for long-term economic and social development. This shift, coupled with increasing tensions with neighboring countries caused by strategic interest expansion, has made the frontier and coastal regions all the more strategically important. Given the possibility of synthetic security threats, frontier and coastal defense assumes an irreplaceable

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The focus of defense has been shifting from resistance against foreign aggressions to administration and control.

and increasingly critical role in safeguarding national sovereignty and interests, enabling strategic interest expansion, maintaining stability in border regions and seas under China's jurisdiction, and preventing and controlling crises. The focus of frontier and coastal defense has been shifting from military resistance against foreign aggression to combined administration and control. Tasks in this regard include:

1. Safeguarding border security and national interests. Ensuring frontier and coastal border security serves as an important expression to the country's commitment to protect its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, as well as a basic requirement for frontier and coastal defense. In order to serve the national interests and in compliance with relevant legal provisions, it is necessary to adopt the following measures:

- a. Guarding the borders and border regions. This includes dealing with any moves that may cause changes in the direction of the border lines, damage border facilities or violate regulations in

relation to border and coastal defense.

b. Protecting national security interests by preventing and rising up to emergencies such as armed conflicts in border regions and waters. Measures tailored to local situation (waters under jurisdiction) and possible coordination with other armed forces should be considered.

c. Upholding legitimate national rights and interests in frontier and coastal border regions under the country's jurisdiction in accordance with international and national laws.

2. Maintaining order in border regions and territorial waters. This means to effectively respond to, by way of appropriate means, unlawful acts and uncertainties in terrestrial border regions, coastal regions, territorial waters, contiguous zones and EEZs in accordance with relevant national laws and border agreements reached with neighboring countries concerned. It is necessary to combine law enforcement with social self-management to ensure that law and order are properly maintained in frontier areas and waters under the country's jurisdiction. Defense forces should act in response to the evolving security landscape and national strategic needs with their competency in defense and administration fully leveraged, so as to create an enabling environment for sustained social and economic development in the border and coastal regions.

3. Contributing to the improvement of both internal and external security for the border and coastal regions. Border defense has a unique role to play in enhancing good neighborliness. Proceeding from the implementation of the policy of good neighborliness and the maintenance of peace and stability along the periphery, the work of frontier and coastal defense is expected to:

a. while administering the borders in accordance with relevant provisions of the laws and regulations, consolidate and strengthen friendly relations with the neighboring countries, perform China's duties and fulfill China's obligations in state-to-state security cooperation, work together with countries concerned to maintain peace and security in the frontier and coastal border regions, and endeavor to create favorable conditions to enhance political mutual trust, economic and trade ties, and security cooperation between

China and the neighboring countries;

b. properly handle foreigner-related incidents and maritime disputes and emergencies, and prevent crises from happening or escalating in accordance with relevant domestic laws as well as border treaties and agreements reached with relevant neighboring countries;

c. collaborate with relevant Party committees, governments and functional departments at various levels as well as civil sectors in the border and coastal regions and carry forward the fine tradition of joint army-police-civilian defense, so as to mobilize the local governments, people and social force to support border and coastal defense;

d. collaborate with relevant departments to carry out struggles against infiltration and separatism and strive for improvement of social security in the border and coastal regions; and

e. bring into play the diplomatic functions of border and coastal defense and expand cooperation with relevant neighboring countries to support the political and diplomatic measures adopted by the state.

4. Collaborating with the armed forces during military operations in the frontier regional and coastal waters under China's jurisdiction. Given the requirements of hi-tech-enabled local wars, the developmental trend of frontier and coastal defense and the capability of China's national defense and military forces in the current security landscape, it is imperative to appropriately separate military defense from law enforcement and administrative efforts in the country's frontier and coastal defense, so as to fully tap the country's defense and administrative resources for more effective response to multiple security threats. Competent and efficient law enforcement forces should be placed at the core to address regular security challenges and ensure stability in the frontier regions and waters under the country's jurisdiction, while major military forces will carry out defensive military operations in time of war. In other words, one key role border and coastal defense forces should play is to be ready to effectively respond to armed provocations and emergencies at borders and, in case of military conflicts, execute missions under the command of the military.

Future development of China's border and coastal defense should be geared to the requirements of defense missions and effective handling of security threats, based on the principle and policy of the Party and state to strengthen border and coastal defense and develop China into a maritime power, in view of China's economic development and fiscal situation, and in line with relevant plans of the state and the military as well as projected objectives of the institutional reform.

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China's border and maritime defense development is expected to take all possible factors into account.

1. Improving the leadership and management system. A transition towards unified, effective, integrated and specialized leadership and management is imperative for ensuring unified command, efficient defense and administration, and security and stability in border and coastal regions. Efficient management in frontier and coastal defense operations is expected after adjustments through which the numerous functional departments concerned are integrated into one to take charge of overall border defense management. In this way, the leadership of border defense is concentrated at the national level. In addition, against the increasingly complex security landscape, it is all the more important to administer and safeguard borders in accordance with domestic laws and regulations as required by the principle of the rule of law, so as to ensure performance of duties in a proper and more specialized manner and be better prepared for a greater administrative role in addition to border defense.

2. Making the frontier and coastal defense forces more refined and more capable. At present and for a period of time to come, the security and development of China will become increasingly dependent on the frontier and coastal regions as well as the work in relation to them. It is therefore necessary to improve the frontier and coastal force system in the following aspects:

a. integrating existing border and coastal forces and enhancing their quality and performance by such means as upgrading,

reforming and adjusting the forces and rearranging their tasks as well as developing new forces in line with the general requirement of reducing the size and improving the quality, and with the readjustment of the leadership and management system for frontier and coastal defense;

b. building better-equipped border and coastal defense forces by focusing on the role of IT application in enhancing the capacity of information gathering, information perception, command and control, switching from peacetime to wartime readiness, and fast and effective response; and

c. optimizing border and coastal defense force deployment to China's advantage by adjusting forces for border and coastal defense, enhancing forces in major strategic directions and key areas, strengthening control in these areas to meet the needs of different strategic directions and match the deployment of forces in neighboring countries with China at a slight advantage, and enhancing the capability of crisis prevention and handling.

3. Making the legal system in relation to frontier and coastal defense more effective. Along with the ongoing social and economic development and the implementation in an all-round way of the basic strategy of the rule of law, it is necessary to ensure that the development of the legal system concerning frontier and coastal defense keeps pace with the times, so as to meet the needs of the practical situation and the urgent requirement imposed by the development of frontier and coastal defense. Specific measures to be adopted include:

a. highlighting the key areas, strengthening the power of office of the state and completing the development of the principal part of the legal system concerned;

b. completing enactment of comprehensive laws and regulations on frontier and coastal defense, clarifying the functions and tasks of frontier and coastal defense, and amending those that are outdated;

c. enacting and improving a number of national laws and supportive regulations on frontier and coastal defense to meet immediate needs;

d. enacting and improving a system of local administrative rules and regulations on frontier and coastal defense supplementary

to relevant national laws and regulations in view of the current development of the country's legal system, and the reality of different strategic directions as well as the coastal provinces and cities;

e. facilitating communication and exchanges on frontier and coastal defense legislation to build trust and resolve doubt with the neighboring countries and signing necessary frontier and coastal defense cooperation agreements with them in view of the security landscape in the country's periphery and for maintaining stability and security in the border and coastal areas;

f. intensifying efforts in law enforcement, delegating rationally greater power of law enforcement to the frontier and coastal defense forces, expending support to them for effective enforcement of the law, improving the environment of law enforcement, and raising the efficiency of law enforcement by the border and coastal defense forces; and

g. strengthening the applicability and consistency of laws and regulations on border and coastal defense and ensuring that these laws and regulations are strictly observed.

4. Improving border and coastal defense infrastructure. Such infrastructure constitutes a prerequisite for enhancing the capability of defense and control. Hence, it is necessary to channel more resources to ensure that such infrastructure meets the needs now and in the future. On the basis of the infrastructure already built, it is necessary to:

a. strengthen surveillance, reconnaissance and early warning facilities for border and coastal defense to enable the early detection of threats and uncertainties in the border regions and waters under China's jurisdiction;

b. improve transport, telecommunications, and network infrastructure in the border and coastal regions by intensifying efforts in military-civilian integration, putting in place fast and multi-modal transport networks in key areas of border and coastal defense, increasing the density of current transport networks in other areas, and covering all land and sea border regions with reliable telecommunications systems, particularly those related to key national interests; and

c. greatly improve the capacity and quality of border and coastal defense in view of the development and changes of state-to-state relations and taking into consideration both peacetime and wartime needs.

5. Improving the competence and theoretical level of professionals of border and coastal defense. Specifically, work in this regard involves:

a. strengthening talent training in relation to border and coastal defense, and improving training quality;

b. devising a talent pool for professionals boasting sound comprehensive quality, consummate professional skill and rich work experience by way of exploring approaches for professionalism and long-term service;

b. developing a system of training of professionals for frontier and coastal defense by colleges and universities, and improving the mechanism of training for leading cadres of frontier and coastal defense; and

c. strengthening theoretical research in border and coastal defense, promoting the establishment and development of disciplines on frontier and coastal defense, forming a research network on frontier and coastal defense, strengthening the building of the relevant talent pool, and creating an enabling environment for theoretical research and decision-making consultation.

Over the years, constant progress has been witnessed in the capability of handling emergencies of border and coastal defense. As the strategic significance of crisis management grows ever more pronounced in the face of multiple security threats, it has become a key task of China's frontier and coastal defense to effectively respond to various types of emergencies. It is necessary to enhance the capability to respond to emergencies caused by turmoils in some neighboring countries, preventing such emergencies from causing instability in China's border regions. It is necessary to enhance the capacity to respond to emergencies caused by natural and man-made factors to minimize their negative impact on the border regions both in and out of China. In addition, it is necessary to establish an emergency-responding linkage mechanism between the state, major functional departments

and local governments in the border and coastal regions for appropriately handling emergencies due to either internal or external factors.