

With the start of the New Year, the China Landpower Studies Center (CLSC) would like to share with you the team's latest analysis and insights on the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

If you find value in this newsletter, please share it with colleagues and invite them to subscribe.

Quarterly Highlights:

1. **[Understanding the PRC's Selective Use of Military Hotlines](#)**

Dr. Jake R. Rinaldi

The Jamestown Foundation - China Brief

The PRC's strategic use of and reluctance to establish military hotlines reflect a calculated approach to escalation risk, which can be seen in crises ranging from the accidental bombing of its embassy in Belgrade in 1999 to the present day.

2. **[Peace and Unity: China's Growing Military Footprint in Tanzania](#)**

Mr. Jake Vartanian

CLSC Website

The July and August 2024 Sino-Tanzanian training exercise, Peace Unity-2024 (和平团结-2024), provided the People's Liberation Army (PLA) an opportunity to apply its growing joint expeditionary capability, while also strengthening its relationship with a key strategic partner on the African continent.

3. **[PRC Strategic Adaptation in Africa](#)**

Dr. Jake R. Rinaldi

CLSC Website

The People's Republic of China (PRC)'s expanding security footprint in Africa, marked by increased military cooperation and infrastructure investments, poses a significant challenge to US strategic interests.

4. **[China in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A New Dynamic in Critical Mineral Procurement](#)**

LTC Paul Milas and Mr. Farrell Gregory

CLSC Website

Cobalt, a key component in advanced technologies like batteries and solar-powered vehicles, underscores a growing geopolitical challenge for the United States as China strengthens its grip on critical-mineral supply chains. The case of cobalt highlights how China has come to control much of this critical mineral—with direct and indirect implications for American national security.

5. **[The BRICS Summit, China, and the Emerging Illiberal Counter-Order](#)**

Dr. R. Evan Ellis

Legado a las Americas

The 2024 BRICS summit in Kazan solidified an anti-liberal counter-order, challenging the rules-based international system. With its expansion to 23 members, the bloc, financially led by China, seeks to evade global restrictions, and advance its agendas, though it faces coordination challenges and diverse objectives among its members.

6. **[China's Next Step in Modernizing the People's Liberation Army: A New Reserve Service System](#)**

Mr. Joshua Arostegui

CLSC Website

Xi Jinping has emphasized the modernization and restructuring of PLA reserve forces in recent years. By the end of 2021, nearly all the People's Liberation Army's reserve divisions and brigades in each service, often equipped with antiquated equipment, quietly disappeared as a new reserve-base structure started training troops and small units to plug and play into active-duty units.

Recent CLSC Dialogues Podcasts of Interest:

1. **[China, the Illiberal Counter-Order, and the Role of Values in the Strategic Response](#), **Dr. R. Evan Ellis and Colonel Rich Butler:** In this episode, Colonel Rich Butler interviews Dr. R. Evan Ellis on his article written for *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* titled, "China, the Illiberal Counter-Order, and the Role of Values in the Strategic Response."**
2. **[A Baseline Assessment of the PLA Army's Border Reinforcement Operations in the Aksai Chin](#), **Mr. Joshua Arostegui and Mr. Dennis Blasko:** In this episode, Josh Arostegui interviews prominent China expert Dennis Blasko on his analysis of PLA Army and Border Defense Unit activity along the Line of Actual Control between China and India.**

What the Future Holds – Upcoming Events and Publications:

In the next CLSC quarterly update, look for research and analysis from our staff on:

- PLA laser systems and future challenges for Hellscape
- Assessments on the effectiveness of US Army campaigning in the Indo-Pacific
- PLA Army operational capabilities in extremely cold environments

Additionally, keep an eye out for updates on our 2025 Carlisle Conference on the PLA, tentatively scheduled for October 2025.

For more insights on the PLA, please read future update emails or visit the [CLSC website](#).

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For questions or comments, please contact us at CLSC@armywarcollege.edu.

Thank you for your interest in the [China Landpower Studies Center](#).