

The People's Liberation Army and Contingency Planning in China, edited by Andrew Scobell, Arthur S. Ding, Philip C. Saunders, and Scott W. Harold. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2015. vi+371 pp. US\$28.50 (cloth).

This collection of 14 chapters on the PLA's contingency planning is based on a conference hosted by the Rand Corporation. For anyone interested in the subject who wants to know what the PLA plans to do in response to various contingencies, this is an essential source book. Contributors have relied on extensive Chinese sources, and the attention to detail is impressive.

However, one of the major difficulties of conducting research on the Chinese military is the absence of reliable information on how the system actually operates and the problems the PLA encounters. Getting beyond the Chinese documents to understand the problems the PLA may encounter is a difficult task, particularly when bureaucratic stovepiping and deficiencies in planning, training, and equipment are rife. This problem plagues this type of research on China where investigative journalism is absent and where tight security is maintained. Another part of the story is disinformation, as the various agencies cover up deficiencies and put their best face forward to the Party leadership. Contributors to the book have dealt with these problems in various ways. Some have used the documents to provide descriptions of how the system is supposed to operate, without venturing further. Others have admitted the problems and have resorted to informed speculation based on the limited evidence in the public domain.

Chapter 1 by Mark Cozard cites an impressive array of Chinese documents on PLA contingency planning and discusses the "new historic missions" that Hu Jintao announced in his 2004 speech. Cozard notes that the planning process is "opaque" (22) and refers to the limited information, a complaint that echoes the views of the other contributors. Chapter 2 by Marcelyn L. Thomson is on PLA observations of US contingency planning. It notes that even as the PLA becomes more "informationized," its approach to contingency planning is limited to a few rigid options (46), which indicates the PLA has not learned much from observing the United States.

Chapter 3 by Jonathan Walton is on China's plans to combat internal unrest and the role of the People's Armed Police. He argues that unrest will not topple the Party, even though riots and civil disturbances have been increasing due to land seizures and abuses of power. In chapter 4 Caroline Welch examines the civilian authorities and contingency planning for emergencies such as the Yunnan/Guizhou earthquakes in 2012. Much space is given to a description of plans and the ministries involved, but Welch notes that a full assessment of the success of the responses is "beyond this chapter" (98).

Chapter 5 by Dean Ching is about Chinese planning for mobilization and argues that the Chinese leadership has gone to great lengths to establish a mobili-

zation structure for war. Ching provides an extensive description of Chinese mobilization structures, but he admits that the likely performance cannot be assessed (130). Chapter 6 by Mark Stokes discusses the PLA's possible mobilization strategies during a crisis in the Taiwan Straits. He describes how PLA assets might be employed as well as organizational structures, but he does not identify the kind of contingencies in the straits that could trigger the PLA's potential responses.

Chapter 7 is by Jeffrey Engstrom and Lyle Morris, who examine the response of China's armed forces to internal disaster relief. They argue that disaster relief operations can be used to measure the PLA's mobilization capacity and its ability to sustain military operations. They compare the numbers involved and the time required to mobilize forces in response to internal or peripheral contingencies (175). Not surprisingly, they conclude that since the Korean War, the PLA's mobilization capacity has improved considerably. Chapter 8 by Ma Chengkun is on PLA responses to internal unrest in the Han homeland. He notes that the People's Armed Police, in pursuit of maintaining internal security, has become equipped like the regular infantry (196).

Chapter 9 by Thomas Woodrow examines the PLA and cross-border contingencies in North Korea and Burma. How would the PLA react, for example, if North Korea experiences a regime collapse? Woodrow admits that China's contingency plans are unknown, and he relies on clues to make a case (208). Chapter 10 by Larry Wortzel is on PLA contingency plans vis-à-vis India and argues that the basic conditions that led to the 1962 border war have not changed (225). He observes that the PLA has learned the lessons of that war better than India has regarding combined arms operations in border conflicts. Chapter 11 by Ben Lowson is on China's role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Once again, the problem of reliable information about China's contingency plans obliges the author to rely upon the formalism of public documents.

Chapter 12, by Alexander Chieh Cheng Huang, examines the PLA and near-seas maritime sovereignty disputes in the Bohai Gulf, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Straits, and the South China Sea. He notes the PLA navy's offshore active defense strategy to expand from coastal defense up to the first island chain to prevent US involvement in any conflict over Taiwan. He argues that the PLA navy wants to create a *fait accompli* in the South China Sea against the ASEAN claimants, and it may have done so with the land reclamation projects that China has completed in the area.

Chapter 13 by Michael S. Chase examines the PLA's noncombatant evacuation operations, such as the evacuation by the PLA of 36,000 Chinese citizens from Libya in 2011. As more Chinese workers are sent abroad, this ability will become more important, but does the PLA have to be involved? Chase asks whether the Chinese will use civilian assets for such operations, as the Americans have done. Chapter 14 by Kristen Gunness and Samuel K. Berkowitz examines

PLA planning for out-of-area deployments and focuses on the Chinese navy's missions to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Again, the authors have to admit that little is discussed in open sources and that assessments are speculative. The sources at least identify difficulties with logistics and communications that would have to be rectified if deployments to other areas are planned (341). In summary, this is a necessary source book but one limited by the difficulty of conducting research on this topic.

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The South China Sea: A Crucible of Regional Cooperation or Conflict-Making Sovereignty Claims?, by C. J. Jenner and Tran Truong Thuy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. v+370 pp. A\$180.00 (cloth).

The short answer to the book title's question is "both." The South China Sea is both an area of cooperation and conflict, now more than ever. The long answers are provided by a host of distinguished scholars including Geoffrey Till, Rodolfo C. Severino, Renato Cruz De Castro, Mark J. Valencia, Alice Ba, Ian Storey, Bonnie Glaser, Vijay Sakhuja, Nguyen Hung Son, Stein Tønnesson, Nguyen Thi Lan Anh, Erik Franckx, Marco Benatar, Robert C. Beckman, Leonardo Bernard, Carlyle A. Thayer, and Sukjoon Yoon, along with a posthumous contribution by a pioneer researcher in the field, Jon M. Van Dyke. The editor C. J. Jenner also contributed to four chapters.

There is widespread agreement throughout the book on the key factors affecting the context for conflict or cooperation around the South China Sea. The dynamo of global economic growth is shifting from the North Atlantic to East Asia. United States' defense strategy is seen to be moving toward low-cost, low-risk, strike-and-leave operations increasingly dependent on financial support and logistical assistance from regional allies and partners. America looks unlikely to intervene militarily in any naval skirmish between China and other territorial claimants. The coastal states of the South China Sea have failed to create an effective maritime security institution. China has derailed US efforts to form an ad hoc coalition of Southeast Asian countries that might constrain China's expansionist ambitions in the South China Sea. In sum, these authors generally see the balance of power in the South China Sea shifting from the United States to China, and they examine the implications for maritime security.

The central drivers of the South China Sea disputes are widely seen to be conflicting maritime boundary claims, increasing competition over maritime resources, and increasing nationalist pressure in domestic politics. The most likely flash