

# The PLA at Home and Abroad: USAWC assesses operational capabilities of China's military

Limited U.S. response to piracy in the Horn of Africa arguably offered China a particularly useful strategic opportunity. China has rotated to the Gulf of Aden five task forces and warships from a variety of classes for the PLA's first combat operation abroad. The anti-piracy operation is a valuable training opportunity for the PLA Navy.

For a long time, American leaders have been surprised with the PLA's advances. **The PLA at Home and Abroad** shows that the PLA's advances did not come out of the blue. Although much of the learning and many of the improvements are still far from what is intended, the PLA's persistent and diligent learning practices will eventually move the PLA to emerge as a much more sophisticated military in coming years.

Mr Roy Kamphausen, Dr. David Lai, Dr. Andrew Scobell collaborated to produce a collection of papers presented at the 2009 PLA Conference -- the 11th conference held at Carlisle Barracks. **The PLA at Home and Abroad** reflects the discussion of more than 70 noted China observers in September 2009.

This volume of work, from the SSI PLA conference, show that these advances. Thanks to its relentless pursuit of wealth in the last 30 years, China had more than quadrupled its gross national product by the end of the 20th century, and increased it to over 3 trillion dollars by 2008, wrote Lai. The principle of 'prosperous nation-strong military' has turned on the green light for China's defense modernization. That modernization is only a little over one-third of its way.

The PLA follows closely the development of the U.S. 'Revolution in Military Affairs' and learned from the experience of the U.S. armed forces in practically every aspect. The PLA selects from among the U.S. military learning and initiatives to 'get more with less investment' and therefore more faster in transformation.

**The PLA at Home and Abroad** analyzes China and the PLA's views on China's changing security landscape; the PLA's performance at home with emphasis on informationization and management of diverse military tasks and military operations other than war; the PLA's interactions with foreign militaries and its first combat operation abroad: the anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden; and, in the

final section, China's efforts to transform its defense industry and logistics systems.

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