

Deng Xiaoping's Military Modernization and the National Security Interests of the People's Republic of China in the East Asian Region during the Cold War (1980-1991)

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Abstrak

Pasca Mao Zedong, Cina menyusun modernisasi militer pada Kongres Rakyat Nasional ke-12 tanggal 1-11 September 1982 menjadi prioritas modernisasi Deng Xiaoping dalam menjawab konstelasi kekuatan politik dan militer Amerika Serikat dan Uni Soviet. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menganalisis modernisasi militer oleh Deng Xiaoping bagi kepentingan keamanan nasional Cina masa Perang Dingin (1980-1991). Metode penelitian menggunakan metode sejarah yang terdiri dari penentuan permasalahan, heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil temuan penelitian yaitu modernisasi militer Cina yang dilakukan Deng Xiaoping melindungi kepentingan keamanan nasional Cina dalam membangun dan mengembangkan kapabilitas militernya di kawasan Asia Timur tahun 1980-1991.

Kata kunci: cina, deng xiaoping, asia timur, modernisasi militer, keamanan nasional.

Abstract

After Mao Zedong, China arranged military modernization at the 12th National People's Congress on 1-11 September 1982 to become Deng Xiaoping's modernization priority in response to the constellation of political and military forces of the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The research aims to analyze Deng Xiaoping's military modernization for the interests of China's national security during the Cold War (1980-1991). The research method uses historical methods which consist of problem determination, heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The results of the research findings are that the modernization of the Chinese military carried out by Deng Xiaoping protected China's national security interests in building and developing its military capabilities in the East Asian region from 1980-1991.

Keywords: china, deng xiaoping, east asia, military modernization, national security.

INTRODUCTION

When Deng Xiaoping in 1976-1978 consolidated cadres within the Communist Party of China (CPC) after the Cultural Revolution (CR) (1966-1976), then in 1978

Deng Xiaoping proposed modernization at the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on 18-22 December 1978 (Lieberthal, 1984; Nainggolan, 1995; Rukmo, 1987). The plenary

session included internal party consolidation and a modernization agenda to prepare China for good conditions after Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution (CR) (Nainggolan, 1995; Pantsov & Levine, 2015; Salisbury, 1993; Zhao, 2010). His modernization agenda received support from fellow soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to improve the country's military and defense like Western countries during the Cold War.

Deng Xiaoping's modernization attempted to transform socialism after Mao Zedong's leadership in China by eliminating personal and group interests within the party. Indirectly, his political policy is an assertion of political power to carry out improvements in people's lives (Fromm, 2004: 164-165). Deng Xiaoping thought that modernization prepared the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a superpower in East Asia, changing the dogmatic focus of ideology to humane and pragmatic development necessary to achieve the country's progress (Bakri, 1996: 5-6). Moreover, after the death of Mao Zedong, China is facing complex national security problems in the East Asian region. China's current problem is facing the escalation of the military hegemony of the United States of America and the Soviet Union and their allies during the Cold War.

Because China faced these problems, Deng Xiaoping formulated the Chinese military to be immediately modernized and restructured in terms of quality and quantity at the 12th National Congress on 1-11 September 1982 (Dillon, 2015; Shambaugh,

1993; Shambaugh, 2002a; Shambaugh, 2002b). Of course, the results of the 1982 National Congress helped strengthen China's international political position at the East Asian regional level from hegemony between the superpowers and their allies which endangered its national security in an increasingly polarized Cold War situation. This strategic step has the potential to put China in a bargaining position if an armed conflict occurs (Garcia, 2019: 51). China's bargaining position during the Cold War lay in efforts to develop China's foreign interests which required national protection and security through military modernization.

With the modernization of the Chinese military by Deng Xiaoping, it was possible to uphold regional sovereignty, especially China's national security interests during the Cold War in the East Asian region. Deng Xiaoping did this because the United States of America had a military base in Okinawa, Japan and was allied with Taiwan and the Soviet Union annexed Afghanistan in 1979 (Liping, 2009; Liping, 2013). Other threats facing China are seen from Taiwan's attempted declaration of independence, perhaps with assistance from the United States of America, and/or China's confrontation over the Spratly Islands, Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, South China Sea, and East China Sea with Japan and Southeast Asia (Yahuda, 1997: 200). The presence of the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union in the East Asia region threatened China's national security, especially its

regional borders adjacent to Taiwan and Xinjiang as well as water border issues.

To overcome the constellation of superpower hegemony in the East Asian region, China modernized its military during the Cold War, developing military quality and quantity capabilities rather than having to engage in armed contact with the USA and the Soviet Union. This is because China's national security interests during the Cold War were to stem the political and military hegemony of the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Apart from that, making East Asia a strategic buffer for Deng Xiaoping's modernization in building a strong country. In turn, the use of the military will increase the prospect of increasing military spending in predicting all national security threats both domestically and regionally. Not surprisingly, the communist rulers of the People's Republic of China wanted to maintain the existing regime or political system by trying to prevent foreign powers from undermining the legitimacy of the CPC through modernizing the Chinese military (Scobell & Kamphausen, 2007: 24).

In theory, Giddens (2000: 47, 55) sees modernization in the 20-21 century as blurring left (socialism-communism) and right (liberalism-capitalism), because developing countries, such as China, combine left and the right to offer a welfare state towards the reconciliation of market and state. The welfare state that existed in China during the Cold War provided for the interests of the people and played a key role in achieving

social justice and national interests in the East Asian region, including national security matters. However, modernization in China must be responded appropriately to maintain the idea of modernization in several new contexts regardless of whether it's a democratic country or not or a liberal-capitalist country or a socialist-communist country (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997: 176).

This research contributes to the study of East Asian History, History of China, Politics and Military of China, and East Asian Security. The urgency of this research focuses on the analysis that places military modernization by Deng Xiaoping in the national security interests of the People's Republic of China facing the hegemony of the USA and the Soviet Union and their allies through developing and building military capabilities at the regional level. So, the aims of this research are (1) to explain the rejuvenation of China's military weapons and defense systems in supporting national security, and (2) to analyze the national security interests of China's military modernization which is taking place put China in a position that has the potential to threaten its defense on two fronts, namely *saifang* (inland and border defense) and *haifang* (coastal defense).

METHODS

The research method used is the historical method. The steps of the historical method are determining the problem, heuristics/ source collection, source verification/ criticism, interpretation, and historiography.

The first stage is identifying the problem. At this stage, the researcher identifies the problem to be discussed, because the researcher can focus on the main problem as the focus of the discussion. Identifying research questions first is very good for connecting data with facts when writing a report (Kuntowijoyo, 2015).

The second stage is heuristic. At this stage the researcher collects secondary sources in the form of books, journals, articles, thesis, and research reports. This article also uses electronic documents from the Government of the People's Republic of China and Government of the United States of America, such as *Results Report of the 12th National People's Congress of China September 1-11 1982* (Beijing Review 2011), *Hanbook of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA)* belonging to the Defense Intelligence Agency (1984), and *Military Power of the People's Republic of China* published by the Office of the Secretary of Defense US (OSD US) (2008 and 2016). From limited and selected sources, history is reconstructed (Zed, 2018: 57). After the sources are collected, verification/source criticism is carried out.

Verification consisting of internal criticism and external criticism is carried out to collect facts from data in the form of references which become historical evidence which must be analyzed and validated according to the research problem (Daliman, 2012: 66). The data collected is limited according to the research problem.

After criticizing/verifying the sources, the sources are then classified in relation to the research problem, because this classification helps researchers in evaluating sources (Sjamsuddin, 2012: 76). At the interpretation stage, based on sources that have been criticized, researchers interpret that China's military modernization by Deng Xiaoping during the Cold War (1980-1991) created China's national security interests from a conflict situation with the superpowers and their allies in the East Asian region. Next, there is historiography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rejuvenation of China's military armament and defense systems

Professionalism, education, and personnel budget of the People's Liberation Army

The PRC government pays attention to its national defense through China military modernization, believing that by transforming the long-term power projection capabilities and general quality of the PLA's weapons, it will begin to truly influence the military calculations of neighboring countries (Waldron, 2005: 721). This assumption is based because China has shifted to become a welfare state that relies on strong military capabilities and modern defense equipment to fulfill the regional defense sector from external and internal threats (Chieh-cheng Huang, n.d.: 134; Gwyn, 1985: 222). To produce strong military capabilities, soldiers and prospective soldiers receive military and political education at the Military School. In

this school, knowledge is given about the types and characteristics of aircraft and tanks, regional and global political situations, conflict resolution and management, and how to fight and direct joint operations (Xiaoping, 1993a: 52-53).

Educational programs designed to improve morale and motivate enthusiasm and initiative in military training, for example, were carried out extensively in the PLA's basic level units. Li (2021: 40) revealed that to expand military knowledge in military education programs at basic level units, party cadres also work with military officers to implement rules and regulations and enforce discipline as well as resolve combined arms and tactical coordination problems that arise from military training. The provision of military education programs available through college and professional military education is a prerequisite for the appointment and promotion of officers. This has helped improve the educational and professional qualifications of the PLA's officer corps as a form of rejuvenation of China's military weapons and defense systems.

In 1985, Deng Xiaoping replaced Mao's military tactics and concepts of "luring in the enemy" and "preparing against total war" into respectively "extended depth of defense" and "local war on China's periphery" under the concept of "people's war under modern conditions". This shows a clear connection with Mao's revolutionary thinking regarding defense from Deng Xiaoping's military modernization (Chieh-cheng Huang, n.d.:

135). This means that the new military tactics and concepts carried out the external tasks of national defense and security carried out by the PLA to claim the CPC's legitimacy to govern economics development and technological development in the post-Mao and Cold War era through military modernization.

To support the rejuvenation of China's military weapons and defense systems belonging to the PLA, in 1986-1989 the budget disbursed for military purposes during the modernization process was 20-25 billion yuan renminbi (see figure 1) (Craine et al., 2005: 104). This has increased from government spending on defense and national security of 11.3 billion US dollars (USD) from the 1980s to 1991. These funds came from aid from the Soviet Union and from the revenues from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (SREB) during modernization uses foreign investment (Li, 2009: 4).

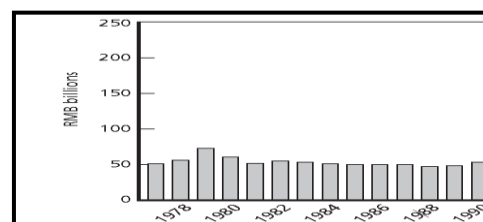


Figure 1. Graph of China's military budget development (1978-1990) (Craine et al., 2005: 105).

In figure 2 you can clearly see the fluctuation graph of the military budget, especially when it experienced its lowest point in 1978 and 1981 at 50 billion yuan renminbi. This budget is slightly larger than the 1979-1981 period which Deng Xiaoping cut by 24.6% of the SREB (Ellman, 2014: 127), because in the 1979-1981 period, China was

still focusing on industrial and infrastructure development, increasing agricultural production and industry, and other social policies. In that period too, China was still carrying out the party's main tasks of "class struggle" with economic development as well as Deng Xiaoping's harsh evaluation of Mao's historical role and personal cult. Only then did Deng focus on the military aspect.

Minister of National Defense People's Republic of China Marshal Xu Xiangqian (1978-1981) and Director of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army Wei Guoqing supported weapons modernization. According to both of them, weapons modernization has become an integral part of modernization of national security and defense to equip the PLA with new weapons in a very short time (Joffe, 1981: 322). Rejuvenation of the arsenal by supplying modern weaponry is the main historical pillar of the People's Liberation Army in strengthening and pursuing military capabilities as was done by the Qing Dynasty in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the face of Japanese imperialism (Bitzinger & Boutin, 2009: 125). At the same time, restructured military units were expected, as far as possible, to increase their own food and build and maintain their barracks (Dreyer, 1993: 547).

Development and rejuvenation of the People's Liberation Army armaments

Starting in the 1980s, the PLA tried to change itself from centralized land forces to air and

sea forces with a wider radius using high technology capable of reaching operations beyond its borders (Craine et al., 2005: 201; Scobell, 2003: 70). This expansion of forces was based on the fact that large-scale land invasions by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Mongolia, and Central Asia were no longer seen as a major threat to the future during the Cold War. New threats to China can be seen from efforts to declare Taiwan's independence, perhaps with help from the United States of America, or China's confrontation over the Spratly Islands, Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, South China Sea, and East China Sea with Japan and Southeast Asian countries (Yahuda, 1997: 200). The existence of 2 superpowers near their territorial borders makes the rejuvenation of the PLA's increasingly important.

The rejuvenation of China's military weapons and defense systems has several calculations in facing the military forces of the USA, Japan, South Korea and the Soviet Union in East Asia. This calculation was carried out because the PLA's defense equipment (the main weapon and defense system) had come from and been made in the Soviet Union. For example, Sukhoi aircraft (unknown type), J-6, and T-54 A tanks from the 1950-1960s, so their weapons lag behind other countries with sophisticated weapons (Shambaugh, 2002a: 264; Waldron, 2005: 721). By strengthening military capabilities through weapons updates, China can ultimately secure the East Asian region from reactions from the USA and the Soviet Union

and its allies if they declare war against China at any time (Robinson, 1982: 240; Sukarnaprawira, 2009: 78).

Accelerating the development of China's military capabilities, especially weapons and defense systems, is handled by the Science, Technology and Industry Financing Commission for National Defense. This commission handled the financing of the manufacture and design of weapons and equipment for the PLA armed forces, carried out by a team of physicists Tsung-Dao Lee (Li Zhengdao) (Xiaoping, 1993b: 182). The development of military capabilities by rejuvenating weapons is based on its connection to socialist development, where military equipment is used to assist and participate in the smooth development.

The air force, navy, army, and the Commission in Charge of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense must divert some of their resources to promote domestic development (Xiaoping, 1993b: 70). For example, the PLA Air Force provides several airports for civilian or military use and civilians help the country develop civil aviation and anticipate emergency availability of bases and airstrips. The PLA Navy can designate some ports for military and civilian use or for civilian use only, but rather help increase the handling capacity of ports and water defense systems. Also, here defense equipment is not only a means of defense but also for domestic purposes and requirements which are organized into China's national weapons and defense system.

The commission will work together under the coordination of the Minister of Defense with the Minister of Aviation and Space Industry and the Minister of Electronic and Mechanical Development to build the defense industry making helicopters, jets, tanks, artillery, submarines, and fighter aircraft during 1988-1991 (Shambaugh, 2002a: 234). In 1987, China counted 8,680,000 scientific and technical personnel and 9,153 research and development institutions at all levels of government (Xinming & Handberg, 1992: 275). The products produced comply with and meet national standards set by the Science, Technology and Industry Financing Commission for National Defense.

Before 1978, S.K. Ghosh (1978) reported that China's military modernization was very limited. As a source of material for military weapons alone, China's steel production at that time was estimated to have reached 21 million tons after the Cultural Revolution (CR). This gives a per capita steel consumption of 25 kg as a raw material for weapons compared to 600 kg in most developed countries. In the energy sector, China's production is estimated to require 80 million tons of oil, 108 million kW of electrical power and 390 million tons of coal, mostly second class quality which was needed as weapons fuel at that time (Ghosh, 1978: 75). Considering the PRC difficulty in producing advanced weapons in the early period of modernization, Deng Xiaoping considered purchasing much needed items, as well

as the technology for their manufacture from abroad, especially from the Soviet Union.

Even though China is trying to diversify the weapons market with joint ventures, foreign investment and "creative adaptation" of weapons from other countries are the mainstay of the PLA's military modernization. The decision to allow foreign investment was justified within the CPC leadership on the grounds that such investment would bring high technology that would allow China to become more independent and more powerful in the region. To cover China's lack of weapons, in 1986-1991, China employed Soviet scientists to develop more than 500 new Sukhoi aircraft to increase the effectiveness of the People's Liberation Army Air Force's combat power (Sukarnaprawira, 2009: 133). Apart from that, China also received donations of new fighter aircraft and tanks from the Soviet Union such as the J-7 Fishbed, J-11 Flanker, Q-5 Fantan, Su-27 Flanker, T-54A Tank, and T-69 Tank (see figure 2) in supporting its defense (Shambaugh, 2002a: 277).



Figure 2. T-69 tank made in the Soviet Union (http://www.tanks-encyclopedia.com/coldwar/USSR/T-69/T69_turing_field_testing.jpg).

The arrival of weapons from the Soviets was based on the China-Soviet Union military cooperation relationship towards a

constructive partnership (*jianshexing huoban guanxi*), and became a strategic coordinative partnership (*zhanlue xiezuo huoban guanxi*) (Li, 2009: 158). Apart from donations and joint ventures, the government can contract to purchase 100 S-300 artillery pieces, 72 Su-27K supersonic fighters, and the Sovremenny destroyer (see figure 3) with SSN-22 Sunburn guided missile weapons (Sukarnaprawira, 2009: 161). This was done to cover China's weapons which were outdated and outdated since the 1950-1960s.



Figure 3. Soviet-built Sovremenny destroyer with SSN-22 Sunburn guided missile armament (http://weaponsystems.net/image/s-lightbox/n-Sovremenny%20class/--/img/ws/sh_des_sovremenny_o1.jpg).

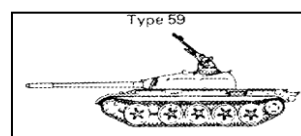
China's shipping and aircraft industries were still largely engaged in "creative adaptation" of foreign products rather than true original innovation, as evidenced through the need to acquire the Liaoning aircraft carrier framework and Su-33 fighter aircraft from the Soviet Union (Rinehart & Gitter, 2015: 23). The PLA believed that each form of weaponry could be improved and applied to modern high-tech warfare (Sukma, 1995: 83). However, because the prioritization of technology in the defense sector was so great. New military equipment continued to be improved and Soviet-made equipment remained in use for a certain period of time

for strategic reasons (Bitzinger & Boutin, 2009: 126; Rinehart & Gitter, 2015: 4). The Chinese have undoubtedly produced several weapons systems before modernization, such as the F-9 fighter based on Soviet antiaircraft missiles and the MiG-19.

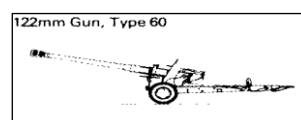
Soviet-designed T-59 and T-60 (amphibious tanks), indigenously designed T-62 light tanks and armored personnel carriers, diesel-electric submarines, missile destroyers and fast patrol boats, nuclear-powered submarines (only one Han class nuclear submarine of this type is reportedly undergoing tests), and a variety of light weapons (Ghosh, 1978: 69). In the 1980s the Chinese military was able to develop the J-8 II M Finback-B fighter aircraft from the initial version of the J-8 with a turbo jet engine and Soviet-made radar. Apart from this type of aircraft, the Phazotron Zhuk-8 II turbo engine component is located on the left of the aircraft body with the radar located on the nose of the aircraft which is similar to that of the Soviet fighter aircraft, Sukhoi-27 (Su-27).

The J-8 II M aircraft was born as a fighter aircraft with BVR combat capability and was equipped with Soviet-made R-27 and R-77 anti-aircraft missiles (Susilo, 2008: 44). In addition, China developed tanks, antitank guns, warships and fighter aircraft as a result of "creatively modifying" the Soviet Union's arsenal. Weapons resulting from "creative modifications" such as the T-59 tank (modification of the T-54A tank), T-60 122 mm antitank cannon (D-74 modification), Tu-4 fighter aircraft (modification of the Sukhoi),

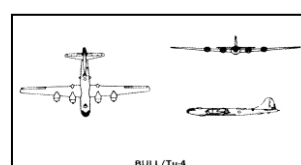
Luda class destroyer battleship (modification of the Sovremenny battleship) (see figure 4) (Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), 1984).



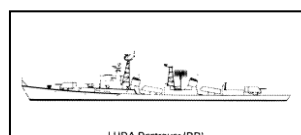
T-59 tank



T-60 antitank cannon



Tu-4 fighter aircraft



Luda class destroyer battleship

Figure 4. Chinese-made weapons that "creatively modify" Soviet Union weapons (Defense Intelligence Agency, 1984: A-21, A-25, A-37, A-39).

There were also weapons supplied by the Soviet Union to China but the names were changed, such as the BTR-50 amphibious (changed by China to M-1974) (see figure 5) (Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), 1984). In procuring warships in the 1980s, the People's Republic of China abandoned dependence on the Soviet Union in model design and looked to Western technology in building homemade battleships (Sukarnaprawira, 2009: 126). The Chinese are overhauling and retooling their forces to enable them to confirm each enemy in technological terms that are more equi-

valent to what they “creatively modify” other countries' arsenals.

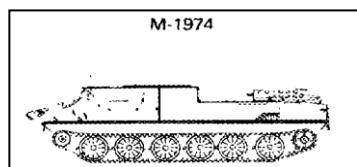


Figure 5. Soviet-supplied BTR-50 amphibian renamed by China as M-1974 amphibian (Defense Intelligence Agency, 1984: A-22).

In addition to producing equipment of the Soviet Union and other foreign designs, the Chinese have developed and produced various types of domestically designed equipment. The main weapons of Chinese design, for example, include a Type 62 and Type 63 armored personnel carrier, the A-5/Fantan fighter-bomber aircraft (see figure 6), various antitank and guided missiles, nuclear submarines as well as ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missiles) (Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), 1984: 11; Shambaugh, 2002a: 234).



Figure 6. A-5/Fantan fighter-bomber aircraft (Defense Intelligence Agency, 1984: 65).

In 1991 Beijing ordered 24 Sukhoi type 27 SK/UBK (in China with the name J-11/JJ-11) from the Soviet Union to secure the waters of the East and South China Seas as well as China's air zone. This Sukhoi order is the backbone of the PLA Air Force's air defense in strengthening the air force's

defense equipment. China then developed a fighter jet with the code J-10 which was the result of 20 years of R&D to create its own aircraft which has produced fighter aircraft copied from the MiG-15 to the Tu-16 bomber. Around 60 J-10 fighter aircraft are operated in the Taiwan Strait area and around the South China Sea (SCS) to deal with Taiwan which relies on F-16s and Mirage-2000s made in the USA (Susilo, 2008: 44-45).

Overcoming Taiwan which received the transfer of F-16 and Mirage-2000 weapons from the USA, China launched a medium-range ballistic missile submarine using a Xia class SSBN ship after the results of 9 years of R&D starting in 1981 (Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), 1984: 69; Shambaugh, 2002a: 271). Thus, China played little or no part in the negotiations leading to Soviet agreement to the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty in December 1987 to eliminate all SS-20 missiles, including those in Asia. China's inventory contains more than 2,000 ballistic and cruise missiles would violate the INF treaty if China were a signatory (Stokes, 2019: 3).

Likewise, China wasn't a party to the 1988 international agreement in which the Soviet Union promised to withdraw all its armed forces from Afghanistan (Yahuda, 1997: 94). However, China is the main beneficiary of both to maintain the stability of the East Asian region. China has based its modernization process primarily on its domestic resources relying on ideological and institutional innovation and industrial restructuring. By

exploring emerging domestic markets, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has infused its economy headfirst with a new momentum that calls for a shift of technological and industrial resources from the social-economic sectors of society to the defense and national security sectors.

The aim of shifting the social-economic sector of society to the national defense and security sector during Deng Xiaoping's modernization was to facilitate national economic development with national defense improved and technological progress increasing. Xinming and Handberg (1992: 279) argues the Chinese government's recent plan for a scheme to rejuvenate China's military weapons and defense systems aims to place a heavy emphasis on projects in the field of high technology. Projects in high-tech fields such as genetic engineering, space technology and military weapons, lasers, information technology, automation technology, energy and advanced materials.

Indirectly, Deng Xiaoping's military modernization of China was an attempt by the moderate-revisionist group in the Communist Party of China (CPC) to balance the power of the USA to the west and the Soviet Union to the east by copying the Soviet Union's military model. Deng Xiaoping (1993b: 135) talks about military modernization in planning the productive development of the PLA's arsenal copying the Soviet military model on 6 February 1987.

“We must uphold the principle of building an army with diligence and frugality, make best use of existing financial and material resources, do everything possible to reduce

military expenditure and strengthen the country's economic construction. At the time we copied the Soviet military model...”

The main objective of the military modernization of the PRC is to ensure the development of a strategic and stable environment at home and abroad to guarantee sustainable modernization through the utilization of existing financial and material resources.

China's national security interests in the East Asia region

Development and creation of China's defense zoning in the East Asia region

Global political changes during the Cold War, especially in the East Asian region, have placed China in a risky strategic position/dealing with superpowers and their allies, potentially threatening defense on two fronts, namely *saifang* (inland and border defense) and *haifang* (coastal defense) (Waldron, 2005: 722). The military strength of the superpowers and their allies endangers China's national security in the East Asian region which directly borders its territory. To the north-west, precisely in Xinjiang-Heilongjiang-Inner Mongolia, there is a Soviet Union military base in the *saifang* region. To the east, namely the waters of the East China Sea (ECS), Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea (SCS), there are US military bases with its allies Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea as the *haifang* region.

The presence of the USA and the Soviet Union in the East Asian region caused the *saifang* and *haifang* regions bordering China

territory to be included in the development and creation of China's military defense zoning at the regional level. This is because these areas are geostrategic for the PRC's national security. The PLA developed its armed forces through arms control, claiming it as the country's sovereign territory in East Asian waters (see figure 7). This growing prominence is a direct result of the PLA's growing securitization of some of its core interests in the region, starting with Taiwan, and then expanding to the East China Sea (ECS) and South China Sea (SCS) disputes as well as Pacific waters.



Figure 7. Development of China's military defense zoning in the East Asia region (<https://cofda.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/1st-and-2nd-island-chains.jpg>).

In figure 7, China includes the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, East China Sea, South China Sea and Yellow Sea as ring 1 (first circle) of the country's military defense areas. This region has a main strategic security function and interest, namely being a leading military base as a deterrent to attacks extending from areas bordering superpowers and their allies to regional waters. The widening of the defense area from around the East Asia region then expanded to the Philippine Sea, Mariana Islands, Guam, and Palau as ring 2 (circle 2) because in this region

there are US military bases in the Northern Mariana Islands, the Philippines, and Guam.

The development of China's military defense zoning originated from the plan of Deputy Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) Liu Huaqing in 1982, which formulated how maritime in the East Asian region would become a component of China's security and defense strategy and interests as long as the superpower constellation was still ongoing (Cordesman, Hess, & Yarosh, 2013: 66). China has a coastal border of 18,000 km and requires the East Asia region as an effort to guarantee the national integrity of the region, including restoring territory lost during the Ming Dynasty in areas that constitute ring 1 (Gaoyue, 2009: 121). The areas included in the development of China's military defense zoning, especially in the ring 1 area, were the defense base in Deng Xiaoping's efforts to restore the glory of the Ming Dynasty as the legal status quo for those who had sailed through the region (Liping, 2009: 116).

Thus, the East Asian region has become a strategic area for China's national security in developing its military power by creating good and stable neighborly relations without disturbing or weakening neighboring countries by taking up arms (McDougall, 2007: 74). That is why the military zoning proposed in 1982 had an influence on China's military modernization in the East Asia region during the Cold War, especially disputes over the East China Sea and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. By including China's military strategic area as a strategic area against Japan's claim

to the area, China seems to be indirectly from the perspective of other countries regarding China's military modernization as a threat to the country concerned with the area that crosses China's military defense zone in East Asia.

Thus, China's military modernization has dealt with territorial disputes with the countries concerned, especially Japan regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and the East China Sea in connection with its security development in the East Asian region (Majie, 2013: 66). According to Rinehart and Gitter (2015: 8), Chinese leaders see national security interests as part of regional security based on their understanding of overall global trends combined with the domestic situation through military modernization. What this means is that military modernization is based on regional security which is part of China's national security which is a common thing for a country in reducing the struggle and constellation of hegemony between the two superpowers and their allies which affects China's domestic situation from the dangers of democratization, nationalism, and separatism.

This is because China's national security in East Asia, flanked by the United States of America and the Soviet Union and their allies, endangers the security of countries directly adjacent to its territory, such as Xinjiang and Heilongjiang-Inner Mongolia-Liaoning. This is not simply excessive fear or worry from Chinese leaders, because China under Deng Xiaoping's rule implemented *zhoubian*

zhengce (peripheral policy) and *mulin zhengce* (good neighbor policy) as *jieshou yueshu* (accepting constraints) seeing the East Asian as a political strengthening area the state stemmed the escalation of the superpowers. The potential of the East Asian region during the Cold War for China was the concentric political circle of China military operations which depended on increasing domestic military strength and capabilities (Gaoyue, 2009: 121).

The East Asian region was made into a concentric political circle by China in developing military superiority in facing the military confrontation of the superpowers and their allies during the Cold War. That is why East Asia has become a sociocultural-historical concept for China which views its nation as more or less as large as the world based on a sense of nationalism to build its defense (Machetzki, 1983: 1090). Why is East Asia becoming a geopolitics that could lead to military confrontation? because apart from the military bases of the two superpowers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, there are also other resources (oil and gas and fisheries) off the coast which are under China's political-military control.

Military defense zoning is a system that relies on building fast-moving capabilities to face regional wars and is limited to low-intensity conflicts around China and the East Asian region which cannot be avoided (Susilo, 2008: 51). The development of the PRC's military defense zoning in the East Asia region brings an entry point in mapping military

defense for the PLA's armed forces as a state military region. Deng Xiaoping changed party-military relations, which Mao Zedong had previously used for the benefit of conservative-dogmatic political circles, towards state-military relations. This new relationship pattern explains that the PLA is moving from its traditional communist institutional ethos as a pioneer in the establishment of a communist government in China to a new stage of limited autonomy from the ruling party with a complementary system of state political autonomy.

Shambaugh (2002b: 19) and Dreyer (1993) explain state political autonomy that the military's relationship with the state and party can be seen as complementary, not limited autonomy. This means that the state increases its control mechanisms and lines of authority over the armed forces and weapons as the guard of national defense and security, while the party withdraws to a higher position as superstructure and controls the strength of the military (PLA). What China is doing is not like what happened in Thailand, Latin America, Central America, and Africa, where in the 1950s to 1990s the military was very dominant in the politics of these countries.

The strength of political institutions is the key to facing a political system that is more successful in developing strong state institutions after Mao Zedong. That way, the country can better handle the increasing pressure generated by political participation and will become more stable, accelerating national development using modernization

(Hout, 2016: 26). Deng Xiaoping's modernization of China has legitimized the Communist Party' of China political order in economic development matters that secure its national security. Deng Xiaoping's modernization politics brought about social and political changes in post-Mao China regarding China's military strategic framework which prioritized the development of the military strength of the armed forces in creating regional stability.

Defense mapping of China military regional commands in the East Asia region

After the development of military defense zoning which included East Asia as the defense area of the People's Republic of China, the area that became China's defense area was then created to map the defense of China's regional military command for the PLA's armed forces. China has unilaterally committed to responsibilities that other nuclear-weapon states haven't yet taken on, including the declaration of a discretionary use policy. A commitment not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and in a nuclear-weapon-free zone. China has no military presence outside it's own territory (Dongxiao, 2013: 172-173).

The meaning of China not having a military presence outside it's own territory is that its armed forces, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), maintain the status quo as long as other countries don't declare war or attack their territory first. This greatly benefited its modernization during the Cold War. If the People's Republic of China doesn't want to be left out of regional political developments,

there is no other choice for China except to adapt to the pressures originating from its environment (Sukma, 1991: 257).

China must adapt to the conditions of the East Asian regional environment, where other East Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea are increasing their military strength with the USA. Addition, the Soviet Union threatened China's western and northern regions. China's way of adapting to this environment is none other than the policy of developing deterrent power through zoning and mapping China's military defenses in East Asia.

Even more importantly, defense protection for national security provides the advantage of minimizing the occurrence of armed wars in the region and in the East Asian region. China has one main characteristic, namely avoiding military force expeditions in the region like those carried out by the USA and the Soviet Union towards developing military power at the regional level (Sultani, 2018: 251). Thus, during the Cold War, China emphasized defensive strength and building weapons on a large scale wasn't a violation rather than carrying out war like during Mao era.

China's strategic evaluation of the Soviet Union's global attitudes was further revealed in China's pattern of domestic deployment of military power. Of the 1,191 regular divisions and 70 local divisions, only 55 regular divisions and 25 local divisions were deployed in the military areas of Northeast. 220 regular divisions and 8 local divisions were

deployed in the military areas of Northwest and South China. This meant that no more than a third of the PLA troops were deployed against the Soviet Union (Machetzki, 1983: 1091). Therefore, in facing threats in all directions by the Soviet Union and the United States of America, the People's Republic of China (PRC) created a mapping of its military defense which was divided into military regional command areas.

Military regional command areas are divided into seven parts covering the provinces in People's Republic of China. China's seven military regional commands include the Beijing, Shenyang, Jinan, Lanzhou, Nanjing, Chengdu, and Guangzhou military commands (see figure 8). This mapping was created in 1985 by General Zhang Aiping (1983-1988) to facilitate the organization of inter-divisional command coordination in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) after restructuring in dealing with internal security issues, defense and national security, and defense mobilization for PLA troops (Office of the Secretary of Defense US, 2016: 1; Scobell et al., 2016: 125).



Figure 8. Seven military regional commands of the People's Republic of China as mapping China's military defense (1985-2015) (Office of the Secretary of Defense US, 2016: 2).

The Beijing Military Regional Command area includes Inner Mongolia, Beijing Capital, Tianjin City, Shanxi, and Hebei with a central base in Beijing. The Jinan and Chengdu Military Regional Command regions do not have a central base because this region only covers 5 provinces, namely Tibet, Guizhou, Chongqing, Sichuan, and Yunnan for the Chengdu Military Regional Command, while 2 provinces, Henan and Shandong for the Jinan Military Regional Command. The provinces of Heilongjiang, Liaoning, and Jilin are included in the Shenyang Military Regional Command with a central base in Dalian.

The central base referred to is the central military base of each regional military command which is supported by infrastructure and facilities that can be used for PLA purposes at any time. Meanwhile, the Nanjing Regional Military Command is strategically close to East Asian waters such as the East China Sea and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands with its central base in Shanghai City. The Nanjing Military Regional Command covers the defense areas for Anhui, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Fujian, Zhejiang Provinces and Shanghai City.

Each Regional Military Command (RMC) has several categories of reserve forces established in 1983. RMC consisting of divisions (*shi*), brigades (*lü*), and regiments (*tuan*) led by the Military Headquarters in charge of the political department, logistics department, equipment, and provincial military district commanders (Scobell et al., 2016: 124, 128). The purpose of dividing the categories of reserve forces from the RMC is

to secure all defense information and potential resources in the RMC area which is a means of emergency defense for the PLA.

However, the PLA has a responsibility to the state to maintain defense in addition to obtaining information regarding the minimum limits of military security that must be possessed amidst the capabilities of other countries (Huntington, 2003: 78). This capability shows the government's interest in protecting mainland China (Gaoyue, 2009: 123). China's elite leadership in the CPC appears to have adopted a coherent set of enduring strategic priorities, including the continued preservation of CPC rule, growth and development, maintaining political stability, defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Chinese state, and securing China's status as a great power (Office of the Secretary of Defense US, 2008: 9). Modernization is needed by China not only for national security and defense reasons, but because being the most technologically advanced sector, the military part of the economy can be more efficiently integrated into national economic development.

China's interactions with the outside world are modifying the East Asian region to become increasingly complex, because China has moved towards calculations of national interests that result in increasingly aggressive behavior. Beijing is seeking to present itself as an actively involved participant in the region. It emphasizes the responsibility of a great power in establishing a stable international order, and supports a relationship with

external parties based on mutual interests, cooperation, and a long-term commitment to regional stability (Scobell & Kamphausen, 2007: 90). In other words, if China does not conform to the acceptable norms of the international system, investment will flow to countries that follow global political changes.

It eased the anxieties of other countries at the time of China's rise by telling the world that China's modernization goal was to "build an eternally rich society" internally and to "maintain world peace and promote common development" externally (Sukma, 1995: 48). Maintaining world peace and promoting joint development externally through modernization was Deng Xiaoping's interpretation of homeland reunification and regional stability in East Asia during the Cold War.

Homeland reunification and stability of the East Asian region

The use of military force gives China further support for preventive war and utility in examining issues where certain conflicts of interest exist, such as territorial disputes (Sukma, 1995: 89). As long as China still prioritizes domestic development while also building its military, China has great political power during the Cold War over China's interests in the East Asian region, especially the creation of a stable regional environment. Behind a stable regional environment, there is anger from the USA, Japan, and South Korea over control of maritime in East Asia. It is still much more difficult for China to fight and

deploy military power outside the East Asian region.

China defended against threats from the expansion and agitation of the hegemony of the USA and the Soviet Union during the Cold War that endangered national security near its territorial borders. Facing these threats and agitation for hegemony, the CPC during Hu Yaobang's era responded by formulating regional policies known as *zhoubian zhengce* (peripheral policy) and *mulin zhengce* (good neighbor policy) (Zhao, 2009: 5-6). *Zhoubian zhengce* (periphery policy) is a policy of peripheral and even development across all regions in China as an external peripheral/buffer state area facing the Soviet Union and the USA and their allies.

Meanwhile *mulin zhengce* (good neighbor policy) was the government's political policy in establishing relations with the USA, Japan, South Korea, and the Soviet Union in the face of superpower hegemony and its development interests in East Asia. Therefore, there are extraordinary characteristics in the influence of Deng Xiaoping's military modernization from the *zhoubian zhengce* (coastal development) policy which made the East Asian region a *haifang* in his country's security and defense system during the Cold War. Deng Xiaoping sought to avoid external conflict that could jeopardize China's priority of economics development in East Asia through modernization.

This is to reduce the natural resistance that a country as big as China will face in reaching the international political stage after

Mao Zedong faced the Soviet Union and the USA. China's modernization was designed as a long-term strategy with the result that China regained its lost centrality, which would require a modern and powerful armed force at that time. But China's achievements during the Cold War era could not have achieved this goal without its previous strong scientific economic and technological foundation from 1976-1984 (Shambaugh, 2002b; Zhao, 2010).

China's achievements during 1980-1991 were historically motivated by China facing a short border war in 1969 with the Soviet Union. Therefore, defense mapping and zoning was necessary, aimed at the northern and western border when in 1979, the Soviet Union annexed Afghanistan. Vulnerable to the stability of China's national security interests are the breakaway western regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. However, if China wants to become a dominant regional power, sooner or later its strategic national security advantage will be adjacent seas and free access to the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Santayana, 2021: 5). Because access to the Indian and Pacific Oceans is an international trade route through Southeast Asia and East Asia and there are US military bases in Guam, the Philippines, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

What Deng Xiaoping did using modernization, theoretically, Narayanan (2006: 334) explained that China's domestic political changes after Mao Zedong required socialism to be interpreted broadly and a more discursive framework to initiate and justify capitalist experiments following the

times. This response led to the victory of the moderate-revisionist group which became increasingly strong in providing social guarantees and development through modernization as a view of realistically facing changes in surrounding conditions (Suseno, 2003: 229). Elites in the party responded to changes and developments in the circumstances surrounding China by considering military modernization as important for the country's political and economic stability.

The response of the party elite gave China a political situation that determined the direction of development related to regional security from the hegemony of the USA and the Soviet Union in the East Asian region (Sukma, 1991: 253). This is once again at the heart of the CPC's legitimacy and the catalyst for China's securitization of its national security in East Asia (Garcia, 2019: 53). The heart of the CPC's legitimacy prioritizes China's securitization of its national security in East Asia by including *haifang* and *saifang* into China's national security area at the regional level as reunifying the motherland. This analysis is strengthened by evidence of Deng Xiaoping's statement at the 1982 National People's Congress.

“...including Chinese nationals residing abroad, we shall pursue the great aim of reunifying the motherland. We shall also join the people of the rest of the world in carrying on the struggle against imperialism and hegemonism in defence of world peace. These are the lofty tasks of creating a new situation in all fields that lie before us” (*Beijing Review*, 2011).

However, Liping (2009: 104) provides a different analysis that the influence of

modernization brings peace which shows that China is uniting the point of view of whether it is beneficial for international and regional peace and stability, not the point of view of gaining military superiority in East Asia. On the other hand, China obtained sovereign independence from *zhoubian zhengce* in accordance with its national security interests, namely maintaining world peace and promoting development in its national security policy, apart from efforts to reunify the homeland (Liping, 2009: 105). This is to deny enemy control/maintain efforts to deny enemy control around the waters and land of East Asia, especially from the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union.

However, China understands that its approach will not be effective without the support of hard military force. Cimballa (2015: 12) argues that China may prefer to see weapons development as an option to prevent or fight in urgent conditions with superpowers and their allies. Since then, China has recognized the importance of developing and deploying capabilities for regional-level military contingencies in creating stability and increasing its military power (Bommakanti & Shivamurthy, 2021: 4). Indeed, China's military capabilities were greatly enhanced during the Cold War primarily because their military was directed at managing potential conflicts around China's periphery such as across the straits with Taiwan and Xinjiang with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The role of the army as a mechanism for internal political control of the state and

the Communist Party of China (CPC) can not be denied or ignored for this reason, that the existence of domestic political violence is likely to give rise to a response by the military which is the goal of justifying state defense and security such as the Cultural Revolution (CR) (Huntington, 2003: 70). In turn, military use during the Cold War would raise the prospect of increased military spending in response to any national security threats. It is not surprising that China's communist rulers want to maintain the existing regime or political system by trying to prevent foreign powers from undermining the legitimacy of the CPC (Scobell & Kamphausen, 2007: 24).

Considerations of historical, geographical, ideological, and international political developments had to be included in Deng Xiaoping's military modernization calculations. The gravity of relations between countries based on the political dynamics of the Cold War period doesn't completely erase the relevance of the geostrategic political context of China's national security. For China, protecting national security is a major effort to protect and defend territorial sovereignty as a homeland and the resources within it (Dillon, 2015; Dreyer, 2014; Li, 2009; Li, 2021; Pantsov & Levine, 2015; Salisbury, 1993; Vogel, 2011; Zhao, 2009). Shipping lane security, sovereignty over exclusive economic areas, and sovereignty over maritime resources in East Asia are as important as resources on mainland China as a means of supporting assertive diplomacy and conventional operations when necessary by

China in the face of American agitation. The USA and the Soviet Union near their borders.

Majie (2013: 66) stated that this threat is very reasonable in relation to China's national security strategy in the East Asia region, which mainly focuses on the following objectives: (1) to maintain national unity and territorial integrity, (2) to maintain a stable and peaceful international environment on its periphery, and (3) to establish good relations with neighboring countries. China has done its best to ensure national security and maintain regional stability through promoting development as a security mechanism for the Asia-Pacific in the process of implementing its modernization. China's national security mechanism which covers East Asia to the Pacific within its military defense zone seeks to deter and repel superpower aggression into the East Asian region.

In addition, China's national security built by Deng Xiaoping through military modernization opposed and restrained Taiwan's independence in order to obtain military assistance from the United States of America (Li, 2009). Thus, maintaining national sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and national security has given China the skills to manage violence. This of course imposes on the military the primary responsibility for ensuring military and external security of society. However, apart from economic considerations of modernization, increasing military strength always invites suspicion from other parties, especially if it's done by giving greater priority to the modernization of

offensive weapons (Anggoro, 2003: 8). During the Cold War, China military modernization became the China military strategic guideline making preparations to fight and win the country through upholding the sovereignty of it's national security area with the development of weapons and military defense systems.

These requirements imply that a major war involving an invasion of People's Republic of China by a major foreign power during the Cold War is highly unlikely due to the enhanced deterrence and balance of power capabilities of military modernization to the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Likewise, China's military strategy emphasizes the continuous improvement of its military capabilities to effectively posture, manage and control crises, and prevent war (Li, 2021: 242). China's national security interests through modernization Deng Xiaoping sought to shape it's external security environment to support China in upholding territorial sovereignty and homeland reunification through active defense.

CONCLUSION

China's military modernization by Deng Xiaoping during the Cold War had implications for China's efforts to guarantee it's national security in East Asia by managing all forms of threats to the hegemony of the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union and their allies. The aim is to create regional stability and maintain regional sovereignty as a homeland.

In addition, China's national security mechanism, which was built through military modernization, faced regional international political developments during the Cold War from the constellation and escalation of the United States of America and the Soviet Union using the redefinition of the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism ideology. Deng Xiaoping carried out the redefinition/reinterpretation of the ideology of communism following developments in international politics in the East Asian region. The Soviet Union annexes Afghanistan. The USA is still in contact with Taiwan, and South Korea and Japan receive financial assistance from the USA for their military.

This requires the PLA to adapt to situations that at any time threaten China's national security. China maps the region and surrounding waters into the PLA's defense and security zones and military regional commands. China's strategic consideration of modernizing its military by Deng Xiaoping can create conducive regional security and profitable cooperation to expand domestic product markets that pay attention to each other's national interests. Without waging war with Japan, the USA, and South Korea, the government can use its productive power from development to build advanced weapons, technology, production of quality goods, skilled labor, which will become important exports for the PRC in the future. The resolution of the problems is based on mutual strategic interests not to exploit unilaterally. So the creation of regional

stability does not interfere with the sustainability of modernization in the future which accelerates military and social development.

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