

CHINA'S MILITARY PREPAREDNESS AND ITS ROLE IN CONFRONTING THE EXTERNAL THREATS

A PREPARAÇÃO MILITAR DA CHINA E SEU PAPEL NO ENFRENTAMENTO DAS AMEAÇAS EXTERNAS

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Abstract

China's military preparedness is a basic pillar of its strategy, serving as a tool for maintaining national security, ensuring national interests, and deterring external threats. So that, China relies on a comprehensive vision that integrates military modernization, technological innovation, and expanding military-security partnerships. This is consistent with its declared goal of building a strong military by 2049, due to the centenary of the founding of the modern Chinese state in 1949. By 2024 China marked the continuation of three consecutive decades of increases in the defense's budget. China's military preparedness, through the integration of its components, contributes to strengthening China's position as a rising international power capable of deterring external threats and adapting with a chaotic international environment. China also achieved that by building a multidimensional deterrent capability, in order to enable and protect its interests, then expanding its influence without engaging in direct military confrontations. China's military preparedness is a central pillar of its national strategy, not only as a defense tool; but also as a means of deterrence and protection against imminent external threats. The findings of facts also resemble that the continued increase in defense spending represents a long-term trend aimed achieving a new balance between economic growth and strengthening defense capabilities.

Keywords: Military Preparedness. Deterrence. External Threats.

Resumo

A preparação militar da China é um pilar fundamental de sua estratégia, servindo como ferramenta para manter a segurança nacional, garantir os interesses nacionais e dissuadir ameaças externas. Assim, a China se baseia em uma visão abrangente que integra a modernização militar, a inovação tecnológica e a expansão das parcerias de segurança militar. Isso está em consonância com seu objetivo declarado de construir um exército forte até 2049, data do centenário da fundação do Estado chinês moderno em 1949. Em 2024, a China marcou a continuação de três décadas consecutivas de aumentos no orçamento de defesa. A preparação militar da China, por meio da integração de seus componentes, contribui para fortalecer a posição do país como uma potência internacional em ascensão, capaz de deter ameaças externas e se adaptar a um ambiente internacional caótico. A China também alcançou isso ao construir uma capacidade de dissuasão multidimensional, a fim de viabilizar e proteger seus interesses, expandindo então sua influência sem se envolver em confrontos militares diretos. A preparação militar da China é um pilar central de sua estratégia nacional, não apenas como ferramenta de defesa, mas também como meio de dissuasão e proteção contra ameaças externas iminentes. As conclusões dos fatos também indicam que o aumento contínuo dos gastos com defesa representa uma tendência de longo prazo que visa alcançar um novo equilíbrio entre o crescimento econômico e o fortalecimento das capacidades de defesa.

Palavras-chave: Preparação Militar. Dissuasão. Ameaças Externas.



1 INTRODUCTION

China's military preparedness is one of the most important pillars of the People's Republic of China's comprehensive power, in which it seeks to achieve a balance between its internal national security requirements and its ambitions to reshape the international order according to a multipolar upcoming vision. Recent decades have witnessed a huge transformations in China's military and strategic position, as a result of the comprehensive modernization of its defensive institutions and the development of its doctrine. This shift has gone beyond the traditional concept of military power and toward a more comprehensive approach based on integrating nuclear deterrence, technological superiority, and expanding international partnerships by different active alliances. The development of Chinese military capabilities is also joined with the political-security decision-making mechanisms within the Chinese Communist Party structure itself.

2 OBJECTIVE

The research aims to analyze the structure of Chinese military preparedness and its role in confronting external threats through three objectives. Firstly, making progress in the Chinese armed forces. Then, it was strengthening the mechanism of military-security decision-making. Finally, it resembled Chinese military alliances and partnerships, to understand how China seeks to build a comprehensive force capable of ensuring its national security and consolidating its position as a major player in the contemporary international order.

3 IMPORTANCE

China's military preparedness stems from the fact that it reflects a combination of defensive and offensive motives, and expresses the shift in Chinese strategic thought from a focus on protecting national sovereignty to active engagement in managing regional and international balances alike.

4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem revolves around the following question: How does China's military preparedness contribute to strengthen its China's position as an international power capable of confronting regional and international threats within a chaotic international system?

This problem gives rise to a set of sub-questions, the most prominent of which are:

- What is the nature of China's armament and military capabilities? And how are they reflected in its defense and security doctrine?
- What are the mechanisms of military-security decision-making within the Chinese political system structure? And what role does the Communist Party play in guiding these decisions?
- To what extent do the military alliances and partnerships that China is building represent a tool for strengthening China's strategic deterrence in the face of threats?

5 HYPOTHESIS

The research is based on China's military preparedness, with its integrated components, to contribute directly in strengthening China's position as a rising international power capable of deterring external threats and able to adapting with a chaotic international environment, by building a multidimensional deterrent capability that enables it to protect its interests and expand its influence without entering into direct military confrontations.

There are sub-hypotheses related to the main hypothesis, in order to understand and analyze the following:

- Modernizing the Chinese military establishment that contributes to transforming China into a global power capable of influencing over international security equations.

- The military-security decision-making structure, dominated by the Communist Party, enables the state to direct its defensive strategy to serve greater national goals, and independent of institutional or bureaucratic pressures.
- Non-alliance military partnerships represent an equation within contemporary international relations, in which reflecting China's efforts to build a network of influence that achieves deterrence without becoming involved in direct security commitments.

6 METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the inductive approach, which proceeds from the part to the whole, i.e., by studying one element of Chinese power to arrive at comprehensive results related to confronting various threats, by using analytical approach.

7 RESEARCH LIMITS

China's military power is one of the cornerstones of the country's comprehensive strength, especially after declaring an initiative of the Belt and Road by the president of China Xi Jin Ping in 2013. It was aimed for competing, not partnering, with the United States of America, and it continues to contain all threats until this day.

8 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

The research consisted of an introduction, conclusion, and three main items. The first item tackled the nature of Chinese armed forces armament, aiming to demonstrate the extent to which modern armament represents a central position for the Chinese armed forces and their executive effectiveness. In the second item was resembled military-security decision-making mechanism. Finally, the third item was tackled to analyze China's military alliances and partnerships.

9 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Defining the reality of Chinese military preparedness and its role in confronting regional and international threats, based on the structure of military force and security decision-making mechanisms, by taking into account the nature of military alliances and partnerships that China employs within the framework of its national strategy.

1 -The nature of Chinese armed forces armament:

China's modern military capabilities are among the most powerful and advanced in the world. China has heavily invested in modernizing and developing its armed forces, encompassing areas such as air power and naval forces. Military power occupies a central place in China's national strategy, serving both to confront external threats and to support its global position and interests. This is reflected in China's annual military spending scale, which has steadily increased. By 2024, China had completed three consecutive decades of continuous increases in its defense budget, which represents only (1.3%) of China's GDP, a relatively low percentage compared to the global average of (1.8%) or in comparing with NATO's(2%) of military spending budget⁽¹⁾.

Nevertheless, the Chinese authorities also confront different challenges in determining defensive spending priorities, which is distributed across improving basic capabilities through major projects, such as enhancing training, preparing for potential confrontations, and accelerating innovation in defensive sciences and technology, especially in weapons systems or logistics, and undertaking defense and military reforms ⁽²⁾. Thus, China has maintained nuclear weapons since 1964, adopting a distinctive approach to deterrence based on several principles, including being surrounded by four regional nuclear powers (Russia, India, Pakistan, North Korea) and managing deterrence relations with the United States ⁽³⁾. One fundamental principle is the No First Use (NFU) policy, consistently emphasized in official statements by Chinese government itself ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾The Military Balance 2025, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Routledge Taylor & Francis group, U.S.A, 2025, P,224.

⁽²⁾The Military Balance 2025, Ibid, P, 225.

⁽³⁾Dean Cheng, An Overview of Chinese Thinking About Deterrence, in Frans Osinga and Tim Sweijjs, NL ARMS Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies 2020 Deterrence in the 21st Century—Insights from Theory and Practice, ASSER press, springer, Berlin, 2021, p 181.

⁽⁴⁾ James M. Smith, and Paul J. Bolt, China's strategic Arsenal Worldview, Doctrine, and Systems, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C., U.S.A, 2021, P,47.

Although too much clear, the NFU policy has been questioned due to global security environment changes and the rise of U.S. conventional capabilities. Chinese officials note that targeting Chinese nuclear forces with high-precision conventional weapons could be seen as crossing the nuclear threshold, introducing uncertainty into NFU doctrine—that is, China's approach to nuclear deterrence response against any evolving imminent threats ⁽⁵⁾. China also relies on the principle of 'minimum deterrence,' maintaining a limited but sufficient nuclear force to survive and respond after a first strike, capable of penetrating missile defenses. ⁽⁶⁾The nuclear arsenal, although smaller than U.S. or Russian forces, is continually modernized for reliability and effectiveness⁽⁷⁾. Moreover, China's military can be divided into ⁽⁸⁾:

- **Ground Forces:** According to the 2024 census, China's ground forces consist of (2.545) million troops, (5,000) tanks, (174,300) armored combat vehicles, (3,850) self-propelled vehicles, (1,434) artillery carriers, and (3,180) missile carriers.
- **Naval Forces:** According to the 2024 census, the naval forces consist of (380,000) troops, including two aircraft carriers, three helicopter carriers, (49) destroyers, (42) frigates, (72) corvettes, (61) submarines, (150) patrol vessels, and (36) mine-prevention vessels.
- **Air Force:** According to the 2024 census, the Air Force consists of (400,000) soldiers, equipped with (112) special mission aircraft, (10) air transport fleets, (913) helicopters, and (281) attack helicopters.

According to that, nuclear and missile weapons are considered the cornerstone of China's military preparedness structure. China relies on this military system as a tool of deterring imminent threats, especially in light of the superiority of some major powers in conventional capabilities. However, Chinese military industry, especially its missile system, constitutes one of the most important elements of hard power that supports its military preparedness. It has been able to build a diverse missile arsenal, and among the

⁽⁵⁾Ibid, PP, 54-53.

⁽⁶⁾Hui Zhang, How US restraint can keep China's nuclear arsenal small, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 68, No. 4, SAGE Publications, 2015, p.76.

⁽⁷⁾Baohui Zhang, U,S missile defence and China's nuclear posture: changing dynamics of an offence–defence arms race, *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 3, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.561.

⁽⁸⁾Muhammad Ubaid Ali Abd al-Azim and Doria Shafiq Basyouni, China and its Rise to Global Pole Status, *Scientific Journal of Business Research and Studies*, Volume 38, Issue 4, Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration, Helwan University, Egypt, 2024, P, 12.

most prominent missiles that embody the qualitative development in Chinese capabilities such as ⁽⁹⁾:

- 1) **DF-17:** A medium-range missile equipped with a hypersonic thruster, capable of hitting targets at a distance of up to (2,500) km.
- 2) **DF-41:** Considered the "crown jewel" of China's deterrent arsenal, with an operational range of approximately (12,000–15,000) km and capable of carrying multiple nuclear warheads (up to 10–12 warheads).
- 3) **DF-31:** A land-based mobile intercontinental ballistic missile with an estimated range of approximately (8,000–11,000) km.
- 4) **DF-21:** A medium-range missile, often used to strike aircraft carriers. Its range is approximately (2,000) km, and can be equipped with conventional or nuclear warheads.
- 5) **DF-16:** A medium- to short-range missile (approximately 1,000 km), highly accurate, used to target targets such as airports and military installations.

Furthermore, People's Liberation Army (PLA) is enhancing its missile capabilities by adopting the PCH-191 multi-purpose launcher platform, which supports high-precision artillery rockets and short-range ballistic missiles up to (750) km, enabling it to accurately target Taiwan from Chinese territory⁽¹⁰⁾. Especially, since China sees the increased of U.S. military presence in Taiwan as a threat to its security ⁽¹¹⁾. Chinese strategic doctrine has recently been directed towards expanding deterrence tools beyond the nuclear domain, as cyberspace and outer space have become two pillars of the comprehensive deterrence system, since the establishment of the People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force (PLASSF) in 2015 ⁽¹²⁾.

⁽⁹⁾Nour El Din Ahmed, A quick and concise look at China's missile capabilities. Last visited: 10/10/2025. <https://www.defense-arabic.com/2021/03/24/%d9%86%d8%b8%d8%b1%d8%a9-%d8%b3%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%b9%d8%a9-%d9%88%d9%85%d8%ae%d8%aa%d8%b5%d8%b1%d8%a9-%d8%ad%d9%88%d9%84-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%82%d8%af%d8%b1%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b5%d8%a7%d8%b1%d9%88>.

⁽¹⁰⁾The Military Balance 2025· op.cit, P,221

⁽¹¹⁾Laith Esma Majeed Al-Obaidi, The Chinese Vision of American Rapprochement with Taiwan in the Administration of President Joe Biden, Journal of Political Science, Issue 65, College of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, 2023, P, 317.

⁽¹²⁾Roy D. Kamphausen, modernizing deterrence How China Coerces, Compels, and Deters, The National Bureau of Asian Research, United States of America, 2023, P,104.

Moreover, China has begun to focus on space and cyber capabilities not only as supporting tools, but also as central elements to compensate any potential gaps happened in the balance of power with superior adversaries such as United States of America ⁽¹³⁾. In addition to the continued Chinese interest in the developments within the field of artificial intelligence, in order to compete the United States for periods of coming future ⁽¹⁴⁾. This approach aims to establish a proactive deterrence capability by disrupting the enemy's command and control systems in any potential conflict.

Meanwhile, another dimension of Chinese preparedness is an evident in its naval expansion, particularly through the development of aircraft carriers. With the Fujian aircraft carrier set to enter sea experiments in May 2024, equipped with advanced technologies such as electromagnetic launchers, China also seeks to enhance the efficiency of its naval operations. Furthermore, China is working on building a nuclear-powered carrier, along with developing advanced Type (076) amphibious landing ships and new hybrid and nuclear submarines, reflecting an integrated strategy to increase its maritime depth and its ability to carry out long-range military operations⁽¹⁵⁾. The accumulation of naval capabilities, in parallel with technical superiority in space and cyber, indicates a Chinese vision that seeks to reformulate the deterrence equation to include overwhelming control over multiple actors, which strengthens its position as a power capable of achieving a kind of balance in the multipolar international order which also characterized by the presence of a group of poles with nearly equal capabilities ⁽¹⁶⁾. China's thinking is evolving in response to the growing number of potential adversaries, particularly India, which has acquired anti-satellite capabilities. While China's focus attention previously was on the United States, it now requires a broader approach to deterrence that includes other regional adversaries ⁽¹⁷⁾. Especially, the development of China's strategic approach to nuclear weapons can be summed up in the following ⁽¹⁸⁾:

⁽¹³⁾Ibid, P,100.

⁽¹⁴⁾Laith Esam Majeed Al-Abidi, *Artificial Intelligence and Human Existence: An Intellectual Reading of the Political Dimensions*, Journal of Political Science, Issue 67, College of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, 2024, P, 305.

⁽¹⁵⁾Roy D. Kamphausen, op.cit, P,100.

⁽¹⁶⁾Muthanna Ali Al-Mahdawi and Yusra Mahdi Saleh, *The transformations within International Polar order: A Study of the Future of the Non-Polar order*, Journal of Political Science, Issue 63, College of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, 2022, P, 3.

⁽¹⁷⁾Roy D. Kamphausen, op.cit, p,105.

⁽¹⁸⁾James M. Smith, and Paul J. Bolt, op, cit, P, 55.

- **A Shift in Strategic Thinking:** China has moved from a doctrine based solely on guaranteed retaliation to be in a more proactive posture focused on rapid response to nuclear imminent threats.
- **A Focus on Rapid Preparedness and Response:** China's missile force has developed significant capabilities in rapidly preparing for nuclear launches, while improving operational efficiency, enhancing its ability to respond quickly different crises.
- **The Concept of "Deterring Intermediate War":** China has begun implementing strategies to preserve a portion of its nuclear arsenal to control nuclear escalation in conflicts, reflecting the potential for an effective nuclear war management.
- **A Broader Understanding of Nuclear Strategy:** China is developing a more sophisticated understanding of its nuclear strategies, recognizing the need for flexibility and responsiveness to various scenarios rather than adhering to previous traditional doctrines.

However, the central powers in the international order constitute the main axis that manage the interests of these central powers⁽¹⁹⁾, aiming to impose their will in accordance with their strategic military capabilities over others⁽²⁰⁾. Therefore, China aims to modernize its national defense by 2035 and transform the People's Liberation Army into a world-class military by 2049. The army is progressing toward achieving a military modernization goal of 2027, which coincides with the centenary of its founding on August 1, 1927. The centenary goal accelerates the development of information technology and artificial intelligence to create a combat-ready force capable of defending sovereignty, security, and interests⁽²¹⁾.

2 - Military-security decision-making mechanism:

The decision-making process is influenced by domestic politics, and the official bodies responsible for implementing any policy are joined with the ruling party, whose

⁽¹⁹⁾Inass Abdulsada Ali and Aya Ghanim Nimr, Exploring Sport's Role in Mitigating Conflicts Gulf Cup as a Case Study, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Taylor & Francis, 2025, p. 13.

⁽²⁰⁾Naszdar Zaki dawood, and Faieq Hassin Jasem, The power vacuum and the authority of informal actors, *Russian law journal*, Vol. 11 No. 8s , 2023, P,171.

⁽²¹⁾Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, U.S. department of Defense, 2024, P,44.

supreme leadership occupies the highest position in power. The Chinese Communist Party controls the use of force and considers the People's Liberation Army (PLA) a wing of the party. The party also controls over other bodies that provide information and proposals. The Party Central Committee is the supreme coordinating body and the most important level in the system itself. The Central Committee makes major decisions on national security and foreign policy. Small groups also provide advisory services on specific issues.

The Central Military Commission assesses the nature of threats to national security, and it develops plans to address them. The commission is chaired by the party chief. The influence of other actors has grown with the expansion of China's foreign policy circles globally, the spread of its interests, its growing role in international politics, and the numerous challenges it faces consequently. These institutions provide information, analyses, and proposals to research departments within state agencies, such as the Academy of Political Science, the China Institute for Strategic Studies, the Institute of International Relations, and specialized research centers in the United States, the European Union, Africa, and in the Middle East ⁽²²⁾.

In April 2013, the party congress decided to establish the Central National Security Committee, with the aim of establishing a unified national security system. This was achieved after responsibilities were distributed among various bodies inside the party, government, military establishment, and research centers. This also was due to the intensification of internal and external challenges resulting from China's expanding role and policies in economic and social reform in international politics. This committee is subordinate to the Communist Party, not the government, indicating the central role of the party in security decision-making. It serves as an advisor to the party's Central Committee on security issues and the country's supreme strategy. The relevant bodies in charge of security, foreign policy, and military affairs submit reports to this committee, which in turn coordinates among them ⁽²³⁾. The People's Liberation Army in China is subject to a special party body called the Military Commission. Power in the People's Liberation Army is shared by a general military commander with the General Secretary

⁽²²⁾Kadhim Hashem Nemah, *Critique of the Chinese Strategy Towards Arab Countries*, Amna Publishing and Distribution House, Jordan, 2018, P, 83.

⁽²³⁾Kadhim Hashem Nemah, *Ibid*, P, 84.

of the Communist Party, who directs all ideological and political affairs⁽²⁴⁾. The basic decision-making bodies in the Chinese military establishment can be identified as the following ⁽²⁵⁾:

- **The Central Military Committee:** The central body that sets all military modernization policies. It is linked to the party's Politburo, making it the liaison authority between the army and the party. Three important bodies are linked to this committee:
 - A- The General Staff, which oversees all military activities, along with a number of companies operating in the field of military technology.
 - B- The General Political office: This is responsible for all political activities within the military establishment, in addition to coordinating the use of military media and publications through two institutions supervised by this department.
 - C- The General Logistics Office: This is responsible for providing the army's logistical needs, including food, clothing, building materials, fuel, and machinery.
- **The Government Council** (Council of Ministers or Cabinet) supervises on the industrial companies related to the military.
- **The Ministry of National Defense:** It represents a civilian authority that responsible for the military forces.
- **The Science, Technology, and Industry Committee for National Defense:** It represents the central body for determining the military establishment's technical needs.
- **The Academy of Sciences:** It represents a semi-independent institution that sometimes contracts with technical institutions for the benefit of the military, to avoid the military establishment from any risks that might result from some technical deals.

So that, it can be concluded that China's military and security decision-making mechanism represents one of the pillars of the country's preparedness to confront external threats. The institutional structure between the Communist Party, the Central Military

⁽²⁴⁾Ibrahim Hardan Matar Al-Qaisi, Chinese Foreign Policy towards the Arabian Gulf Region after the Cold War and its Future Prospects, unpublished PhD dissertation, College of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, 2013, PP, 10-11.

⁽²⁵⁾Walid Salim Abdel-Hay, China's Future Position in the International System 1978-2010, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2nd ed., Abu Dhabi, 2014, PP, 133-135.

Commission, and research and scientific bodies demonstrates the nature of the Chinese political system activity, which is based on centralized decision-making and the integration of the tools of power. This system also enables the ability to formulate rapid and effective responses to security threats and challenges, unlike democratic systems, which undergo rather complex mechanisms ⁽²⁶⁾.

3 - China's military alliances and partnerships:

China does not have institutionalized alliances like NATO but builds bilateral and multidimensional partnerships, leveraging the Belt and Road Initiative of 2013, to secure foreign interests and supply routes while enhancing deterrence without formal alliance commitments⁽²⁷⁾. China maintains strategic relationships with nuclear powers such as the Russian Federation, Pakistan, and North Korea, enhancing global standing and deterrence in the international politics. These partnerships and alliances have contributed to strength their China's global position in confronting its rivals, especially most notably the United States. Through decades of cooperation, it has built solid frameworks for political and military coordination with these countries, transforming them into a strategic asset that enhances China's deterrence capacity, and it confronts imminent threats that prevent it from achieving its goals. Therefore, Sino-Russian relations, the strategic alignment between the two countries, is one of the most prominent manifestations of reshaping the global balance of power. Since they signed an agreement in 1992 stipulating non-participation in any military alliances that threaten the security of any party. Moreover, the relationship has rapidly developed into a comprehensive strategic partnership encompassing military and technological cooperation, joint exercises, and coordination of political positions in the face of American hegemony ⁽²⁸⁾. Pakistan is China's closest strategic partner in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. It is a reliable ally that shares its interests in confronting Indian threats and growing US-Indian influence in the region. The cooperation between two sides extends to defense, military manufacturing, and

⁽²⁶⁾Muntasser Majeed Hameed, Hybrid regimes: An Overview, IPRI Journal, Issue 1, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan, 2022,P,10.

⁽²⁷⁾Hamida Abdul-Hussein Muhammad Al-Dhalimi, The Geopolitical Importance of Iran's Geographical Location in China's Belt and Road Initiative, Iraqi University Journal, Issue 55, Iraqi University, Baghdad, 2024, P, 640.

⁽²⁸⁾Ammar Hussein Sadiq and Majid Hamid Khadir, "Russian-Chinese compromise in a Multipolar World," Journal of International Studies, Issue 100, Center for Strategic and International Studies, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, 2025, PP, 91-99.

intelligence sharing, enhancing China's defense capabilities and consolidating its influence in the region ⁽²⁹⁾. China also maintains a close relationship with North Korea, a neighboring nuclear state. China sees North Korea as a tool to use in confronting regional threats, and has supplied it with nuclear technology ⁽³⁰⁾. Especially, since it was a pressure card in the face of the alliances led by the United States in Asia, including India, Japan, and South Korea. On the other hand, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization provides a framework for military and security coordination against terrorism, extremism, separatism, and drug trafficking, although it lacks some institutional elements of traditional alliances⁽³¹⁾. Thus, China emphasizes peaceful defense, and participates in UN peacekeeping, and promotes security cooperation diplomatically within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Belt and Road Initiative through peaceful means and mutual dialogue. Its security vision is based on the principle of collective security, rejecting the use of nuclear threats against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones⁽³²⁾. Thus, the disruptions by increasing civil wars, ethnic conflicts ⁽³³⁾, and the emergence of an increasing role for non-state actors in armed conflicts have been impacted in the international order in general ⁽³⁴⁾. Despite this growing military and security activity, but official Chinese political discourse continues to emphasize its commitment to a policy of defense. It realizes the importance of peaceful and diplomatic methods ⁽³⁵⁾. So that, it can be argued that China's approach for building military partnerships and alliances has enabled it to enhance its nuclear and conventional

⁽²⁹⁾Shahla Ali Abdul-Wahab Al-Andalawi, *The Impact of Strategic Companies on Regional Competition in South Asia after 2001 (China and India as a Model)*, College of Political Science, Administration and Diplomacy, Islamic University of Lebanon, Lebanon, 2025, P, 230.

⁽³⁰⁾Tala Issam Faeq, *North Korea's Strategic Armament after 2001*, Journal of the College of Basic Education for Educational and Human Sciences, Issue 38, University of Babylon, Babylon, 2018, P, 672.

⁽³¹⁾Saad Obaid Alwan Al-Saeedi and Fadhel Abdul Ali, *The Relationship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with Other Organizations and Alliances*, Journal of Political Science, Issue 54, College of Political Science, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, 2017, P, 240.

⁽³²⁾Christopher P. Twomey, *Perspectives on Sino-American Strategic Nuclear*, palgrave Macmillan, United States of America, 2008, P,112.

⁽³³⁾ Rashed Ahmed Alrasheed and others, *The role of identity in a multilevel interdependence in international relations: exploring popular understandings of international politics*, *Frontiers in Political Science*, Volume 7, Frontiers Media S.A, 2025, p. 8.

⁽³⁴⁾Hussein Mezher, *The Methodological and Epistemological developments in Conflict and Peace Studies*, *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, Issue 47, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, 2024, P,29.

⁽³⁵⁾Inass Abdulsada Ali, *Reshaping the world, Rethinking actors: the role of sub-state actors in foreign relations*, *Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 21, Number 1, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia, 2025, P, 5.

preparedness and enhance its deterrence capacity in the face of various or different threats, while simultaneously maintaining a political discourse that supports stability and peaceful development in a multipolar international order.

As a result of China's high level of strategic preparedness, its strategic partnerships with important nuclear powers, and the nature of its major economic partnerships inside the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS group had consequently been activated too much. China has also become the primary threat to the United States and a destabilizing factor within the American and Western hegemonic system. Therefore, it is not surprising that US intelligence reports classify China as the greatest threat, particularly in the military aspect, and the most comprehensive threat to US national security. The United States has also increased the pace of its proactive strategic preparedness related to confronting the Chinese threat, adding to its nuclear deterrence capabilities in Asia, located in South Korea and Japan, a new strategic belt consisting of a new missile system equipped with nuclear warheads, which places vital Chinese centers, including command headquarters, weapons factories, launch systems, and Chinese nuclear reactors, within range of these advanced missiles.

10 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of China's military preparedness shows a strategic transformation, moving from traditional deterrence to comprehensive, integrated deterrence encompassing military, economic, technological, media, and diplomatic tools. This approach blends political realism with long-term economic planning, offering a distinctive model of a rising power balancing both hard and soft power. This trend is likely to continue and influence international interactions in coming decades.

11 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are following of:

- China's military power is one of the cornerstones of the country's comprehensive strength. It is no longer merely a defensive tool, but rather a means of achieving influence and securing vital interests in regions such as the South China Sea and

the vital sea lanes linked to the Belt and Road Initiative since 2013. The advancement of nuclear, missile, naval, and space capabilities reflects China's pursuit of multi-layered deterrence tools that give it flexibility in confronting various threats from competing powers, such as the United States of America.

- Data on China's growing military spending—showing it remains within a moderate percentage of GDP (around 1.3%)—reflects a long-standing policy aimed balancing between economic development and defensive capabilities. The military power is not viewed as a burden on the economy; but rather as an investment in protecting development achievements and national interests from external threats for the future.
- At the level of military and security decision-making mechanisms, the Chinese Communist Party remains the focal point within internal political system. This centralized decision-making enables the leadership to act quickly and effectively to address threats and mitigates the institutional contradictions often encountered in multi-level democratic systems.
- In the field of military alliances and partnerships, China has adopted a model different from the Western approach based on military alliances such as NATO. It has relied on a network of flexible strategic and defensive partnerships, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and military cooperation with Russia. This pattern of cooperation does not aim to engage in direct conflicts, but rather to enhance its strategic depth of deterrence and ensure the security of global trade routes.
- China's military preparedness is not merely a technical or armament dimension, but rather represents a comprehensive strategic vision aimed to enhance or consolidate China's position as a major power capable of protecting its national security, deterring its adversaries, and reshaping the upcoming regional balances within the international order.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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