

The “New Security Concept”, RMA and the Control of Outer Space

While China’s international diplomacy contemplated the range of tradeoffs to be made in different arms control sectors, it was not conceptually deterred by the new “negative developments” associated with the shift in US strategic doctrine away from Europe to the Asia Pacific Region and US unilateralism. While the latter has been deeply deplored, the relevance of the US-inspired RMA was at the same time acknowledged as an urgent matter of fact. US-inspired RMA apparently required states generally to adopt a more “comprehensive” understanding of national security.

While acknowledging the US lead in RMA, Chinese analysis refuses to accept US single-superpower dominance of the world’s political affairs and its control of economic globalization as foregone conclusions. Chinese leaders continue to stress that the trend associated with single superpower unilateralism has to be qualified in the changing dimensions of multipolarity. The latter has become especially interesting in light of new Chinese participation in multilateralism. While the Chinese leaders in their view have been sorely tested by the recent ups and downs in Sino-US bilateral relations, they have not shown any inclination to abandon the thematic axis of their foreign and defence policy as it highlights “peace and development”. On the other hand, the development of the civilian economy may lend new support to Chinese participation in the RMA. While the Chinese insist that this does not make them more dangerous, their advocacy of a “new security concept” is in deliberate counterpoint to the development of US-led systems of military alliance. The “new security concept” is part and parcel of a new trend in Chinese military diplomacy and at a higher level, is part of a new strategy of multilateralism.

The following assessment, for example, refers to how a rules-based multilateralism can inhibit US unipolarity as it seeks to maximize American control of economic globalization. Zhong Yijun of the Chinese Institute of Foreign Affairs outlines the implications of China’s example for the developing countries more generally:

“...it is imperative to pursue an open policy and deepen reform, strive to seek advantages while avoiding disadvantages in dealing with other countries and promote what is beneficial and abolish what is harmful domestically. While observing universally