

# THE CHINESE “NEW SECURITY CONCEPT”: THE REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS, SPACE WEAPONIZATION AND PROSPECTIVE ARMS CONTROL COOPERATION

## Introduction

In the mid to late 1990s, the Chinese began self-consciously to articulate new thinking on security in response to the rapidly changing Post-Cold War context of world politics, economic globalization and technological revolution. While some of the most important content of their “new security concept” incorporates past principles, which actually date back to the Cold War, these principles have been updated to deal with rapid domestic economic change and Post-Cold War globalization. Now the Chinese are politically recommending these principles to other states, especially the United States. This analysis will parse the conceptual development of Chinese security thinking, paying particular attention to how this thinking relates to the prospects for arms control cooperation; particularly in light of the developing Chinese response to the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), the recent American withdrawal from the AMB treaty and its impact on the prospects for PAROS (Prevention of a Arms Race in Outer Space).

## New White Paper Strategic Thinking

Over a series of new white papers in the mid to late 1990s, the Chinese claimed to participate in a new trend towards arms control cooperation based upon what was perhaps for the PLA the newly discovered political utility of transparent multilateralism. These papers challenged the assumptions underlying the so-called “China threat” and countered with a “new security concept” highlighting multilateral arms control cooperation and confidence building. The white papers of 1995, 1998 and 2000 reflected new concern for China’s international image, as China sought to consolidate its position as a responsible neighbour in the Asia Pacific region and became more deeply involved in the ASEAN Regional Forum and its practices relating to defence policy and arms control reporting.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Bates Gill, “Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: The Dynamics of Chinese Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Policy-Making in an Era of Reform”, in David Lampton, ed., *The Making of Chinese*