

These papers generally reflect what Gill and Medeiros refer to as “critical period of transition” and the contemporary “pluralization and opening of the decision-making process inside China and the exposure of a growing cadre of specialist and specialized institutions to the international community.”²

Together the papers summed up the revision of domestic strategic thinking, and provided the basis for the related domestic allocation of resources as well as providing a new basis for participation in international political and military diplomacy regarding arms control. The papers also served as a self-conscious political rejoinder to hostile Western, and particularly American, criticism of the apparently threatening new technological dimensions of the modernization of China’s defences, filliped in rapid national economic growth.

On 16 November 1995, the Chinese issued their first white paper on arms control and disarmament.³ The 1995 paper asserted China’s “positive, sincere and responsible efforts” towards arms control and disarmament and challenged any assumption of a “China threat”.⁴ The paper reiterated existing “independent foreign policy” (*duli zizhu waiguan zhengce*) based upon the “five principles of peaceful existence” and its Cold War corollary on state-to-state relations, “seeking common ground while reserving differences”, (*qiu tong cun yi*). These principles were to facilitate the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s general line of “peace and development” and cognate defence policy summed up as: “China’s national defence policy is defensive in nature”.⁵

This view drew from a long established policy continuum that since at least the mid-1950s had subordinated national defence building to national economic construction. And this view has been sanctioned not only in the State Constitution, but it has been

Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978-2000. Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 277-79.

² See Bates Gill and Evan S. Medeiros, “Foreign and Domestic Influences on China’s Arms Control and Nonproliferation Policies”, *The China Quarterly*, 2000, pp. 82, 86,93.

³ See “White Paper on Arms Control and Disarmament”, *Xinhua*, 16 November 1995 in FBIS-CHI-95-221, 16 November 1995, pp. 20-31

⁴ The paper, itself, did not refer to this threat, but accompanying *XinHua* commentary highlighted the paper’s rebuttal to the “China Threat”; for example, see “Report Summarize, Highlight Defense White Paper”, *XinHua*, 16 November 1995 in FBIS-CHI-95-221, 16 November 1995, p. 31.

⁵ For the historical connotations of this basic terminology see Ronald C. Keith, *The Diplomacy of Zhou Enlai*. London: Macmillan Ltd., 1989, passim and Keith, “The Origins and Strategic Implications of China’s ‘Independent Foreign Policy’”, *International Journal*, vol. sli, no. 1, Winter 1985-96, p. 99 and Keith, “‘Strategic Ambiguity’ and the New Bush Administration’s ‘China Threat’”, *Review of International Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2, Winter 2001, pp. 8-11.